



SUMMARY

Research and advice bureau Breuer&Intraval has evaluated the 'alcoholmeter' pilot over 2017. This pilot is commissioned by the Research and Documentation Centre (WODC) of the Dutch Ministry of Justice and Security. This pilot was carried out in the region of Rotterdam and the east of the Netherlands.

In the original design, the intention was to include 100 carriers in the research. However, only 26 clients carried an 'alcoholmeter' during the pilot. 18 of them participated in a questionnaire after the gestation period of 75 days, and 14 (out of 18) also took part in the measurement 3 months after taking the 'alcoholmeter' off. In addition, 100 clients - who were eligible to wear the 'alcoholmeter' but did not want to - were to act as a control group. However, this was not successful because of the low number of clients selected by the probation service for carrying the 'alcoholmeter'.

Due to the low number of carriers and the lack of a control group, the effect or influence of the 'alcoholmeter' on alcohol consumption and criminal behaviour could not be determined in a scientifically sound manner. In consultation with the supervisory committee, it was therefore decided to give the evaluation mainly the character of a process evaluation and to let go of the effect evaluation.

We started with a reconstruction of the intervention logic to capture the active mechanisms of the 'alcoholmeter'. Subsequently, various research activities were carried out to map the pilot's progress, bottlenecks, and areas for improvement.

Four Reasons for Lower Intake

The evaluation showed that there are at least four reasons for a lower intake. The first reason is the delay in information provision, which started after the start of the pilot. A second reason is that due to the large number of pilots in the probation service, focus on the 'alcoholmeter' pilot quickly diminished. The strict inclusion criteria, due to which the SVG (Stichting Verslavingsreclassering GGZ; addiction rehabilitation service foundation) candidates often did not belong to the target group of the pilot because their problems are too severe, is the third reason. Finally, the lower intake is partly caused by the focus on ZSM. The decision moments for ZSM are short, so there was little time for the correct screening.

Procedures

In addition to the problems with the intake, screening of clients was not always performed correctly. For example, four clients with a severe alcohol addiction - which is a contraindication - carried the 'alcoholmeter'. In addition, the contraindication diabetes caused some confusion. Diabetes turned out to be a contraindication because some people experience swollen legs. At the beginning of the pilot, this was not known to the advisors who performed the screening.



Monitoring

Because of the frequent measurement moments of the 'alcoholmeter', the supervisors gained more insight into the moments clients drink alcohol. In the interviews they were able to go into this more deeply, which benefited the interviews and/or supervision. Another advantage of continuous measurements is that it is less susceptible to fraud than urine controls.

The fact that a carrier had to be home at two specific times every day to upload the 'alcoholmeter's' data, was seen as a disadvantage by some participants. In particular for carriers with irregular shifts/working hours. In addition, carriers could not spend a night elsewhere.

Experiences

According to the carriers, wearing the 'alcoholmeter' had a positive influence on their alcohol consumption and awareness. Twelve carriers indicated that they did not drink alcohol while wearing the 'alcoholmeter'. This was also confirmed by the 'alcoholmeter' measurements. Of the 14 carriers who participated in the final measurement, 9 indicated that they did not drink alcohol in the 3 months after wearing the 'alcoholmeter'.

The carriers differed in their views on whether the 'alcoholmeter' could help stop offences in the short or long term. The group that indicated that the 'alcoholmeter' could help, was the same size as the group that expected it would not help.

Use

Carriers preferred the 'alcoholmeter' over the urine controls. They mainly experienced it as a stimulus not to drink alcohol. In addition, they preferred it to reporting to the probation service for urine inspections a few times a week. The disadvantages of the 'alcoholmeter' are its size and comfort. The 'alcoholmeter' is large and very rigid. Carriers are limited to wearing certain clothes and (work) shoes.

Need

Some probation officers indicate that they could benefit more from the 'alcoholmeter' if they could use it in their work in various ways. The probation officers were of the opinion that the 'alcoholmeter' is particularly suitable for use as a support tool, especially for clients who are motivated to work on their drinking behaviour.