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Participating NATSAP Programs Produce Results for Youth

Anita R. Tucker, Ph.D, LICSW

University of New Hampshire

Michael A. Gass, Ph.D., LMFT

University of New Hampshire

Ryan Zelov

University of New Hampshire

Correspondence should be addressed to Dr. Anita Tucker, Department of Social Work, University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH 030824. E-mail: anita.tucker@unh.edu.

Note: Consumers and other individuals examining this report are advised to limit their interpretation and generalization of these results only to the NATSAP programs participating in this study.

In its fourth year of active data collection, the NATSAP Practice Research Network (PRN) is showing promising outcomes for participating NATSAP programs. In the current issue of the *Journal of Therapeutic Schools and Programs*, researchers from the University of New Hampshire specifically looked at the positive changes reported by youth as well as their parents from admission to the treatment program to discharge from NATSAP programs. These changes not only occurred following treatment, but also maintained their levels of positive change six months following their discharge from treatment. Participating NATSAP programs not only produced positive statistically significant differences in treatment, but also clinically significant ones. These changes can be seen in Figure 1:

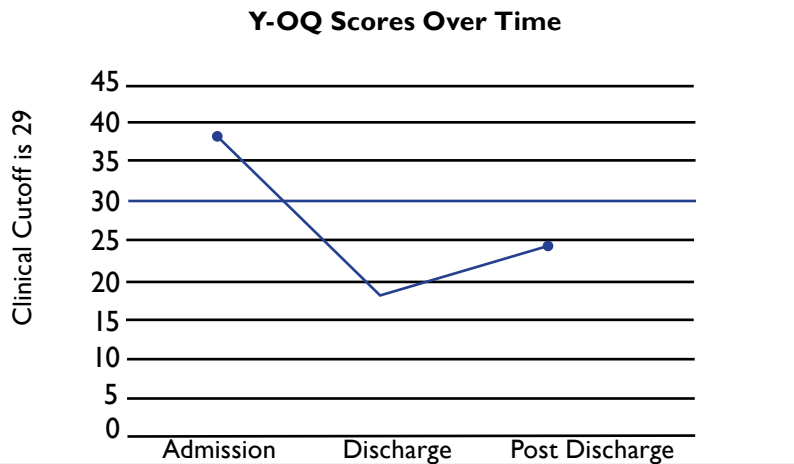


Figure 1 - Clinically and statistically positive changes in the mental health for clients in participating NATSAP programs in the research study.

When adolescent clients were further separated into clinical presenting issues such as substance abuse, depression or mood disorders, or attention deficit issues, positive client change was seen for these presenting problems as illustrated in Figure 2.

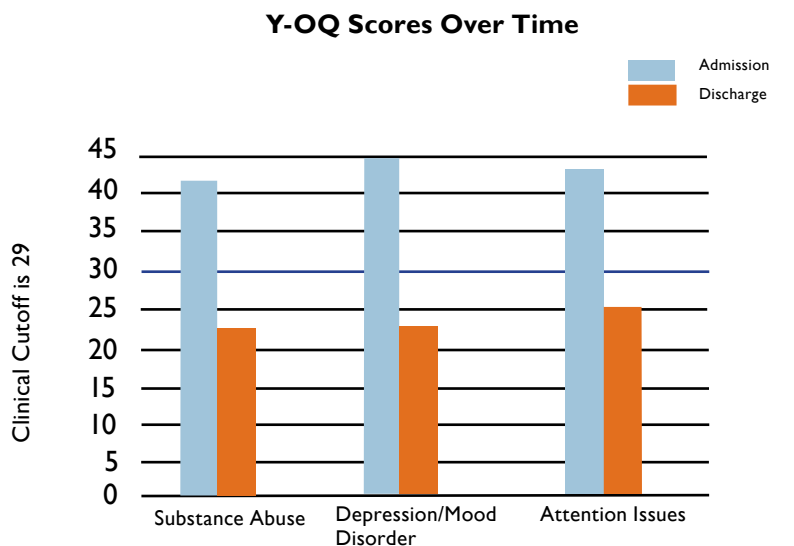


Figure 2 - Clinically and statistically positive changes in the areas of substance abuse, depression/ mood disorders, and attention issues for clients in participating NATSAP programs in the research study.

PRODUCE RESULTS FOR YOUTH

As seen in Figure 3, note that these positive changes were reported in critical areas of mental health, which included positive changes in the areas of:

- Intrapersonal distress issues such as anxiety, depression, fearfulness, hopelessness, and thoughts of self harm
- Somatic/physical issues such as headaches, dizziness, stomachaches, nausea, and pain or weakness in joints
- Interpersonal relations issues such as attitude toward others, communication, interaction with family and friends, cooperativeness, aggressiveness, arguing, and defiance
- Critical items such as paranoia, obsessive/compulsive behaviors, hallucinations, delusions, suicide, mania, and eating disorders
- Social problems issues such as truancy, sexual problems, running away, vandalism, and substance use/abuse
- Behavioral dysfunction such as ADHD

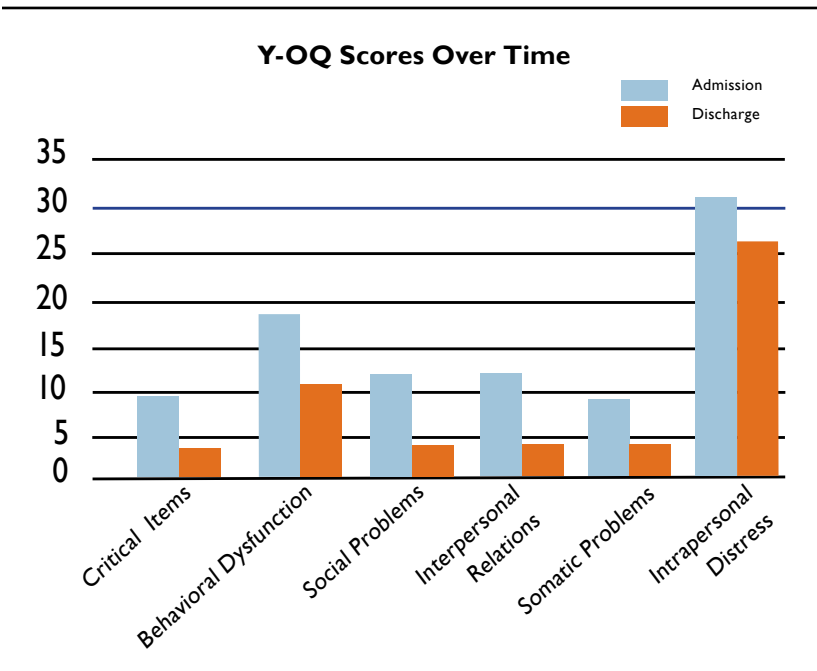


Figure 3 - Clinically and statistically positive changes in the areas of interpersonal distress, somatic issues, interpersonal relationships, critical items, social problems, and behavioral dysfunction for clients in participating NATSAP programs in the research study.

All of these trends were observed in both participating outdoor behavioral healthcare programs and residential treatment centers. Both the adolescents in treatment as well as their parents reported these significant changes.

The majority of the study's participants were male (68%) with 32% being female. The average age of the participants was 16 years old with 94% of the clients between the ages of 13 and 18 years of age. Problematic issues facing the youth in the study included alcohol and substance issues (57.4%), depression (32.7%), Oppositional Defiant Disorder/Conduct Disorder (24.7%), and attention issues including Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder or Attention Deficit Disorder (17.3%). Note that an overwhelming majority of clients in the study were facing interacting and complex problems, with almost 90% of the participants possessing two or more of these difficult issues.

The uses of PRNs like the NATSAP PRN are critical for examining medical, clinical, mental health, and educational issues. PRNs have been established in different fields, but especially in areas of mental health as a response to the call by consumers, government agencies, and insurance companies to increase cost efficiency and the quality of care for clients. Increased support of the research initiative supported by NATSAP promises to deliver even greater and more informative findings in the future.

For the complete findings of this study, see Tucker, Zelov, & Young. (2011). Four years along: Emerging traits of programs in the NATSAP Practice Research Network (PRN). *Journal of Therapeutic Schools and Programs*, 5(1), 10-28.

For further information please contact the NATSAP main office at:

NATSAP

Email: info@natsap.org

5272 River Road

Suite 600

Bethesda, MD 20816

Phone: (301) 986-8770

Fax: (301) 986-8772