


# FORUM

on Corrections Research

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Research Summaries

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FORUM reviews applied research related to corrections policy, programming and management issues. It also features original articles contributed by staff of the Correctional Service of Canada and other international researchers and practitioners.

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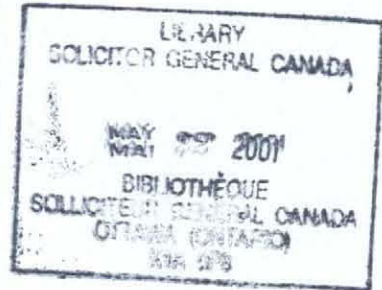
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# FORUM

on Corrections Research



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## Style

Articles should be written in plain language. Complicated research and statistical terms should be avoided; however, if they are unavoidable, a clear explanation of the meaning of the term should be provided. FORUM reaches about 5,000 individuals in more than 35 countries, including academics, the public, journalists, corrections staff (from front-line staff to senior managers) and members of the judiciary. Our goal is to present reliable research to a **lay audience**.

## Length

Ideally, articles should be 1,000 to 1,500 words in length (six double-spaced pages). Feature articles must be no longer than 2,000 words.

## Figures and Tables

Figures and tables should be on separate pages at the end of the article. When an article has more than one figure or table, these should be numbered consecutively. Graphs, if possible, are preferred over tables.

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# Special issue: Research summaries

This is a special edition, presenting 55 summarized research reports which address a broad range of offender and corrections issues within institutional and community settings. These studies, published by the Research Branch, Corporate Development, the Correctional Service of Canada, reflect the efforts of researchers within the Correctional Service of Canada as well as in private and academic sectors.

The reports in this issue of FORUM are presented in summary format and are available in their entirety through the Correctional Service of Canada's Web site: <http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca>. These reports are in the standard HTML format, as well as the Adobe 3.0 PDF format. You may request certain reports by faxing our Research Information Centre at (613) 996-2867 or by e-mail at [reslib@magi.com](mailto:reslib@magi.com).

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# Offender risk/needs assessment: A study of conditional releases (R-01, 1989)

by Motiuk, L., and Porporino, F.J.

The researchers take into consideration that predictor instruments used for assessing "risk" are static in nature and cannot be responsive to differential management strategies. Consequently, if risk scores are to be used to determine levels of supervision, then the problem of changing levels of supervision over time becomes clear. They rationalize that, as validity need areas are addressed, the relative risk the offender represents will be reduced and less supervision and contact will be required to manage that offender effectively in the community. They hypothesize that if a meaningful and significant relationship could be shown between identified needs and conditional release outcomes, then a combined risk/needs assessment procedure may be useful for differentiating offenders under community supervision.

This study examines the potential for an offender risk/needs assessment process in establishing guidelines or standards for varying levels of supervision on conditional release.

As a preliminary investigation, the study examined three areas. First, it re-examined the predictive validity of a traditional risk assessment procedure, separately for parole and mandatory supervision samples. Second, it attempted to identify some of the major needs characteristics of those offenders who succeed or fail while under conditional release. Third, it looked at how a combination of risk and needs assessment might yield improved predictions of release outcome.

The automated Offender Information Service was used to identify and draw the sample selection from offenders on conditional release who either successfully completed their parole or mandatory supervision between January 1 and December 31, 1985, or had their parole or mandatory supervision revoked during that same period. Approximately 4,523 cases were identified across Canada.

In generating the final sample, all five Correctional Service of Canada regions would have equal representation. Within each region, male offenders would be classified into one of four groups:

- those who reached their warrant expiry date while on parole;
- those who were revoked while on parole;
- those who reached their warrant expiry date while on mandatory supervision; and
- those who were revoked while on mandatory supervision.

This resulted in a randomly stratified sample of approximately 600 cases, 150 cases per conditional release grouping.

Due to inaccessible files and the elimination of samples that did not meet the criteria, a total of 221 cases – 103 offenders who were on parole and 118 who were on mandatory supervision – remained at this stage of the sampling process.

The data gathering came from the community case management files of each case. A structured information coding schedule was developed to gather relevant data in 12 general areas: demographics, juvenile history, index offence(s), offence dynamics, socio-economic and psychological background, institutional adjustment, prerelease performance, release data, community supervision performance, final outcome data, original offence(s) and prior criminal history.

The findings of the study, in brief, suggest that while needs level appears to show ample variation within risk level categories, the overwhelming consideration would be whether there are combinations of risk/needs levels which yield improved release predictions. The findings further suggest that a risk/needs instrument may be particularly useful for the differential allocation of controls and services to higher risk cases on conditional release.

In general, the results of the study indicate that offender risk/needs assessments may have some practical utility for community case managers and suggest that further development and refinement of a risk/needs assessment tool would be a worthwhile pursuit in light of its potential relevance to conditional release outcomes. ■



# Pilot implementation of a Custody Rating Scale: Interim report (R-02, 1989)

by Porporino, F.J., Luciani, F., Motiuk, L., Johnston, M., and Mainwaring, B.

In June 1988, a pilot project implementing the new Custody Rating Scale was introduced as a component of the penitentiary placement process. The test areas were the Quebec and Pacific regions, and all initial placement decisions in these two regions were to be made using the Custody Rating Scale as a replacement for the benchmark codes found in the penitentiary placement report.

An assessment of the effects of adopting this new classification tool was twofold:

- an analysis of the implementation process — to determine how the scale would be accepted by case management staff; and
- an analysis of the impact on classification decisions — to determine the usefulness and appropriateness of the scale in classifying inmates to the lowest suitable level of security.

One-day training workshops were conducted for field staff who would be applying the scale. A user's guide provided detailed instructions on how to complete the scale, and detailed

explanations and definitions for each item to ensure consistency and uniformity of application.

All data captured on the Custody Rating Scale and support documents (i.e., penitentiary placement reports and fingerprint section records) completed by the participating case management officers were to be forwarded to National Headquarters. Any concerns raised by the participants relating to the use of the new scale were addressed through various media of communication to maximize quality control.

In brief, the findings indicated minor disagreement with participating regional case managers on the effectiveness of the instrument, but there was general acceptance that it was an accurate tool for classification.

The findings also provided a sense of what issues must be addressed before further implementation of the Custody Rating Scale. ■

## Access to information

*The Research Branch, Correctional Service of Canada, regularly produces research reports and briefs on a variety of corrections-related topics. To obtain copies of specific reports/briefs, contact the Research Information Centre at (613) 995-3975.*

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# Family violence review: Prevention and treatment of abusive behaviour (R-03, 1989)

by *B. Appleford Associates*

For many centuries, family violence was considered a private affair subject to treatment as a crime only when resulting in severe injury or death. It is only recently that it has been recognized as a serious social problem requiring the intervention of criminal justice, social welfare and mental health agencies.

The revelations of the prevalence of family violence and its effects on society as a whole came to light in regard to child abuse in the 1950s, wife abuse in the 1970s and elder abuse in the 1980s. Violence is produced by a range of biological, economic, demographic, cultural and psychological factors.

This review identifies those factors which are relevant to the occurrence of family violence and to the treatment of abusers, and applies this information in the context of the correctional system.

The study sets its framework by outlining definitions and descriptions applied to the wide

range of abuse situations and likely to be met with general agreement. The research presented an extensive list of abuser characteristics gathered from clinical and survey sources. It also identified risk factors supported by an overview of treatment models employed in family violence based on the theoretical approaches to causation.

Conclusions on effective treatment suggest modest evidence of the success of group treatment after six months to one year and support continued effort in further research and in developing treatment models. The research report, in its recommendations for corrections, outlines program proposals and needs for both the offender and victim(s) of family violence. It acknowledges the significance of incest as an act of violence but does not address the issue as part of the study on the premise that treatment in this area would be "special needs." ■

# Validation of an adult offender classification system for Newfoundland and Labrador (R-04, 1989)

by *Robinson, D., and Porporino, F.J.*

The Community Correction Branch of the Department of Justice of Newfoundland and Labrador introduced the Wisconsin Case Classification System in October 1984. The system combines several recidivism risk indicators, including criminal history and psychosocial functioning, to classify probationers into high, medium and low risk levels. The classification procedures provide an objective method of matching probationer risk levels with supervision standards. Frequency of contact with probation officers and casework time is allotted to individual cases in proportion to the risk level identified by the classification

system. Hence, probationers at highest risk of becoming re-involved in criminal activity automatically receive the highest levels of supervision.

The implementation of the system included a research component aimed at the effectiveness of the Wisconsin system in Newfoundland and Labrador. Reconvictions for offences committed during probation were monitored for 200 probationers who had been classified using the Wisconsin system. The recidivism rate, including reconvictions and absconsions, was 10.5 % (21/200).

The Wisconsin system showed a good measure of success in identifying probationers who would reoffend during supervision. The recidivism rate for cases classified as low risk was 3%, while the rate for medium and high risk cases was 17%. Statistical tests revealed that the difference in recidivism observed for "low" versus "medium" and "high" risk groups was greater than would be expected by chance. The success of the system can be measured in terms of the fact that close to 50% of the 200 cases had been defined as low risk probationers, and members of this group subsequently recidivated at a very low rate.

The classification levels also predicted regular versus early terminations of supervision. Fifty percent of low risk cases received early terminations compared to 13% among medium and high risk cases. This difference was also statistically significant.

A shortcoming of the system was that it failed to differentiate between the recidivism rates of medium and high risk cases. However, exploratory analysis indicated that changes to the scoring of the Wisconsin risk/need device would not result in improvements to the classification system currently in use.

Re-assessments conducted using the Wisconsin system were also completed for a subsample of 108 cases. On average, reclassifications were completed eight months after the initial classification. The results indicated a high degree of predictive validity for classifications. Recidivism rates of 1.5%, 37.9% and 54.5% were recorded for cases reclassified low, medium and high risk, respectively. Thus, the initial inability of the system to discriminate between medium and high risk cases was no longer observed when reclassifications were examined. ■

## Role of the Research Branch (R-05, 1989)

by Porporino, F.J.

This report presents a general strategy for the development of the research function in the Correctional Service of Canada, and proposes a particular role and mandate for the Research Branch in the Communications and Corporate Development Sector. It outlines a process for the development and approval of an annual national research plan, suggests a mechanism for periodic review of progress and revision of priorities if necessary, and describes a multifaceted approach for the effective

communication and dissemination of research findings.

In defining applied corrections research, the report states that all research conducted should be relevant in an operational sense. It should also clearly relate to some policy issue, either current or emerging, that is responsive to regional and national needs. All research must reflect the best possible standards of scientific rigour and be communicated in a language understandable to its total readership. ■

# Field test of the Community Risk/Needs Management Scale: A study of offenders on caseload (R-06, 1989)

by Motiuk, L., and Porporino, F.J.

The report provides a comprehensive review of the development of the Community Risk/Needs Management Scale and presents an overview of the first wave of caseload data collected during the field test. It furnishes a descriptive profile of the needs of offenders under supervision, examines some of the validation data gathered on the instrument and assesses the need for any adjustments or refinements of the instrument.

The Community Risk/Needs Management Scale was applied on a pilot basis at 12 separate community field-test sites across Canada. Supervising case managers assessed a total of 453 federally sentenced male offenders. The cases studied were either on day parole, full parole or mandatory supervision. The behaviour of those offenders who were assessed was subsequently monitored for a six-month follow-up period.

The results of the Community Risk/Needs Management Scale field test validated previous

findings regarding the predictive value of offender risk/needs assessment. Offenders were easily differentiated by case managers as to the nature and level of needs presented, and these assessments of "case needs" were consistently related with conditional release outcomes at the six-month follow-up.

Overall, the field test of the Community Risk/Needs Management Scale strongly supported the potential usefulness of an objective risk/needs assessment process in establishing guidelines or standards for varying levels of supervision on conditional release. It would seem that the Community Risk/Needs Management Scale can be used effectively to focus supervising resources by capitalizing on the professional judgment of case management staff regarding case needs. Moreover, it can also provide a useful means of monitoring changes in the offender's behaviour, attitudes and circumstances which are clearly related to release outcome. ■

# Effectiveness of the Cognitive Skills Training Program: From pilot to national implementation (R-07, 1991)

by the Research and Statistics Branch, Correctional Service of Canada

This report examines the effectiveness of the Cognitive Skills Training Program in relation to:

- postrelease outcomes of offenders — reduction of recidivism;
- selection of appropriate offenders for participation in intensive rehabilitative programming — identification of high risk offenders; and
- pre/post-test changes made by participants on a variety of attitudinal and cognitive skills factors — positive effects on targeted dimensions.

The effectiveness of the Cognitive Skills Training Program is assessed using a sample of offenders who participated in the program since the national implementation began in 1990.

The issue of the program's effects on recidivism is examined using postrelease follow-up data for offenders who participated in the initial Cognitive Skills Training Program pilot project. The readmission rate for participants is compared with the rate for a group of offenders who were selected for participation but did not take part in the program.

The selection of high risk offenders is addressed by examining the characteristics of offenders chosen following the national implementation of the Cognitive Skills Training Program. Finally, the program's effectiveness in producing intended changes on the attitudinal and cognitive dimensions which the program addresses is investigated using pre/post-test psychometric data which have been gathered for the national implementation sample. (See a description of the Cognitive Skills Training program in "Focusing on Successful

Reintegration: Cognitive Skills Training for Offenders," Research Branch, CSC-1992, No. R-19.)

In brief, the investigation of two samples of offenders who took part in the program revealed that, in comparison to non-participants, participants were less likely to recidivate following release. There is also evidence that the program is effective in producing positive changes on the intermediate targets which are associated with recidivism. ■

## Case Management Strategies survey (R-08, 1990)

by Andrews, D.A., Hodge, R.D., Robinson, D., and Andrews, F.J.

The study surveys users' evaluations of their initial training in Case Management Strategies (CMS), opinions pertaining to CMS in the workplace and opinions regarding both future refinements of CMS and priority areas for future action. Questionnaires concerning training in CMS in the workplace were sent to 966 CMS users, of which 528 (55%) were returned in time for analysis and reporting.

Overall evaluations of initial training in CMS were evenly distributed across the satisfied, dissatisfied and in-between categories. Some variations in the evaluations of training in CMS were traced to respondent and organizational training variables. Positive evaluations of initial training were associated with a positive pre-training attitude toward CMS, the number of days of training received, having been trained by a trainer with links to the National

Council on Crime and Delinquency, being institution-based, working in the Atlantic Region and not having pursued formal studies in criminology. Evaluations of training were more positive regarding the basics of scripted interview than they were with regard to CMS in the overall case management context.

Great variability in opinions regarding CMS in the workplace was found. On average, however, the evaluations were negative. The sources of the variation in opinions concerning CMS in the workplace generally replicated those found for opinions regarding training in CMS.

Major efforts are indicated for the future in clarifying and, perhaps, rethinking the links between CMS and the overall responsibilities of case management officers. ■

## Development and validation of a psychological referral screening tool (R-09, 1990)

by *Serin, R.*

This research describes an alternative to the current procedure of providing relatively undifferentiated psychological assessments for offenders reviewed for release. Presently, all Category 1 offenders and those with overt psychological or psychiatric problems are referred for psychological assessment before review by the National Parole Board. The alternative model screens referrals according to factors empirically related to recidivism. Inmates are separated into three categories, with the more serious cases receiving a more comprehensive assessment.

Preliminary analysis demonstrates that the derived referral screening form is reliable across time and observers, and correlates significantly with measures of criminality, psychopathy and recidivism (the latter provided by the Statistical Information on Recidivism score). These findings suggest that such a screening model might profitably be adopted, although normative data on a larger sample are required to determine appropriate cutoff scores for the three categories. ■

## Differences in response to long-term imprisonment: Implications for the management of long-term offenders (R-10, 1991)

by *Porporino, F.J.*

This research paper addresses the factors to be considered in differentiating long-term offenders according to security and programming requirements. It illustrates, in particular, that differences in the criminal history and criminal orientation of these individuals are consistently predictive of how they will react and adjust to the prison experience.

The author follows the premise that corrections traditionally have dealt with their long-term offender population as a special, though fairly undifferentiated group of individuals. Long-termers, and in particular life-sentence offenders, have been managed routinely, at least for the early portion of their sentence, as maximum security risks. Release planning for these individuals has been typically postponed until well into the sentence. Because numbers have dictated the kinds of programs and services that are offered, little specialized programming for long-termers has been developed.

With the number of these offenders steadily increasing and with the growing need to make more effective use of scarce resources, a uniform approach in managing these offenders is no longer sensible or practical. The diversity that characterizes this population should be considered.

The relationships in this report are here for illustrative purposes. Examining other indices of adjustment or reaction to the prison experience would certainly reflect other kinds of differences within long-term offender populations. One conclusion is evident: long-term offenders can be differentiated in meaningful ways, and approaches for managing these individuals should consider the diversity that characterizes this population.

It is evident that long-term offenders react to imprisonment in different ways, and approaches for managing these individuals should consider these differences. ■

# Patterns of alcohol and drug use among federal offenders as assessed by the Computerized Lifestyle Screening Instrument (R-11, 1991)

by Robinson, D., Porporino, F.J., and Millson, W.

This research report represents the first in a series which will examine substance abuse and criminal behaviour using data from the Computerized Lifestyle Screening Instrument (CLSI). This report presents descriptive information derived from the various components of the instrument and explores the development of a typology for the purpose of screening and prioritizing offenders for treatment. The data for this report are based on a sample of 503 offenders who completed the CLSI in the Atlantic and Prairie regions of the Correctional Service of Canada.

The results of this comprehensive study and the data generated indicated the utility of CLSI was promising and worth exploring further. Analyses of the data suggest that the self-reported information provided on alcohol and drug problems can be used reliably to measure levels of substance abuse problems among reception inmates. The reported frequency of alcohol and drug use and the link with criminal behaviour was found to be similar to the self-reports obtained previously for a U.S. sample of inmates. The estimate of the number

of offenders who require assistance for substance abuse problems is also consistent with previous attempts to measure the prevalence of substance abuse problems in our inmate population. In addition, the reception inmates who completed the CLSI assessment battery were very positive in their evaluation of the system.

The CLSI proved to be comprehensive in scope with respect to the number of variables measured. Future research will need to focus on some of the data relating to substance abuse and crime and, in particular, make further attempts to link this type of assessment information to the overall substance abuse screening process.

This report lays some groundwork for structuring the front-end screening procedure and presents a model for developing such a screening system. The figures generated from the data of this study suggest that the CLSI is a very appropriate tool on which to base the development of such a front-end screening system. ■

## Correctional Service of Canada Mission Statement, signed by the Honourable Andy Scott, Solicitor General of Canada, September 25 , 1997....

*The Correctional Service of Canada, as part of the criminal justice system and respecting the rule of law, contributes to the protection of society by actively encouraging and assisting offenders to become law-abiding citizens, while exercising reasonable, safe, secure and humane control.*

# Literature review on the factors related to escape from correctional institutions (R-12, 1991)

by Sturrock, R., Porporino, F.J., and Johnston, J.

Correctional institutions are intended to provide safe, secure and humane containment for convicted offenders who pose a potential threat to the community. For the protection of the community, the single most important responsibility of correctional institutions is to prevent escapes or other unauthorized "walkaways." Although it has been understood that not all convicted offenders pose an equal threat to society, and not all institutions are the same with respect to the security measures they provide, escapees are cause for serious concern both among correctional staff and the public in general.

This report provides an overview of identified factors related to escape behaviour and methods of analysis. One of the two commonly used approaches is the quasi-experimental design which typically focuses on archival data and compares a group of non-escapees to escapees. The other is a simple descriptive approach to analyzing the characteristics of inmates involved in escape incidents. The authors also recognize that much of this research is outdated and sometimes experimentally inadequate.

The report suggests the focus of research, which has examined factors related to escape from correctional institutions, generally falls into three categories: static factors, situational or dynamic factors, and psychological characteristics of inmates. The report also identifies another body of research that addresses institutional security, such as perimeter fences, walls, alarm/patrol systems and towers.

For the purpose of this paper, the authors have reviewed the range of static and dynamic/situational factors that research has examined in order to obtain a clearer understanding of the phenomenon of escapees.

The research suggests there was sufficient evidence to cite static factors (such as prior escapes, prior confinements and age) and dynamic/situational factors (such as family problems, alcohol abuse and institutional crisis situations) as related to escape. Understanding the precursors to escape is the first step in developing appropriate preventive measures. ■

## What's happening in applied research related to corrections?

*Research continues to play a major role in the development of new technology for the Correctional Service of Canada. As the Research Plan 1997-1998 moves along, we find ourselves...*

- *field testing a newly devised security reclassification scale;*
- *reviewing the Offender Intake Assessment (OIA) process;*
- *piloting an automated approach to psychological intake assessment;*
- *examining some newly developed measures of sex offender treatment gain;*
- *building a compendium of "what works" in offender programming; and*
- *gathering ideas for the 1998-99 Research Plan.*



# Conditional release supervision standards: An update in training for offender risk/needs assessment (R-13, 1991)

by Motiuk, L., and Brunet, L.

The research report provides an overview on the training sessions conducted for the implementation of the standards for conditional release supervision. It outlines the training format used and describes the hands-on training exercise in relation to the Community Risk/Needs Management Scale assessment device.

The hands-on training exercise was designed to establish an acceptable level of agreement among community case managers for frequency of contact decisions. It focused on two different approaches. One was an individual assessment of a practice case, the other, a group assessment of a different case.

Overall, the results of the hands-on training exercise indicate that systematic assessments have practical utility for case managers working with offenders in the community.

The following provides a summary of the major findings.

- The hands-on training exercises confirmed the ability of community case managers to apply the Community Risk/Needs Management Scale as a systematic method for assessing the needs of offenders, the risk of reoffending and any other factor that

might affect the successful adjustment of an offender into the community.

- The results of the practice case assessments demonstrated acceptable levels of agreement among case managers when assessing the same case for the first time using the Community Risk/Needs Management Scale with respect to frequency of contact considerations.
- The variability in case needs level ratings at different training sites points to a need for clarification of the various needs dimensions being assessed with training and reference to the guidelines.
- A combination of individual and group practice exercises can result in improved levels of agreement among case managers for risk/needs ratings.

Thus, it appears that, throughout the hands-on training exercises, there was considerable agreement among trainees regarding the supervision requirements of particular cases. More important, the training on systematic offender assessment resulted in the implementation of Section 5 of the conditional release supervision standards across federal corrections. ■

# Persons with intellectual disability who are incarcerated for criminal offences: A literature review (R-14, 1991)

by Endicott, O.

This comprehensive review provides readers with insight into complex and sensitive incarceration issues relevant to intellectually disabled offenders. The literature review addresses a range of subject matters, such as definitions and descriptors, measuring intellectual disability and the importance of making the distinction between intellectual disability and mental illness.

The review discusses the relationship between intellectual disability and criminal behaviour, defining characteristics of offenders and types of crimes committed by persons with intellectual impairment. It also examines "the prison

experience" as a punitive environment of exploitation and victimization subject to the conditions of prison discipline. The author presents a discussion on the rights of the intellectually disabled offender, including institutional habitation, equality and special needs.

The review explores some research questions requiring further investigation in the Canadian context to determine the magnitude of the problem of persons with intellectual disabilities serving criminal sentences in Canadian correctional facilities. ■

# Measuring performance towards Corporate Objective #1 (R-15, 1991)

by Porporino, F.J., and Robinson, D.

This document attempts to develop a framework for arriving at a common understanding, and an agreed-on set of procedures, for ongoing monitoring and reporting of performance related to Corporate Objective #1 (as stated below). A clearly stated objective is a necessary first step in deriving valid, reliable, sensitive and easily interpretable "summary performance indicators."

*Enhance the service's contribution to the protection of society by safely reintegrating a significantly large number of offenders as law-abiding citizens while reducing the relative use of incarceration as a major correctional intervention.*

The study has three aims:

- to propose, and to explain the underlying rationale for, a set of "summary performance indicators" relevant to Corporate Objective #1;
- to affirm the value of the Service's corporate automated data sources and to outline a broad-based quality control process to improve on

time lines and integrity of data capture; and

- to suggest an approach wherein the regions and the National Headquarters Programs and Operations, Corporate Management, and Communications and Corporate Development sections can make their respective and appropriate contributions to the reporting and analysis of the Service's corporate performance.

The study outlines the essential qualities that should characterize corporate performance indicators as commonly understood in the management and organizational effectiveness literature. In their conceptual model, the researchers propose three aspects of Corporate Objective #1 that can be distinguished as performance dimensions that should be monitored.

These dimensions — differentiation, time lines of release and reintegration — are defined and discussed in relation to indices relationships and are reflected on a series of bar charts. ■

# Evaluation of Correctional Service of Canada substance abuse programs (R-16, 1991)

by Gendreau, P., and Goggin, C.

This report evaluates the Correctional Service of Canada's substance abuse program using the Correctional Program Evaluation Inventory (CPEI) which was adapted to accommodate this survey.

CPEI consists of a variety of items that assess several factors found to have been associated with the literature on "what works" with offenders. These factors are program implementation, client assessment, treatment modalities, staff characteristics or practices and program evaluation. The CPEI allows for a comprehensive summary of the current functioning of a program as well as a rating of the program for its potential effectiveness.

The survey, national in scope, was sent to 170 substance abuse programs directly operated by the Correctional Service of Canada; 112 were returned. Deficits were discovered across all areas of programming activity. Programs were also assessed as to "quality." Most programs were found to be less than adequate, although several satisfactory programs were identified.

While it defines the limitations of the study, the report also suggests that the findings will allow policy makers and clinicians to target deficits in a rational, constructive and positive manner. ■

# Dynamic and behavioural antecedents to recidivism: A retrospective analysis (R-17, 1991)

by Zamble, E., and Quinsey, V.

This study identifies dynamic antecedents of recidivism that can be measured in the postrelease period. Large numbers of measures were examined simultaneously for predictive value. These measures can be divided into several classes: historical (e.g., offence history), individual differences (e.g., anger proneness, intelligence, coping ability), general postrelease (e.g., self-ratings of mood in the time before the reoffence or during a specific period of successful supervision) and specific postrelease (e.g., the particular events that preceded a specific arrest). The initial data analysis task was to reduce the number of variables within a given predictor domain. Measures that had intractable problems (e.g., missing data, extremely skewed distributions, no real variance) were eliminated. The remainder of the variables were examined for redundancy; highly intercorrelated variables were combined or eliminated.

The analyses are descriptive in nature. The researchers compare offenders who were convicted of robbery to offenders convicted of serious assault using key variables.

One of the findings of this study suggests that the separation of recidivists into violent predator and other inmate groups should permit more accurate delineation of the relationship of emotional and environmental precipitants to criminal acts in both types of offenders. These results will have direct implications for the development and supervision of more effective programs of treatment. Similarly, the separation of "other" offenders into several groups that will differ according to precipitants and motivations, as some of the results presented imply, may lead to some very useful guidelines for supervision. ■

## Research on staff commitment: A discussion paper (R-18, 1990)

by *Robinson, D., Simourd, L., and Porporino, F.J.*

This study measures the overall commitment of staff to the Correctional Service of Canada and to the type of work demanded in corrections. The research also investigates a number of attitude, personality and organizational variables which may be associated with variation in levels of staff commitment.

As this was a pilot study, participants were asked to provide feedback on the data collection package to assist the research team in identifying aspects of the study that needed clarification or elaboration and providing a general barometer on how a national study might be received by staff.

The methodology of the study required the support of two regions with a total of 30 employees (15 from each region). Employees from both community and institutional settings

were involved, with job classifications ranging from correctional and case management officers to management-level employees.

In addition to the major criterion, organizational commitment, the study examined three additional organizational outcome measures: job satisfaction, motivation and job performance. A number of predictor measures were incorporated into the design of the study including demographic variables, job attitudes and personality variables.

The outcome of this pilot study provided the opportunity for an in-depth review of the research design and methods and set the stage for a larger scale national study. (See "Staff Commitment in the Correctional Service of Canada," Research Branch, CSC-1992, No. R-21.) ■

## Focusing on successful reintegration: Cognitive skills training for offenders (R-19, 1991)

by *Porporino, F.J., Fabiano, E., and Robinson, D.*

This paper summarizes the underlying principles of the cognitive approach, outlines a strategy for ensuring careful and systematic implementation, and gives some preliminary research data on the effectiveness of the Cognitive Skills Training Program in relation to:

- selection of appropriate offenders for participation in intensive rehabilitative programming — identification of high risk offenders;

- effects on attitudes, behaviour and cognitive skills — positive effects on targeted dimensions; and
- postrelease outcomes of offenders — reduction of recidivism.

The paper provides a comprehensive overview of the development of the cognitive skills training program, program implementation, program effects, postrelease outcomes and future program development. ■

## **B**ackground to the staff commitment research project (R-20, 1992)

*by Robinson, D., Simourd, L., and Porporino, F.J.*

**T**o increase our knowledge of the levels and determinants of staff commitment in the Correctional Service of Canada, the research project was designed to survey all staff employed in institutional, community and headquarters operations. The strategy adopted relied on the use of an initial pilot study conducted in three regions. Based on the outcome of the pilot study, the research design was refined and a

national study followed. The pilot approach ensured field input at the research design stage and provided a method of generating staff support for the project. (See "Research on Staff Commitment: A Discussion Paper," Research Branch, CSC-1990, No. R-18; and "Staff Commitment in the Correctional Service of Canada," Research Branch, CSC-1992, No. R-21.) ■

## **S**taff commitment in the Correctional Service of Canada (R-21, 1992)

*by Robinson, D., Porporino, F.J., and Simourd, L.*

**T**his research report presents a major national research undertaking conducted in 1991. The project was designed to provide a better understanding of the factors which affect staff commitment in the Correctional Service of Canada. It was intended that the knowledge gained from the study would contribute to the Service's ability to enhance the commitment and motivation of staff to pursue the challenging objectives of the Correctional Service of Canada.

This national study follows an earlier pilot project used to test the research measuring instruments and to gauge the receptivity of staff to this type of research. (See "Background to the Staff Commitment Research Project," Research Branch, CSC-1992, No. R-20.)

The random sampling method, use of group-administered rather than mailed questionnaires, the conduct of personal interviews with staff participants and the high rate of consent to participate are the major strengths of this study. Of the total sample selected, over 90% took part.

In past research it has been found that highly committed staff members possess a variety of desirable characteristics — characteristics which serve to enhance the organization's

ability to achieve its goals. For example, highly committed staff members were high performers, were more involved in their jobs, were less likely to want to leave their work organizations for new jobs, exhibited less absenteeism, possessed high motivation to perform at their work and expressed high job satisfaction.

An important finding of this study was that staff members who displayed strong commitment to the Correctional Service of Canada were different from those who expressed less commitment on a number of these characteristics. This was significant in such areas as job seeking, desire to leave the organization, job satisfaction, job involvement and job performance.

The results of the study also provided a measure of levels of commitment within the Service and demonstrated that commitment is a desirable characteristic to encourage in staff. The report also notes the importance of exploring the reasons for varying levels of commitment among staff and identifies the following factors that were significantly related to commitment: type of job, work site, region, length of service, gender, attitudes

toward corrections and rehabilitation, human service orientation, openness to change, openness of the organization, career development orientation and job stress. Two demographic factors, age and education, were found to be unrelated to levels of commitment.

The report states that "attitudes towards corrections" was the factor most strongly related to staff commitment. Holding positive views about the field of corrections appeared to be fundamental to being committed to the Correctional Service of Canada.

In brief, the report suggests there are a number of strategies available for enhancing the commitment levels of staff. The results of this study provide a sound knowledge base for selecting the most appropriate commitment enhancement strategies, and suggest that further planning and discussion among various groups of Service staff will be helpful in generating additional strategies. ■

## Can educating adult offenders counteract recidivism? (R-22, 1992)

by Porporino, F.J., and Robinson, D.

This paper describes some efforts within the Correctional Service of Canada to study the benefits of its Adult Basic Education programs, both for the general process of reintegration and in reducing the likelihood of recidivism for different categories of offenders.

The paper provides an overview of the fundamental approach that the Correctional Service of Canada has taken in implementing and delivering the Adult Basic Education

program. The research findings indicate there is encouraging evidence that involvement in Adult Basic Education during incarceration can improve adjustment after release, particularly for higher risk individuals. The existing evidence suggests that the current commitment to teaching basic language and mathematical skills should not be curtailed. ■

### Submissions for publication in FORUM

*Recently, we have received articles for publication in FORUM that do not follow the Guide for Prospective Authors. In future, articles that do not meet these guidelines will be returned to the originator for the necessary adjustments. When forwarding your article, ensure the diskette is enclosed. Your co-operation in this regard is appreciated.*

# Factors related to unlawful walkaways from minimum security institutions (R-23, 1992)

by Johnston, J., and Motiuk, L.

This report is the first in a series on walkaways and provides a descriptive profile of offenders who unlawfully depart from minimum security institutions. Data were collected on all offenders who had walked away from federal minimum security institutions in the Ontario region (Bath, Beaver Creek, Frontenac, Pittsburg) over a 15-month period (January 1, 1990 to April 15, 1991). There were 70 offenders who had unlawfully departed during this period.

The results of the study revealed that unlawful departures from minimum security facilities were most likely to occur at institutions with higher admission rates, during the spring and summer months and within several months of minimum security placement. Moreover, inmates who walked away were more often under 30 years of age (75.4%), Caucasian

(97.1%), single (58.6%), serving sentences of under four years (71.5%) and had a major offence that was property-related (58.6%).

An important feature of the walkaway study was that it sought to capture inmates' perceptions of their minimum security placement and the circumstances surrounding their unlawful departures. A systematic review of case file documentation and a descriptive profile of motivating circumstances strongly suggest this group fits the higher risk and multineed category since both "static" and "dynamic" or situational factors are present that are amenable to a more specialized offender risk/needs scale. ■

# The prevalence, nature and severity of mental health problems among federal male inmates in Canadian penitentiaries (R-24, 1991)

by Motiuk, L., and Porporino, F.J.

This research report describes in detail the design of the mental health survey commissioned by the Correctional Service of Canada in September 1988. This national survey assessed the prevalence, nature and severity of mental health problems among the male inmate population and provided precise information on prevalence rates for the major categories of mental disorder at national and regional levels, as well as across a variety of offender categories.

The survey was unique in that it relied on a structured interviewing instrument — the Diagnostic Interview Schedule (DIS) — and

employed objective diagnostic criteria described in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DIM 111) of the American Psychiatric Association. A total of 2,185 DIS interviews were conducted with a stratified (by region) random sample of inmates.

The results of the survey are organized around eight separate groups of diagnoses: organic, psychotic, depressive, anxiety, psycho-sexual, antisocial, substance abuse/dependence and alcohol use/dependence disorders.

This major survey of mental disorders among penitentiary inmates has shown that mental health is rapidly becoming one of the major challenges facing federal corrections. ■

# **A**n analysis of temporary absences and the people who receive them (R-25, 1992)

by Grant, B.A., and Belcourt, R.

**T**his report analyzes data on temporary absences and the people who receive them. Temporary absences provide an opportunity for the correctional system (consisting of case management officers, offenders, treatment personnel, parole officers and administrators) to test the offenders' ability to behave appropriately in non-prison settings under varying degrees of supervision.

Each year there are approximately 50,000 applications for temporary absences from Correctional Service of Canada prisons.

Approximately 7,000 are granted. Absences range from a few hours to three days. Successfully completed temporary absences have averaged 99.5%; however, over the last few years, success rates have risen to 99.9%.

The report presents analysis of the temporary absence program, profiling applicants and recipients, trends, offenders most likely to succeed or fail, taking into consideration fixed variables. ■

# **A**n assessment of the offender substance abuse prerelease program at Drumheller Institution (R-26, 1992)

by Millson, W., and Robinson, D.

**T**his report describes the results of the test measurements completed by a group of offenders participating in a prerelease substance abuse program. An assessment of the program from the point of view of both participants and instructors is also provided.

Results showed that the offenders attained better scores on all measures after program participation. Although not all the post-program scores showed statistically significant improvements, the differences in the scores from pre- to post-testing were all positive. Analysis of post-program scores between severe and non-severe drug/alcohol users

indicated that the program is having a positive effect on the offenders for which it was intended. Evaluation of both program and control group scores showed that program participants scored better on the majority of the test measures when compared to the control group. These preliminary results suggest that the program was successful in promoting positive change in attitudes and knowledge regarding substance abuse.

Offender and instructor evaluations of the program were generally positive. Program participants indicated a very high degree of satisfaction with both the process and the content of the program. ■



# Unlawful departures from minimum security institutions: A comparative investigation (R-27, 1992)

by Johnston, J., and Motiuk, L.

This study compares a group of federal offenders who had walked away from minimum security facilities to a matched sample of similarly situated offenders who had remained in custody (non-walkaways) on a variety of relevant measures. To conduct a comparative investigation, offenders who had unlawfully departed from minimum security facilities over a specified time period were to be matched with offenders who had remained in custody in minimum security institutions at the same time. Aside from these matching criteria, non-walkaways would be randomly

selected from listings of the available minimum security population.

The report identifies a series of comparisons between walkaway and non-walkaway offenders to determine factors which might distinguish these two groups in terms of offender characteristics, criminal conviction record, prison incident history and classification.

Background Reference: "Factors Related to Unlawful Walkaways from Minimum Security Institutions," Research Branch, CSC-1992, No. R-23. ■

# An historical review of the role and practice of psychology in the field of corrections (R-28, 1992)

by Watkins, R.E.

The history and development of the discipline of correctional psychology is reviewed. Particular attention is paid to the evolution of psychological practice in the applied correctional context and to the emergence of a thematic/generic model of the role of the correctional psychologist as well as the functions and activities he/she undertakes while performing that role. To position the development of psychology in corrections and the forces which helped shape its development and application properly, a brief overview of the historical antecedents of modern correctional philosophy

and practice is provided. Two factors are noted for their direct and indirect influence in this regard: the introduction of the use of confinement as punishment for criminal behaviour and the establishment of penal institutions in order to carry out such punishment.

The paper closes with an examination of practical aspects of the operation and maintenance of a correctional psychology unit, and summarizes further evidence of the growth of the discipline and its unique contribution to the correctional process. ■

# Preliminary results of the national sex offender census (R-29, 1991)

by Porporino, F.J., and Motiuk, L.

The sex offender census was conducted to identify accurately the number, types and characteristics of sex offenders under the jurisdiction of the Correctional Service of Canada, both in institutions and under community supervision.

This research follows a series of reviews by the Correctional Service of Canada on programs and services for sex offenders and an identified need in Canadian federal corrections for more co-ordinated sex offender programming and service strategy. The report describes the undertaking of a national sex offender population study that would provide a census identification of all sex offenders and an extensive case file review of a large sample of sex offenders from across the country. The latter was subject to a separate follow-up research report.

A sex offender census checklist survey instrument was designed to gather case-specific information on status (current offences or previous history), details of the current sex offence (nature of the offence, number of victims, age and gender of victims, degree of injury, degree of force, presence of alcohol or drugs), past history of sexual offences (patterns, seriousness) and treatment history (dates, type/nature, location, sponsors).

The results of this research and analysis provides direction for the Correctional Service of Canada in the development of typologies for differential treatment regimes. ■

# An examination of sex offender case histories in federal corrections (R-30, 1993)

by Motiuk, L., and Porporino, F.J.

This report details the development and methodology of a structured case file review instrument to gather case-specific information on demographics, criminal history (general, juvenile, sex offence), education/employment, marital/family problems, sexual abuse history, mental health, substance abuse and sex offender typology (victim gender and age preferences). This research will enhance our knowledge of the nature and characteristics of sex offenders

under federal jurisdiction — both in institutions and under community supervision.

The case file review study is part of the research the Correctional Service of Canada is conducting to develop and evaluate special treatment programs for sex offenders.

Reference: "Preliminary Results of the National Sex Offender Census," Research Branch, CSC-1991, No. R-29. ■

# Survival time until suspension for sex offenders on conditional release (R-31, 1993)

by Motiuk, L., and Brown, S.

This study is a community follow-up investigation of the national sex offender census "Preliminary Results of National Sex Offender Census," Research Branch, CSC-1991, No. R-29.). In 1991, the Correctional Service of Canada conducted a nation-wide census which collected case-specific information on over 3,000 federal male sex offenders. A follow-up of the national census yielded a total of 793 sex offenders who were under community supervision at the time of the census and formed a "caseload" group. An additional 216 sex offenders who had been released from federal institutions after the census formed a "new release" group for follow-up.

The report is a comprehensive examination of the use of survival analysis to explore the time

until suspension for sex offenders on conditional release.

Survival analyses of time until suspension for sex offenders on conditional release yielded important information on postrelease adjustment. As a relapse prevention strategy, the practice of issuing and executing suspension warrants for sex offenders was found to be strongly associated with the presence of "dynamic" or situational/victimization factors. This suggests that a systematic approach to assessing and re-assessing a sex offender's needs (marital situation, substance abuse, etc.) coupled with an awareness of sexual preferences (age, gender, number) and past sex offence history can improve the community supervision of sex offenders. ■

# Insights into innovative correctional industry: A case study of CORCAN at Warkworth Institution (R-32, 1993)

by Getkate, M.

This report describes the CORCAN operations at Warkworth Institution as an example of a leading prison industry in Canada. This case study was conducted to gain insights into the distinguishing characteristics of this program.

The CORCAN operation manufactures a variety of components for modular office furniture, and produced in excess of \$3 million worth of products in the 1992-93 fiscal year. Production facilities include five shops: cabinet, paint, sheet metal, welding and upholstery.

Inmates in the CORCAN program work a full day and are paid only for those hours worked. They receive training in one of the trades areas, and a record is kept of all apprenticeship hours which may be applied against requirements for trades apprenticeship.

The report reviews the manner in which CORCAN was integrated into the institution, the broad changes brought about by demands for product quality, and the nature of employee and organizational involvement. ■

# The prison careers of offenders with mental disorders (R-33, 1994)

by Porporino, F.J., and Motiuk, L.

This study follows a sample of federally incarcerated offenders diagnosed as having experienced a serious mental disorder.

There is general agreement, both within the research literature and among practitioners, that individuals with mental disorders are increasingly, and often unintentionally, caught in the ambit of the criminal justice system, vulnerable to arrest for minor offences and spending disproportionately more time on remand and awaiting a sentence disposition. Furthermore, many of these individuals are caught in a cyclical pattern of recurrent and brief encounters with both the mental health and criminal justice systems.

Comparatively little research has been conducted on those offenders diagnosed as having a mental illness but found legally sane, who commit relatively serious crimes and receive lengthy

terms of imprisonment. What remains unanswered regarding offenders with disorders serving lengthy prison terms is whether their criminal and prison careers differ from the careers of their counterparts without disorders.

This study examines aspects of the prison careers of these offenders with mental disorders, as well as pre-imprisonment criminal histories and postrelease outcomes. A matched sample of similarly situated offenders without diagnosed mental disorders was used as a comparative reference to examine possible differences in the correctional system's response to offenders with mental illness.

The results of this study suggest that there is a distinguishable and differential correctional response in the management of offenders with mental disorders who are convicted of serious offences. ■

# The validity of offender needs identification and analysis in community corrections (R-34, 1993)

by Motiuk, L., and Brown, S.

This research examines the validity of an enhanced case management approach to offender needs identification and analysis in community corrections.

The Case Needs Identification and Analysis (CNIA) portion of the offender intake (front-end) assessment process was adapted and piloted in the Ontario region for community corrections. While the CNIA protocol had collapsed the 12 need areas of the Community Risk/Needs Management Scale into seven need areas, the individual ratings for both criminal risk (low, high) and case need levels (low, medium, high) were retained as well as the individual ratings for each target domain. In addition, the community version of CNIA was enhanced to capture current employment status, level of

motivation for intervention and whether there is a special National Parole Board condition which could be used to effect intervention.

A sample of 604 federally sentenced adult offenders (573 males, 31 females) released from institutions in the Ontario region over a six-month period was gathered for study.

The results of the CNIA pilot validated previous findings regarding the operational value of systematically assessing and re-assessing offender risk and need as one part of the process in the successful reintegration of male and female offenders to the community. Both male and female offenders on conditional release were easily differentiated by case managers as to the nature and level of criminal risk and case needs presented. ■

# The Native offender substance abuse pretreatment program: Intermediate measures of program effectiveness (R-35, 1994)

by Weekes, J., and Millson, W.

Native offenders represent over 11% of the offenders incarcerated in Canadian federal institutions and more than 38% of the total inmate population in the Prairie region of the Correctional Service of Canada. Recent research has found that substance abuse is a serious criminogenic factor for Native offenders. In particular, this research found that although Native offenders did not differ from non-Native offenders in terms of the severity of their drug-taking behaviour, Native offenders evidenced more severe alcohol problems than non-Native offenders.

This report highlights the preliminary results of a substance abuse pretreatment program designed specifically to meet the needs and concerns of Native offenders. Originally a one-year research and development demonstration project, the Native Inmate Substance Abuse Treatment was developed by the National Native Association of Treatment Directors and jointly sponsored by four government agencies.

A total of 120 offenders from eight different Correctional Service of Canada institutions from across Canada participated in the program. Although alcohol was the major presenting problem for these offenders, over 92% of offenders in the sample had moderate-to-severe substance abuse problems (drugs or alcohol).

The results of a battery of measures administered before and after the program indicated that there were significant improvements in terms of offenders' knowledge and attitudes toward substance abuse, general problem-solving ability and recognition of Native cultural factors.

In general, ratings provided by program facilitators suggest that the overwhelming majority of offenders demonstrated improvement on a host of key performance indicators.

The authors also acknowledge that the results of this study are limited in scope due to the fact that it did not include a follow-up of offenders after the completion of the program. ■

## Research Briefs recently published

- B-17 *Results of the 1996 CSC Staff Survey: A Synopsis*, by D. Robinson, P. Lefaive and M. Muirhead.
- B-16 *Homicide, Sex, Robbery, and Drug Offenders in Federal Corrections: An End-of-1996 Review*, by L. Motiuk and R. Belcourt.

# Northern Aboriginal offenders in federal custody: NA profile (R-36, 1994)

by Johnston, J.

This study gathers information on the incarcerated population of northern Aboriginal offenders to profile those currently in federal custody.

Events such as the establishment of Nunavut, self-government issues and possible plans for repatriation of northern Aboriginals incarcerated in southern institutions, underscore the need for such study. Applied operational and programming issues come to the fore. Little is known about the language abilities or other needs of this unique group of offenders. By enhancing our knowledge of this population, the desired outcome would be more culturally sensitive treatment, delivered by a more culturally aware line staff as a positive step toward optimizing correctional practices for northern Aboriginals.

This study selected 64 male volunteers, or approximately half of all northern Aboriginal offenders incarcerated in institutions in the Prairie region and the Yellowknife Correctional Centre. The sample represented a range of

Aboriginal groups: Inuit, Dene, Métis, Chippewan, Gwich'in and other/mixed groups.

Initially, all 64 offenders were given face-to-face interviews covering such areas as personal background, extent of cultural identity, issues of interest, desire for repatriation to the North, adequacy of correctional programming and sensitivity of staff.

Structured case file reviews were completed for each interviewed offender to profile institutional performance and behaviour, security incidents, needs areas, family background and program participation. Complete criminal histories were gathered using the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) system.

The findings of the study revealed interesting patterns within this study group that have implications and causal factors contributing to their criminogenic behaviour. The offence patterns that landed them in federal custody, in fact, could be viewed as a kind of mirror image of the backgrounds from which they emerged. ■

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# Native offender substance abuse assessment: The Computerized Lifestyle Assessment Instrument (R-37, 1994)

by Vanderburg, S.A., Weekes, J.R., and Millson, W.A.

This report focuses on the appropriateness of the use of the Computerized Lifestyle Assessment Instrument (CLAI) with Native offenders. Potential differences in CLAI results for Native and non-Native offenders were examined by assessing the CLAI's primary alcohol and drug screening instruments: the Alcohol Dependence Scale (ADS) and the Drug Abuse Screening Test (DAST).

Additional analyses were performed on data from 855 Native offenders who had completed the CLAI as part of the routine intake assessment process. Approximately 75% of these Native offenders were assessed as having alcohol problems of sufficient severity to warrant some level of treatment intervention.

The results of this study's analysis support the conclusion that the CLAI is an appropriate assessment system for administration to Native offenders to identify the extent and nature of their substance abuse problems for at least two important reasons. First, there was a high degree of consistency in the psychometric structure of the CLAI's individual drug and

alcohol screening measures when samples of Native and non-Native offenders were compared. Second, there were consistent patterns and relationships in Native offender responses to the screening measures and other CLAI items related to offenders' present drug and alcohol-taking behaviour, their past substance abuse behaviour and their criminal behaviour.

The research failed to unearth patterns in either the structure of the substance abuse screening or anomalies in other key variables relating to substance abuse and criminal behaviour which would prompt questioning the use of the CLAI with Native offenders.

The results support the ability of an automated self-report system to generate reliable and interpretable information about offender substance abuse problems, regardless of whether the offenders are Native or non-Native, and the fact that the CLAI system is better able to identify offenders having substance abuse problems as compared with approaches reliant on information from offenders' institutional files. ■

## Just Released ...

*The Research Branch recently released:*

*R. Serin, H. Barbaree, M. Seto, B. Malcolm and E. Peacock, A Model for a Clinically Informed Risk Assessment Strategy for Sex Offenders, Research Report No. R-56, 1997 (Ottawa: Correctional Service of Canada); and*

*L. Motiuk and K. Blanchette, Case Characteristics of Segregated Offenders in Federal Corrections, Research Report No. R-57, 1997 (Ottawa: Correctional Service of Canada).*

# Treating violent offenders: A review of current practices (R-38, 1994)

by Serin, R.

This report examines the assessment/treatment processes used for developing programs for violent and high risk offenders and suggests that current methods and practices of assessment/treatment are not adequate in meeting the needs of persistently violent offenders.

The author suggests that advances in the assessment of violent and high risk offenders have yet to have a significant impact on intervention strategies. In addition, despite increased concern regarding violent criminals, the published literature on their treatment is very meagre. Recent studies which show some improved methodology support the finding that offenders who participate in cognitively based treatment programs with skills practice components show post-treatment gains. However, these gains have yet to be demonstrated to affect recidivism rates significantly. Further, the literature is hindered by the lack of a cohesive theoretical model, problems in defining violent offenders and overreliance on self-report indices of treatment gain. Current programs appear sufficiently

contemporary to meet the needs of many violent offenders, although improved methodology and empirical validation are required. These existing programs, however, fail to address, specifically, the needs of persistently violent offenders.

The author suggests that progress in the areas of treatment of sexual offenders and substance abuse has direct application to the treatment of violent offenders. The literature illustrates the importance of matching offenders to the appropriate level of intervention and providing a continuum of intervention from intake to community follow-up and supervision. Additionally, research on persistently aggressive individuals indicates that their cognitive style or aggressive beliefs are important antecedents to violent behaviour and a critical treatment target. Innovation in strategies for the assessment of such deficits and offenders' response to intervention appear to be important in the development of a treatment program for persistently violent offenders. The next requirement is to develop such a program, keeping in mind these conclusions. ■

## Also Just Released ...

*K. Blanchette, Risk and Need Among Federally Sentenced Female Offenders: A Comparison of Minimum, Medium and Maximum Security Inmates, Research Report No. R-58, 1997 (Ottawa: Correctional Service of Canada); and*

*R. Boe, Review of the Offender Population Forecast: Models, Data and Requirements with Provisional Forecasts for 1998 to 2007, Research Report No. R-59, 1997 (Ottawa: Correctional Service of Canada).*



# Managing high risk offenders: A post-detention follow-up (R-39, 1995)

by Motiuk, L., Belcourt, R., and Bonta, J.

Preventive detention during the period of statutory release (formerly mandatory supervision) is an option for managing potentially violent offenders serving a federal sentence. The 1986 passage of Bill C-67 provided a legal mandate for controlling the automatic release of potentially dangerous inmates before the expiry of their sentence. Previous research conducted to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the legislative provisions was essentially descriptive and did not deal with the characteristics of post-detention recidivists or the impact of preventive detention on criminal futures. This study explores more fully the issue of post-detention recidivism by introducing two statistical controls: level of risk for reoffending and time at risk in the community.

Historical information was collected from a variety of official sources (National Parole Board, Correctional Service of Canada, Royal Canadian Mounted Police) on all male federal offenders (807) who had detention orders applied to them before December 31, 1991. A comparison between detention cases and the general penitentiary population over the same time period (57,157) revealed the following:

- the Ontario and Prairie regions had larger proportions of detained inmates relative to general inmates (about 31% versus 25%);
- Aboriginal offenders were overrepresented among detainees (25.6% versus 12.8%);
- detained offenders were more likely than the general inmate population to have been convicted of a major admitting violent offence, particularly sexual offences (48% versus 10%) and assault (16% versus 6%); and
- there was a substantially larger proportion of detained offenders serving sentences between two and four years than the general inmate population (76% versus 39%).

A follow-up sample was assembled of 424 detained offenders who had been released from custody for at least one year. A further extension of the post-detention follow-up period yielded an average of 4.1 years since release (ranging from 2.2 to 7.8 years) for the study sample.

The follow-up sample was divided into three different groups for comparison purposes:

- 148 offenders (35%) who had been detained but then had their detention orders "lifted" before the end of their sentence;
- 114 offenders (27%) who were "fully detained" (held in custody for their entire sentence); and
- 162 offenders (38%) who were detained until the end of their sentence after having their "one chance" statutory release revoked.

Using official records, proxy Statistical Information on Recidivism (SIR) Scale scores were calculated for the follow-up sample. This study yielded important information on the characteristics of post-detention recidivists and the impact of preventive detention on future criminal behaviour. As an option for managing potentially violent offenders until the end of their sentence, the selection of cases for detention could be improved by taking into consideration both volume and type of criminal history, as well as previous exposure/response to the criminal justice system. Particular attention to past sex offence history (such as number and variety) can improve the selection of sex offenders for preventive detention.

These results validate previous findings on the predictive value of criminal history and point to the consideration of other case-based variables (such as attitudes, attachments, addictions) which could improve the selection of potentially violent offenders for preventive detention and provide useful targets for intervention. ■

# The Offender Substance Abuse Prerelease program: Analysis of intermediate and postrelease outcomes (R-40, 1995)

by Millson, W., Weekes, J., and Lightfoot, L.O.

This study was undertaken to evaluate the effectiveness of the Offender Substance Abuse Prerelease (OSAP) program in improving offenders' postrelease success and in changing their problematic substance abuse behaviour. The study examines both intermediate and postrelease outcomes for 317 offenders who completed the program between January 1990 and August 1992. The analysis focused on four areas:

- the severity of program participants' substance abuse problems;
- pre- to post-program changes on a battery of assessment measures;
- post-program/postrelease outcomes for offenders who completed the program; and
- the relationship between outcome and severity of substance abuse problems, criminal risk and need levels, type of release, offence type, pre- to post-program performance and postrelease substance use for offenders admitted back into the criminal justice system.

Almost 70% of all federal offenders present had substance abuse problems of sufficient severity to warrant formal treatment intervention. An examination of the distribution of substance abuse problems revealed that close to 30% of offenders have low severity problems, approximately 17% intermediate severity problems, 13% have substantial problems and 10% experience severe substance abuse problems.

The severity of offenders' alcohol and drug problems was assessed before the program began using three screening instruments originally developed and standardized on non-offender clinical and non-clinical populations (Alcohol Dependence Scale, Michigan Alcohol Screening Test, Drug Abuse Screening Test).

The findings of this study support OSAP as an effective intervention for developing skills and cognitive abilities that are of critical importance in assisting offenders. From the perspective of the researchers, the most important finding in the study was that OSAP program performance was predictive of offenders' re-admission. ■

## A new resource

*The Research Information Centre, Research Branch, Corporate Development, houses a wide variety of documents, research reports and other materials. The goal of the Information Centre is to provide easy access to research documents, as well as to other corrections-related information.*

# The impact of cognitive skills training on postrelease recidivism among Canadian federal offenders (R-41, 1995)

by Robinson, D.

This report describes the results of a study of the effects of Cognitive Skills Training on postrelease outcomes of offenders under federal jurisdiction in Canada. Re-admission and reconviction rates for a sample of Cognitive Skills Training participants are compared with the rates of released offenders who were randomly assigned to a waiting list but never received the program. The report provides details on the differential impact of the program on offenders with varying characteristics including different release types, risk levels, offence types and demographic variables. The results provide grounds for considerable optimism regarding the effectiveness of Cognitive Skills Training as a method of reducing recidivism among this group of generally high risk offenders.

The Cognitive Skills Training program consists of 36 sessions delivered by staff who have completed an intensive two-week training program. It focuses on the faulty thinking patterns that typify the haphazard strategies offenders employ to make life decisions, solve minor problems and react to immediate situations. The program combines didactic methods of teaching cognitive skills by the coaches, with carefully guided group and individual exercises which provide opportunities to practise skills. Among the cognitive deficits addressed by the program are impulsive decision making, narrow thinking, absence of goal-setting behaviour and poor interpersonal skills.

This research is based on a sample of 4,072 offenders who completed Cognitive Skills

Training or were referred and considered eligible for the program between 1990 and 1994. Case management officers assessed the candidates to ensure they possessed the cognitive deficits addressed by the program and were motivated to participate. Eligible candidates were randomly assigned to the program immediately or placed on a waiting list for the next program. Offenders who remained on the waiting list without receiving the program became the control group for this study. This ensured that a pool of "untreated" offenders with the same characteristics as program participants was available for postrelease outcome comparisons.

The research also addressed the assumption that programs have more effect on recidivism when conditional release occurs close to program completion. While the results do not conclude that offering programming in close proximity to probable release should be abandoned, they challenge the notion that offenders will lose program skills if they must wait longer periods before release.

Overall, the results of this study furnish encouraging evidence that careful attention to the development and implementation of state-of-the-art correctional programming can pay dividends in terms of reductions in recidivism. They also fill many gaps in our knowledge about programming with this population and, more important, demonstrate that effective correctional programming for many federal offenders is feasible. ■

# Persistently violent (non-sexual) offenders: A program proposal (R-42, 1995)

by the Research Branch, Correctional Service of Canada

This proposal outlines relevant treatment targets and presents a research framework to evaluate a program for persistently violent (non-sexual) offenders. The proposed program is compatible with existing Correctional Service of Canada programs, but more intensive than most. It reflects an alternate conceptual framework which has been employed in other settings and has a rigorous assessment component. The proposal recommends providing intervention over a three-year period at multiple sites, with a matched treatment control (anger management) and untreated groups to permit the evaluation of program effectiveness on institutional violence and postrelease recidivism.

The program incorporates novel and multiple measures of interpersonal style (personality), impulsivity and aggressive beliefs. Responsivity or treatability factors relate to an offender's ability and motivation to respond to both the program content and intervention model. These factors are included in the assessment protocol to investigate which factors may

potentially influence an offender's response to treatment, an increasingly important consideration for all programs. The results of these investigations will therefore be applicable to a range of offender programming, including anger control, the treatment of sexual offenders and core programming. Comparisons of types of violent offenders and treatment outcomes will be considered.

This intensive intervention is intended to be more than an educational exercise. It is expected that offenders must demonstrate both skill acquisition and application for successful participation in the proposed program. Targets reflected in the treatment components include aggressive beliefs, anger and arousal, and cognitive distortions regarding violence, impulsivity and self-regulation. Violent offenders are a diverse group whose needs in these areas will vary.

The specific research questions and methodology, a preliminary assessment battery, overview of treatment components and consultation process are described in the proposal. ■

## The Citizens Advisory Committee Mission Statement

*Citizens Advisory Committees, through voluntary participation in the Canadian federal correctional process, contribute to the protection of society by actively interacting with staff of the Correctional Service of Canada, the public and offenders and by providing impartial advice and recommendations, thereby contributing to the quality of the correctional process.*

# Prison work programs and postrelease outcome: A preliminary investigation (R-43, 1996)

by Motiuk, L., and Belcourt, R.

This study is a first look at the relationship between inmate participation in CORCAN programs and postrelease outcome. The focus of this first report is limited to one important aspect of a postrelease investigation, specifically, the ability of an industrial program to have an impact on recidivism.

A pool of potential participants was obtained from CORCAN program site representatives for the calendar years 1992, 1993 and 1994. A study sample was then created by identifying adult male offenders who had started and completed a prison work program within the three-year period. Inmates whose participation in a CORCAN program was less than six months (from start to end) were excluded from the sample.

From the 2,026 offenders who had uninterrupted participation in an offender employment program for at least six months, 300 were

selected because they were within one month of their release date. That is, they had been employed over an extended period just before their return to the community. Further selection criteria produced a sample of 277 offenders who had been released and were available for at least a one-year follow-up.

The results of this preliminary investigation indicated that uninterrupted participation in prison work programs immediately before release may have some positive impact on offender postrelease recidivism, particularly for low risk offenders. Specifically, the report indicates that CORCAN participants released on full parole were considerably less likely to return to federal custody for any reason than offenders without such experience. The report suggests that participation in prison work programs be encouraged early in the incarceration of lower risk offenders who must serve a portion of their sentence in custody. ■

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# Attitudes of federal correctional officers towards offenders (R-44, 1996)

by Larivière, M., and Robinson, D.

**C**orrectional officers (COs) are the largest category of front-line correctional employees and are viewed as key agents in the process of rehabilitation. The quality of relationships between COs and inmates is also likely to promote more stable institutional environments whereby offenders are easier to manage on a day-to-day basis.

This study focuses on three dimensions of CO attitudes toward offenders or "correctional orientations": empathy, punitiveness and support for rehabilitation. Empathy refers to the COs' willingness to understand the affective states of inmates (e.g., trust, compassion, advocacy for offenders). The punitiveness dimension is concerned with the degree to which COs endorse retribution and punishment for offenders as important correctional goals. Support for rehabilitation simply refers to belief in the efficacy of rehabilitation and agreement that programming is a valuable function within the correctional domain.

The study was based on data from the Correctional Service of Canada's staff survey conducted in 1994. A total of 1,970 COs participated in the national survey, which represented an overall response rate of 48% for this occupational group. The CO respondents were 83% male, had a mean age of 39.6 years and a mean of 11.4 years of work experience in the Service.

The 1994 survey results indicated that 23% of COs exhibited empathetic views of offenders, 76.2% held punitive views of corrections and 53.6% supported rehabilitation. The data also showed that COs varied significantly from other occupational groups in their attitudes toward offenders. COs were less empathetic, more punitive and less supportive of rehabilitation than each of eight other occupational groups within the Service.

The study presents findings on CO gender differences regarding the three dimensional approach as well as job satisfaction analyses. ■

## Special Reports

*Correctional Service of Canada Staff Survey 1996 Final Report - Volume 1 (SR-3A) and Correctional Service of Canada Staff Survey Final Tables - Volume 11 (SR-3B) are available from the Research Branch, Correctional Service of Canada, Ottawa.*

## **Inmates referred for detention (1989 to 1993-94): A comparative analysis (R-45, 1996)**

by *Grant, B.A.*

**T**his report provides detailed analysis of the detention provisions of the *Corrections and Conditional Release Act* in preparation for a legislated parliamentary review of the Act. The study addresses three main questions.

1. Are the right people referred for detention? That is, are the highest risk violent offenders referred for detention?
2. Are the right people being detained? That is, are the detained people the highest risk offenders?
3. Are those who have been detained the most likely to reoffend after release and are they most likely to reoffend violently?

Presented in the report are descriptions of the changes in the number and types of referred and detained offenders, offence histories and recidivism rates. The study also looks at gender,

regional and racial differences in referral and detention patterns. The report provides an extensive summary and discussion of the findings.

In brief, the overall results suggest that it is very difficult to discriminate within the high risk group of offenders who are held until their statutory release date. Revised methods of selecting inmates for detention based on objective assessment risk may be more effective at selecting the most serious offenders, rather than relying on a set of offences as specified in schedules 1 and 2 of the Act. The report proposes that additional research would assist in the development of better selection criteria for those most likely to commit new offences. ■

## **Female offenders with and without major mental health problems: A comparative investigation (R-46, 1996)**

by *Blanchette, K., and Motiuk, L.*

**T**his study focused on a sample of 76 federally sentenced adult female offenders incarcerated at the Prison for Women in Kingston, Ontario, in 1989. Each of these women agreed to participate and each completed an objective mental health survey at some point during the course of their incarceration. The instrument used to assess mental health was version 111-A of the Diagnostic Interview Schedule (DIS). Offenders with major mental health problems were then compared to their non-disordered counterparts as to case history, criminal history, institutional adjustment and postrelease outcome.

A review of the published research has indicated that the results of postrelease outcome studies of offenders with mental disorders depend, in part, on how the researchers define disorder and recidivism. This research was concerned primarily with whether diagnosis of a major mental disorder could aid in the prediction of postrelease outcome. It was expected that manipulation of the operational definitions of mental disorder and recidivism would produce different postrelease outcome results.

The investigation involved four stages of data collection. The first wave of data was the result of the mental health survey conducted at the

Prison for Women in September 1989. A comprehensive coding manual was prepared for the second, third and fourth waves of the study. This involved data collection as to criminal history and case management/file information (such as demographic data and case history), institutional adjustment and in-program performance, and postrelease outcome. The offenders were followed from first release after the DIS survey until May 1, 1995. Of the 76 participants who completed the DIS interview,

10 had not been released from the institution as of that date.

In brief, the investigation found no significant differences between groups with and without a major mental disorder. This was the case despite the fact that the groups were not matched for criminal history and that the offenders with a major mental health problem had significantly more prior violent offences. The study also presents cross comparative results of similar studies on male offenders in relation to female offenders. ■

## **A**n operational review of the Custody Rating Scale: Reliability, validity and practical utility (R-47, 1996)

by *Luciani, F.P., Motiuk, L., and Nafekh, M.*

**T**his study is the third examination of the Custody Rating Scale (CRS) to assess its reliability, validity and practical utility. Accurate inmate classification is critical to the effective management of prison populations and to meet the Correctional Service of Canada's legislative and policy mandates. Objective classification methods are needed to ensure excessive controls are not imposed on offenders, help direct the use of limited resources and generate accurate offender information for long-term accommodation planning. The 1988 introduction of the CRS established objective standardized criteria for the initial classification of federal offenders. (An automated version of the Scale became a component of the penitentiary placement model in 1991.)

A sample of 6,745 active offender files with complete and accurate CRS evaluations was drawn from the Offender Management System in March 1995. Unlike previous pilot or field tests, this review used a large national sample, and data reflect the prison environment at that

time. Files were reviewed for errors, scoring defects, irregularities and incomplete administration of the Scale. The frequency of detected errors was insignificant and confirmed that implementation of the automated version of the CRS has all but eliminated application error as a source of concern. The Offender Management System also improved access to the documents required for a competent and accurate administration of the Scale.

This study indicates that the CRS continues to perform well as assessed by a variety of traditional psychometric and operational criteria. Introduction of the automated version ensures the Scale is applied to all offenders at admission and greatly reduces omissions, computational errors and irregularities in the application of the security classification protocols.

The study exposed a number of regional differences, and to ensure the uniform application of the Scale, a number of recommendations were proposed to address identified deficiencies. ■



# Sex offender assessment, treatment and recidivism: A literature review (R-48, 1996)

by *Blanchette, L.*

This report provides a literature review of contemporary assessment and treatment paradigms for sexual offenders. The importance of a thorough, comprehensive assessment and subsequent individualized treatment is emphasized. The report tentatively concludes that current treatment paradigms are encouraging in terms of recidivism reduction. This appears to be especially true for comprehensive approaches that follow a cognitive behavioural model with adjunctive relapse prevention components. For some offenders, treatment with anti-androgen or hormonal medications might prove beneficial.

Some fundamental problems with recidivism and treatment outcome research have been identified. Notwithstanding those issues, some sound research has converged on several correlates and predictors of both sexual and

non-sexual recidivism in samples of sex offenders.

Sexual offending remains a serious problem in Canada today. With the numbers and proportions of sex offenders in federal custody on the rise, there is an urgent call for empirically robust longitudinal research. Although preliminary results regarding the effectiveness of current approaches appear favourable, assessment and treatment are invariably designed for the prototypical sex offender. More specifically, there has been little or no consideration of female or Aboriginal sex offenders, despite evidence that they do not fit the prototype. The author is hopeful that prospective research will provide methods to improve on current assessment and treatment models whereby recidivism is reduced and protection of the public is enhanced. ■

# Factors related to recidivism among released federal sex offenders (R-49, 1996)

by *Motiuk, L., and Brown, S.*

This study examines the predictive value of systematically assessing and re-assessing sex offender risk. In continuing examinations of sex offender case histories in federal corrections, a follow-up sample was assembled of 570 sex offenders, 329 who were on "caseload" (already under community supervision) and 241 who were "new releases" and subsequently followed up. The average time served in federal custody until release for caseload and new releases (3.2 and 3.6 years, respectively) did not significantly differ.

During the postrelease follow-up period (average 3.5 years), about one third of the sex offenders were convicted of a new criminal offence, nearly

one fifth for a violent crime and fewer than one in ten for a new sexual offence. It was also found that among newly released sex offenders, rapists had the highest rates of general, violent and sexual recidivism relative to any other group. In contrast, incest offenders demonstrated the lowest rates of general, violent and sexual recidivism relative to pedophiles or rapists, regardless of whether they belonged to caseload or newly released samples. It is notable that the pedophile group on caseload had the highest rate of sexual recidivism relative to incest offenders or rapists.

A series of chi-square and stepwise regression analyses identified factors that can be used to

predict sex offender recidivism. For general and violent recidivism, important predictors were age at release (younger), juvenile history (training school), unemployment (at time of arrest), unstable living arrangement and substance abuse (alcohol and/or drug). For sexual recidivism, the most salient factors were age at release (younger), previous sex offences (federal sentence) and adult drug abuse. While a large number of significant predictors could be found for general and violent recidivism, the low rate of sexual reoffending limited the ability of the study to generate many predictors of sexual recidivism.

The report contends more longitudinal research is required to establish relevant risk factors firmly for sexual recidivism. Given that released sex offenders, as a group, are at risk for committing new crimes other than sex offences, then administering risk assessment procedures which are applied to the general offender population is recommended.

The focus of this research is on how well we can target high risk, violent offenders who require extraordinary restrictions of liberty. ■

## **H**igh risk violent offenders in Canada (R-50, 1996)

by Bonta, J., and Motiuk, L.

**T**his report provides an overview of high risk, violent offenders in Canada, legislation that deals with offenders who pose a serious risk of reoffending in a violent manner and the criteria required to meet the dangerous offender designation. The legislation is based, in part, on the premise that violence can be reliably predicted. However, the legislation does not require the use of actuarial risk assessment.

For the purpose of this study, the files of designated dangerous offenders and detained offenders were reviewed to evaluate how well

high risk, violent offenders were being identified. Furthermore, a follow-up of detained inmates who recidivated violently permitted creation of profiles of some very high risk, violent offenders. The results showed that both designated dangerous offenders and detention cases are indeed, high risk offenders.

The authors contend that while some empirically based instruments could be useful in assessing the potential for violence, further research is needed to improve the predictive accuracy of such instruments. ■

### **Coming up in Forum on Corrections Research ...**

*The January 1998 issue of FORUM will focus on "Offender Reintegration."*

# Temporary absence program participation and the release of federal offenders (R-51, 1996)

by Motiuk, L., and Belcourt, R.

This comprehensive study examines the relationship between temporary absence (TA) program participation and discretionary (day or full parole) release. As well, these offenders were followed up to explore postrelease outcome.

A research sample was assembled of 47,146 TAs taken by 7,368 offenders (male and female) from April 1, 1993 to March 31, 1994. From this sample, 13,112 medical TAs were excluded. A total of 3,389 offenders (almost one half) were subsequently released from a federal institution. Of these, 2,975 had been granted an escorted temporary absence (ETA) and 1,002 had been granted an unescorted temporary absence (UTA). All these offenders were followed up for a period of at least two years (until March 31, 1996).

The TA follow-up sample was subdivided into five separate groups (ETAs; UTAs; ETA and UTA; ETAs and no UTAs; UTAs and no ETAs) and a series of comparative analyses were conducted in relation to three outcome measures (Temporary Absence Failure, Discretionary Release, Returned to Federal Custody).

This study yielded important information on the TA program and the impact of participation on release and community adjustment. As an indicator of reduced offender risk, having had an ETA is insufficient to warrant the granting of discretionary release. On the other hand, having had UTAs does warrant further consideration. ■

# Day parole program review: Case management predictors of outcome (R-52, 1996)

by Grant, B.A., Motiuk, L., Brunet, L., Lefebvre, L., and Couturier, P.

This study describes the trends in day parole use and who is on day parole. Analysis of the relationship between day parole outcome and risk/needs is presented along with analysis of factors related to failure while on day parole to determine how better to select and manage day parole cases. Analyses identifying differences between all offenders receiving day parole and females and Aboriginal offenders are also presented.

This study, initiated just before implementation of the *Corrections and Conditional Release Act* (CCRA) of 1992, was designed to estimate the impact of the Act on day parole and to provide a basis for comparisons after the CCRA had been in place for a number of years. While it was not possible to evaluate all the impacts of the CCRA on day parole, it does appear that some of the operational changes (eligibility

dates and purpose of release) were common practice before the CCRA.

The results of this study provide interesting background data regarding both female and Aboriginal offenders relative to the day parole process. The results of the study indicate that the day parole process is an effective program for permitting the early release of low risk offenders and for providing a controlled release of offenders who are at slightly higher risk. The research indicates that day parole, with the higher level of supervision provided through residency conditions, helps prepare the offender for release and creates an opportunity to determine if an offender is ready to be released into the community before full parole or statutory release.

This report also provides the reader with a succinct history of day parole in Canada. ■

# Maximum security female and male federal offenders: A comparison (R-53, 1997)

by Blanchette, K., and Motiuk, L.

Institutional classification involves a process by which offenders are designated as either "minimum" or "maximum" security and housed accordingly. The major aim of this procedure is to provide the safest and least restrictive environment possible. Federally sentenced female offenders are to be classified and housed in an environment commensurate with their assigned security designation. Some argue that the maximum security designation for women is inequitable in that it overestimates the risk and imposes unnecessary restrictions.

The study examined this issue through a comparison of maximum security female offenders with their maximum security male counterparts. More specifically, groups were compared across a number (over 200) of variables associated with risk (criminal history background), criminogenic need and suicide potential.

Results demonstrated that current classification strategies appropriately target offenders who are high-risk/high-need for the maximum security designation. Analysis revealed few statistically significant between-gender differences on risk and need variables. Global need level ratings for six target areas (employment, associates, substance abuse, community functioning, personal/emotional

orientation, attitude) were found to be non-discriminating. For the marital/family domain, maximum security female offenders were rated as being more needy than their male counterparts.

Examination of individual need domain indicators revealed that female offenders were especially needy in the areas of substance abuse and community functioning. Indeed, all discriminating substance abuse indicators showed more problems among the maximum security female offenders. In the area of personal/emotional orientation, maximum security male offenders had more needs in terms of cognitive skills, and women had more difficulties with mental health.

The most significant and robust differences were found in the areas of suicide potential: federally sentenced women are clearly at higher risk for self-injury and suicide. Results showing that the majority of maximum security female offenders have previous suicide attempts suggest maladaptive coping strategies by this particular group. This raises awareness about the case characteristics of female offenders placed in maximum security and suggests tailoring intervention strategies to meet their unique needs. ■

## Also coming up in Forum on Corrections Research ...

*The May 1998 issue of FORUM will be the 29th to be published and will focus on "Parole and Corrections."*

# Treatment readiness and responsivity: Contributing to effective correctional programming (R-54, 1997)

by Serin, R., and Kennedy, S.

This report provides an overview of issues related to the effective treatment of offenders. Treatment responsivity is considered to comprise two constructs: treatability, a term used in forensic settings, and treatment effectiveness. The former describes aspects of motivation and treatment compliance, while the latter considers the assessment of treatment gain and generalization of treatment effects.

This paper integrates these constructs into a contemporary model to guide the development of an assessment protocol for use by clinicians and program staff in correctional settings. The resultant protocol is generic, permitting its application across a range of programs. Preliminary data are presented which support its utility, and recommendations are made regarding its further development prior to implementation.

Several key findings resulted from this pilot study. First, many offenders report low readiness for treatment, and this did not change the function of treatment. This has important implications for the planning and delivery of correctional planning and intervention. Second, the Interpersonal Style Ratings proved to be dynamic, with significant pre/post-treatment changes in the desired direction, and these ratings were significantly correlated with post-treatment evaluations. Third, self-report measures are influenced by social desirability and do not significantly correlate with behavioural measures. Related to this finding was the result that offenders' self-reports regarding treatment gain were discrepant from clinicians' evaluations.

The report also identifies several limitations to this pilot study. ■

## To make note of ...

*In collaboration with Aboriginal Offender Programs and the Prairie Region of the Correctional Service of Canada, the Research Branch is supporting a forum on Aboriginal offender research issues in December 1997.*

# An examination of medium and maximum security federally sentenced female offenders (R-55, 1997)

by *Blanchette, K.*

This study compares female offenders placed in medium security to their maximum security counterparts on a variety of criteria: risk (security and escape), criminogenic need and suicide potential. For the purpose of this study, the Correctional Service of Canada's automated Offender Management System was used, and all available data for federally sentenced female offenders were extracted. As of January 14, 1997, data for institutional security level were available for 212 female offenders and revealed that 34% (72) were designated minimum security, 49% (103) were medium security and the remaining 17% (37) were maximum security.

The first set of comparisons focused on demographic information (age, race), which was available for the entire sample. Statistical analysis revealed that the maximum security female offenders were significantly younger (with a mean age of 28.7 years) than their medium security counterparts (a mean age of 34.2 years).

Comparisons on overall risk ratings also yielded statistically reliable results, with the majority (56%) of those in medium security assessed as medium risk, and most (77%) of those in maximum security as high risk. Regarding their admitting offences, the majority (62%) of female offenders designated for maximum security were serving sentences for violent assaults or robberies. This was true for less than half (46%) those designated for medium security.

The results of this study demonstrate clear and reliable differences between medium and maximum security female offenders. Multiple risk and need variables discriminate between groups, in each case demonstrating more needs and higher risk among those in maximum security. These data suggest a heterogeneity of female offender populations by security designation and imply that the assignment of security/custody levels is proceeding in an equitable manner, while appropriately managing risk. ■

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