

Key results



Mission Australia



Australian Government

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

1. Introduction

This flyer provides a summary of the results from the first pilot test of the tool to measure the level and complexity of client needs in SAAP services. The results will be used to improve the assessment tool and develop training materials for a second pilot test to be undertaken in March 2008. Please note that these results are not an accurate representation of the final census.

A report that includes further details of the results of the pilot is available on request. You can email us at highneedstest@aihw.gov.au or phone us on 1800 035 938 if you would like a copy.

2. Sample and methodology

Fifteen SAAP agencies participated in the pilot test. These agencies were from New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory and included a range of service delivery models and target groups.

The pilot was conducted over a 2-week period between 26 November and 7 December 2007.

Participating agencies undertook a range of activities, including completion of:

- the assessment tool for clients
- scenarios
- the assessment tool whilst being observed by Mission Australia or the Australian Institute of Health & Welfare staff
- a feedback form.

3. Summary of results

There was an excellent response rate to the pilot test and the feedback provided was very useful. The sample included a small number of clients who were receiving assistance during the pilot test period and were chosen by the agencies (ie. 41 clients).

While this sample was sufficient to test the assessment tool, the results should not be used to make inferences about the level and complexity of client needs in SAAP services.

Client demographics

Of clients who were included in the pilot test 71% were female. Just over half of the clients assessed were in the 25–44 year age group (Table 1).

The average age of clients assessed was 36 years. (This is older than the average SAAP profile, where the average age is 30 years).

Table 1: Clients, by age group and sex

Age group (yrs) ^(a)	Males	Females	No. of clients
15–19	1	2	3
20–24	3	2	5
25–44	5	17	22
45–64	1	7	8
65+	—	1	1
Missing	2	—	2
Total	12	29	41

(a) Age at 31 December 2007.

Areas and circumstances

The assessment component of the tool covered 13 areas which were identified as important for determining clients with high and complex needs. The areas were:

- Housing
- Exposure to and effects of violence
- Money management and finances
- Health and self care
- Accessing services
- Access to social supports
- Challenging behaviour
- Personal safety and wellbeing
- Mental health issues
- Alcohol and other drug use
- Disability
- Accompanying children
- Other

On average 8 areas per client were identified. Ninety per cent of clients were identified with a need in 'housing' and 'exposure to and effects of violence'. Client need in relation to 'money management and finances', 'accessing services', 'access to social supports' and 'personal safety and wellbeing' were the next most commonly identified (88%, 81%, 78% and 78% respectively).

A further 32% of clients had a need not covered in the 12 areas, including: emotional support/counselling services for children, family law, advocacy, education and employment, self esteem and confidence, immigration status.

The 'alcohol and other drug use' area had the highest average number of circumstances identified (3.5). 'Housing' and 'access to social supports' had the second highest average number of circumstances identified (3 each).

Key results

Level of support

The assessment tool measured the level of support in each area as low, moderate or high. A high level of support was most commonly identified for clients (62.2%) across all areas. The 'alcohol and other drug use' and 'exposure to and effects of violence' areas had the highest proportions (73.6% and 72.9% respectively).

A low level of support was identified across 8 areas and most commonly for clients in the areas of 'accompanying children', 'disability' and 'mental health issues' (14.2%, 13.3% and 11.5% respectively).

Meeting client needs

The assessment tool identified the level at which client needs could be met in each area, ie. yes, to some extent, no. Across all areas, most reported that client's support needs could be met to some extent. The exception being the 'housing' area which was evenly split between clients needs able to be met and met to some extent.

Agencies capacity to meet clients support needs was most common in the area of 'housing' (48.6%), followed by 'money management and finances' (38.9%).

The most common area where client support needs could not be met by agencies was 'disability' (33.3%) followed by 'health and self care' (25.0%).

Table 2: Proportion of clients, by area and ability of agency to meet needs of client

Area	Support needs of client able to be met		
	Yes	To some extent	No
Housing	48.6%	48.6%	2.7%
Exposure to & effects of violence	27.0%	64.9%	8.1%
Money management & finances	38.9%	55.6%	5.6%
Health & self care	32.1%	42.9%	25.0%
Accessing appropriate services	33.3%	63.6%	3.0%
Access to social supports	21.9%	75.0%	3.1%
Challenging behaviour	11.8%	76.5%	11.8%
Personal safety & wellbeing	12.5%	81.3%	3.1%
Mental health issues	7.7%	84.6%	7.7%
Alcohol & other drug use	10.5%	84.2%	5.3%
Disability	6.7%	60.0%	33.3%
Accompanying children	7.1%	78.6%	14.3%
Other	23.1%	46.2%	15.4%
Total	24.8%	65.5%	8.8%

Referral to other services

Across all areas the majority of agencies reported that they were able to refer (or had referred) clients to other services (77.4%).

Inaccessibility to services due to waiting lists was most common in the area of 'housing'. However, overall this was less common than inaccessibility due to the client not wanting to access services (3.2% and 13.5% respectively).

Overall assessment of high and complex need

Overall, 76% of clients were considered to have high and complex needs. A further 12% were reported to be 'most likely' to have high and complex needs.

Completion of the tool

The average time taken to complete the assessment tool was 14 minutes for clients and 20 minutes for the scenarios.

Feedback from agencies

The majority of participating agencies reported that:

- the layout of the form was easy to follow
- instructions and guidelines were clear and concise
- a number of areas were identified as not covered
- a number of circumstances were not covered and were suggested for inclusion
- the question relating to referrals was problematic

Summary of changes

In response to the feedback from agencies the following changes to the assessment tool and associated documentation will be made:

- revision of the circumstances under each area to address clarity, overlap and gaps
- review and revision of the guidelines to improve understanding of definitions
- revision of the referral question to improve the quality of responses
- additions of instructions and guidelines for completion of the questions on the assessment tool
- revision of the scenarios in line with feedback so that their usefulness for training purposes is improved and their purpose is clear

Where to from here?

The second pilot test will be undertaken by approximately 40 agencies in March 2008. This pilot test will require agencies to complete:

- a distance training workbook to be returned for checking, and feedback will be provided by AIHW
- the assessment tool for new and ongoing clients who present over a 5-day period between 17 and 21 March 2008
- a feedback form.

Results from pilot testing will be used to further develop the assessment tool, which will be used in a full census of SAAP agencies scheduled for May 2008.