

111487



STATE OF NEW YORK  
 DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES  
 THE STATE OFFICE BUILDING CAMPUS  
 ALBANY, N.Y. 12226

CR-Sent  
 111487 8-29-88

THOMAS A. COUGHLIN III  
 COMMISSIONER

WARD DE WITT  
 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER

DIVISION OF PROGRAM PLANNING, RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

Frank Tracy, Director

FOLLOW-UP STUDY OF A SAMPLE OF PARTICIPANTS  
 IN THE WOODBOURNE ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE PROGRAM

At the request of the Department's Deputy Commissioner for Program Services, this survey examines the return rate of a sample of offenders who participated in this program.

The highlights of this report are presented in the following Executive Summary and illustrative graphics.

NCJRS

MAY 26 1988

September 1987

ACQUISITIONS

Prepared By:

Donald G. Macdonald

111487

and

Kathy Canestrini

U.S. Department of Justice  
 National Institute of Justice

This document has been reproduced exactly as received from the person or organization originating it. Points of view or opinions stated in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the National Institute of Justice.

Permission to reproduce this copyrighted material has been granted by  
New York State Department of  
Correctional Services

to the National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS).

Further reproduction outside of the NCJRS system requires permission of the copyright owner

ANALYSIS OF RETURN RATE OF PARTICIPANTS IN  
WOODBOURNE ASAT PROGRAM

HIGHLIGHTS

1. Purpose of Research.

At the request of the Deputy Commissioner for Program Services, this research project was designed to generate statistical data pertinent to the basic question, "Does satisfactory participation in the Woodbourne ASAT Program reduce the participant's likelihood of return to the Department's custody following release?"

2. Research Design.

This survey sampled all 529 participants leaving the program between 1983 and 1985. Of this total, 419 were classified satisfactory program participants while 110 were categorized as unsatisfactory program participants (who dropped out or were terminated by the program).

3. Follow-Up Procedure.

The Department's computerized data file was utilized to determine the number of these program participants who had been released. A cut-off release date of December 31, 1985, was selected to insure a minimum follow-up period of 12 months as of December 31, 1986. As of the end of 1985, 339 satisfactory program participants and 82 unsatisfactory program participants had been released.

4. Comparison of Return Rates of Satisfactory and Unsatisfactory Program Participants.

The return rate of the 339 satisfactory program participants (23.3%) was less than the return rate of the 82 unsatisfactory program participants (28.0%).

This finding is notable since the satisfactory program participants as a group were in the community for longer periods than the unsatisfactory program participants.

5. Comparison of Return Rate of Satisfactory Program Participants and Overall Return Rate of Department Releases.

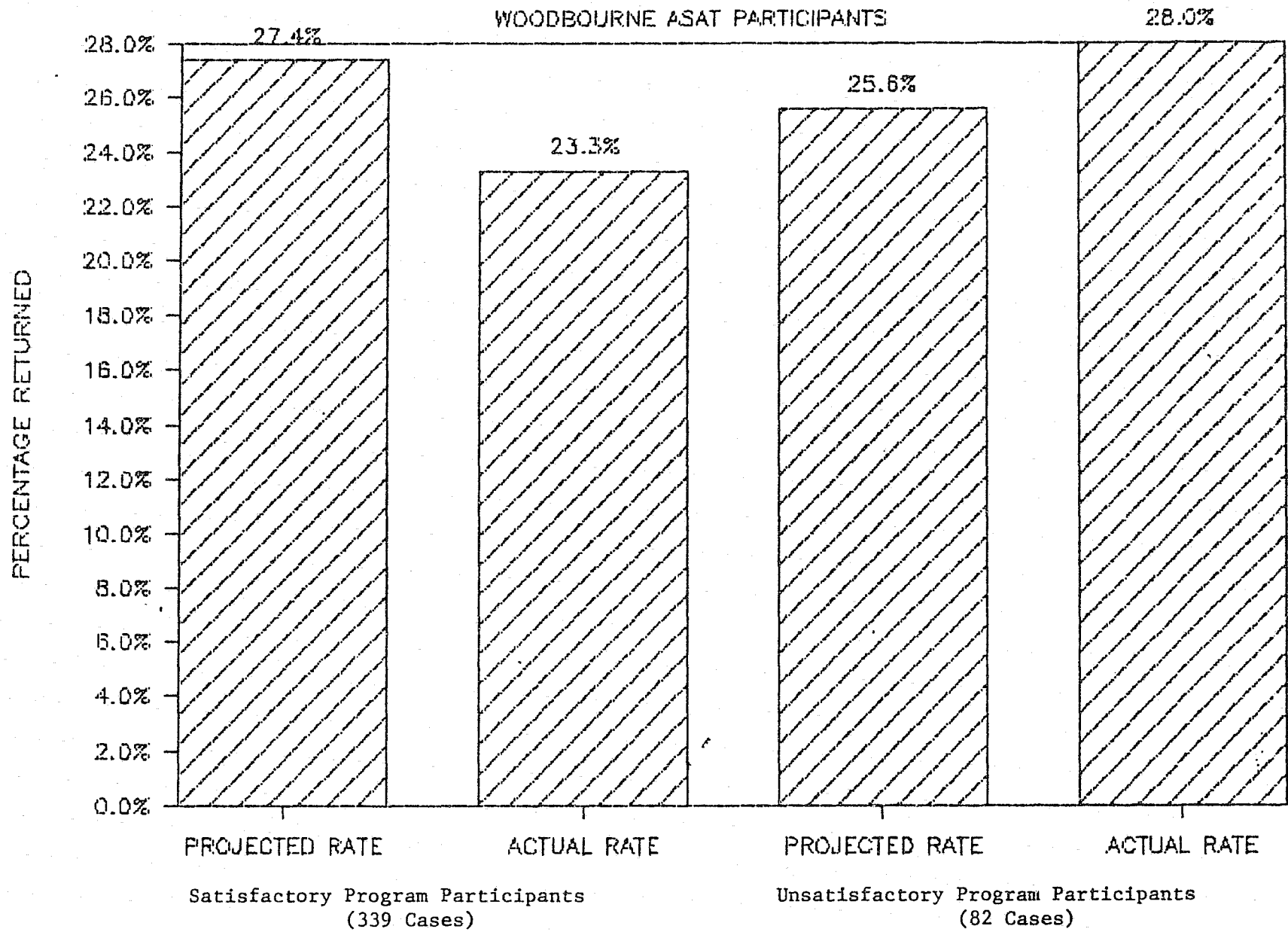
Using the average return rate of all Department releases, projected return rates were computed for these program participants based on the number of months since their release. The actual return rate (23.3%) of the satisfactory program participants was thus notably less than the projected rate (27.4%) based on the Department's overall return rate. On the other hand, the actual return rate of the unsatisfactory program participants (28.0%) was higher than their projected rate (25.6%).

6. Conclusion.

The findings of this report together with prior research on this program consistently suggest that satisfactory participation in the Woodbourne ASAT Program is positively related to successful post-release adjustment as measured by return to the Department.

# COMPARISON OF RETURN RATES

WOODBOURNE ASAT PARTICIPANTS



ANALYSIS OF RETURN RATE OF PARTICIPANTS IN  
WOODBOURNE ASAT PROGRAM

The present report examines the return rate of a sample of participants in the Woodbourne Alcohol and Substance Abuse Treatment (A.S.A.T.) Program.\*

Program Description.

The Woodbourne Program, which was initially established in 1976, presently serves approximately 600 participants on an annual basis.

This program has developed in a series of stages since 1976 through the continuing support of the facility's Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent for Program Services. The program is currently staffed by four staff members: the Program Director (i.e., Correction Counselor) and three ASAT Program Assistants. As the program developed, the Mission Society of New York City has provided technical assistance to the staff in the organization and operation of the program. In recent years, the Woodbourne Program has served as a model for other Department programs in this area.

The program provides both counseling and education services to the involved inmates with alcohol abuse problems.

Program participants attend group counseling sessions with the ASAT program assistants. The number of sessions attended on a weekly basis depends on the inmate's schedule and motivation. If the inmate fails to attend at least one session per week, he is warned that continued inadequate attendance will result in dismissal from the program. Program participants can advance to the point of coordinating sessions under the direction of the ASAT program assistants.

---

\* For purposes of brevity, this program is subsequently referred to as the Woodbourne ASAT Program.

As the program progressed, a more formalized educational component was developed to complement the counseling program. An extensive set of tapes presenting information on alcohol abuse is available for the inmates. After listening to each tape, the inmate is given a written series of questions on the tape to assess his understanding of the material presented. The inmate's work is then reviewed by a staff person, who provides written comments on the inmate's answers and discusses the material with the inmate. Inmate tutors are also available to assist inmates who have difficulty in understanding the material or in writing the answers to the questions.

#### Previous Research.

This report is the third in a continuing series of reports on the Woodbourne ASAT Program.

In March 1983, a preliminary research report was issued concerning the return of a sample of program participants, who left the program in 1981.<sup>1/</sup> This initial survey was able to track released program participants for only limited follow-up periods.

For this reason, a second study was conducted in mid-1984 when this sample could be followed for a longer time period.<sup>2/</sup> This study tracked over 200 program participants (146 satisfactory program participants and 62 unsatisfactory participants). The results of this study were very encouraging. The satisfactory program participants were found to return at a lower rate than the unsatisfactory participants.

#### Present Expansion of Follow-Up Research.

The present study was initiated at the request of the Deputy Commissioner for Program Services to update and expand this previous research.

The current research was designed to track a second and significantly larger sample of program participants.

1/ Macdonald, Bala, Minucci, & O'Keefe, Follow-Up Study of Sample of Woodbourne Alcohol Program Participants. NYS DOCS Publication, 1983.

2/ Macdonald and Bala, Analysis of Return Rate of Participants in Woodbourne Alcohol Program. NYS DOCS Publication, 1984.

Sample Selection.

Similar to the earlier report, which tracked inmates leaving the program in 1981, this survey tracks a sample of program participants composed of all 529 individuals who left the Woodbourne ASAT Program from 1983 through 1985 for any reason.

Comparable Groups of Satisfactory and Unsatisfactory Program Participants

The sample was divided into two main groups.

One group consists of the satisfactory program participants who were paroled from the program or transferred to other facilities while participating in the program in a satisfactory fashion.

The second group is composed of the unsatisfactory program participants who were administratively expelled from the program due to poor participation or dropped out.

The following table indicates the reasons why these program participants left the program from 1983 through 1985.

Reason for Leaving Program

Satisfactory Program Participants	419
Unsatisfactory Program Participants Participants (Dropouts and terminated by Staff)	<u>110</u>
TOTAL	529

Follow-up Procedure.

To permit an adequate follow-up period of at least 12 months, a cut-off of December 31, 1985, was set for release from custody.

As such, program participants who were not released until 1986 or 1987 were excluded from this follow-up.



Release Dates of Program Participants.

The table below indicates how many of the total program participants were released by the cut-off date of December 31, 1985.

<u>Year of Release</u>	<u>Satisfactory Program Participants</u>	<u>Unsatisfactory Program Participation</u>	<u>Total</u>
1983	20	1	21
1984	148	32	180
1985	<u>171</u>	<u>49</u>	<u>220</u>
Total	339	82	421

Of the total 529 program participants, 421 had been released between 1983 and 1985. These 421 individuals were then tracked through December 31, 1986, to determine their return rates.

Comparison to Overall Return Rate of Department Releases.

For general comparison purposes, the average return rate of Department releases is used in Department recidivism studies. The actual return rates of program participants in various programs are compared to this overall return rate.

The average return rate of Department releases can be utilized to compute a projected return rate among the satisfactory and unsatisfactory program participant groups.

The approach permits a comparison of the return rate of the satisfactory and unsatisfactory participant groups and the Department's overall return rate.

Development of Projected Return Rate for Comparison Purposes.

The Bureau of Records and Statistical Analysis tracks all Department releases for a five year period to generate return rate statistics. Using the overall return rate of all Department releases in 1980, a projected return rate can be developed for the satisfactory program participants based on the number of months since their release.

For example, the program participants released in 1983 would have been in the community between 37 and 48 months as of December 31, 1986, depending on their respective release dates. Based on the Department's average return rate, it may be projected that 37.3% of those individuals released in 1983 would be returned to Department custody for a parole violation or with a new sentence by December 31, 1986.

<u>Release Year</u>	<u>Months Since Release (as of 12/31/86)</u>	<u>Projected Percent Returned</u>
1983	37 - 48 months	37.3%
1984	25 - 36 months	31.9%
1985	13 - 24 months	22.8%

These projected return rates can then be applied to the number of program participants released in each of these years to generate the number of expected returns.

<u>Release Year</u>	<u>Number Released in Year</u>	<u>Projected Return Rate</u>	<u>Projected Number Returned by 12/31/86</u>
---------------------	--------------------------------	------------------------------	--

Satisfactory Program Participants

1983	20	X	37.3%	=	7
1984	148	X	31.9%	=	47
1985	<u>171</u>	X	<u>22.8%</u>	=	<u>39</u>
Total	339	X	27.4%	=	93

Unsatisfactory Program Participants

1983	1	X	37.3%	=	0
1984	32	X	31.9%	=	10
1985	<u>49</u>	X	<u>22.8%</u>	=	<u>11</u>
Total	82	X	25.6%	=	21

Overall, it can be projected that 93 (27.4%) of the 339 satisfactory program participants would have been returned by December 1986.

Similarly, it can be projected that 21 (25.6%) of the 82 unsatisfactory program participants would have been returned by that date.

The slightly different percentages of expected returns for the satisfactory and unsatisfactory program participants (27.4% and 25.6%, respectively) are due to variations in the release dates of the samples of program participants. As a group, the satisfactory program participants had been released earlier than the unsatisfactory participants. As such, it is projected that a slightly higher percentage of the satisfactory participants would be returned by December 1986.

Comparison of Actual and Projected Return Rates.

The following table compares the actual and projected return rates of the two groups of program participants.

As illustrated by this table, the actual return rate of the satisfactory program participants (23.3%) was lower than the return rate of the unsatisfactory program participants (28.0%).

	<u>Projected</u> <u>Return Rate</u>		<u>Actual</u> <u>Return Rate</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Satisfactory Program Participants	93	27.4%	79	23.3%
Unsatisfactory Program Participants	21	25.6%	23	28.0%

It is noteworthy that the return rate of the satisfactory program participants (23.0%) was lower than their projected rate based on the Department's overall release population (27.4%). On the other hand, the return rate of unsatisfactory program participants (28.0%) was higher than the Department's overall return rate (25.6%).

This finding that the unsatisfactory program participants had a higher return rate than the Department's overall return rate is consistent with the widely accepted position that alcoholic offenders have a higher than average recidivism rate.

The Department has occasionally been asked what percentage of returned program participants in the prior studies were returned with new sentences or for parole violations. Of the satisfactory program participants, 45 were returned for parole violations and 34 were returned with new sentences. Of the unsatisfactory program participants, 14 were returned for parole violations and 9 with new sentences.

### Discussion

In brief terms, the two major findings of this survey may be summarized in the following fashion:

1. The sample of satisfactory participants had a notably lower return rate than their projected rate based on the Department's overall release population.
2. This sample of satisfactory participants also returned to the Department's custody at a lower rate than the comparison group of unsatisfactory program participants. This finding is especially noteworthy since the satisfactory program participants as a group had been in the community for longer periods than the unsatisfactory program participants.

### Self-Selection Bias v. Program Impact

In reviewing these findings, it might be argued that there may be a self-selection bias. It might be contended that inmates who volunteer for ASAT are more motivated and should be expected to have lower return rates than the Department's overall release population.

However, it should also be noted that this possible self-selection bias would not apply to the comparison of satisfactory and unsatisfactory program participants. All of these cases volunteered for the ASAT Program. As such, these samples may be more appropriately compared with respect to the impact of the program. The principal difference between these two groups is the nature of their program participation.

### Conclusion

In closing, the reader is cautioned against any definitive conclusions concerning the Department's ASAT program based on this sample study. However, the findings of this research (which is based on follow-up data for a sizable sample of over 400 cases) together with the prior research (based on a separate sample of another 200 cases) consistently support the position that satisfactory participation in the Woodbourne ASAT Program is positively related to post-release adjustment.