

NewsPoint

SEPTEMBER 2008

HERE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

A newsletter produced by Turning Point Alcohol and Drug Centre to highlight issues relating to alcohol and drug treatment and the activities and concerns of the organisation.

Turning Point strives to promote and maximise the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities living with and affected by alcohol and other drug-related harms.

P2 METH CLINICS

P2 NEWS IN BRIEF

P3 MANDATED ALCOHOL
SALES DATA

P3 RISKS FOR YOUNG
DRINKERS

P4 DHS SCHOLARSHIPS

ISSN 1834-5697 (Print)
ISSN 1834-5697 (Online)



Turning Point
Alcohol & Drug Centre

International collaboration - Methadone in China



In seeking to strengthen workforce capacity for the delivery of sustainable and high quality opiate substitution therapy across Asia, the collaboration between Turning Point and the Yunnan Institute for Drug Abuse in China (YIDA) is continuing. The Illicit Drugs Initiative funded by AusAID has enabled this support and exchange to develop between two significant treatment organisations in the Asia-Pacific region.

In 2005, the Chinese Ministry of Health established the National Training Center for Methadone Maintenance Treatment (MMT) at YIDA in Kunming City, Yunnan Province. Between 2003 and the end of 2007, China established 511 MMT clinics covering 22 provinces and reaching 52,000 drug users.

“The long term institutional collaboration that is building between YIDA and Turning Point explores training and support, quality assurance in treatment delivery and new research opportunities through international professional exchange and learning,” says Joanna Hayter, Turning Point’s IDI Project Manager.

YIDA’s illicit drug program profile, which includes training, prevention, education and research also involves multiple international project and research activities linked to HIV/AIDS funding where Yunnan is a focus or target province.

YIDA’s MMT training programs reach over 1,500 practitioners who benefit from comprehensive clinic management and treatment intervention training. The training program includes medical management,

behaviour and psychological intervention and treatment, case management and social support services to help patients re-integrate into society. In addition to short courses, clinic managers work through cluster models that enable them to participate in site exchange visits, clinic secondment and internships.

Communication exchange and workshops led by the senior management and treatment experts at YIDA provide ongoing professional development and support for longer term operating clinics.

For the past two years, Turning Point’s collaborative partnership with YIDA has resulted in a national situation and training needs analysis for the drug and alcohol sector in China. Work has now commenced on developing a standards framework for MMT service provision in Yunnan and this is due for completion by December 2008.

Interested in reading the Illicit Drugs Initiative situation and training needs analysis report? Visit our website: www.turningpoint.org.au

NEWS IN BRIEF

SMART Recovery meetings

are now being held every week on Thursday evenings from 6.00 - 7.30pm at Turning Point's Fitzroy clinic.



SMART - Self Management and Recovery Training is a peer managed self help group that assists people in abstaining from drugs and alcohol and achieving a healthy lifestyle balance. The group is open to all members of the community who wish to gain independence from addictive behaviour.

The program covers topics such as:

- enhancing and maintaining motivation to abstain
- coping skills for cravings and urges
- problem solving techniques by managing thoughts, feelings and behaviours
- achieving a lifestyle balance by assessing short and long term interests and goals, practicing relaxation and planning enjoyable activities

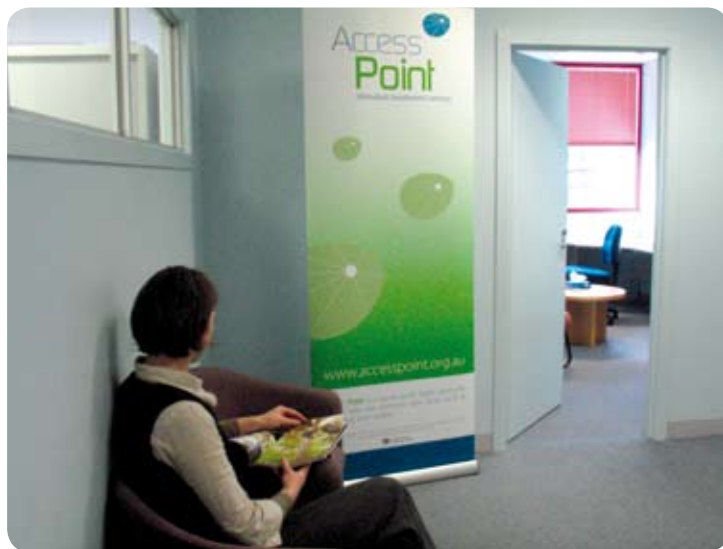
For more information on SMART Recovery, please contact 8413 8444, SMS SMART to 0425 828 645 or visit the website at www.smartrecoveryaustralia.com.au

The PsyCheck package has now been updated with an interactive CD-ROM. This new learning resource provides an orientation on how to use Psycheck, the mental health screening tool specifically designed for the AOD sector. Information on how to access this resource and more about the Psycheck package is available at a new website: www.psycheck.org.au.

The Multicultural Centre for Women's Health in conjunction with Turning Point, is providing training opportunities for the culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) and AOD sectors. A forum is scheduled for metropolitan Melbourne and a two-day training course will be held in a non-metropolitan location. Dates and locations are not yet confirmed but registration information will be available shortly at www.turningpoint.org.au.

A qualification review of the Victorian AOD sector has identified the experience levels and training needs of our workers. Data from 2002 indicated that 8% of workers had an AOD specific qualification at that time. This rose to 24% in 2006 and now sits at 56%. In addition to this, 70% of the workforce now meets the Minimum Qualification Strategy. The complete review is available at www.turningpoint.org.au.

Places are still available for the Pharmacotherapies and Working With Groups professional development courses (non-accredited) in October and November. Download more info from the Turning Point website.



Methamphetamine clinics - catering to a different crowd

Since the establishment of the two Access Point specialist methamphetamine clinics in Fitzroy and St Kilda earlier this year, over 60 clients have presented for treatment. More importantly, anecdotal data suggests that the clinics are tapping into a different client population from those who traditionally present for drug and alcohol treatment: young women, employed people and those with a generally high level of social functionality.

Clinical pathways have been developed to guide appropriate treatment within the Access Point centres. The triage assessment by the nurse is the starting point for developing an appropriate treatment response for the client which may involve the services of an addiction medicine specialist, psychiatrist, psychologist or counsellor depending on client needs.

Referral to emergency departments occurs for acute presentations and, for some clients, referral to tertiary treatment agencies (e.g. inpatient drug withdrawal) as required.

The Access Point website www.accesspoint.org.au is now operational, providing information on:

- how to access the centres and the range of services available
- stimulant drug types
- mental and physical health effects of using stimulant type drugs
- links to harm reduction information for people who use stimulants
- links to resources for professionals
- frequently asked questions

To make an appointment at one of the Access Point clinics, contact 1800 757 717 or visit the website.

Access Point is a Turning Point initiative, in collaboration with Access Health, funded through the Proceeds of Crime Act, Commonwealth Attorney General's Department.



Mandated alcohol sales data vital for policy development

For many years, the Australian Bureau of Statistics has published national estimates of per capita alcohol consumption based on alcohol sales data, including data collected by liquor licensing authorities. After a High Court ruling in 1997 decreed that state liquor licensing fees were unconstitutional, every Australian state and territory apart from Western Australia and Northern Territory stopped collecting this data and now the ABS has indicated that it may no longer report on national alcohol consumption estimates either.

It is essential that debates about alcohol policy are informed by reliable data on alcohol use. Population surveys provide important information on drinking patterns and trends but they are not a substitution for sales data. With a recently renewed interest in alcohol policy at state and federal levels (higher taxes, reduced trading hours), data collection is essential for evaluating the effectiveness of government strategies and community initiatives.

In 2004-05, the social cost of alcohol use in Australia topped \$15 billion, with health costs just the tip of the iceberg at \$1.98 billion. According to a National Drug Strategy study,



alcohol misuse cost the Australian economy \$3.58 billion in lost productivity in the workplace, \$1.57 billion in lost productivity in the home, \$1.61 billion in crime-related costs and \$2.20 billion in road accidents.

Given that the harms from alcohol misuse affects a large proportion of the Australian population, the federal government should ensure sales data be provided by those licensed to sell alcohol.

(Article taken from Hall, W., Chikritzhs, T., d'Abbs, P. & Room, R. (2008). Alcohol sales data are essential for good public policies towards alcohol [editorial]. MJA, 189(4), 188-189.)

Added research highlights risks for young drinkers

Researchers from the AER Centre for Alcohol Policy Research and the Burnet Institute have had an article accepted for publication in scientific journal *Drug and Alcohol Dependence* which examines the degree to which young Victorians are drinking at levels that put their health at significant risk.

Over a twelve month period, 22 per cent of male drinkers aged 16 to 24 years regularly consumed more than twenty standard drinks in one day and 19 per cent of female drinkers regularly consumed more than eleven standard drinks in one day. The research also showed that approximately one in five of the drinkers had consumed their first drink at thirteen years of age or younger.

“Young Victorians are drinking vast quantities of alcohol on a regular basis,” says Michael Livingston, the lead author of the research paper, “It’s a disturbing trend, particularly when easy access to cheap alcohol results in high numbers of hospitalisations, injuries from car accidents, assaults and domestic violence.”

Other findings detailed in the report revealed:

- 25% of male drinkers aged 18-21 years drank at high risk levels.
- 22% of female drinkers aged 18-21 yrs drank at high risk levels.

- Young people living in rural or remote areas were more likely to report very high risk drinking.
- Increased density of packaged liquor outlets is associated with increased prevalence of very high risk drinking.
- Young adults in employment, living out of home and with \$80 or more per week recreational spending money were drinking at high risk levels.

Michael believes that the research findings demonstrate the importance of price and availability of alcohol: “Interestingly, young drinkers who have higher disposable incomes and those living in areas with high numbers of packaged liquor outlets per head of population are much more likely to drink to excess.”

In addition, Michael says that: “The study provides further evidence about what we already know, that young people in Victoria are drinking at very harmful rates and there is a real need for effective public health policies that focus on price and alcohol availability in order to reduce alcohol-related harm.”

This research was funded by the AER Foundation and will be published in a forthcoming issue of *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*.

Exciting new education opportunities for AOD workers

DHS has allocated funding for Turning Point to provide twenty scholarships for AOD workers who are currently employed by DHS funded organisations. Applicants who are awarded scholarships will go on to complete the Graduate Certificate in Alcohol and Other Drug Studies in 2009.

The aim of the scholarship is to assist both metropolitan and rural AOD clinical workers in accessing high quality accredited training at a postgraduate level. The scholarship will pay for 80% of all enrolment fees into the graduate certificate and students will pay the remaining 20% fee directly to Turning Point.

The Graduate Certificate in Alcohol and Other Drug Studies is a post graduate course, fully accredited under the Tertiary Education Act 1993. Completion of the certificate will allow the student to articulate into other post graduate courses at Turning Point or other tertiary institutions. The certificate is a part-time course that can be completed in 12 months, with the first subject commencing in March 2009.

Normal entry will require the student to have completed an undergraduate degree in a relevant discipline and be currently

working as a clinician in a DHS funded AOD service with a minimum of two years experience in the sector. Special entry may be available for people with training and experience in relevant areas who do not hold a degree, and will be considered by Turning Point on a case-by-case basis.

Applications for scholarships must reach Turning Point by Friday 14th November, 2008.


Further information is available online at www.turningpoint.org.au or by contacting Shirley Gill on (03) 8413 8720 or email: shirleyg@turningpoint.org.au.

Turning Point Symposium

Monday 13th Oct 2008, 8.45am-3.00pm

- keynote address by Professor Robin Room
- presentations on key projects
- practical workshops
- poster sessions

For more information go to www.turningpoint.org.au



Anyone can end up having a problem with alcohol or drugs

24 hours 7 days a week
FREE counselling on the internet when you visit counsellingonline.org.au

Or pick up the phone and call DirectLine on **1800 888 236**



Turning Point
Alcohol & Drug Centre

HERE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Turning Point Alcohol & Drug Centre Inc.

ABN: 17 302 055 629

Registered Association no:
A0029308B

54-62 Gertrude Street
Fitzroy Victoria 3065

T: 03 8413 8413

F: 03 9416 3420

E: info@turningpoint.org.au

W: www.turningpoint.org.au

Support Turning Point

JOIN THE MAILING LIST OR UPDATE YOUR DETAILS

- I would like to be included on the Turning Point mailing list to receive information about initiatives and events.
 I would like my details to be updated.

Name _____

Position/Organisation _____

Email _____

Tel _____

Address _____

Suburb _____

State _____

Postcode _____

MAKE A DONATION

I enclose a cheque or money order made payable to Turning Point Alcohol and Drug Centre, being my donation of:

\$20 \$50 \$100 \$200 Other amount _____

(Donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible)

OR please debit my Bankcard Mastercard Visa

Card Number

Expiry Date:

/

Signature _____

Please send information on bequests