



# Research Snippet

## Gangs and institutional adjustment in the context of the Security Reclassification Scale

**KEY WORDS:** *security reclassification scale (SRS), risk assessment, gang affiliation, institutional adjustment*

### What it means

The results of the present study indicate that no further weight should be placed on gang affiliation when scoring the Security Reclassification Scale (SRS). Overall, gang affiliation does not appear to be predictive of SRS relevant outcomes (i.e., institutional adjustment, risk of escape, and risk to the public in the event of an escape). While some covariance between the indicators and gang affiliation was found, associations were mostly very weak and inconsistent. Further analyses revealed that those offenders identified as being affiliated with a gang had higher scores on the SRS, thereby reflecting that gang affiliation is already sufficiently accounted for within the current SRS assessment.

### What we found

Gang affiliation was for the most part, weakly associated with some of the SRS relevant indicators. For institutional adjustment, all variables assessed had a weak (AUCs <.56) to small (AUCs of .56 to .64) positive association with gang affiliation. Conversely, no significant associations were found between any of the risk of escape measures and gang affiliation. Results were mixed for the measures for risk to the public in the event of escape; however all significant association were weak in effect size. Finally, SRS scores and the SRS security ratings (minimum, medium, and maximum) were assessed for their level of association with gang affiliation. A small positive association was found between the overall SRS scores and gang affiliation, while only maximum security ratings were found to be weakly associated with gang affiliation.

### Impetus

Assessment instruments must be revalidated to ensure that they are accurately measuring what they are designed and intended to measure – especially in light of a changing offender profile/population. In 2011, a Board of Investigation recommended that the Custody Rating Scale (CRS) and SRS be reviewed to

assess if being a member of a violent gang should have a higher influence on the final scores on the scales.

The purpose of the present study is to complete the request by examining the association between gang affiliation and the outcomes of relevance to the SRS (i.e., institutional adjustment, risk of escape, and risk to the public in the event of an escape).

### What we did

Data for all SRS assessments completed between April 1, 2007 and March 31, 2009 were extracted from the Offender Management System (OMS). If an offender had more than one SRS completed during this time period, the first SRS was used. Offenders were followed for a fixed six-month period after the completion date of the SRS to assess institutional adjustment, while community variables were assessed for a one-year fixed follow-up post release period.

The strength of the association between gang affiliation and minor/serious charges (proxies for institutional adjustment); escapes during incarceration and the escape history item of the CRS (proxies for risk of escape); as well as release type and returns to custody measured both as any return and returns with a new offence (proxies for risk to the public in the event of an escape) were calculated using area under the curve (AUCs).

### For more information

Please e-mail the [Research Branch](#) or contact us by phone at (613) 995-3975.

You can also visit the website for a full list of research publications.

**Prepared by:** Trina K. Forrester