



Research Snippet

Offenders with Long Term Supervision Orders: Comparing Rates of Return

KEY WORDS: long term offender, long term supervision order, return to custody, re-offence

Impetus

In 1997, legislation was modified in order to allow judges to designate as 'long term offenders' those convicted of serious sexual crimes and assessed as likely to re-offend if not effectively managed in the community. As part of their designation, these offenders serve a long term supervision order (LTSO) – that is, an extra period of community supervision of up to ten years at the end of their sentence.

Since the legislative modification, the types of offenders assigned LTSOs have changed. At a recent meeting of the Correctional Service of Canada's (CSC's) National Working Group on LTSOs, questions were raised regarding whether the rates of return to custody varied for different groups of offenders. Of particular interest was whether offenders' rates of return to custody differed according to type of offending (sexual or other), jurisdiction (provincial or federal) and CSC region.

What we did

All offenders with LTSOs released prior to August 2010 were included in analyses ($N = 418$). For a one-year period from the time of each offender's first release, the following types of return to custody were considered:

1. **Suspension**, which refers to a temporary suspension of conditional release or of the LTSO pending a decision regarding revocation or the laying of a charge;
2. **Return without offence**, which refers to a revocation of conditional release due to a breach of release conditions; and,
3. **Return with offence**.

Though a breach of an LTSO constitutes an offence, due to similarity of behaviours, where breaches were due to failure to comply with conditions of the LTSO, they were grouped with returns without offence.

What we found

Over 50% of the offenders with LTSOs had at least one suspension and approximately 25% were returned to custody at least once.

Small differences in rates of return seem to exist amongst the groups of offenders given LTSOs (see table). Though the limited number of offenders means data must be interpreted carefully, it seems that those convicted of non-sexual offences and given provincial sentences return to custody at slightly higher rates. Patterns with respect to releasing institution are less clear.

Rates of Return to Custody (%) Within One Year

Variable	Type of Return		
	Suspension	Return w/out offence	Return with offence
Index Offence			
Sexual	51	12	10
Other	57	18	14
Sentence Type			
Provincial	62	- ^a	13
Federal	50	18	11
Releasing Region			
Pacific	63	21	8
Prairie	55	15	15
Ontario	45	7	10
Quebec	50	13	10
Atlantic	67	19	14
Total	53	14	11

Note. Offenders may be counted in multiple return categories.
^aValue could not be computed from CSC data (as conditionally released provincial offenders are not under CSC jurisdiction).

What it means

Patterns in rates of return – even if subtle – underscore the differences among offenders given LTSOs. Findings suggest that offender with LTSOs should not be considered a uniform group. In fact, further examination of differences may be fruitful – for instance, it may allow for identification of more targeted interventions or supervision approaches.

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For more information

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