

Assessment of the “Safe Streets Treatment Options Program” (SSTOP)

Presented to: Outagamie County

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Safe Streets Treatment Options Program (SSTOP):
Assessment

Introduction

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee professor, Dr. Tina L. Freiburger, was approached by Outagamie County to assist in an effort to move toward evidence-based programming and decision-making in the county. This led to an initial evaluation of the “Safe Streets Treatment Options Program (SSTOP).” This assessment is an examination of whether SSTOP is effective in reducing recidivism among 2nd and 3rd time Operating While Intoxicated (OWI) offenders. This report presents the findings, a discussion of findings, conclusions and recommendations.

Background

Safe Streets Treatment Options Program (SSTOP)

Wisconsin is among the highest in the nation in regards to its frequency of binge drinking and alcohol-impaired driving. From 2011 to 2014, approximately 64-67% of adults in Outagamie County who were 18 years of age and older reported alcohol use; and roughly 25-28% of adults reported binge drinking (Wisconsin Department of Health Services, 2016). In 2013, there were 120 alcohol-impaired crashes, with two people killed and 66 people injured in Outagamie County (Wisconsin Department of Transportation, 2017, February 23). Furthermore, Outagamie County (2016) reports that 40% of traffic fatalities in the past years were committed by those under the influence of alcohol or other drugs. These statistics pose significant problems to the jurisdiction, and thus efforts have been made to develop interventions that will reduce driving-impaired offenses.

The Safe Streets Treatment Options Program (SSTOP) began in 2010 in Outagamie County; and is largely based on the previously developed program operating in Winnebago

County, WI (Outagamie County, 2017). Results of a study conducted by Winnebago's SSTOP team found an 11% recidivism rate among OWI offenders who had successfully completed the SSTOP program (Responding to dangerous addictions, 2012, March 12). It was with hopes that Outagamie County could produce similar results within their district.

The mission of SSTOP is to provide treatment that is accessible, efficient, and responsive to offender's rehabilitation needs and community responsibilities (Olig, n.d.; Outagamie County, 2017). SSTOP strives to keep the offender in the community, while also maintaining employment, to encourage them to change their behavior and reduce OWI recidivism rates through intensive supervision, education, and treatment (Olig, n.d.; Outagamie County, 2017; Winnebago County, n.d.). SSTOP is a one-year program that allows the offender to opt for reduced jail time and to participate in probation and treatment that will provide them with the tools they need to avoid future arrests.

Individuals are eligible to participate in SSTOP if they have a 2nd or 3rd OWI offense. In addition, participants must be a resident of, as well as received their present conviction in Outagamie, Winnebago, or Waupaca County (or within the city limits of Appleton, WI). SSTOP is a voluntary program, where individuals must agree to abide by the SSTOP program rules and complete an intake assessment and screening by SSTOP staff. Participants of SSTOP can be terminated from the program at any time for any of the following reasons: new criminal arrests or charges, violent behavior, failure to comply with program rules, or moving to a residence in a SSTOP ineligible county (Outagamie County, 2017).

Once an individual has volunteered to enter the program, they are referred to an initial assessment facility. This assessment then allows for recommendations to be made for educational programming, treatment options, or a combination of the two. Based on the

individual's needs, participants may be referred to programs such as grieving/family/divorce/individual counseling, budgeting classes, anger management groups, domestic abuse groups, education, and/or employment assistance (e.g., resume building or job searching) (Outagamie County, 2017). In addition, most 2nd OWI offenders are court-ordered to attend a victim impact panel. A case manager then monitors the participant's treatment and compliance to SSTOP program rules through monthly (or more frequent) appointments. It is the role of the case manager to advocate for their clients, provide resources to treatment services and community-based organizations, prepare reports for the court when required, and assure compliance to the program rules and assigned programming (Outagamie County, 2017).

Methods

The treatment group for this evaluation was comprised of individuals who were admitted to the SSTOP program in the years 2012 and 2013. Clients were referred to the program by a district attorney, public defender, bar association, treatment provider, judge or self; and were approved by the sentencing Circuit Court Judge. The county supplied the names of these participants, as well as data on Prohibited Alcohol Concentration (PAC) levels, education levels, demographic information, days of jailed served, and days of jail saved due to participating in SSTOP.

The county also provided names and demographic data of all individuals who were convicted of a 2nd or 3rd OWI offense in 2009 and 2010, before the SSTOP program was fully implemented. Data from 2011 was not used because SSTOP was partially implemented during that year and its availability to offenders was not consistent. Therefore, the comparison group was comprised from the 2009 and 2010 data using Propensity Score Matching. Propensity Score Matching is a statistical technique used to find a comparable "match" for every individual in the

treatment group. The observed characteristics for gender, race, age, 2nd or 3rd OWI offense, number of prior misdemeanor charges, and number of prior felony charges were used to create a score (ranging between 0 and 1) that indicated each person's probability of being included in the treatment group. The propensity score was then used to create a matched sample of treatment and comparison participants. In essence, the propensity score is a balancing score of observed covariates, meaning the distribution of the covariates are the same for the treatment and comparison groups. Direct comparisons can then be made between the two groups on specific outcomes central to the research. Of the original 349 individuals who completed SSTOP, an equivalent match was found for 346 (99% of the participants). For the subsequent analysis, only those 346 individuals and their matches were included for a total sample size of 692 individuals.

Sample

The characteristics of the participants in the SSTOP groups for 2012 and 2013, as well as the comparison group (containing 2009 and 2010 data) are presented in Table 1. As shown in the table, the groups were comparable for most of the characteristics examined. A slightly higher number of individuals participated in SSTOP after receiving a second OWI offense (N=204); and the comparison group contained a higher number of OWI-2nd offenses as well (N=212). Most of the participants successfully completed the SSTOP program (N=276), with 44 offenders being revoked and only 3 individuals quitting on their own. At the time of arrest, the most common PAC levels was either between 0.100-0.199 (N=157) or between 0.200-0.299 (N=144). Across the entire sample of SSTOP participants, individuals had, on average, 2.11 prior misdemeanors; which ranged from zero to 22 prior misdemeanors. The comparison group had a slightly higher average of prior misdemeanors (2.27), with a range of zero to 21 priors. Moreover, SSTOP participants on average had 0.19 prior felonies, with a range of zero to five prior felonies.

Table 1: SSTOP Participant Characteristics

	SSTOP Participants (N = 346)	Comparison Group (N = 346)
Offense Characteristics		
2 nd OWI	204	212
3 rd OWI	142	134
Program Characteristics**		
Successful Completion	276	--
Revoked	44	--
Quit on Own	3	--
Gender		
Male	269	265
Female	77	81
Race/Ethnicity		
Black	16	14
White	287	289
Hispanic	20	22
Asian	12	14
Indian	4	6
Other	7	1
Education		
Yes	313	--
No	25	--
PAC Levels**		
Below 0.099	11	--
0.100 – 0.199	157	--
0.200 – 0.299	144	--
Above 0.300	23	--
Continuous Variables		
Age	34.96	35.20
Lock Up (in days)**	0.8613 (range 0-44)	--
Lock Up Saved (in days)**	2.6377(range 0-10)	--
Prior Misdemeanors	2.11 (range 0-22)	2.27 (range 0-21)
Prior Felonies	0.19 (range 0-5)	0.26 (range 0-7)
Recidivism	0.92 (range 0-16)	0.95 (range 0-10)

* Some discrepancies exist between cell totals due to missing data

** Data for these variables were not available for the comparison group

The comparison group again received a marginally higher number of average prior felonies (0.26), with a range of zero to seven priors.

Demographically, the majority in both groups was male and White individuals. Particularly related to the SSTOP treatment group, most participants had a high school education. The mean age for the SSTOP participants was 34.96 years, and the mean age for the comparison group was 35.20 years. A statistical test indicated that the SSTOP and comparison groups did not differ statistically on any of the variables. Therefore, it is unlikely that the outcomes would be differently impacted.

Measures of Recidivism

Recidivism was examined through five measures. UWM student research assistants collected all recidivism data from Wisconsin Circuit Court Access (CCAP). The first measure counted new charges. All charges were included in this measure, despite the outcome. Therefore, charges that were dismissed but read in and those that were dismissed by the prosecutor were included. The second measure counted only cases for which there was a conviction. Cases in which the defendant was found not guilty were not included in this measure. The third measure was for incarceration and only included cases in which the defendant was sentenced to a term of incarceration in either jail or prison. Next, a measure for subsequent OWI convictions was included; no convictions for other offenses were included in this measure. Lastly, the number of days for which a defendant was sentenced to jail were included. Only days for subsequent charges were counted (days spent in jail for the initial OWI case were not included). Because only 12 cases resulted in a prison term (3 in the SSTOP group and 9 in the comparison group), days in prison were not analyzed due to the small sample size.

The follow-up time was set at three years for both groups to allow for an equivalent comparison. Therefore, recidivism for the 2009 comparison group was only collected from their sentencing dates through 2012. For the 2010 group, recidivism was collected up until 2013. For the SSTOP groups, recidivism data was collected through 2015 for the 2012 group, and 2016 for the 2013 group. This prevents error from being introduced into the analysis by having a longer follow-up time for the comparison participants than the SSTOP participants.

Findings

For the analysis, each measure of recidivism was first examined as a dichotomous variable for those who had no cases (zero) and those who had one or more cases (one). The results are presented in Table 2. For all outcomes, a higher percentage of offenders in the SSTOP group fell into the zero category. In other words, fewer SSTOP participants had subsequent charges brought against them, convictions, subsequent incarcerations, and OWI convictions than those in the comparison group. McNemar's test was used to determine whether the differences in the outcomes were statistically significant. As shown in the table, the SSTOP group and the comparison group did not differ significantly in their likelihood of receiving another charge. In other words, the possibility cannot be eliminated that the differences in this outcome for the SSTOP and comparison group were due to chance and were not meaningful differences. The SSTOP group was significantly less likely to have a subsequent conviction, be incarcerated and receive another OWI conviction than the comparison group. This means it is unlikely that these results are due to chance. Instead, these differences can be attributed to the SSTOP program.

Table 2: Dichotomous Measures of Recidivism

	Comparison	SSTOP	Chi-Square
New Charges			
None	181 (52%)	205 (59%)	3.06
One or More	165 (48%)	141 (41%)	
Convictions			
None	204 (59%)	242 (70%)	8.89**
One or More	142 (41%)	104 (30%)	
Incarceration			
None	262 (76%)	292 (84%)	7.38**
One or More	84 (24%)	54 (16%)	
OWI Conviction			
None	293 (85%)	312 (90%)	4.32*
One or More	53 (15%)	34 (10%)	

The second set of analyses examined the number of new charges, number of new convictions, times incarcerated, number of subsequent OWIs, and total days in jail for subsequent charges for each group. The results are presented in Table 3. Examination of the means show that the means for the SSTOP group were lower than the means of the comparison group. T-tests were utilized to determine if these differences were statistically significant.

Table 3: Total Counts of Recidivism

	Comparison	SSTOP	T-test
Number of New Charges			
Mean	.939	.867	.591
Standard Deviation	1.4	1.6	
Number of Convictions			
Mean	.749	.564	2.08*
Standard Deviation	1.2	1.1	
Times Incarceration			
Mean	.353	.220	2.51*
Standard Deviation	.75	.61	
Number of OWI Conviction			
Mean	.186	.131	1.62
Standard Deviation	.48	.39	
Days in Jail			
Mean	30.49	17.56	2.60*
Standard Deviation	78.0	57.56	

As shown in the table, the t-statistic indicates that the SSTOP group and the comparison group did not differ significantly in the number of new charges they received nor in the number of subsequent OWI convictions. It cannot be ruled out, therefore, that the possibility that the difference in the SSTOP and comparison group means is due to chance. The groups did, however, differ significantly in the number of convictions, number of times incarcerated, and number of days in jail, with the SSTOP group having significantly fewer convictions, times incarcerated, and being sentenced to fewer days in jail than the comparison group. These differences can be attributed to the SSTOP program.

The following graphs provide a visual representation of the totals for the significant recidivism measures. Graph 1 presents the total number of subsequent convictions for the SSTOP and comparison group participants. The graph indicates that the SSTOP group participants had almost 36% fewer convictions than the comparison group participants.

Graph 1: Total Number of New Convictions



Total number of subsequent convictions for the SSTOP and comparison groups is presented in Graph 2. Examination of the graph shows that the SSTOP group participants had 22% fewer new incarcerations than the comparison group participants.

Graph 2: Total Number of New Incarcerations



The total number of days spent in jail for the two groups is presented in Graph 3. Only days spent in jail for convictions after the initial charge are included; days spent in jail for the initial 2nd or 3rd OWI conviction are not included. Examination of these numbers indicate that the SSTOP group spent 27% fewer days in jail than the comparison group.

Graph 3: Total Number of Days Spent in Jail

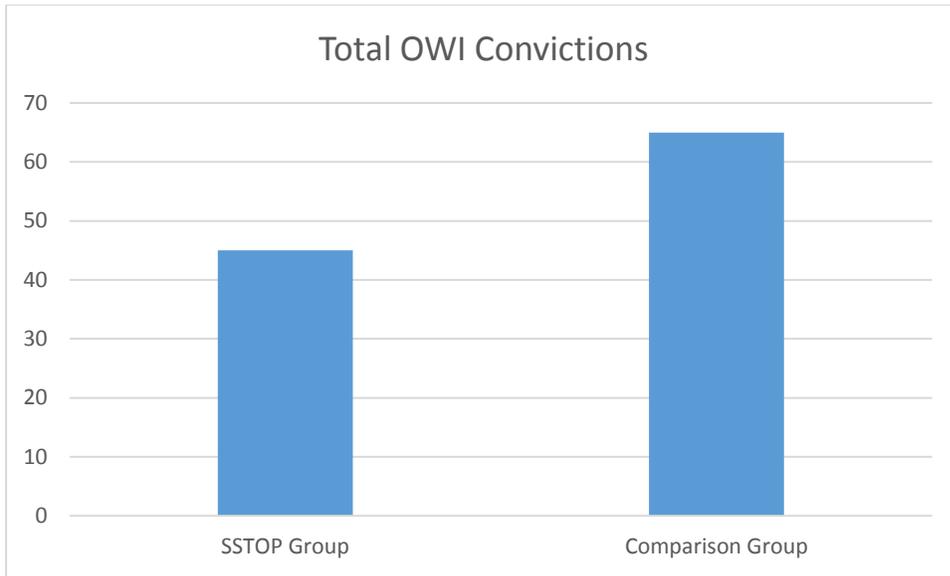


The finding of significance for the dichotomous measure of OWI (but not the number of OWIs) is likely due to the small number of individuals receiving more than one additional subsequent OWI. The frequency numbers for OWIs delineated by group is presented in Table 4 and in the Graph 4.

Table 4: OWI Frequency Differences

Group	One New OWI	Two New OWIs	Three New OWIs	Total New OWIs
SSTOP (N=346)	33	6	0	45
Comparison (N=346)	42	10	1	65

Graph 4: Total Subsequent OWIs by Group



The comparison group had a total of 65 additional OWIs, with 42 offenders receiving one additional OWI, 10 receiving two additional OWIs and one offender receiving three additional OWIs. In the SSTOP group, 33 individuals received another OWI, six offenders received two subsequent OWIs and no offenders received three or more. The total OWIs for the SSTOP group was 45. Therefore, after three years, the SSTOP group had 20 fewer OWIs than the comparison group; **a 31% reduction in total OWIs.**

Conclusions

The data indicate that SSTOP is effective in reducing recidivism among participants. SSTOP participants had significantly fewer convictions, subsequent sentences to incarceration, were sentenced to fewer days incarcerated in jail for subsequent offenses, and were less likely to receive another OWI conviction. The findings further indicate that SSTOP resulted in a 31% reduction in OWI offenses.

Participating in SSTOP also resulted in offenders serving an average of 1.6 fewer days in jail for 2nd offense OWI charge offenders and 4.1 days for 3rd offense OWI offenders. The

program has the potential, therefore, to save the county money by reducing recidivism as well as reducing incarceration time for the initial charge.

Recommendations

Based on the data, we recommend the following:

1. Outagamie County should continue to utilize the SSTOP program to reduce recidivism among 2nd and 3rd OWI offenders.
2. To better determine the impact of SSTOP on recidivism, follow-up time should be extended beyond three years. At the time of data collection, three years was the longest period possible. Adding additional years will provide a better assessment of SSTOP's impact on recidivism long-term.
3. The county should continue their effort to evaluate programing aimed at reducing recidivism. We recommend building on the assessment of SSTOP as a foundation for assessments of other efforts undertaken and underway.

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