

NCETA and workplace alcohol and other drug issues

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The National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction (NCETA) has a 10 year track record in relation to alcohol and other drug (AOD) workplace issues. NCETA's program of work in the area of workplace AOD issues includes research, resource development, publications, policy advice and practical consultancy.

Our research program includes primary research, large scale secondary data analyses, cost analyses associated with AOD-related absenteeism, literature reviews, and theoretical examinations of causal and contributory factors. We undertake ongoing analyses of large data sets, such as the National Drug Strategy Household Survey (NDSHD) every three years (2001, 2004, 2007). Our unique data make it possible to predict with a high degree of accuracy the probable levels of risky AOD use in a workplace based on the age, gender and demographic profile of the workforce in given industry and occupational groups.

A range of practical policy development tools and resources have been developed that stem from this research. These include:

- ▶ a series of information and data sheets
- ▶ AOD fact sheets suitable for employee training and awareness programs
- ▶ a comprehensive information and resource kit that enables employers to develop workplace AOD policies and programs

- ▶ a "train the trainer" program designed to build the capacity of AOD workers and occupational health and safety personnel to respond to workplace AOD issues.

NCETA is currently working to substantially expand its program of work and to undertake a new and innovative approach to AOD in the workplace in Australia including:

- ▶ Implementing established best practice across all Australian workplaces, involving the provision of:
 - updated data and information sheets
 - policy development/ implementation guidelines and assistance
 - tailored education and training programs
 - policy/program evaluation guidelines and assistance
 - safety/productivity risk assessment and audit tools
 - access to web-based resources, interventions, and training programs.
- ▶ Developing a broader AOD research program involving randomised controlled trials to fully test the efficacy of workplace interventions tailored for different work settings. Little evaluation research effort has been directed toward workplace interventions and many AOD interventions that are known to be efficacious in other settings have yet to be adapted for and trialled in the workplace. NCETA has already undertaken substantial research identifying the prevalence and

patterns of AOD use among the workforce, and this work identified high risk industries and occupational groups (e.g. hospitality and tradespersons) that could be the initial focus of this research.



- ▶ Developing and implementing research and practical programs that target young new entrants to the workplace. Young Australians undergoing the school-to-work transition are a group at particular risk of AOD-related harm. NCETA's research indicates that risky drinking and illicit drug use are most prevalent among young workers, and young workers are high risk groups for using/drinking at work, attending work under the influence and being absent from work due to their drinking/drug use.

For more information on NCETA's workplace research and practice program visit www.nceta.flinders.edu.au ❖

