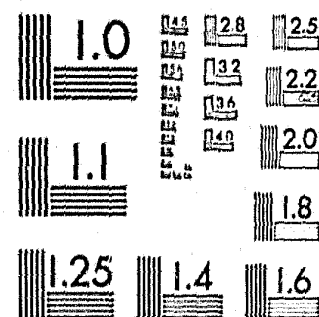


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ANALYSIS OF INEBRIATE RECEPTION CENTER  
UTILIZATION IN JUNE, 1982, IN SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

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ANALYSIS OF INEBRIATE RECEPTION CENTER  
UTILIZATION IN JUNE, 1982, IN SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

Background and Purpose

The Inebriate Reception Center (IRC) in San Diego County is a contractor-operated (Volunteers of America) alcoholism intervention service which serves as a low cost, high volume introduction to sobriety and jail diversion program, enabling law enforcement officers to divert to the IRC persons picked up on public intoxication charges in lieu of taking those persons to jail. This effort not only facilitates inebriates' introduction to the availability of recovery opportunities, but also represents a cost-savings to the criminal justice system in police time saved and jail and court costs avoided.

Each month approximately 2,000 law enforcement diversions to the IRC occur. Anecdotal reports from law enforcement officers have suggested that a very small number of publicly intoxicated persons are responsible for most of the total number of diversions. Because the County Alcohol Program is concerned about this matter a study of all IRC diversion records for June, 1982, was conducted to determine: (1) the total number of diversions occurring, (2) the total number of individuals (unduplicated count) being diverted, (3) the number of times each person was diverted. The purpose of this effort was to define and describe client utilization patterns at the IRC.

Methodology

All IRC diversion records were acquired and all client names, dates of diversion, and other identifying information was transferred from law-enforcement drop-off logs to small cards. One card was completed for each diversion, thus if a person were diverted four times in a one month period the file would contain four cards on the same individual. A total

of 2,049 diversions occurred during the month studied, resulting in 2,049 cards being prepared. The cards were then alphabetized and categorized by the number of times each person was diverted.

Results

The results of the study are shown in Table I.

TABLE I  
PATTERNS OF DIVERSION TO THE IRC  
IN SAN DIEGO, JUNE, 1982

# OF DIVERSIONS	# OF PEOPLE	% OF PEOPLE	# OF DIVERSION INCIDENTS	% OF DIVERSION INCIDENTS
1	1,434	88	1,434	70
2	111	7	222	11
3	33	2	99	5
4	28	2	96	5
5	10	1	50	3
6	11	1	66	3
7	3	--	21	1
8	4	--	32	2
9	2	--	18	1
10	0	--	0	--
11	1	--	11	--
TOTALS	1,637	100	2,049	100

Note: percentage totals may exceed 100 due to rounding

The data indicate that 2,049 diversions occurred involving a total of 1,637 individuals. The vast majority of all diversions were diverted only once (88%) or twice (7%) during the month studied. Approximately 5% of all persons utilizing the IRC accounted for a disproportionate number of diversions, with 92 high-risk individuals requiring 393 diversions (mean = 4.2 diversions per high-risk person).

Implications for Intervention

The findings of this study are consistent with findings of a similar study conducted by the County Alcohol Program in August, 1980 (see Appendix "A"). The data indicate that almost all (95%) persons diverted to the IRC during a month are diverted only once (88%) or twice (7%) during that period and cannot be regarded as frequent users of the IRC.

Anecdotal reports suggest that many IRC users experience considerable benefit from their IRC diversion, with some members of the group proceeding from the IRC into the structured detoxification and residential treatment program located adjacent to the IRC. The large group of single-incident users of the IRC demonstrates the efficacy of operating a low-cost diversion program offering access to the intervention/recovery system.

Only 5% of IRC users are frequent users. The research literature and local experience suggest that effective intervention with this group of persons is problematic---for their lives are touched not only by alcoholism but also by chronic unemployment, limited education, poor nutrition, social disenfranchisement, and serious medical problems. For these individuals, the IRC provides a brief respite from drinking, an awareness that recovery from alcoholism is achievable, and a low-cost, humane method of diversion from the jail.

APPENDIX "A"

TABLE II

COMPARISON OF PATTERNS OF DIVERSION  
TO THE IRC IN AUGUST, 1980, AND JUNE, 1982

# OF DIVERSIONS	# OF PEOPLE		% OF PEOPLE		# OF DIVERSION INCIDENTS		% OF DIVERSION INCIDENTS	
	1980	/1982	1980	/1982	1980	/ 1982	1980/	1982
1	1,637	1,434	94	88	1,637	1,434	80	70
2	46	111	3	7	92	222	4	11
3	20	33	1	2	60	99	3	5
4	18	28	1	2	72	96	4	5
5	12	10	1	1	60	50	3	3
6	6	11	--	1	36	66	2	3
7	1	3	--	--	7	21	--	1
8	3	4	--	--	24	32	1	2
9	7	2	--	--	63	18	3	1
10	0	0	--	--	0	0	--	--
11 +	0	1	--	--	0	11	--	--
TOTALS	1,750	1,637	100	100	2,051	2,049	100	100

Note: percentage totals may exceed 100 due to rounding

**END**