

Society for the Exploration of Psychotherapy Integration (SEPI) Annual Conference

Lisbon 6-9 June 2019



Building Alliance between Science & Justice:

The Viability of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)
to move young addicts accused for personal use drug
possession from court trial to treatment

Presented by E. Kazamia, N. Andreou and D. Glynou-Constantinides



Purpose of Study

- ◆ The purpose of this study was to examine the alliance built recently in Cyprus between science and law.
- ◆ This alliance focused on the **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** between Apofasizo (a drug rehabilitation centre located in Nicosia, Cyprus) and the Cyprus Drug Law Enforcement Unit (D.L.E.U.)
- ◆ This alliance between the two stakeholders allowed for the provision of psychotherapy as a contingency plan instead of criminal prosecution for youths who were arrested having drugs in their possession for personal use and/or used illegal drugs



Aim of Study

- ◆ The study aimed to examine whether this MoU enables a positive therapeutic outcome in the treatment of addictions.
- ◆ Specifically, the therapy outcome which was based on the integrative approach of 81 young adults, who were referred by the Cyprus Drug Law Enforcement Unit to the Apofasizo rehabilitation centre was investigated.
- ◆ Research material was drawn from the individual clients' therapy records after receiving their informed consent.

Protocol of MoU

- ◆ The cooperation protocol is directed towards
 - Adults and young people (aged 14-24)
 - Residents of the Republic of Cyprus
 - Who have been convicted or sentenced in criminal proceedings as a consequence of the use and/or possession of illicit substances of dependence
- ◆ The aim of the protocol is for early intervention and treatment by the public rehab centres and non-state rehab centres which are approved by the Cyprus National Addictions Authority.



Criteria for Inclusion within the Protocol of MoU

- The individual is arrested or being charged with a criminal case relating to the use or possession of drugs for the **first time**.
- The **amount** of drugs seized is such that it is **intended solely for own use**.
- They are **criminally responsible**.
- Their **age** is up to 24 years old.
- At time of arrest **no offense** was committed.
- They must **attend and complete an accredited drug treatment program**.

Provision for Individuals who do not meet the Inclusion Criteria according to the Protocol of MoU

- ◆ Provision is made for individuals who do not meet the inclusion criteria of the MoU Protocol.
- ◆ The full treatment program is available to these individuals.
- ◆ However, unlike those that meet the inclusion criteria and fulfil the treatment program, in this case, for these individuals who fall outside of the inclusion criteria, **the legal charges of drug possession will still stand even though they complete the treatment program.**



Apofasizo Counselling Centre: Drug rehab centre

- ◆ Cyprus Institute for Psychotherapy (NGO), runs Apofasizo Counseling Center
- ◆ The program was established as from **2012** as an **out-patient** program
- ◆ Applicants to Apofasizo must be **over 18 years old**.
- ◆ It provides **treatment** for experimental and occasional drug and alcohol users, as well as those that are addicted to gambling.
- ◆ There is a **multi-disciplinary team** in attendance consisting of clinical psychologists, counsellors and psychotherapists.



Apofasizo Counselling Centre: Philosophy and Action Plan

- ◆ Individual, family and group sessions are provided.
- ◆ Treatment is tailored according to the individual needs and progresses in stages (intake, evaluation, commitment, change, after-care).
- ◆ **Experience - based therapy:** In 2016, certain procedures were employed on order to support a more experience - based therapy. Four questionnaires were chosen for testing and retesting the participants (first administration during intake session, second during commitment, third during after-care).



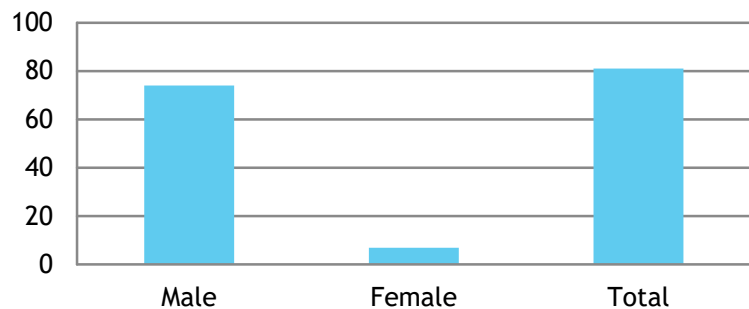
Research Methodology

- ◆ **Type of Research:** Retrospective Cohort Study
- ◆ **Evaluation Tools Used:**
 - Multi-drug One Step Screen Test 10-Panel (Urine drug test - Innovacon)
 - Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale (DASS-21) by Lovibond & Lovibond (1995)
 - Scale of Disturbance Anxiety Disorder by Dr K. Platrites (2015)
 - Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale by M. Rosenberg (1965)
 - Attitudes towards Drug Addiction by Dr K. Platrites (2014)

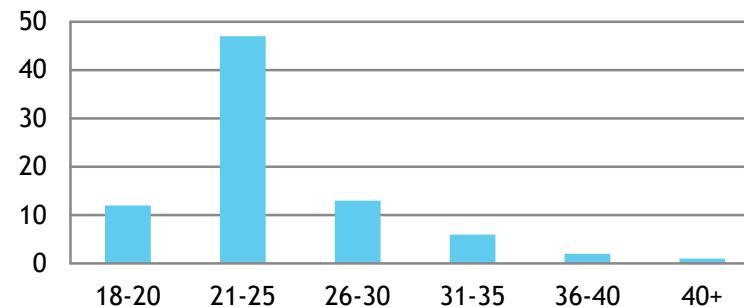


Participants - Gender, Age, Family status

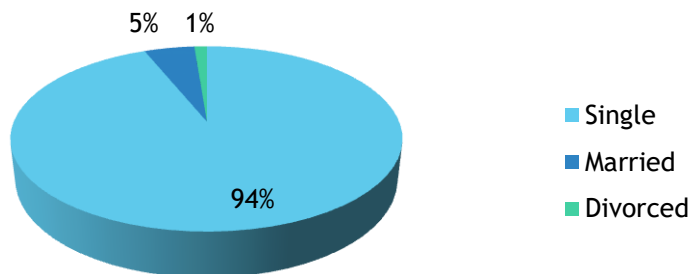
GENDER OF PARTICIPANTS



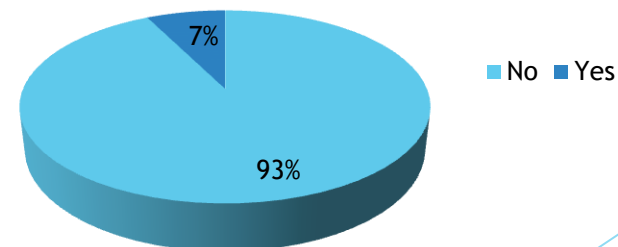
AGE OF PARTICIPANTS



PERCENTAGE OF THE PARTICIPANTS FAMILY STATUS

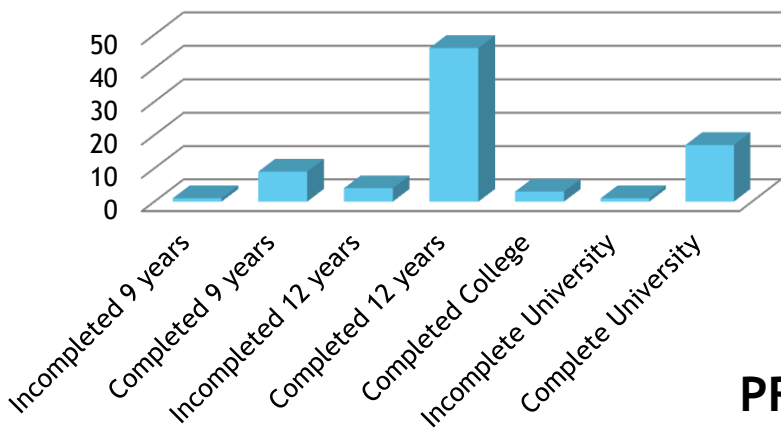


PERCENTAGE OF PARENTS

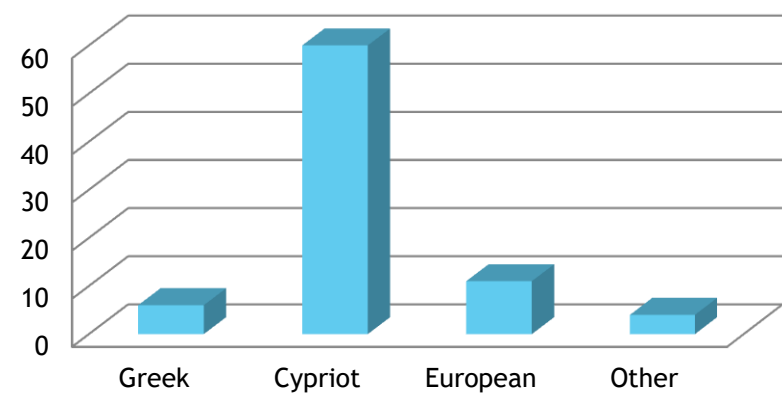


Participants - Nationality, Education, Protocol with MoU

EDUCATION

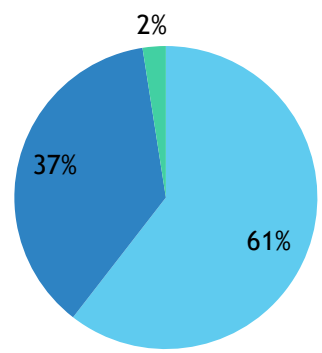


NATIONALITY



PROTOCOL WITH MOU

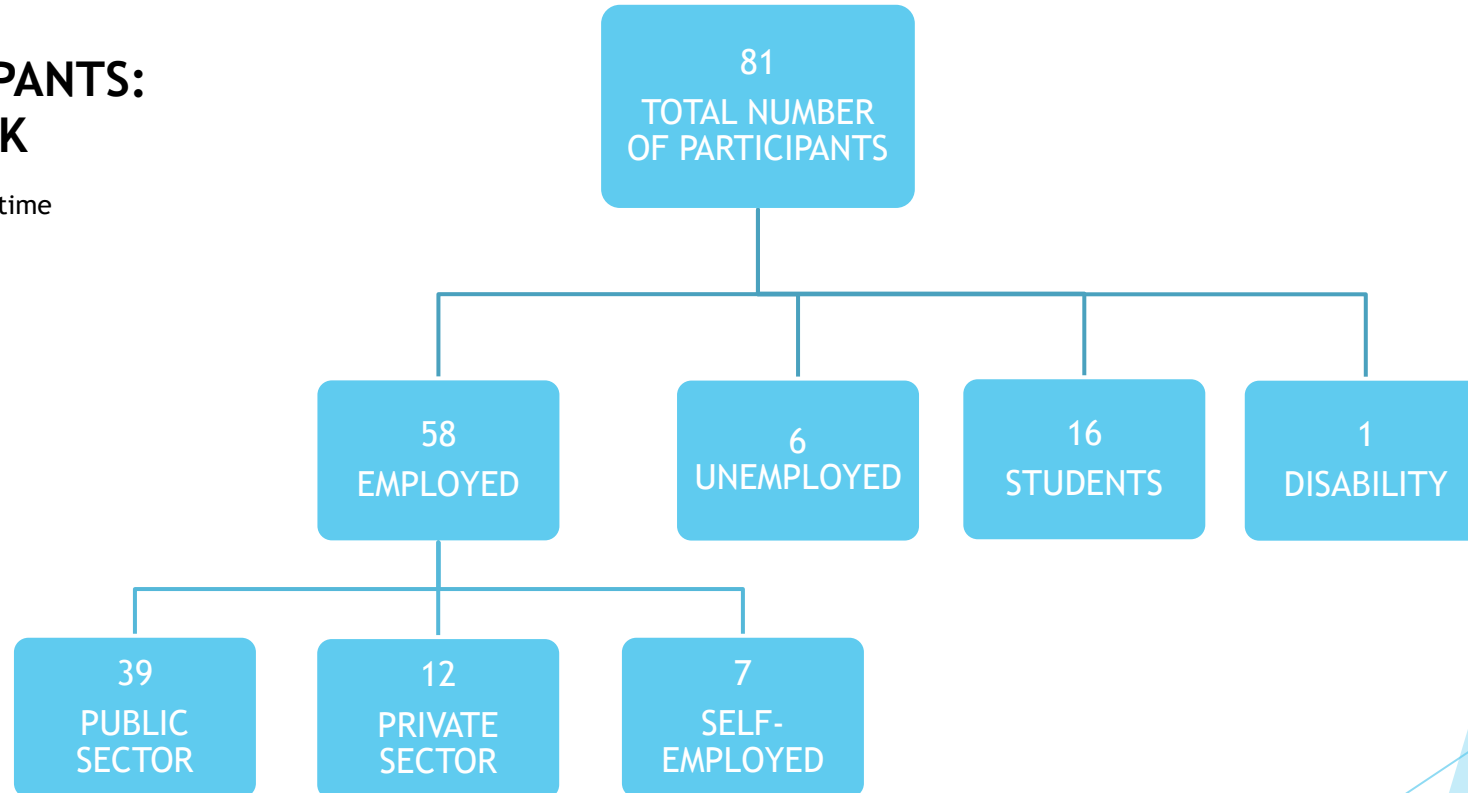
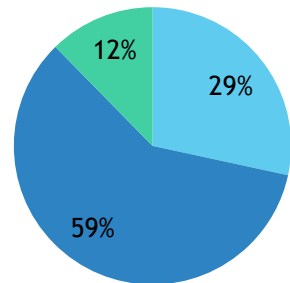
■ with in
 ■ out of
 ■ with in/out of



Participants - Employment

EMPLOYED PARTICIPANTS: TYPE OF WORK

■ N/A ■ Full time ■ Part-time

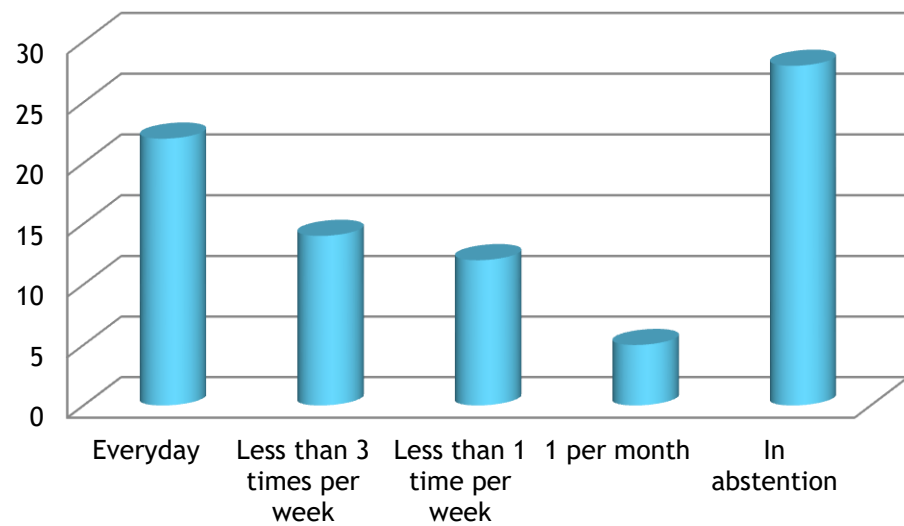


Presented by Institute for Cyprus Psychotherapy

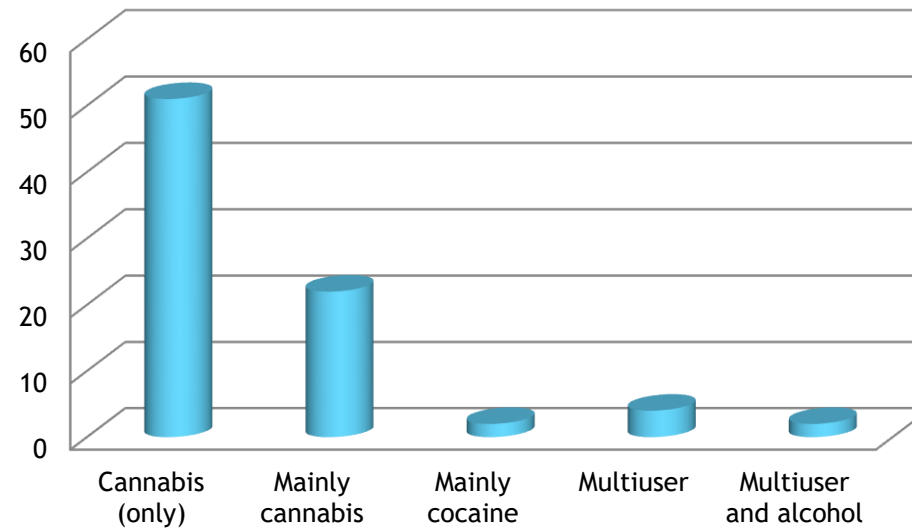


Participants - Substance use, frequency

**FREQUENCY OF SUBSTANCE USE
(WHEN ENTERING THE PROGRAM)**

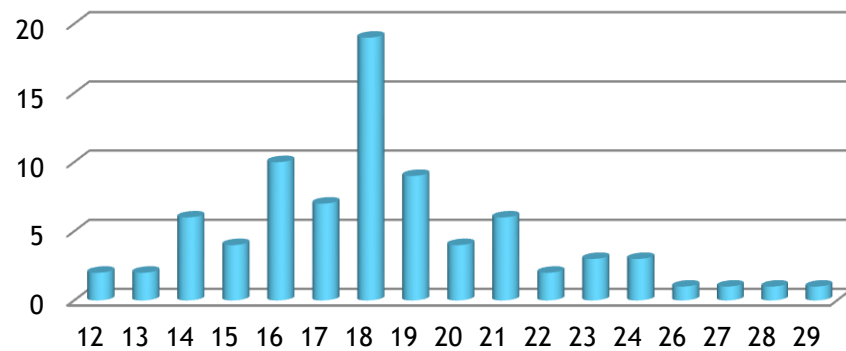


SUBSTANCE USE

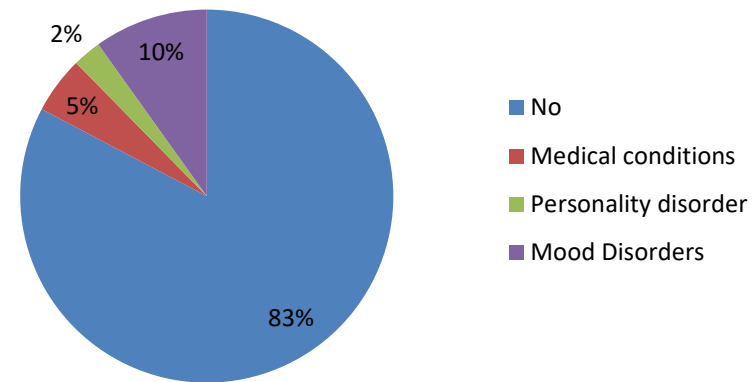


Participants - Age of start, comorbidity

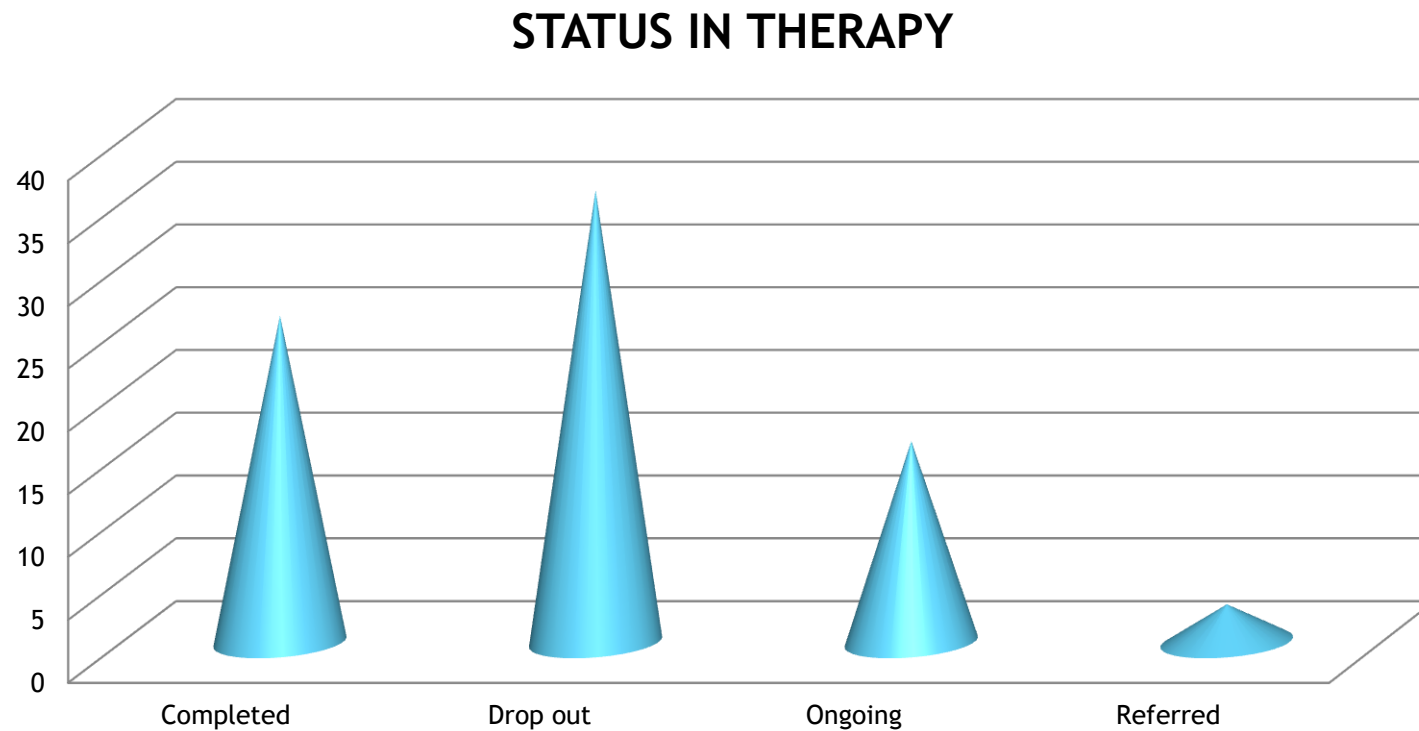
AGE OF FIRST SUBSTANCE USE



COMORBIDITY

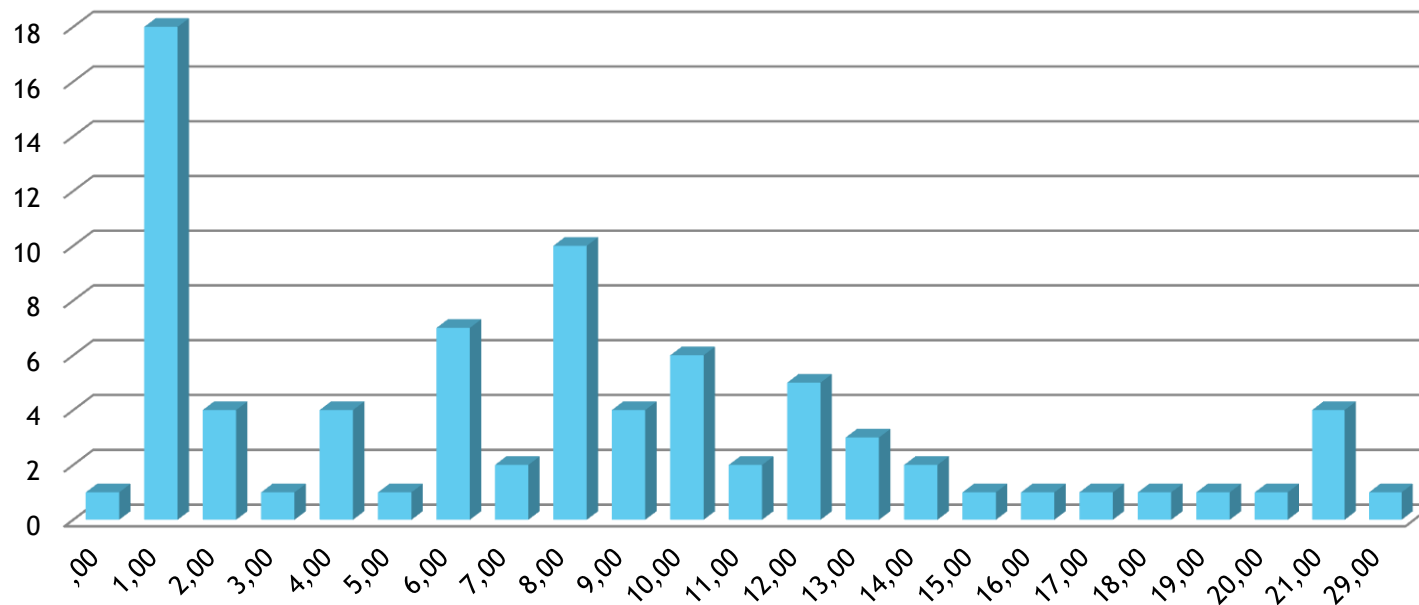


STATUS IN THERAPY



Participants - Total time of therapy

**TOTAL TIME OF THERAPY
(in months)**

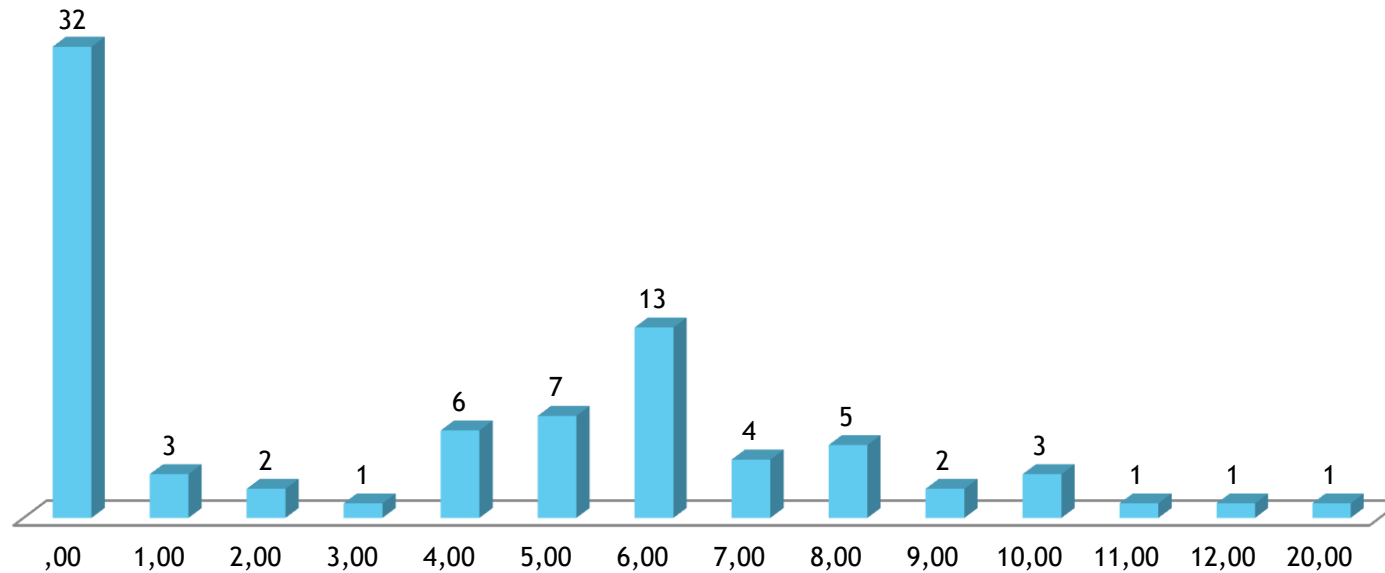


Presented by Institute for Cyprus Psychotherapy



Results of Intervention

**TOTAL TIME OF ABSTENTION DOCUMENTED BY
UWARNING URINE TEST (in months)**

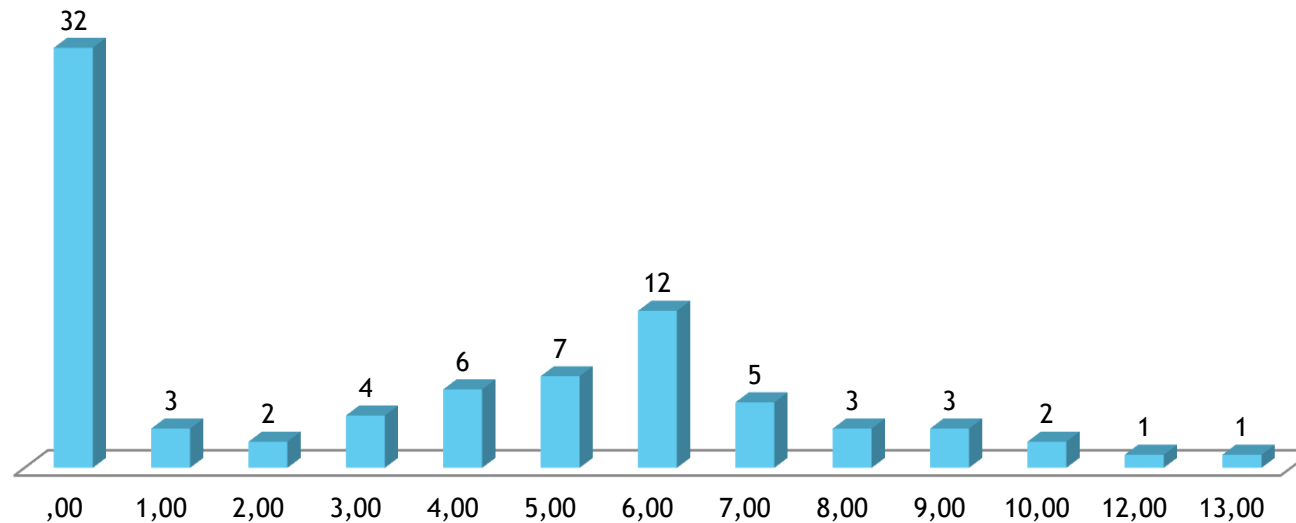


Presented by Institute for Cyprus Psychotherapy



Results of Intervention

MAXIMUM PERIOD OF ABSTENTION DOCUMENTED BY UWARNING URINE TEST (in months)



Results of Intervention

- Linear regression analysis was used to test if the total months of therapy significantly predicted participants total time of abstinence. The results of the regression indicated the predictor explained 34% of the variance ($R^2 = .42$, $F(1,79)=58.57$, $p<.005$)
- Linear regression analysis was used to test if the total months of therapy significantly predicted participants maximum period of abstinence (uninterrupted period of time). The results of the regression indicated the predictor explained 12% of the variance ($R^2 = .12$, $F(1,79)=10.63$, $p<.005$)



Conclusion

- ◆ The longer the individual stays in therapy, the longer the abstinence.
- ◆ MoU under discussion seems to be a viable effort to move young drug addicts accused for minor crimes from the prosecution to court trial to treatment.



Limitations of Study

- ◆ Potential gender bias - predominantly male (74) as opposed to female (7) participants
- ◆ When the therapeutic program started to apply the policy of administration of the test battery initially given at the intake stage, there were a number of participants who were already at the advanced stage in the program and who had not been administered the test battery at all. There were difficulties for the counselling therapists in administering the battery of tests to all the 81 participants because of the new procedural policy and the different stages of the participants in the program. These difficulties led to a limited amount of measurements that could take place and therefore a decision was made not to analyse the data from the questionnaires any further.



Recommendations

- ◆ Further studies examining a larger variety of therapy outcome indicators will provide a more comprehensive picture of the importance of the MoU under discussion.
- ◆ Similar studies need to take place in other rehabilitation centres using the same MoU.
- ◆ Since the data from the questionnaires was not evaluated at this time, continuing the measurements and increasing the data base will allow further evaluation to take place in the future.

*Thank you very
much for attending
our presentation*

