

**Reductions in Drug Use and Criminal  
Activity  
among Women Treated in ADAPT**

*Project WORTH*

**Final Report**

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## **Methodology**

### ***The ADAPT Sample***

- Project WORTH conducted comprehensive baseline interviews with 30 women within two weeks after they were mandated to treatment in ADAPT.
- In-depth follow-up interviews were conducted with 24 of the women one-year after they left ADAPT.
- Although this represents an 80 percent follow-up rate, which is excellent for research with criminal populations; however, the sample size is small. Because of the limited sample size, qualitative data on the women's perceptions of their experience in ADAPT are used to enrich the quantitative analyses (see Appendix).

### ***Data Validity***

All data are based on the women's self-reports. We believe the data are reasonably accurate, reflecting the reality of their drug use and criminal activities because:

- the interview had built in checks to correct serious inaccuracies and misrepresentations;
- the interviewers were highly sensitive to the women's issues and skillful in building rapport and instilling confidence;
- the interviewers assisted the women in developing a month-by-month events timeline (showing birthdays, holidays, and other memorable events in their lives) to aid them in accurately recalling their drug use, criminal behaviors and life circumstances (e.g., time in jail, prison, and residential drug treatment) during each of the past 12 months;
- the women were assured that their confidentiality would be protected with a Federal Certificate of Confidentiality;
- and urine tests were performed whenever possible to ascertain recent drug use.

## **Client Characteristics**

ADAPT provides drug treatment to chronic substance abusers with extensive criminal histories and serious psychological and social deficits. ADAPT's client population consists of women who are:

- hardcore polydrug users—the women started using drugs regularly (meaning three or more days a week for a month or more) when they were about 16 years old, and most

of them were still regularly using a variety of hard drugs (mainly methamphetamine, crack, and heroin) when they entered treatment about 15 years later. Nearly two thirds of the women have been in drug treatment programs at least twice before.

- heavily involved in criminal activity—two thirds of the women have been arrested at least five times as adults. Most of the women have committed a variety of crimes during their lifetimes, especially shoplifting, drug dealing, trading sex for money or drugs, and driving under the influence, and they continue to commit these and other crimes during the year before entering treatment.
- victims of physical and sexual abuse in adulthood—about 75 percent reported that they had been physically abused by a partner and 29 percent reported they had been sexually abused (because of the highly sensitive nature of abuse and the stigma associated with it, it is likely that these figures understate the true extent of abuse among ADAPT clients). Many of the women are at risk for repeating the cycle of violence: one third of them are at elevated risk for physically abusing their children.
- in poor health, lack education and work experience, and have serious mental health problems.

### **Reductions in Drug Use**

- In the year before entering ADAPT, half of the women used illegal drugs or drank alcohol to intoxication at least every other day that they were at risk in the community. (By “at risk” we mean that the women were not incarcerated or in residential drug treatment.) There was a substantial decline in substance abuse during the year after treatment: over two thirds of the women used substances on fewer than *one out of every four* days at risk (Chart 1).
- Many of the women were successful in either stopping their use of substances or substantially reducing their substance use after treatment: one quarter were abstinent for the entire year, and most of the others cut their drug use to some degree (Chart 2).
- Many of the women who abstained after treatment reduced their substance use substantially: during the year before treatment, 17 percent of them had abused substances at least three out of four days, and another 17 percent had abused substances at least every other day (Chart 3).

### **Reductions in Criminal Activity**

- There was a substantial reduction in criminal activity after the women left ADAPT. During the year before treatment, the women committed crimes, on average, about

one third of the days that they were at risk. By adding up all of their “crime-days,” we find that the group of women as a whole were involved in criminal activity on 2,400 days. The total number of crime days declined to 1,700 during the year after treatment. The amount of time that the women were involved in crime declined from 32 percent of their days at risk before treatment to only 25 percent of the days at risk after treatment. From a public safety perspective, there was a substantial bottom line reduction of 700 crime days (Chart 4).

- In the year before entering ADAPT, 44 percent of the women were involved in illegal activities more than half the days that they were at risk in the community. There was a substantial decline in criminal activity during the year after treatment: 39 percent of the women did not commit any crimes at all (Chart 5).

### **Treatment Effectiveness**

- Women who completed ADAPT treatment were significantly more likely to reduce their drug use than those who either dropped out or were discharged by the program: program completers reduced their drug use from about half of the days at risk before treatment to only 13 percent after treatment, whereas non-completers reduced their drug use from over half their days at risk to 36 percent of their days at risk (Chart 6).
- Program completers were significantly more likely to reduce their involvement in illegal activities than non-completers: 47 percent of completers did not commit any crimes during the year after treatment, whereas only 25 percent of the non-completers were crime-free the entire year; non-completers were significantly more likely to commit crimes than were program completers (Chart 7).
- It should be noted that ADAPT treatment had a positive effect on women who left the program early as well as those who stayed to completion.
- Among the women who reduced their drug use and criminal involvement after completing ADAPT, about two thirds of them said that the program helped them “a lot” to reduce their drug use and a little over half said that ADAPT helped “a lot” to reduce their criminal activity. Relatively few of the non-completers who reduced these behaviors said that ADAPT helped them a lot (Chart 8).

### **The Drugs-Crime Connection**

- There is an extremely high correlation between drug use and criminal activity: women who used drugs rarely (up to five percent of their days at risk) did not commit any crimes, whereas those who used drugs more frequently (e.g., three out of five

days) also committed crimes more frequently (more than half the days of the week) (Chart 9).

- Women who used drugs more frequently (i.e., about half their days at risk) were also more likely to say that they committed crimes to support their drug habits, whereas women who used drugs infrequently (one percent of their days at risk) said that they did not commit crimes to support their drug use (Chart 10).

## **Conclusions**

- Given their lifestyles, long histories of substance abuse, extensive involvement in criminal activities, and their psychological and social deficits, it is remarkable to observe as much success after drug treatment as occurred among the women who received treatment in ADAPT. Many women completely stopped using substances and being involved in illegal activities, and many more substantially reduced these behaviors.
- Given that women who completed treatment in ADAPT reduced their involvement in drug use and crime significantly more than those who failed to complete treatment, it is reasonable to infer that there is considerable success as a result of women receiving treatment at ADAPT. It is hard to know exactly how much the change in their behaviors was influenced by drug treatment and how much other factors, such as the threat of criminal justice sanctions and their own intrinsic desire to change their lifestyles, also influenced the women. Because women who do not complete treatment are significantly more likely to relapse and recidivate than those who complete the program, it is fair to say that without treatment, drug use and criminal activity would likely continue largely unabated. Thus, we believe that treatment in ADAPT, in conjunction with criminal justice sanctions, is effective in reducing drug use and criminal activity.
- ADAPT treatment appears to have a direct effect on reductions in both drug use and criminal activity. Criminal activity also declines indirectly as a result of the drug-crime connection (e.g., women have less need to commit crimes to support their drug habits, they may have greater impulse control, and they may stop associating with others involved in the criminal subculture). Thus, to the extent that drug treatment influences reductions in drug use, it also influences reductions in criminal activity above and beyond any reductions in crime that are directly influenced by the therapeutic process.
- Because of the small sample size, the quantitative results should be viewed as suggestive. Qualitative data (see Appendix) support the quantitative findings.

## **Recommendations**

We recommend that the Multnomah County Department of Community Justice:

- continue to mandate substance-abusing women offenders to treatment at ADAPT;
- allocate sufficient resources to ADAPT so that it can provide appropriate treatment services to its clients;
- and ideally provide additional support to enable ADAPT to expand and enhance treatment-related services (e.g., mental health services, childcare, transitional services) for its clients.

## **Appendix: Client Responses to Open-ended Interview Questions**

### ***1. What were the best things about ADAPT?***

- My Nurse was always there when I needed help. Even after I graduated, my counselor was understanding and caring. So was my PO.
- My counselor, Maureen...very neat woman. You could talk to her about anything. She helped me pay my bills by dealing with collections. She firmed up housing for me. She talked to me about everyday issues.
- Everything. The interventionist -- having someone who has walked in your shoes and experienced it.
- Counselors were good. Home nurse was helpful.
- I looked at it like a support team. If I needed any help, any question I could turn to any of them in any situation.
- The staff support was the very best, the availability: they are always there. They always got back right away. They would come over. They helped me with baby blankets, car seats, emergency supplies.
- Counselors were really honest. Structure helped meet all my needs.
- I got WIC (food for kids). They were strict but it helped me be more responsible.
- The people who worked there were understanding. The counseling.
- Their kindness. They were nice and friendly.
- The constant support around all issues. They really helped so I could be with my kids in treatment. When I went to court they helped me with a different PO.
- One-on-one help. They set me up with a good parole officer; they set me up with Target Cities to get clothes; Medical help.
- Their being able to take time to talk to me, to help me with the issues that I had.
- The counselors--very supportive. I liked the one-on-one communication to work on any issues that I wanted.
- They really seemed to care. Helped me with bus passes. If you needed to talk to someone you could talk to them.
- I could really count on them to be there with their awesome resources. They really went all out to help me.
- My counselor: she was always there for me when I needed something or had a problem or whatever it was.
- My nurse. She was very personal, true, real, and caring, very caring. I love her.
- They did try to help me out if I needed clothing or someone to talk to. I could talk to them.
- When I needed help they were there, being supportive.

### ***2. Why did you stay in ADAPT as long as you did?***

- I needed to know that there was someone above me. I needed the counseling.
- Because I liked it. It was very helpful. It was nice to have people in your life you could turn to if you needed something.

- I didn't think I had a choice and because I liked the people that I was involved with (staff, counselors).
- They were supportive. Non-judgmental. I know if I did use [drugs] they would advocate for me. They would be supportive through the court. They would help me to do what I needed to do to get back on track and I felt I needed that.
- They kept helping me. I'd slip and they stayed with me anyway.
- I liked it because I was doing positive things with my life.
- The wonderful support from the whole ADAPT team, and with my new baby I needed all the support I could get.
- It's a good program. They really help you with so many different things.
- They were helping me to do things on my own--finding resources. I felt good to accomplish something.
- My kids. So I could get them back.
- Because they were very helpful to me. When I needed something they were there for me. Like housing they gave me numbers, helped me call. If I needed a bus ticket they gave me a bus ticket.

***3. In what ways did drug treatment help you to reduce your involvement in illegal activities?***

- ADAPT showed me that there are ways to get things you need without stealing.
- Helped me become a better person, with self-esteem, and a mother.
- Teaching you not to use...if not using going out to get into crimes.
- I stayed away from illegal activities because ADAPT taught me to have confidence in myself. Set up goals, have a plan...take advantages of opportunities like ADAPT, social services that are there.
- They helped me build my self-esteem.
- Built self-esteem. Gave tools to be clean and sober. Taught to work steps. Helped in therapy.
- They talked about AIDS and risk of sexually transmitted disease (re: prostitution) and using while pregnant is not good.
- They helped me think before I act to think about consequences
- They were non-judgmental, I could tell them anything, they helped me problem solve, they advocated for me many times, with PO and court.
- They pushed the point that if I kept doing what I was doing I'd wind up in jail again and lose custody of my daughter.
- By talking to me and letting me know what my consequences would be.
- It was scary that they had that much control, that they could keep me from getting my children back if I was out of compliance. But it worked. They made me accountable and I did what I needed to do and I got my kids back. Then I appreciated their influence in my life.
- They referred me to VOA and the drug treatment really helped.
- Just by giving me the strength and support to know I could do it.
- Helped me learn about domestic violence, find books, talk about it so I wouldn't use drugs to hide my feelings.



- Talking to me and explaining that the more crimes I did would just cause me to go back to jail.

***4. In what way did ADAPT help you to quit or cut back on your drug use since before you entered treatment?***

- The UA's and the counseling. Just knowing I was on probation.
- Gave me the support and tools that I needed.
- Counseling.
- Made me look at myself, what I want out of life, where I come from, what if I didn't stop.
- Talking to me and being there. Gave me good info. Very persistent and consistent.
- Just helping me with some of my personal issues and showing me that there is life without drugs.
- I don't want to let people down who did a lot of hard work
- Support, great support.
- They really talked to me about the effects of drugs on my unborn baby. I stayed clean through my pregnancy and six more weeks after.
- Counselor was very helpful. She talked to me about the various consequences that could happen.
- Things they taught me. One time leads to runs. It just made me think about my daughter.
- They always told me "good job" and encouraged me when I accomplished small goals. It helped me feel good on my own with accomplishing small goals.
- They were always there for me, non-judgmental, but helpful. Talked to me, reminded me how far I'd come, how good I'd done and to not throw that away.

***5. What did you learn in ADAPT that helped you stay clean?***

- I learned that I had options other than using. I had support, I could go to talk to someone instead of using.
- ADAPT taught me to respect myself, that I could be trusted, that I deserved my baby, that I wasn't bad. I deserved what other people take for granted.
- That me and my family, that my life is worth staying clean.
- Abusive relationships: they helped me out with that.

***6. Thinking back to all the things we talked about or anything else we may not have covered, what was the most important thing that you got out of being in ADAPT?***

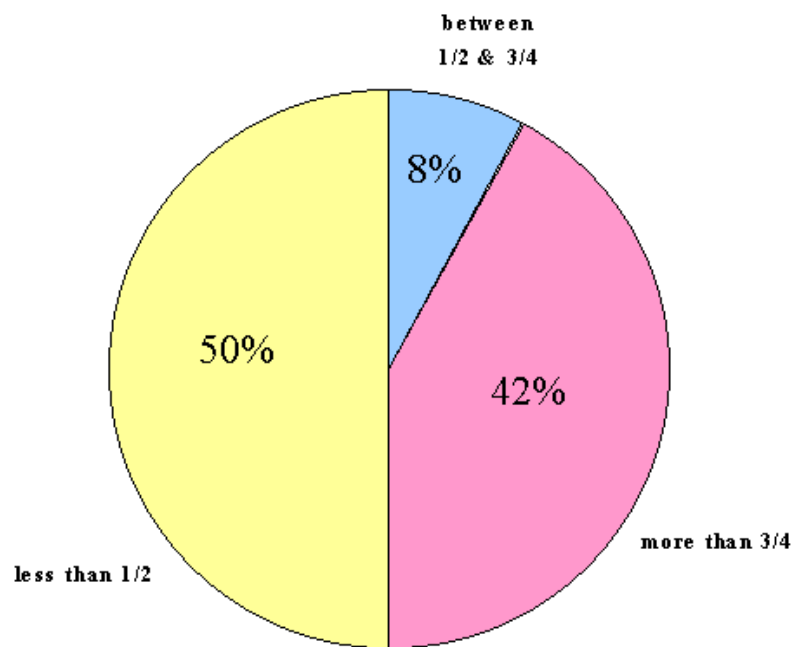
- My self-esteem.
- They taught me life skills. They taught me having steady people in my life to depend on...I never really had that before.
- Knowing that I could make it on my own that I didn't need a man or anyone else to support me. I was capable.

- Support...I got support. They were very non-judgmental, they advocated for me, they went to court with me. I felt like they were there.
- Tools to stay clean and sober. A sense of completion. A sense of recovery.
- Taught me to take care of my body. Not to have sex if I didn't want to. To use condoms--it's my decision.
- Support. I can't stress enough how much support I got. The Community nurse even helped get my partner into treatment.
- The determination to stay clean while I was pregnant; HIV risk - use condoms.
- Them being very supportive and trying to help me with my kids. Then working with me, dealing with my criminal issues.
- Learning to be my own woman. Being able to ask for help when I needed it.
- The support from my team.
- I finished something I really felt good about. They helped me even when I didn't know I wanted help.
- They taught me how to live without using. I didn't need to use for stress or being alone or boredom.
- How to be assertive. Be able to tell people about my boundaries.

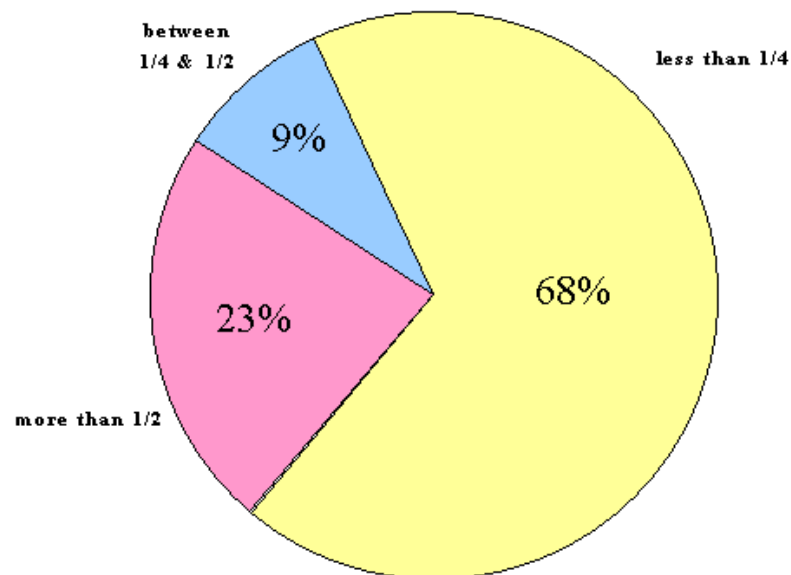
Chart 1

# Days of Drug Use: ADAPT Clients

Before Treatment



After Treatment

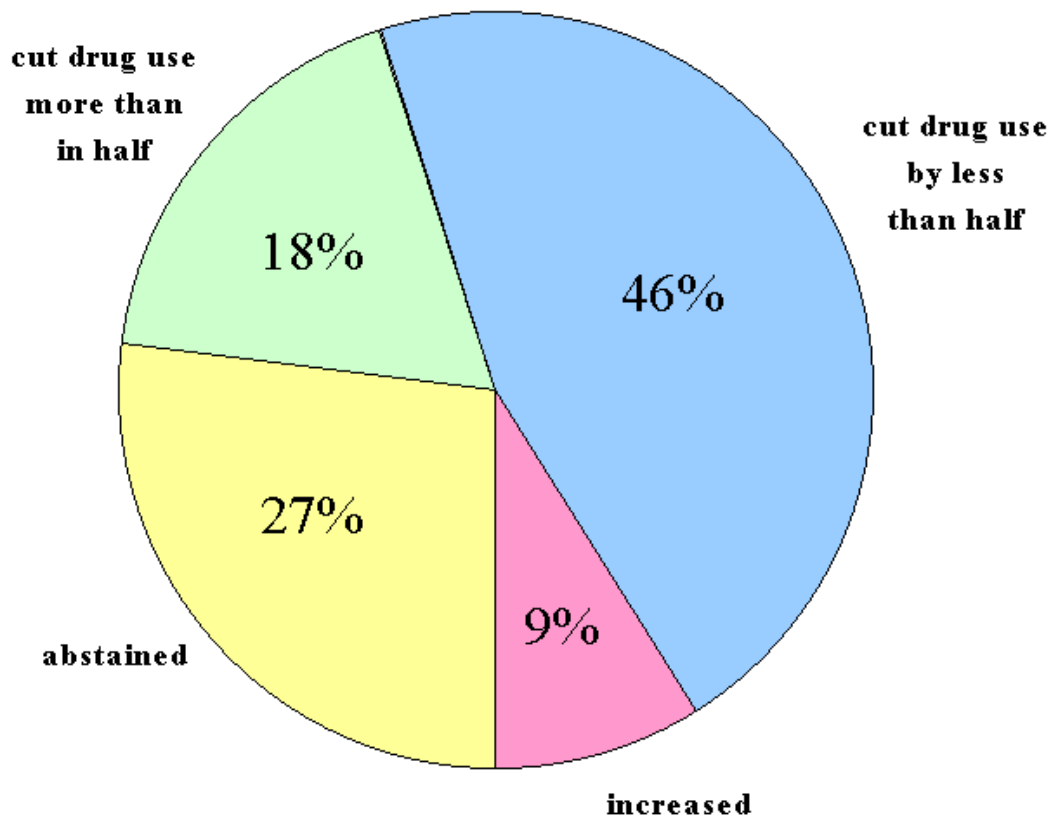


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Chart 2

# Changes in Drug Use after Treatment: ADAPT Clients (N=24)

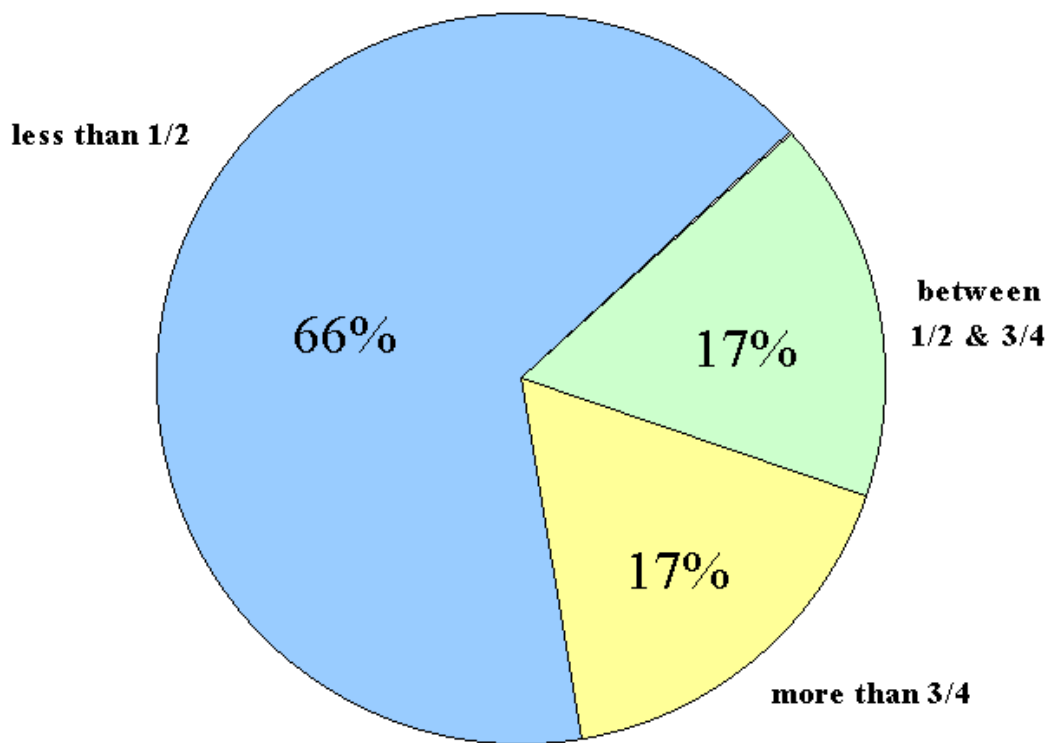


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Chart 3

## Days of Drug Use before Treatment: ADAPT Abstainers (N=6)



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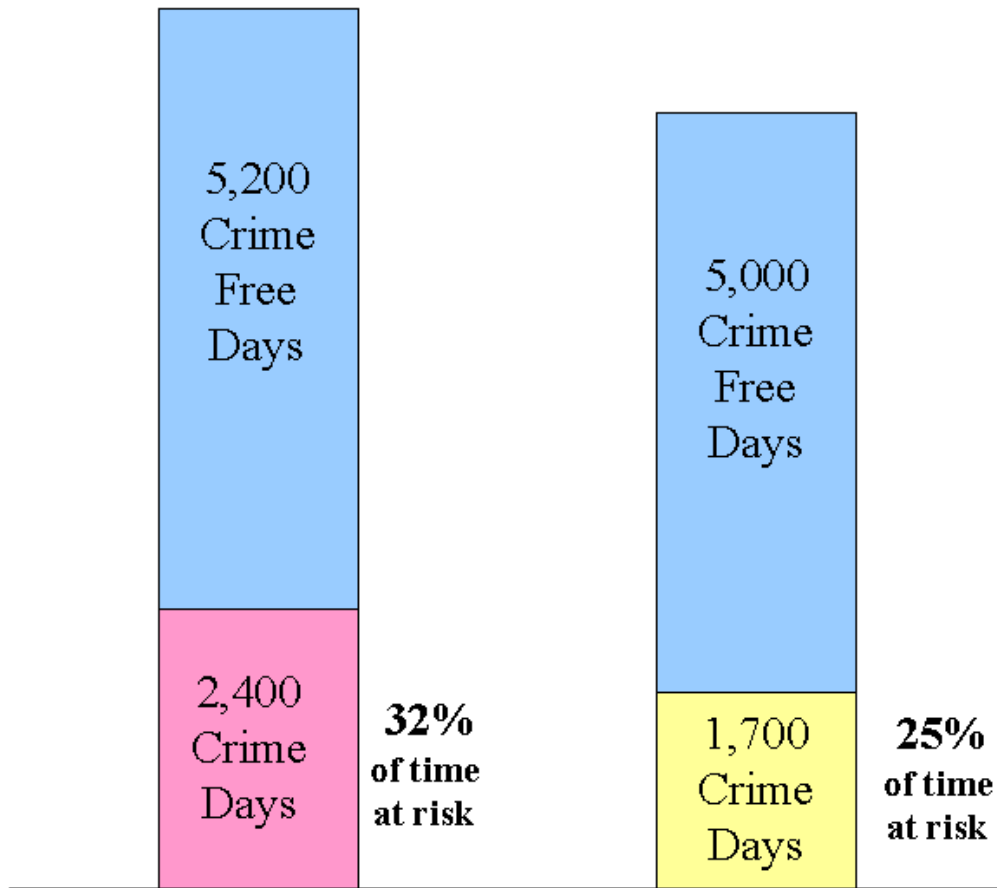
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Chart 4

## Crime Days: ADAPT Clients

Before Treatment

After Treatment



**Reduction of 700 Crime Days**

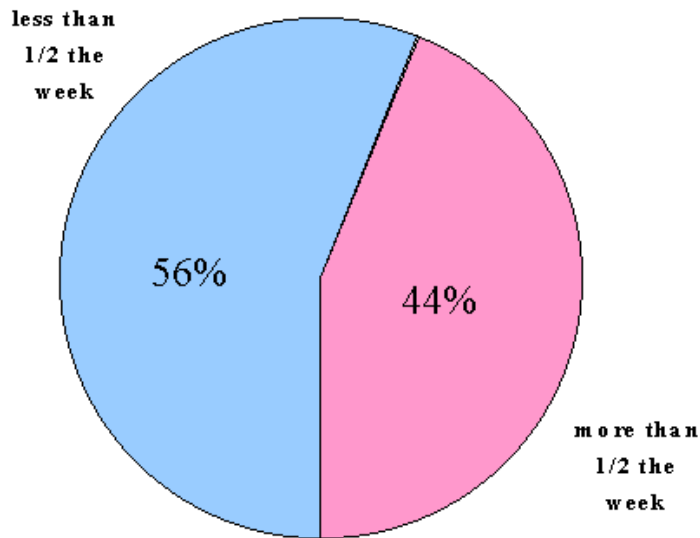
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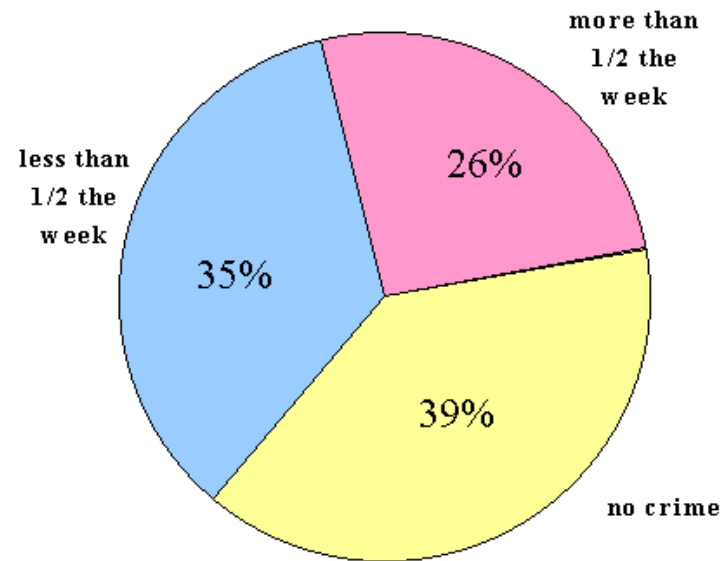
Chart 5

# Amount of Crime: ADAPT Clients

Before Treatment



After Treatment

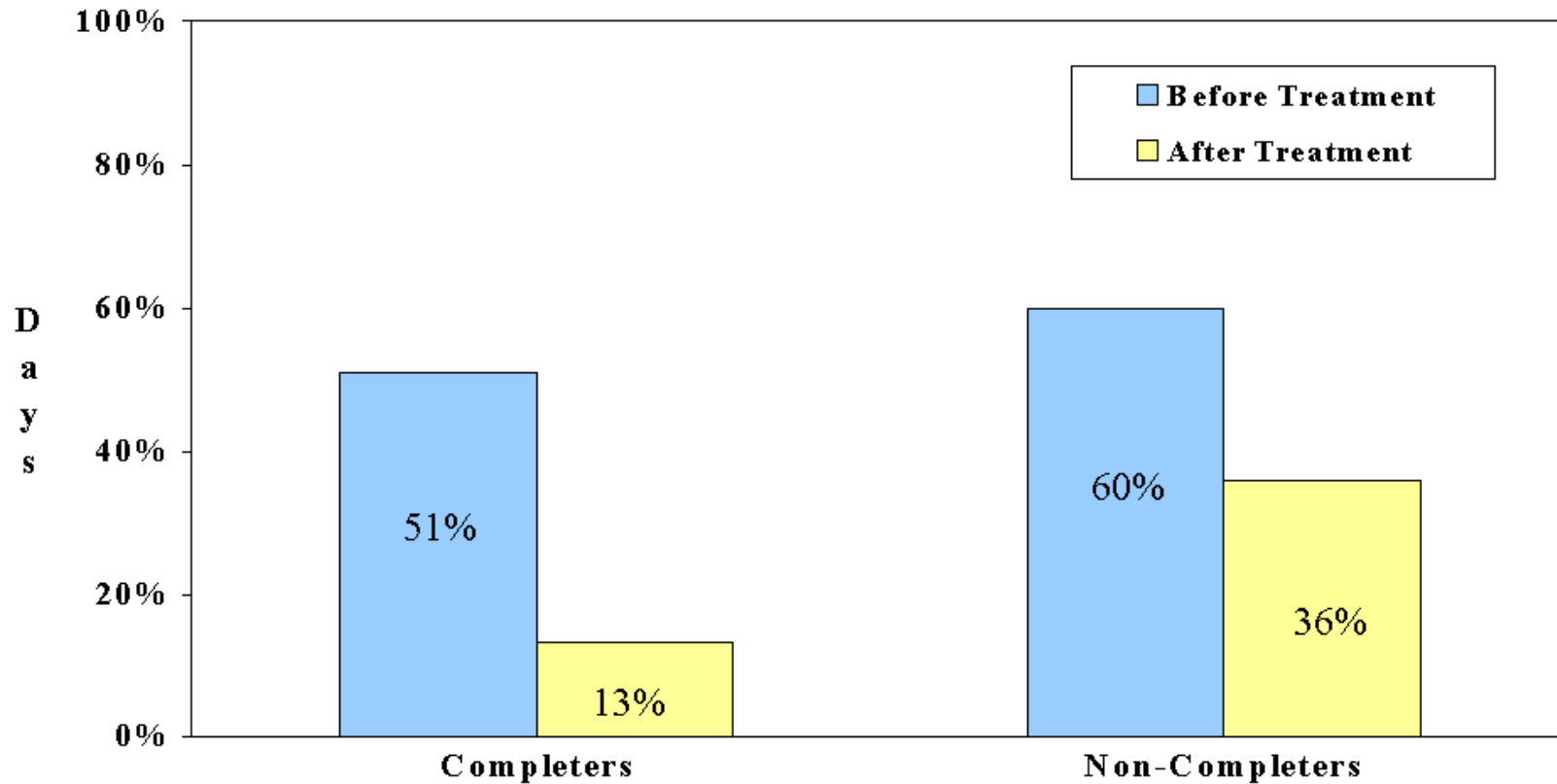


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Chart 6

## Percent of Days that Drugs Were Used: ADAPT Completers and Non-Completers



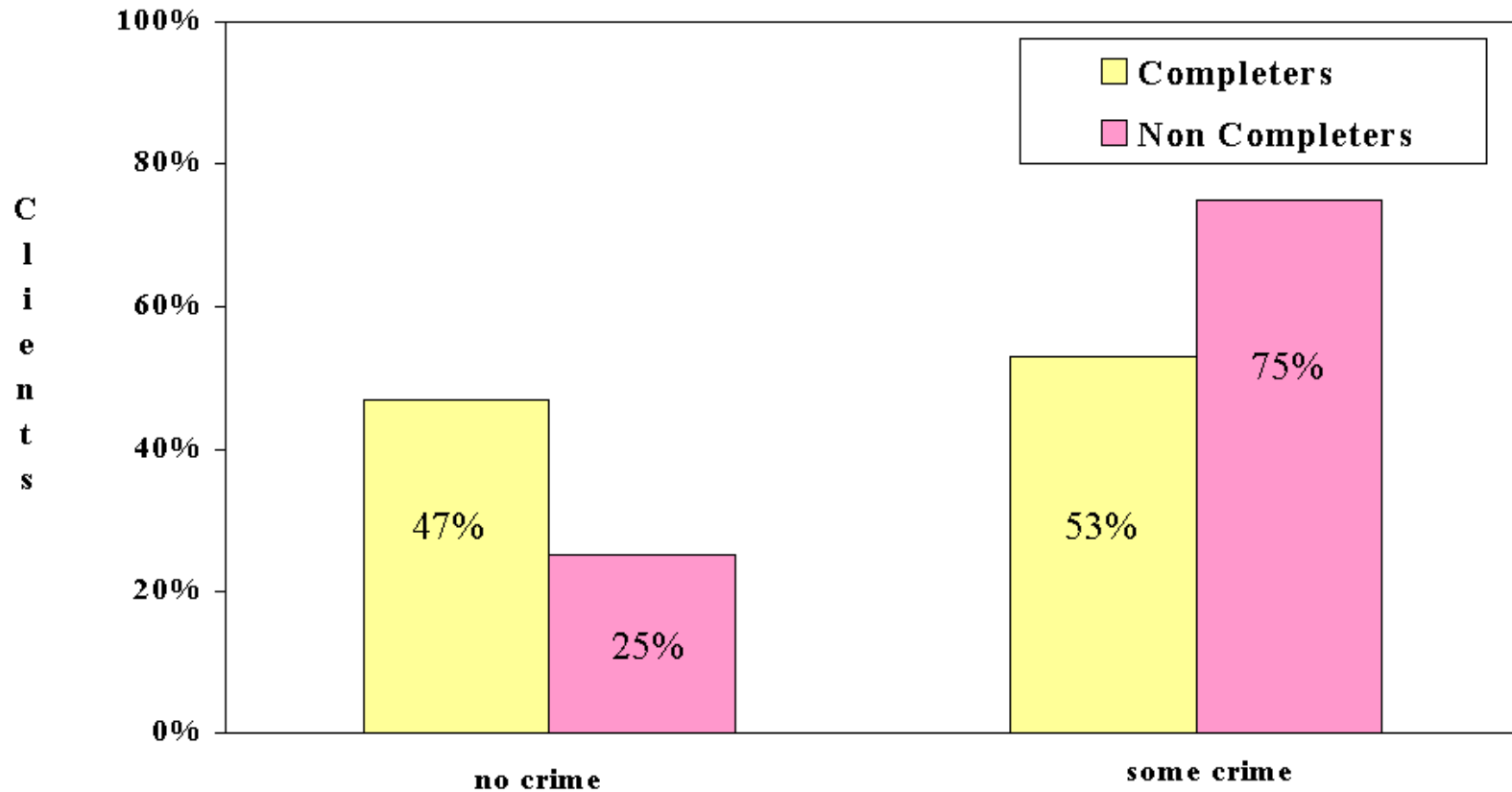
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Chart 7

## Comparison of Criminal Activity: ADAPT Completers and Non-Completers

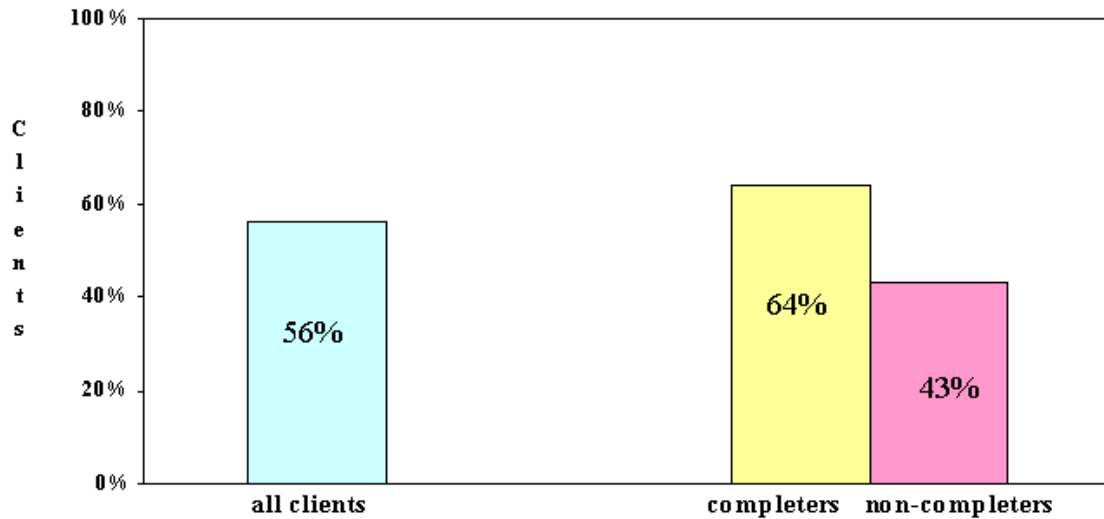


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Chart 8  
**Clients Who Said ADAPT Helped Them  
A LOT to Reduce Their...**

### Drug Use



### Criminal Activity

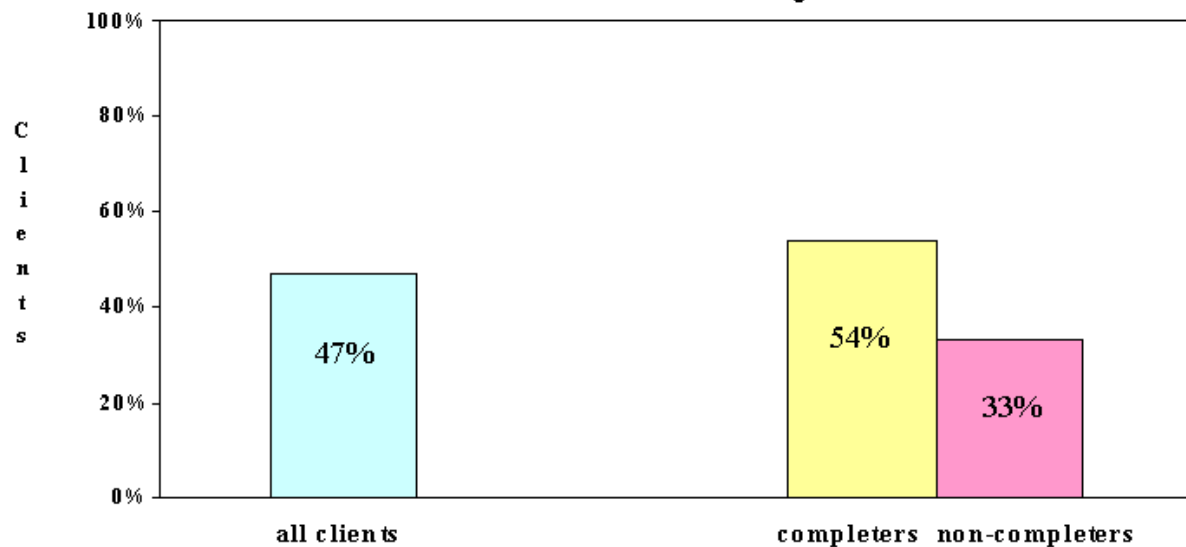
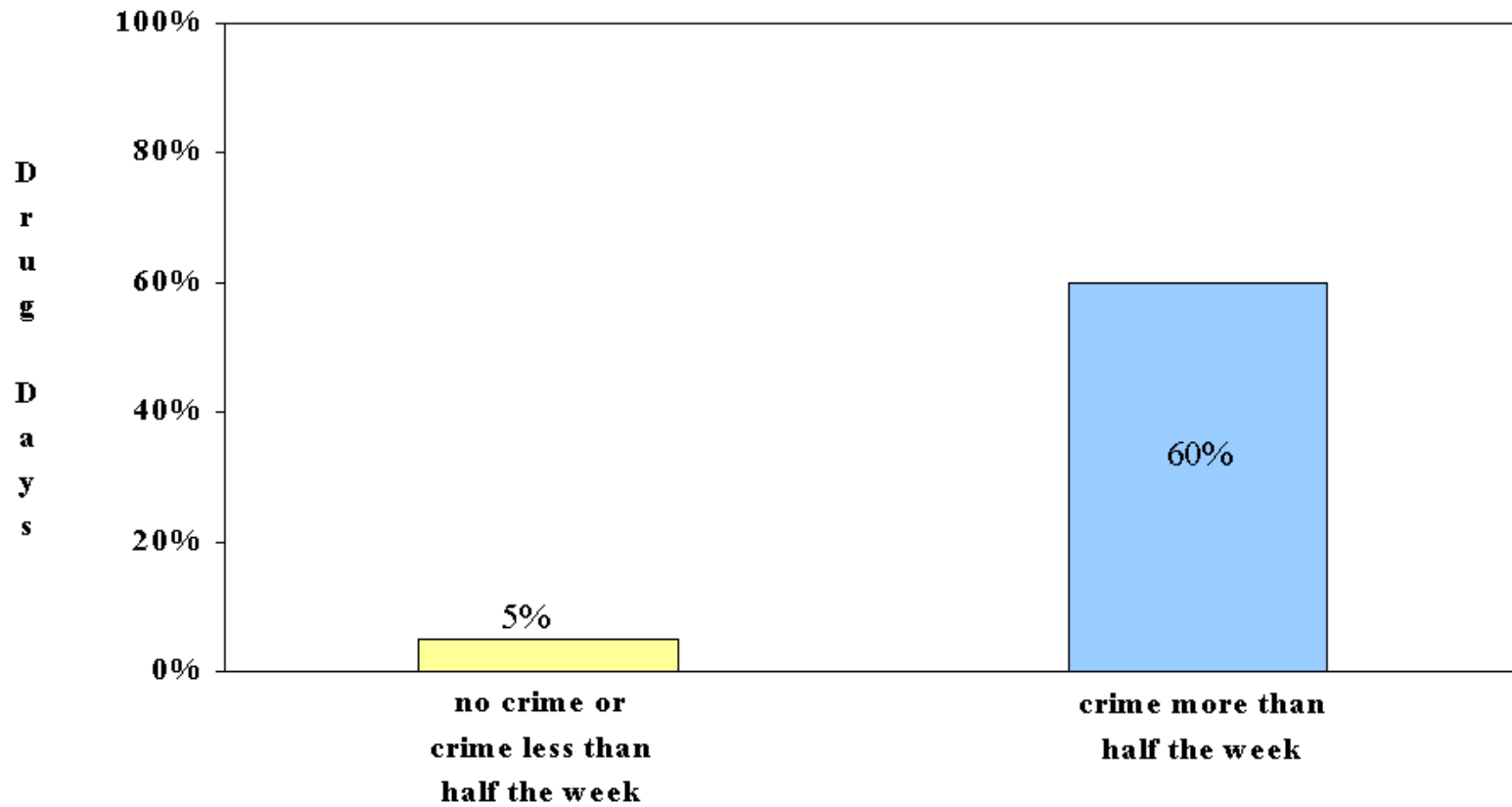


Chart 9

# The Drug-Crime Connection: ADAPT Clients

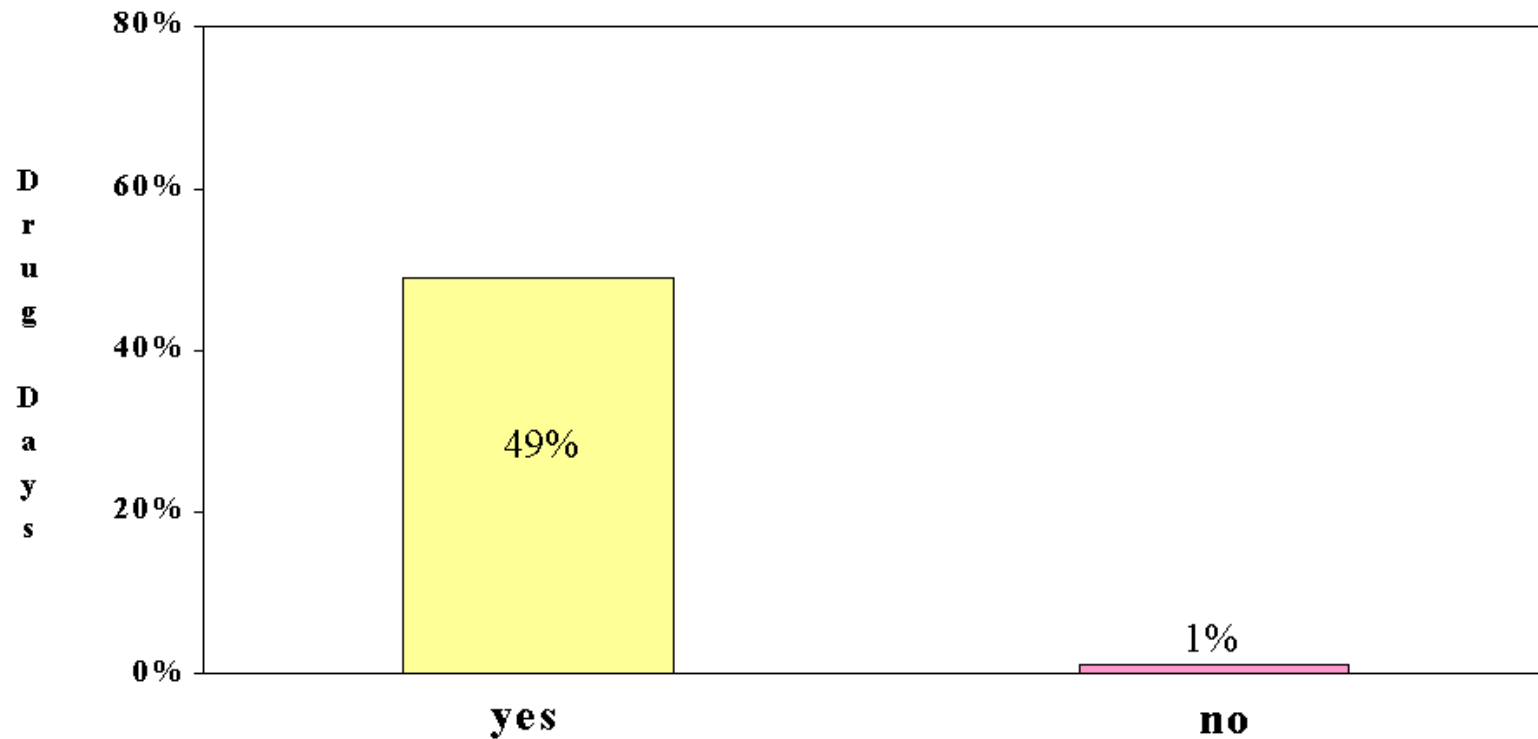


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Chart 10

# Committing Crimes to Support Drug Use BY Amount of Drug Use among ADAPT Clients



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