VOLUME 2, ISSUE 1: APRIL 2014



The New Zealand Corrections Journal





Contents



Editorial	4
Liz Morgan	
How Corrections measures progress towards its 25 percent reducing re-offending target	5
Review of PhD research by Laura Hanby on the ability of the Dynamic Risk Assessment for Offender Re-entry (DRAOR) to identify risk and desistance for NZ parolees (2010-2012) Nick J Wilson	9
What can the DRAOR tell us about high-risk offenders? A preliminary examination Julia A. Yesberg & Devon L. L. Polaschek	13
Women on parole: Do they need their own DRAOR? Julia A. Yesberg, Jessica M. Scanlan & Devon L. L. Polaschek	.20
Prevention first and victims at the centre - NZ Police's journey to reduce victimisation	.26
Prison-based employment interventions: effects on recidivism	.28
Developing a world class family violence programme for New Zealand Mark Hutton & Danielle Kallil	32
Preparing Core members for Circles of Support and Accountability in New Zealand	35
Assessing the literacy and numeracy of prisoners Jill Bowman	.39
Translating the right relationship into right practice: Right Track in NZ prisons Carolyn O'Fallon	.42
Book review: Prison violence – Causes, Consequences and Solutions Kristine Levan (2012) & Reviewed by Neil Beales	.45
Information for contributors	.46

Contact details

Practice: The New Zealand Corrections Journal Department of Corrections / Ara Poutama Aotearoa Private Box 1206 Wellington New Zealand

Email: CorrectionsJournal@corrections.govt.nz

ISSN 2324-4305 (Print) ISSN 2324-4313 (Online)



Welcome to Practice: The Corrections Journal.

To achieve our goal of reducing re-offending by 25 percent by 2017, services and approaches need to be appropriately tailored and targeted to support an offender to change. This edition of *Practice* outlines a number of new approaches, frameworks and interventions that have been developed, enhanced or tailored for specific groups, to support offenders to lead law-abiding lives.

Having a reliable measure of re-offending is essential to allow us to measure our success against the 25 percent reduction in re-offending target. This measure, in and of itself however, can never tell the full story. When combined with other measures, such as the seriousness of an offender's re-offending and the effectiveness of our interventions, a richer story begins to unfold. Peter Johnston's article explains the ins and outs of these measures and how they should be interpreted.

Have we got the right way of assessing risk to allow us to make the best decisions? The short answer to this question is "yes" and three of the articles contained within this edition give evidence to this effect. Julia Yesberg and Devon Polashek's article shows that Dynamic Risk Assessment for Offender Re-entry (DRAOR) is a robust predictor of recidivism for both low and high risk offenders, Julia Yesberg, Jessica Scanlan and Devon Polaschek explore the question of whether women on parole need their own DRAOR, and Nick Wilson outlines the extensive DRAOR research carried out by Laura Hanby.

Risk assessment is only part of the equation though. We also need to understand an offender's learning abilities so our messages are correctly understood and we can tailor our approaches accordingly. Jill Bowman's research shows that over 71 percent of prisoners are below the literacy level at which a person is able to cope with the demands of everyday life in modern society. This supports the extensive expansion of educational interventions that has taken place over the last eighteen months.

Every seven minutes an incident of family violence is reported. Mark Hutton and Danielle Kallil's article outlines a new family violence programme for male offenders in the community that has been developed using international best practice. Jim van Rensburg's article also discusses best practice and the recent New Zealand pilot of Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA).

Corrections isn't the only organisation undertaking fundamental changes to achieve better results. Police are changing their approach via the Victims Focus Framework. Six percent of adults experience 54 percent of all crime and many of these victims are offenders themselves. Inspector Fiona Prestidge provides more detail on this relatively new framework.

As at the end of February, we have achieved a 12.6 percent reduction in re-offending. This equates to 3,219 fewer offenders and over 9,200 fewer victims of crime per year. This is a huge achievement and our communities are safer as a result. To achieve our goal of reducing re-offending by 25 percent by 2017 we will need to continue to be innovative and flexible in the solutions we deliver and build on our successes to date.

Liz Morgan

Director, Reducing Re-offending Programme Department of Corrections



How Corrections measures progress towards its 25 percent reducing re-offending target

Dr Peter W. Johnston

Director Research and Evaluation, Department of Corrections

Author biography

Dr Peter Johnston has been with the Department of Corrections for over 20 years. He started in the Psychological Service in Christchurch, as one of three psychologists who set up the first special treatment unit, Kia Marama, at Rolleston Prison in 1989. He then moved to Prison Services, where he was involved in setting up a prison-based 'inmate assessment centre'. In his current role he leads a team of seven staff who undertake research and evaluation, and in-depth analysis of data to support new policy initiatives.

Introduction

Given the centrality of the goal of reducing re-offending for the Department of Corrections (and its importance for public safety), Corrections has spent considerable effort and time in developing several reliable means of measuring re-offending.

New Zealand has significant advantages over other countries in this respect. Firstly, we are fortunate in having a single justice system that ensures that all instances of reconviction and sentencing are captured and recorded in the one database. This avoids the problems faced by some countries where federal and state systems operate separate and sometimes unintegrated systems. Secondly, New Zealand has one of the highest crime resolution rates in the developed world. Currently, around 47 percent of crimes recorded by Police are resolved, the majority of such instances leading to successful prosecution of an offender. For serious offences such as violent and sexual offences resolution rates are even higher. This means that recorded convictions are a reasonably valid indicator of actual re-offending.

The Department calculates and reports on recidivism in a number of ways. The purpose of this article is to describe the various recidivism measures, explain how they are calculated, and discuss ways in which changes on each measure can be interpreted.

Recidivism Index

The main measure of re-offending is known as the Recidivism Index, or RI. At one level RI is fairly straightforward: it is simply the percentage of offenders in any given cohort that is reconvicted within a given period of time (the "follow-up period") AND who receive either a prison sentence ("RI re-imprisonment") or *any* Corrections-administered sentence ("RI reconviction" – either imprisonment or a community sentence). Currently, the RI indicator shows gradually reducing rates of both reconviction and re-imprisonment amongst community-sentenced offenders and released prisoners respectively. The Department is well on target to meet its 2017 goal of a 25 percent reduction in the rate of re-offending. The reduction is more pronounced in the community reconviction RI, but it is anticipated that the re-imprisonment RI will fall faster as rehabilitative services delivery progressively ramps up among the prisoner population.

At a more technical level, RI is calculated in relation to a specific cohort of offenders: for prisoners, it is all sentenced prisoners released from prison over a given 12 month period. For community-sentenced offenders, it is calculated in relation to all offenders sentenced to a new community sentence over a 12 month period.

A re-imprisonment RI "score" of 26.7 (as was reported in the latest annual report for released prisoners) simply means that 26.7 percent of the roughly 8,000 sentenced prisoners released in 2011/12 committed one or more new offences within 12 months of their individual release dates, were reconvicted, and received a further sentence of imprisonment.

RI can be calculated for a 24 months follow-up, or for longer periods¹. Obviously, as follow-up periods are increased, the rate of reconviction increases. In general, around half of all offenders reconvicted at least once within five years are reconvicted within the initial 12 months follow-up period.

Underneath this straightforward result, however, lies some measurement complexity. For example, RI calculations exclude some offenders from the cohort whose outcomes are analysed. We exclude prisoners

¹ See for example http://www.corrections.govt.nz/resources/ reconviction-patterns-of-released-prisoners-a-60-monthsfollow-up-analysis2.html

who, during the follow-up period, are recalled to prison (without a new offence conviction), or are remanded in custody for 60 or more continuous days (but who don't get another sentence). This ensures that the people in the "study group" (potentially) all have at least 12 months of being "at large" in the community. We also exclude prisoners who are deported. These and other minor exclusions mean that the 2012 RI was calculated on a total of around 7,500 offenders, rather than all 8,000 released in the previous year.

RI also does not count some types of convictions. For example, if an offender is released from prison and then charged and convicted for an offence that occurred *before* the most recent prison sentence, that would not be included. Also excluded are convictions that result in sentences not administered by the Department, such as fines, conviction and discharge, driving disqualification only, or simple reparation. These types of sentences typically are applied to minor offences which have little significance for public safety. Finally, also excluded are administrative offences, such as breaches of release orders. Again, offences of this nature generally are not related to public safety.

RI also counts only the first qualifying new offence – an individual convicted of several new offences, all of which led to a single prison sentence, would only be counted once.

RI is also calculated on the basis of reconviction and sentencing to any Corrections-administered sentence (not just imprisonment). As such, re-imprisonment RIs are a sub-set of *reconviction* RIs. When reconviction RIs are calculated for offenders serving community sentences, the follow-up period commences on the sentence start date. This is an area where things can get quite complex, as a proportion of offenders in the community have multiple sentences, some being served concurrently, some successive but overlapping in terms of start and end dates, and some which occur within the same year but with an interval between; this means that community re-conviction RIs are currently calculated on a total of around 60,000 community "new starts". An offender in the community who commences multiple sentences on the same day is counted only once in the headline community RI calculation, but may be counted more than once if there are multiple community sentences started at different times through the year.

Annual RI rates are calculated on a monthly, quarterly and annual basis. The latter analysis is published in the Department's annual reports, which provide rates broken down separately for different age groups, sex, ethnicity, offence type, sentence length, release order type, and community sentence type. More recently, RI rates also have been calculated for individual prison of release, and by the probation district in which the offender was managed under community sentence. The RI figures produced on a monthly basis use a 12-month "rolling cohort" of offenders.

It is important always to keep in mind that when RI rates are reported, they relate to offenders who were released from prison, or started a community sentence, over the previous 18 months. This "lag" in time, between the offender release or sentence start period, and the reporting of the re-offending, is to allow for the follow-up period to run its course, and ensure that convictions for new offences have been recorded by Courts.

It is reasonable to deduce that falling rates of reoffending reflect the huge improvements in both quality of rehabilitation and the extent of coverage across the offender population. Initiatives such as the probation Integrated Practice Framework have clearly had significant impacts. But, however well the Department generally is doing in managing offenders, changes in RI rates can also be subject to other external influences. For example, if Police place more emphasis on crime prevention and alternative resolutions of offences, then reconviction rates might improve (despite there being no change in actual re-offending). Alternatively, improved Police crime resolution rates can potentially make our RI rates look less favourable.

Other recidivism measures

A number of additional recidivism measures also exist, some of which are reported in our annual reports. These include re-offending rates which have the following parameters:

- new offences which occurred only during the period of a community sentence or order (i.e., if the sentence of Supervision is six months, only offences which occurred between sentence start and end dates are counted)
- "offences against the person" that occurred during the period of a community sentence or order (i.e., same as above, but limited to sexual or violent offences which occurred between sentence/order start and end dates are counted).

The standard RI measure indicates overall impacts of the Department's management of an offender, including the beneficial effects of any rehabilitation. The two sub-measures described here are more an indication of effectiveness of an offender's management in the community, particularly in relation to minimising risks of harm to others.

A third new recidivism measure is a measure of reoffending *seriousness*. The new Seriousness Index (SI) measure provides an indication of the relative seriousness of offending for any given cohort of offenders. Unlike RI, which counts new convictions and sentences, the SI is based on the actual offences for which an individual has been convicted. It is also calculated on the basis of all new offences that are recorded during the follow-up period, rather than just the initial one (as occurs with the standard RI). Seriousness scores are derived from a scale known as the Justice Sector Seriousness Score (2012), developed by the Ministry of Justice, which attributes a numeric value (or score) to each offence type, based on current sentencing patterns. Scores range from near zero for minor infringements to over 12,000 for murder. The seriousness scoring system developed by the Department, using the Ministry scale, allows capture of the full range, volume and types of offences that are committed, concurrently and sequentially, by individual offenders, within a given follow-up period. Its calculation method has built-in limits, however, to ensure that overall cohort scores are not skewed by "outlier" cases (e.g., an offender convicted of 200 separate fraud offences on a single occasion).

When calculated for entire annual cohorts of released

prisoners and community sentenced offenders over the last five years, there has been a gradual reduction evident in the average seriousness of new offences amongst the offenders who were reconvicted for new offences.

Finally, another new method of measuring recidivism and changes in recidivism is the Custody Index (CI). This has • ...in 2013, the Department was able to report effect sizes of almost 13 percentage points for its most intensive programmes, the Special Treatment Unit Rehabilitation Programmes... this is an excellent achievement.

internationally developed best practice principles. Research on outcomes from rehabilitative programmes has shown that significant reductions in reconviction and re-imprisonment can be achieved when welldesigned interventions are delivered to appropriately selected offenders.

The Department's measurement methodology is known as the "Rehabilitation Quotient" (RQ). RQ gauges the extent to which re-offending is reduced, by comparing rates of reconviction and re-imprisonment amongst offenders who received a rehabilitative intervention, with the rates recorded amongst offenders who have an equivalent risk of re-offending, but who had no exposure to the particular programme or intervention.

RQ is a complex statistical process that is designed to allow for the fact that a significant number of offenders in any given cohort will have completed multiple rehabilitative and reintegrative interventions. The statistical procedure at the core of RQ is known as "logistic regression". It ensures that factors

> unrelated to the particular intervention under scrutiny are "controlled for" – in other words, all other known factors which could have an influence on outcomes are held constant. This allows us to see how effective a specific intervention is in reducing re-offending amongst those who participated in and/or completed it.

RQ scores are reported as a number between zero and 100, equating

been developed primarily for use in comparing the performance of Serco's Mt Eden Corrections Facility and the wider public system prisons. The CI is based on counts of "days out of custody post-release". As such it is not dependent on convictions or sentencing for new offences, but rather the amount of time that an individual can remain out of custody and avoid, for example, remand, recall, or a new prison sentence. This measure is particularly suited to assessing the performance of prisons which have large numbers of prisoners released from remand.

Rehabilitation Quotient

The Department's other primary re-offending indicator was designed specifically to measure the impact of rehabilitation and reintegration activities. The Department delivers a reasonably wide range of programmes and interventions to enable offenders to lead law-abiding lives. These programmes have been designed and implemented in ways consistent with to the percentage-point changes in rates of either re-imprisonment or reconviction. Another term for these figures is the programme's "effect size". RQ scores are calculated separately for re-imprisonment and reconviction, and can be based on 12, 24 or 60 months follow-up periods. The RQ score is based on the percentage-point difference between treated and untreated offender groups; thus, an RQ (reimprisonment) score of 10.0 might indicate, for example, that the rate of re-imprisonment amongst untreated offenders was 35 percent, and the corresponding rate for the programme "graduates" was 25 percent.

By international standards, effect sizes of ten percentage point reductions are an excellent outcome. While scores lower than this are more commonly reported, it is noteworthy that, in 2013, the Department was able to report effect sizes of almost 13 percentage points for its most intensive programmes, the Special Treatment Unit Rehabilitation Programmes (STURPs). Given that these programmes mainly work with the highest-risk violent offenders, this is an excellent achievement.

Caveats on the interpretation of RQ results are also appropriate. Whereas the methodology involves careful matching of offenders in terms of a wide range of riskrelevant characteristics (e.g., age, gender, ethnicity, sentence length, sentence type, RoC*RoI scores), as well as by sentence start or end dates, there is no random assignment of offenders to "treatment" and "untreated" (comparison) groups. Consequently, there is potential for "selection bias" to influence scores.

Work is underway this year to further enhance RQ by building in seriousness of re-offending as a new outcome variable. Currently we only measure whether an offender was, or was not, reconvicted. However, we suspect that even if offenders who have completed a programme *are* reconvicted, it is likely to be for less serious offences – so the programmes are having a significant positive impact that it is important to start measuring.

Conclusion

8

The Department is well-placed to be able to track its progress towards its reduced re-offending goal. In fact, few other developed countries have such a comprehensive range of recidivism measures available to allow the level of scrutiny of recidivism. Furthermore, no other country's correctional system is known to subject its entire suite of rehabilitation delivery to the level of continuous and comprehensive scrutiny of outcomes, as is now routinely done here in New Zealand.

Recent years' rehabilitation and reintegrative programme results have been increasingly positive, indicating measurable reductions in re-offending amongst offenders who completed our rehabilitation programmes. The overall rates of reconviction and re-imprisonment, as measured by the Recidivism Index, are tracking downwards. Rehabilitative interventions, along with improved practice by probation officers and corrections officers in their daily interactions with offenders, are underpinning the Department's positive progress towards its goal of reducing re-offending by 25 percent by 2017.



Review of PhD research by Laura Hanby on the ability of the Dynamic Risk Assessment for Offender Re-entry (DRAOR) to identify risk and desistance for NZ parolees (2010-2012)

Dr Nick J Wilson

Principal Advisor, Psychological Research, Office of the Chief Psychologist, Department of Corrections

Author biography

Dr Nick Wilson has been with the Department for 18 years. Nick began employment with Corrections as a clinical psychologist at psychological services in Hamilton until 2001 when he became a specialist psychological researcher. He has been involved in research into the assessment and treatment of high risk offenders such as psychopaths, adult and child sex offenders, and youth offenders and in the development of dynamic risk measures for the Department such as the Dynamic Risk Assessment for Offender Re-entry (DRAOR). Nick is currently part of the team lead by the Chief Psychologist.

Key DRAOR probation practice guidance from the Hanby Study

- 1. Ensure more frequent use of DRAOR for those with higher RoC*RoI scores beyond the first six months of parole to keep a risk focus.
- 2. Check scoring of the Acute items *Interpersonal Relationships* and *Employment* with regard to checking collateral sources and the manual guidance.
- 3. Keep your assessment of the Protective items dynamic across time; they do change and need to be maintained by parolees to remain effective.
- Have increased confidence in the usefulness of DRAOR to capture real changes in risk for New Zealand parole management, including for Māori offenders.

Introduction

This review relates to the extensive DRAOR research carried out by successful PhD candidate Laura Hanby (2013) from Carleton University Ottawa, Canada, in a thesis titled "A longitudinal study of dynamic risk, protective factors, and criminal recidivism: Change over time and the impact of assessment timing".

This research into DRAOR use by probation staff in New Zealand was a collaborative study between Corrections and Dr Ralph Serin from Carleton University, principal developer of DRAOR. Hanby was supervised by Dr Serin in completing her PhD research. Corrections provided a database (with identifying information removed) of all offenders released on parole following a term of incarceration in New Zealand from 1 April 2010 to 31 March 2012. This provided a very large representative sample of 3,498 offenders managed on parole with risk and demographic and DRAOR information along with details of first new offence post release. Hanby had the task of turning a database containing over 700,000 lines of data extracted from the Corrections' computer system into a dynamic record of DRAOR administration overtime. A huge organisational task!

Previous New Zealand research included two pilot evaluations of DRAOR (Tamatea & Wilson, 2009; Wilson & Tamatea, 2010), however, the research by Hanby has provided the largest population evaluation of DRAOR to date. The DRAOR measure with three subscales and 19 items (see Table 1) was first developed in 2007 to assist probation staff in Canada in the management of offenders in the community through a focus on stable and acute risk factors, as well as protective factors linked to desistance from crime (Serin, 2007; Serin & Lloyd, 2009; Serin, Lloyd, & Hanby 2010a). DRAOR was further refined during pilot application in New Zealand to improve its ability as a dynamic structured decision measure through the inclusion of relevant risk scenarios (Serin, Mailloux, & Wilson, 2010b). In addition to its use in New Zealand, DRAOR is also currently in use by probation services in several states in the USA and in community aftercare by the Singapore Prison Service.

Stable	Acute	Protective	
Peer association	Substance abuse	Responsive to advice	
Attitudes towards authority	Anger/hostility	Prosocial identity	
Impulse control	Opportunity/access to victims	High expectations	
Problem-solving	Negative mood	Costs/Benefits	
Sense of entitlement	Employment	Social supports	
Attachment with others	Interpersonal relationships	Social control	
	Living situation		

Table 1.DRAOR Subscales and Items (Serin et al., 2010)

Discussion of key study results

The offender sample analysed by Hanby covered two years of parolee releases who were managed with DRAOR after its introduction into New Zealand. In terms of their offending that had resulted in imprisonment, non-violent offending made up 44 percent, violent offending 39.3 percent, and sexual offending 16.4 percent. Ethnicity distribution was also consistent with the pattern for release on parole from New Zealand prisons with 52 percent Māori, 37 percent European, and 7.5 percent Pacific Island (Harpham, 2012).

In the period covered by the study, probation officers as per their practice guidelines typically administered the DRAOR multiple times (5,000 times per month on average across parolees during the year 2011-2012). Offenders regarded as of higher risk based on Corrections' measure of static risk, RoC*RoI (Bakker, Riley, & O'Malley, 1999) had more administration of the DRAOR occurring during the first six months. However, this greater focus in terms of reassessment using DRAOR on the higher static risk group disappeared after this period, with no difference found across parolees in terms of frequency of application of the measure.

The study found that DRAOR demonstrated overall acceptable psychometric properties, although future research was recommended by Hanby to seek to refine the Acute subscale to improve its reliability. However, Hanby indicated that she was not recommending changes to DRAOR or its subscales given its proven psychometric properties and utility in practice. The Stable and Protective subscales were found to have high internal reliability (Alpha = .80 & .84) and the Acute moderate reliability (Alpha = .62). Application of the original three subscale factor structure, as detailed in Table 1 of this article found a high level of 'fit' with the original model across DRAOR application over time on parole (Goodness of Fit = 98 percent).

Prediction of re-offending

Reconvictions for anything and criminal reconvictions during a two-year follow-up period were accurately predicted from the dynamic risk factors contained in the Stable and Acute sub-scales (Area Under Curve = .71 or 71 percent [Confidence Interval = .69-.73]) and protective factors (AUC = .67 or 67 percent [CI= .65-.68]). Also, Hanby found that the last DRAOR administered before re-offending or the end of the follow-up period had the higher predictive power (Cohen's d = .53 for first rising to .79 for last application). Importantly for New Zealand Corrections, Hanby was able to establish this overall predictive accuracy for re-offending and improvement with reapplication for DRAOR was applicable for both European and Māori offender samples.

In keeping with the design of the DRAOR as a dynamic measure of change, scores were found to change over time. Stable and acute dynamic risk scores decreased over time while protective factor scores increased. This importantly supported that systematic assessment and reassessment of individual paroled offenders by probation staff was change sensitive. It was noted that recidivists had higher stable and lower protective scores when initially assessed using DRAOR. Thus, right from the start of parole supervision the measure was able to identify those in most need of probation management. As expected, variables such as higher RoC*RoI and younger age also indicated those likely to have higher DRAOR dynamic risk scores and lower protective scores when first assessed. Interestingly, higher RoC*RoI scores also predicted less change in the acute subscale scores over time.

Recidivists differed from non-recidivists in stable dynamic risk and protective factors in the month prior to follow-up period end (see Figure 1) and in acute dynamic risk in the second month prior to follow-up end. Reconvictions were accurately predicted from monthly average stable risk, beginning at parole start and continuing for 12 months of assessments (see Figure 1), while protective factors were predictive for the first four months only. For the stable scores this means hazard of recidivism increases by 11 percent for each point increase in score. For the protective items the hazard of recidivism decreases by 9 percent for each score unit increase in protective subscale score.

Figure 1.

Graph of Stable Risk Criminal Reconvictions Model using monthly variables (sourced from page 135, Hanby 2013).



The drop in accuracy in prediction of failure after 12 months was explained by Hanby as a possible result of the removal from analysis of the higher risk offenders who had already re-offended. This reduced the numbers of higher risk offenders with the remaining 'pool' of offenders in the analysis having a lower rate of failure.

Finally, with regard to the prediction of re-offending, Hanby found that the DRAOR predicted recidivism above and beyond the prediction provided by RoC*RoI (DRAOR increases the recidivism prediction by a factor of four percent). This is a very important finding, as the accepted empirical 'litmus' test for a dynamic measure is that it must contribute significantly to risk prediction beyond static variables (RoC*RoI). Hanby found that combining the dynamic (stable and acute) and static model (RoC*RoI) demonstrated the greatest overall accuracy (AUC = .77 or 77 percent).

In conclusion, Hanby's study highlighted the mechanisms by which risk changes over time and provided support for a transitional model of offender re-entry and parole management focusing on dynamic risk and protective factors. This is what DRAOR was designed to do (Serin et al., 2010a) and the role it was selected to perform in the probation change programme (Corrections News, November/December, 2009). The three-year change programme shifted concentration from a sole focus on sentence compliance to include reducing the likelihood of re-offending and to minimise harm to others. This involved a shift from classification of risk based on measures such as RoC*RoI to dynamic management of risk reduction and individual specific professional judgement using DRAOR.

Implications of the study for NZ Corrections

The lack of difference based on RoC*RoI scores in terms of frequency of administration of DRAOR after six months may, in the opinion of the author of this article, indicate some drift from a risk focus (key part of the risk, need, and responsivity model, Andrews & Bonta, 2010) among probation staff. This change in the perception of actual risk of re-offending may occur when higher risk offenders do not re-offend as expected by assessing staff. However, this lack of expected reoffending could be a result of a lack of opportunity, or a specific disinhibiting factor, or indeed may reflect the successful external management of risk by probation.

Some of the Acute items did not perform as well as in previous DRAOR studies, such as items Interpersonal relationships and Employment – this may indicate a need to ensure probation staff have an accurate understanding of the dynamic scoring of items. Indeed it may also indicate for the Acute subscale that staff may be treating these items as stable-pattern based indicators rather than checking at each visit to ensure changes in the offender's life are immediately reflected in score change. The DRAOR Acute items were designed to reflect short term changes and the often chaotic lifestyles of released offenders (Serin et al., 2010b).

Corrections staff can be confident in the reliability and validity of the DRAOR with Māori offenders from the comparison analysis carried out by Hanby in this study. However, this does not mean that other culture relevant information should not also be accessed as appropriate in keeping with multi-method best practice. What it does mean is that the DRAOR dynamic risk and protective scale information should form an important part of probation management of risk and desistance for Māori offenders.

The fall off in the accuracy of the protective factors after four months may indicate that the protective item subscale is not remaining a dynamic focus over time or that the protective factors in DRAOR only relate to desistance in the immediate period following release. The study showed scores continued to fall over the follow-up period yet this reduction was no longer linked to reduced risk. Based on previous supervision of probation staff in New Zealand by the author of this article it is possible that staff are relying too much on unsubstantiated offender self report in deciding protective scores. Protective items require the same rigour in terms of cross-checking as dynamic risk items (Serin et al., 2010b).

Finally, while Hanby did not find the level of accuracy for the Acute items found in previous research (Wilson & Tamatea, 2010) it is important to acknowledge that her data only contained the first new offence (including breach) rather than escalation of offending or seriousness typically captured by reimprisonment. Previous DRAOR research in 2010 had access to all new offences during the follow-up period rather than just first failure and found that the Acute subscale only became significant as a predictor when reimprisonment was the focus of failure analysis.

The research on DRAOR by Hanby also provides a high degree of support for the use of the comparison measure developed by Serin & Wilson (2012), the Structured Dynamic Assessment Case-management-21 item measure (SDAC-21) for use in case management in prison. The SDAC-21 has 21 items with 15 of these sourced from DRAOR including six out of seven Stable items and six out of seven Protective items.

Final comment

The strengths of the research carried out by Hanby, namely the large sample and longitudinal design, permitted a multifaceted examination of the relationship of the DRAOR to recidivism. The results of sophisticated analyses suggest this relationship is robust and that those using the measure can be confident in the DRAOR as a decision making tool. This study, through its large multi-year representative sample of New Zealand parolees, provides assessors with independent peer reviewed research to support use of DRAOR and to assist in defending challenges on its overall accuracy and effectiveness as a management tool.

It is important to remember that the data considered by Hanby in her research were gathered in the first two years in which DRAOR was rolled out across probation in New Zealand. The implantation of the measure has continued beyond this period with the development of interventions tied to the need areas identified by DRAOR. In addition, Corrections has created probation practice leader positions throughout the country to assist staff with understanding the application of DRAOR and the identification of integrity issues. Both these developments would be expected to improve the reliable and valid use of DRAOR in the years since the data used by Hanby was gathered.

It is hoped that future research with DRAOR, both in New Zealand but also in the other international corrections jurisdictions using the measure, will confirm the results of Hanby's research and seek to answer the questions still to be answered.

References

- Andrews, D. A., & Bonta, J. (2010). The psychology of criminal conduct (5th ed.). Cincinnati, OH: Anderson.
- Bakker, L., Riley, D., & O'Malley, J. (1999). Risk of reconviction: Statistical models predicting four types of re-offending. Wellington: Department of Corrections Psychological Service.
- Corrections News (November/December 2009). Community Probation Services' – change programme (page 6). Department of Corrections, New Zealand. Retrieved from: http://corrnet.corrections.govt.nz/__data/ assets/pdf_ file/0004/400477/Correction-News-Nov-09-v5.pdf
- Hanby, L. J. (2013). A Longitudinal Study of Dynamic Risk, Protective Factors, and Criminal Recidivism: Change over Time and the Impact of Assessment Timing. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada.
- Harpham, D. (2012). Department of Corrections offender volumes report 2011. Department of Corrections, New Zealand.
- Serin, R. (2007). The Dynamic Risk Assessment Scale for Offender Re-Entry (DRAOR). Unpublished scale. Carleton University, Ottawa, Ontario.
- Serin, R. C., & Lloyd, C. D. (2009). Examining the process of offender change: The transition to crime desistance. Psychology, Crime, & Law, 15, 347-364. doi:10.1080/10683160802261078
- Serin, R.C., Lloyd, C., & Hanby, L.J. (2010a). Enhancing offender re-entry: An integrated model for understanding offender re-entry. European Journal of Probation, 2(2), 53-75.
- Serin, R. C., Mailloux, D., & Wilson, N. (2010b). Practice manual for use with Dynamic Risk Assessment for Offender Re-entry (DRAOR) scale: Revised version. Unpublished manuscript, Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada.
- Serin, R. C., & Wilson, N. J. (2012). Practice manual for use with Structured Dynamic Assessment Case-management-21 item (SDAC-21). Unpublished manuscript, Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada & Department of Corrections, New Zealand.
- Tamatea, A., & Wilson, N. (2009). Dynamic Risk Assessment for Offender Re-entry (DRAOR): A pilot study. New Zealand: Department of Corrections.
- Wilson, N., & Tamatea, A. (2010). Applying Structured Dynamic Risk and Protective Assessment in Parole Management. New Zealand. Department of Corrections.
- Yesberg, Polaschek. D, & Serin, R (2013-submitted for publication). Assessing dynamic risk and protective factors in the community: Examining the validity of the Dynamic Risk Assessment for Offender Re-entry

What can the DRAOR tell us about highrisk offenders? A preliminary examination

Julia A. Yesberg & Devon L. L. Polaschek

Victoria University of Wellington

Author biographies:

Julia Yesberg is a PhD student in the Department of Psychology at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. Her research interests include the rehabilitation and reintegration of high-risk offenders, theories of offender change and change generalisation/ maintenance, desistance, and risk assessment.

Devon Polaschek, PhD DipClinPsyc is a Professor of Psychology at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. Her research interests include theory, intervention, and intervention evaluation with serious violent and sexual offenders, psychopathy, desistance, reintegration, parole and experimental approaches to offender assessment.

Executive Summary

The Dynamic Risk Assessment for Offender Reentry (DRAOR; Serin, Mailloux, & Wilson 2012) is a risk assessment tool developed to assist probation officers with the effective management of offenders in the community. This study investigated whether the first DRAOR rating after release from prison predicts recidivism for high-risk offenders, and whether scores change systematically over the first six months following release. We found that, at release, the stable and protective subscales predicted a number of reconviction outcomes. Acute scores, on the other hand, only predicted recidivism when measured closer to the re-offence date. We also found that each DRAOR subscale changed in a positive direction over time: assessed risk levels decreased, and protective factors increased. These findings provide preliminary support for the DRAOR's predictive validity with a high-risk offender sample; current and future research directions are discussed.

Introduction

If you are a member of the Parole Board, charged with identifying who to release and who to decline from among your many hearings, you know this: Two offenders released on the same day after the same length of time in prison, similar in age and RoC*RoI score, and on the face of it, with similar arrangements in place for settling in over the next few weeks, may be in very different places six months from now. Within a few weeks after release, one of them may well be back in prison while the other may be going from strength to strength. You may decide at the hearing to release them both. But then you rely on probation officers to make good your decisions. Can they tell which is which ahead of time? And if they can, can they intervene where it is needed to make a difference? We report here some preliminary data on a probation officer-rated tool intended to assist with these tasks: the Dynamic Risk Assessment for Offender Re-entry (DRAOR; Serin, Mailloux, & Wilson, 2012).

Development of Dynamic, Balanced, Risk Assessment Tools

Risk assessment is one of the most important aspects of offender case management and decision-making. The last few decades have seen the development of tools capable of predicting a variety of outcomes (e.g., general and serious recidivism, parole violations, misconducts). More recently, the focus of risk assessment has shifted from 'risk prediction' to 'risk prevention' by incorporating dynamic or changeable factors (Douglas & Skeem, 2005). Dynamic risk factors have the potential to change over time or through targeted intervention and can provide more up-to-date estimates of recidivism risk than static risk factors (Hanson, Harris, Scott, & Helmus, 2007). Some dynamic risk factors are stable, enduring characteristics of the individual that have the potential to change over months or years (e.g., impulse control, poor attachment with others), while others are acute characteristics that can change rapidly and signal an immediate increase in risk of recidivism (e.g., intoxication, negative mood; Hanson & Harris, 2000). Tools that incorporate dynamic risk factors have a variety of uses in addition to recidivism prediction. For example, they can be used to measure change during treatment and guide case management and release planning.

Along with the incorporation of dynamic risk factors, there has been a growing interest in assessing factors that may *decrease* the likelihood of recidivism (i.e., protective factors). Some authors argue that in order to more accurately predict recidivism outcomes, assessment should focus not only on offenders' risks but also on their strengths or resources (e.g., social

13

support, attachment to others; de Ruiter & Nicholls, 2011; McNeill, Farrall, Lightower, & Maruna, 2012). Recent research has shown that a more balanced approach to risk assessment – considering protective factors alongside risk factors – can contribute incrementally to the prediction of violent recidivism (de Vries Robbe, de Vogel, & de Spa, 2011). However, the jury is still out on whether the inclusion of factors that are termed "protective" is simply a semantic exercise (e.g., rewording risk factors in positive language) or reflects the identification of genuinely new domains with the potential to enhance predictive validity and the achievement of desistance.

Risk Assessment in the Re-entry Context

The first weeks and months after release back into the community are the most at-risk time for offenders; it is during this period when re-offending rates are at their peak (Nadesu, 2007). Supportive communitybased oversight ("parole")¹ can play an important role in helping offenders get through the re-entry period successfully. In recent years, there has been a shift away from a punitive model of parole, focused primarily on compliance, to a model that has a wider focus on rehabilitation and change-support. In the latter model, parole is viewed as an intervention in itself and probation officers are potential agents of change (Bonta, Rugge, Scott, Bourgon, & Yessine, 2008; Bonta et al., 2011; Kennealy, Skeem, Eno Louden, & Manchak, 2011; McNeill et al., 2012). Risk assessment has become an important tool for assisting probation officers in their day-to-day management of offenders on parole. With the effective monitoring of relevant dynamic risk and protective factors, probation officers can better judge when an individual is at risk and determine how and when to intervene to lessen that risk (Douglas & Skeem, 2005).

Introduction to this Study

The Dynamic Risk Assessment for Offender Reentry (DRAOR; Serin, Mailloux, & Wilson, 2012) was developed to assist probation officers with the effective management of offenders on parole. The DRAOR incorporates a number of stable and acute dynamic risk factors and protective factors. The instrument was first piloted by Community Probation Services in 2008 and has been adopted as a national standard since 2010. Preliminary data on 59 offenders showed the protective subscale in particular to be related to lower rates of recidivism (Tamatea & Wilson, 2009), and more recent research indicates moderately high predictive validity for all subscales (Serin et al., 2012). Given the lack of published evaluations of the DRAOR, the aims of this study are modest. In this study we explore whether the first DRAOR score predicts recidivism for high-risk prisoners released back into the community: the group that most needs active risk assessment and management. We also investigate whether their DRAOR scores change systematically over the first six months in the community.

Method

Participants

The sample included 287² high-risk male offenders who had been sentenced to two or more years imprisonment and were released from prison between April 2010 and August 2012. Their average RoC*RoI was .74, (*SD*=.11), and 60 percent identified as Māori, 30 percent as New Zealand European, and 7 percent as Pasifika. Their average age at release was 31 years and they averaged 66 prior convictions including five for violence. They were first convicted at 16 years and first convicted for violence at 19 years.

The most serious index offence for 62 percent was for violence, for 26 percent a property/dishonesty offence (e.g., burglary, theft), and for the remainder (12 percent), an adult-victim sexual offence, driving-related or drug-related offence. Seventeen men were on indeterminate sentences. The remaining 270 men had an average sentence length of 3.9 years. All together, at the time of release, they had served an average of 4.1 years in prison; 58 percent were released on parole (i.e., before their sentence end date), while 42 percent were released at the end of their sentence; the average length for this community part of the sentence was 342 days.

Measures

Dynamic Risk Assessment for Offender Re-entry (**DRAOR**). Developed by Serin (2007), the DRAOR has 19 items, and was developed to assess recidivism risk in the community and to inform case planning and risk management (Serin, Mailloux & Wilson, 2012). It is divided into three subscales: stable dynamic risk factors, acute dynamic risk factors, and protective factors. Each item is rated using a three-point scoring format (0, 1, 2). A score of '0' indicates the absence of the item, a '2' indicates it is strongly present, and a '1' rating is used to indicate it is somewhat present, or the evidence is inconsistent.

Serin and colleagues took the DRAOR items from previous theory and research on sexual and violent

¹ This sample contains a mix of men released early onto parole, and "released on conditions" men who served their full custodial sentence. Throughout this article we use the term "parole" to refer to both. In later research we will examine whether outcomes differ for each group.

² This sample includes 159 high-risk special treatment unit (STURP) completers. For the purpose of this study, we will not be separating them out from the high-risk untreated men, but other research is currently underway comparing the two groups.

offenders, and on desistance processes. When a scale is developed from theoretical ideas, it is important to establish whether the theory fits well with how the tool performs in practice. We asked whether all 19 items were useful to have in the scale, and whether they best fitted together the way that Serin and colleagues hypothesised.

To answer these questions, we used a statistical technique called Principal Components Analysis and found that instead of the original three stable, acute

and protective scales, actually four subscales was the best fit for this sample's data (Yesberg & Polaschek, 2013). Both the original and new structures are presented below. The most notable difference between them is that the acute items split themselves up among three of the new subscales (stable, internal acute, external acute). The four-subscale DRAOR will be used in the current study because it is the best fit to this sample, although the results would still be quite similar if we used the original three subscales.

Figure 1.

Original Three-Subscale DRAOR Structure

Stable Subscale	Acute Subscale	Protective Subscale
Peer associations	Substance abuse	Responsive to advice
Attitudes towards authority	Anger/hostility	Prosocial identity
Impulse control	Opportunity/access to victims	High expectations
Problem-solving	Negative mood	Costs/benefits
Sense of entitlement	Employment	Social supports
Attachment with others	Interpersonal relationships	Social control
	Living situation	

Figure 2.

New Four-Subscale DRAOR Structure

Stable Subscale	Internal Acute Subscale	External Acute Subscale	Protective Subscale
Peer associations	Substance abuse	Interpersonal relationships	Responsive to advice
Attitudes towards authority	Anger/hostility	Living situation	Prosocial identity
Impulse control	Negative mood	Attachment with others	High expectations
Problem-solving			Costs/benefits
Sense of entitlement			Social supports
Opportunity/access to victims			Social control
Employment			

Recidivism. Recidivism data were extracted from the National Conviction Records database in October 2013. Time from release from prison to data extraction averaged 775 days (range 404 to 1,275 days). Several indices of recidivism were examined: breaches of parole, any new conviction (excluding breaches), any violent conviction, and any conviction (including breaches) leading to imprisonment.

Procedure

DRAOR scores were extracted from electronic offender records. The number of DRAOR ratings over the six months following release ranged from two to 54 (M=21.0, SD=8.0). To examine predictive validity, the first rating following release was used. To evaluate change over time, the scores closest to two months, four months, and six months after release were identified. Not all parolees had all four scores available; some men re-offended and were sent back to prison before the six months elapsed. Parolees without all four scores (at release, two months, four months, six months) were not included in any analyses examining change over time.

Results

Do initial DRAOR scores predict recidivism?

To assess, at release, the DRAOR's ability to predict recidivism, we examined the relationship between the first DRAOR score after release and the four indices of recidivism. During the follow-up period (average of 775 days), 44 percent of the sample were convicted of breaching their parole conditions, 63 percent were convicted of a new offence (excluding breaches), 27 percent were convicted of a new violent offence, and 40 percent were sentenced to imprisonment.

We found that the stable subscale and the total DRAOR score (calculated by adding together the stable and acute scores and subtracting the protective score) significantly predicted each of the four types of reconviction. The protective subscale predicted breaches of parole and violent convictions. The internal acute and external acute subscales did not predict any type of reconviction.

Box 1.

Correlations Between First DRAOR Scores and Reconviction

	Breach of Parole	New Conviction	New Violent Conviction	Reimprisonment		
Stable	.16**	.22**	.13*	.23**		
Internal Acute	.07	.10	.10	.09		
External Acute	.04	.00	.06	.04		
Protective	22**	11	13*	10		
DRAOR Total	.19**	.18**	.16**	.18**		
*p<.05, **p<.01						

Next, we examined (1) whether all four subscales of the DRAOR predicted recidivism together and (2) whether any subscale contributes more to the prediction of recidivism than the other subscales (see Box 2 for the technique used and statistical outcomes). In combination, the four subscales of the DRAOR predicted which offenders were reconvicted of breaching their parole, convicted of a new offence, and reimprisoned, and those who were not. The four subscales together did not predict violent convictions. The protective subscale independently predicted breaches. In other words, it predicted breaches even when we had already taken into account the contribution of the other subscales, suggesting it is the main driver of the ability of the DRAOR to predict breaches of parole. The stable subscale independently predicted reconvictions and reimprisonment, suggesting it was the most important influence in the prediction of these outcomes.

Box 2.

Predicting recidivism using Cox regressions

We examined the predictive validity of the DRAOR subscales using Cox regression survival analysis: a type of regression used here because it controls for differing lengths of follow-up and is less influenced by variation in recidivism base rates (Hanson, 2009).

Models were run for each type of recidivism; the four DRAOR subscales were entered in the first block as the independent variables. The criterion or dependent variable was recidivism and the time variable was days to recidivism for those who re-offended, or total follow-up time for non-recidivists. The four-subscale model significantly predicted breaches, $\chi^2(4, N=287) = 15.58$, p=.004, reconvictions, $\chi^2(4, N=287) = 18.29$, p=.001, and reimprisonment, $\chi^2(4, N-287) = 16.88$, p=.002. The model did not predict violent convictions, $\chi^2(4, N=287) = 7.77$, p=.101. In predicting breaches, the protective subscale made a significant unique contribution to the model, Wald(1)=8.47, p=.004, OR=.870. In predicting reconvictions and reimprisonment, the stable subscale made a significant unique contribution to the model, Wald(1)=7.37, p=.007, OR=1.108; Wald(1)=9.47, p=.002, OR=1.153. OR is an odds ratio statistic representing change in risk of recidivism per unit increase in the predictor (i.e., DRAOR subscales). OR values greater than 1.0 indicate that higher scores on the predictor are associated with increased recidivism; values less than 1.0 indicate decreased recidivism. In the current study, for example, an OR of 1.153 would be interpreted to mean that for every 1-point increase in stable scores, there would be a 15.3 percent increase in reimprisonment (Olver, Wong, Nicholaichuk, & Gordon, 2007).

Acute score closest to reconviction: Model $\chi^2(2, N=227) = 27.76, p<.001$; Internal acute: Wald(1)=9.78, p=.002, OR=1.233; External acute: Wald(1)=7.20, p=.007, OR=1.244.

Taking a closer look at acute DRAOR scores

As we saw from the above results, at release, the two acute subscales (internal, external) were not related to any recidivism outcomes. This finding could be due to when the acute items were measured. Because theory suggests that acute factors fluctuate a lot, we would hypothesise that the acute subscales would be more predictive measured closer to recidivism. To test this hypothesis, we identified the internal acute and external acute score closest (within 45 days) to the date of first reconviction, excluding breaches. We excluded 60 recidivists who did not have a score within 45 days of re-offending. For non-recidivists, the score closest to six months was used as a comparison.

Measured closer to recidivism, the internal acute and external acute subscales each significantly predicted reconvictions (see Box 2), and did so independently in the presence of the other. This result supports our hypothesis and suggests that both play an important part in short term recidivism prediction.

Do DRAOR scores change over time?

We next examined whether DRAOR scores change systematically over the first six months in the community for our high-risk parolees, using scores closest to release, and two months, four months, and six months after release. For each subscale and for the DRAOR total, scores changed significantly over the first six months (see Table 3, and Box 3). Figure 1 shows the pattern of change for the DRAOR total score. The stable, internal acute, and external acute subscales showed the same pattern with scores decreasing over the six-month period. For the protective factors, scores increased over the first six months in the community. In other words, parolees appear to be getting better over time: their assessed risk levels are decreasing, and protective factors are increasing.

Table 3.

Means and Standard Deviations for DRAOR Scores Across Time

	Atrelease	2 months	4 months	6 months
Stable	8.64 (2.59)	8.06 (3.03)	7.86 (3.05)	7.81 (3.10)
Internal Acute	1.90 (1.43)	1.25 (1.19)	1.23 (1.34)	1.30 (1.36)
External Acute	2.85 (1.24)	2.44 (1.30)	2.38 (1.31)	2.32 (1.30)
Protective	5.66 (2.20)	6.28 (2.63)	6.61 (2.73)	6.75 (2.85)
DRAOR Total	7.73 (5.48)	5.47 (6.44)	4.85 (6.85)	4.67 (7.13)

Figure 3.

DRAOR Total Scores Over 6 Months After Release



Box 3.

Assessing change over time

To assess change in DRAOR scores over time we used repeated measures ANOVA. There was a significant main effect for time for each of the four factors and the DRAOR total: Stable, Wilks' λ =.90, F(3, 229)=8.40, p<.001, ηp^2 =.10; Internal Acute, Wilks' λ =.82, F(3, 229)=17.14, p<.001, ηp^2 =.19; External Acute, Wilks' λ =.85, F(3, 229)=13.45, p<.001, ηp^2 =.15; Protective, Wilks' λ =.84, F(3, 229)=14.04, p<.001, ηp^2 =.16; DRAOR total, Wilks' λ =.79, F(3, 229)=20.26, p<.001, ηp^2 =.21, confirming that scores did change, with medium to large effect sizes. Of course, parolees who were reimprisoned within six months following this release, or parolees who had incomplete data for another reason (e.g., they had absconded from their sentence) were not able to be included in these findings. So these results only represent those who were relatively more successful at surviving in the first place. We wondered whether the DRAOR could differentiate those who survived for longer from these "fast failures". To consider this question we first split the sample into two groups: (1) those who had complete data (i.e., four DRAOR scores over six months) and (2) those who did not. We then examined whether the two groups differed significantly in their DRAOR scores at release. As you can see from Figure 4, parolees who had complete data had significantly lower stable risk (t[285]=-2.47, p=.014), significantly higher protective scores (t[285]=2.30, p=.022), and significantly lower DRAOR total scores (t[285]=-2.75, p=.006), immediately following release. Internal and external acute risk did not differ between the two groups.

Figure 4.

Initial DRAOR Scores for Parolees With Complete and Incomplete Data



Discussion

This study was a preliminary investigation into the use of the DRAOR with a high-risk parolee sample. We found that stable, protective, and total DRAOR scores measured immediately after release were predictive of a number of recidivism outcomes. Acute scores at release did not predict recidivism. However, when measured closer to the date of the re-offence, both the internal acute and external acute subscales predicted reconvictions. This finding confirms what the literature theorises about acute risk factors: that they are more useful for predicting imminent recidivism (Hanson & Harris, 2000). In this research we did not examine probation officers' responses to detecting acute risk factors, but their sensitivity to re-offending tends to support the idea that intervention when they are higher could help to avert it.

Both the stable and protective subscales were predictive of most recidivism outcomes. Investigating whether protective factors *increase* the predictive accuracy over and above stable risk factors – a current interest in risk assessment research – was beyond the scope of this study. However, the results suggest that the protective subscale may be particularly important for predicting breaches of parole. This finding makes intuitive sense when we take a closer look at the individual items within the protective subscale, many of which seem inherent in a good probation officer-parolee relationship. For example, being responsive to their probation officer's advice and having high expectations of succeeding in the community may well be factors important for helping parolees avoid breaches.

The second part of the study looked at how DRAOR scores change over time for high-risk offenders in the community. Based on DRAOR data over six months, we found that all scores changed systematically in a positive direction: risk factors reduced and protective factors increased. We also found that we were able to predict "fast failures" by examining the first score after release: parolees who had incomplete data had significantly higher stable risk and total scores and lower protective factors. This finding has obvious implications for the management of high-risk offenders in the community. Parolees who present with high stable risk and low protective scores on release may be the prime candidates for a more intense focus on active risk management and intervention. This suggestion is in line with the RNR (Risk-Need-Responsivity) principles; if we identify those at highest risk, and target services at those parolees, we will have the greatest effect on recidivism (Andrews & Bonta, 2010). In future research we hope to examine whether these parolees did receive more intensive assistance.

This article presented some research that is currently underway using the DRAOR by our School of Psychology research team at Victoria University of Wellington. Current research projects include examining the validity of the DRAOR with different populations of offenders, including women (see 'Women on parole: Do they need their own DRAOR?' page 20) and youth, and using the DRAOR to examine the impact of intensive treatment on community-rated risk. As part of the Parole Project, we have a study underway comparing a sample of Special Treatment Unit Rehabilitation Programme (STURP) graduates with a sample of similarly high-risk untreated offenders. Preliminary results indicate that STURP graduates have lower risk and higher protective factors both at release and over time in the community. We are also looking into how best to analyse multiple DRAOR scores, given their dynamic nature.

Future research on the DRAOR should investigate *how* the tool is being used by probation officers in their day-to-day dealing with offenders. The New Zealand

pilot study found that some probation officers found the DRAOR to be useful in helping structure their interactions with offenders, and in providing a suitable model for considering a range of important risk and protective factors (Tamatea & Wilson, 2009). But to what extent does rating the DRAOR enable probation officers to better monitor and intervene when risk increases? If probation officers are using the information to intervene, the degree and types of intervention they deploy may be more predictive of recidivism outcome than scores on the measure itself. It is only by considering both assessment and responses that we can get a full picture of the usefulness of this instrument for departmental practice.

References

- Bonta, J., Bourgon, G., Rugge, T., Scott, T-L., Yessine, A. K., Gutierrez, & Li, J. (2011). An experimental demonstration of training probation officers in evidence-based community supervision. Criminal Justice and Behavior, 38, 1127-1148. doi: 10.1177/0093854811420678
- Bonta, J., Rugge, T., Scott, T., Bourgon, G., & Yessine, A. K. (2008). Exploring the black box of community supervision. Journal of Offender Rehabilitation, 47, 248-270.
- de Ruiter, C., & Nicholls, T. L. (2011). Protective factors in forensic mental health: A new frontier. International Journal of Forensic Mental Health, 10, 160-170.
- de Vries Robbe, M., de Vogel, V., & de Spa, E. (2011). Protective factors for violence risk in forensic psychiatric patients: A retrospective validation study for the SAPROF. International Journal of Forensic Mental Health, 10, 178-186.
- Douglas, K. S., & Skeem, J. L. (2005). Violence risk assessment: Getting specific about being dynamic. Psychology, Public Policy, and Law, 11, 347-383. doi: 10.1037/1076-8971.11.3.347
- Hanson, R. K. (2009). The psychological assessment of risk for crime and violence. Canadian Psychology, 50, 172-182.
- Hanson, R. K., & Harris, A. J. R. (2000). Where should we intervene? Dynamic predictors of sexual offense recidivism. Criminal Justice and Behavior, 27, 6-35.
- Hanson, R. K., Harris, A. J. R., Scott, T., & Helmus, L. (2007). Assessing the risk of sexual offenders on community supervision: The Dynamic Supervision Project. Public Safety Canada.
- Kennealy, P. J., Skeem, J. L., Manchak, S. M., & Eno Louden, J. (2012). Firm, fair, and caring officer-offender relationships protect against supervision failure. Law and Human Behavior, 36, 496-505.
- McNeill, F., Farrall, S., Lightowler, C., & Maruna, S. (2012). Reexamining evidence-based practice in community corrections: Beyond "a confined view" of what works. Justice Research and Policy, 14, 35-60.
- Nadesu, A. (2007). Reconviction patterns of released prisoners: A 36-months follow-up analysis. Wellington, NZ: Department of Corrections.

- Olver, M. E., Wong, S. C. P., Nicholaichuk, T., & Gordon, A. (2007). The validity and reliability of the Violence Risk Scale-Sex Offender version: Assessing sex offender risk and evaluating therapeutic change. Psychological Assessment, 19, 318-329.
- Serin, R. C. (2007). The Dynamic Risk Assessment of Offender Re-entry (DRAOR). Unpublished user manual.
- Serin, R. C., Mailloux, D. L., & Wilson, N. J. (2012). The Dynamic Risk Assessment of Offender Re-entry (DRAOR). Unpublished user manual.
- Tamatea, A., & Wilson, N. (2009). Dynamic Risk Assessment for Offender Re-entry (DRAOR): A pilot study.
- Yesberg, J. A., & Polaschek, D. L. L. (2013). Assessing dynamic risk and protective factors in the community: Examining the validity of the Dynamic Risk Assessment for Offender Re-entry. Manuscript submitted for publication.

Women on parole: Do they need their own DRAOR?

Julia A. Yesberg, Jessica M. Scanlan & Devon L. L. Polaschek Victoria University of Wellington

Author biographies:

Julia Yesberg is a PhD student in the School of Psychology at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. Her research interests include the rehabilitation and reintegration of high-risk offenders, theories of offender change and change generalisation/ maintenance, desistance, and risk assessment.

Jessica Scanlan is a Forensic Masters student in the School of Psychology at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. Her research interests include desistance and maintenance of high-risk women offenders and their representation in the NZ criminal justice system, theories of female offending and desistance, and risk assessment.

Devon Polaschek, PhD DipClinPsyc is a Professor of Psychology at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. Her research interests include theory, intervention, and intervention evaluation with serious violent and sexual offenders, psychopathy, desistance, reintegration, parole and experimental approaches to offender assessment.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the Department of Corrections, Laura Hanby, and Ralph Serin, for making this database available to us. This report is based on the Victoria University School of Psychology honours research project completed in 2013 by Jessica Scanlan (supervised by Devon Polaschek and Julia Yesberg).

Executive Summary

The extent to which risk assessment tools developed on a male population generalise to women offenders is unclear, despite the growing number of women involved in the criminal justice system. This study investigated the predictive validity of the Dynamic Risk Assessment for Offender Re-entry (DRAOR) with samples of male and female prisoners released on parole. The DRAOR predicted recidivism for parolees of both genders. Furthermore, the DRAOR incrementally predicted recidivism after taking into account RoC*RoI (risk of reconviction/risk of imprisonment) scores. These results are promising and support the use of the DRAOR with women offenders in recidivism prediction. More research needs to be conducted to examine whether the inclusion of gender-specific variables improves the prediction of recidivism for women, and whether the DRAOR can be used with both women and men to reduce recidivism.

Introduction

The population of women prisoners in New Zealand has almost doubled in the last decade: in 2002 there were 275 women in prisons compared to 527 in 2012 (Statistics New Zealand, 2012). Although now a population worthy of attention in their own right, women in prison remain a tiny proportion compared to the male majority (94 percent of New Zealand's prisoners in 2012). Consequently, in New Zealand and throughout the western world, there has been much debate about the extent to which research on male offenders generalises to women. Especially in the area of risk assessment, it is important to establish the validity of assessment instruments with all the relevant populations. This study examines whether one such "gender-neutral" instrument – the Dynamic Risk Assessment for Offender Re-entry (DRAOR; Serin, Mailloux, & Wilson, 2012) – predicts recidivism for both female and male parolees.

Development of risk assessment

Risk assessment is one of the most important tasks in a criminal justice system. Over the last $10\ to\ 15$ years, static-factor-based instruments, which do little more than identify risk levels, have been supplemented by potentially more useful tools that incorporate dynamic, psychologically meaningful and clinically relevant risk factors (Douglas & Skeem, 2005; Mann, Hanson, & Thornton, 2010). Dynamic risk factors have the potential to change over time or through targeted intervention and can provide more up-to-date estimates of recidivism risk than static risk factors (Hanson, Harris, Scott, & Helmus, 2007). An individual's dynamic risk factors can be relatively stable, enduring characteristics (e.g., problem solving, peer associations) or acute characteristics that can change rapidly (e.g., intoxication, negative mood; Hanson & Harris, 2000). Stable dynamic risk factors are thought to be important for long-term recidivism prediction and as targets for treatment, whereas acute risk factors are theorised to be relevant for the day-to-day management of offenders and the prediction of imminent recidivism.

Recently, the focus has broadened again, to encompass factors that may *decrease* the likelihood of recidivism (i.e., "protective" factors). It has been argued that to more accurately predict recidivism, assessment should focus not only on offenders' risks but also on their strengths or resources (e.g., social support, attachment to others; de Ruiter & Nicholls, 2011). Research has shown that considering protective factors alongside risk factors can improve the prediction of violent recidivism (de Vries Robbe, de Vogel, & de Spa, 2011).

Risk assessment and gender

There has been debate in the literature over whether risk assessment is a "gender-neutral" or a genderspecific process. In other words, questions have been raised about whether the factors used in risk prediction are identical for men and women, and whether tools developed for men ("gender-neutral") generalise to women offenders. The gender-neutral approach is supported both theoretically – theories of criminal behaviour suggest that the underlying mechanisms that explain offending are the same regardless of gender (i.e., the PIC-R; Andrews & Bonta, 2010) – and empirically; research has found that tools developed and validated on male offenders are equally predictive for women (e.g., Manchak, Skeem, Douglas, & Siranosian, 2009). However, in practice "genderneutral" means "developed with men and then tested with women" and never means "developed with women and then tested with men". So, it is entirely possible that even if tools developed for use with men are a good fit to criminal risk prediction in women, additional risk factors that are uniquely predictive in women, and that could improve prediction further for them, have not been investigated.

By contrast, proponents of a gender-specific approach argue that tools developed on men can not be generalised to women for a number of reasons: (1) risk assessment and theories of crime have predominantly been developed on male offenders, (2) women and men have different pathways into and out of crime, and (3) certain risk factors may be more prevalent or be differentially predictive of recidivism for men and women (Andrews, Guzzo, Raynor, Rowe, Rettinger, & Wormith, 2012; Daly, 1992, 1994). For example, victimisation, mental illness, and substance abuse have been found to be more prevalent in women (Andrews et al., 2012), and factors such as employment, parental stress, and self-concept have been identified as particularly salient to women offenders (Blanchette, 2002; Bloom, Owen, & Covington, 2004).

The gender-specific – really "woman-specific" – approach is more political than scientific in its orientation, but there is some empirical support for it. Van Voorhis, Wright, Salisbury, and Bauman (2010) found that by adding variables specific to women into a tool originally developed for use with men, its predictive power with women improved. Research has also found that particular domains within a gender-neutral tool may be more predictive for women than for men (e.g., the financial scale of the LSI-R; Manchak et al., 2009) and a recent study found that protective factors (i.e., positive social support) were more predictive for women offenders (McCoy & Miller, 2013).

Introduction to this study

The DRAOR was theoretically derived from a review of the literature on dynamic risk and protective factors: most of which was based on male offenders. Although the tool is routinely administered to female offenders, there have been no studies assessing its validity with this population. The current study used matched samples of women and men recently released on parole to establish whether the DRAOR is predictive of recidivism for both genders, and whether for men and women, different scales or items contribute most to prediction.

Method

Participants

This study is based on an archival dataset extracted and prepared for data analysis by Hanby (2013). For this study, the sample selected from the database comprised 145 women and 145 case-matched¹ men released on parole between April 2010 and August 2012. They were aged 35 on average at release (SD=9.24; range 18 to 63) and the majority identified as Māori (56.6 percent) or New Zealand European (37.9 percent). The index offence for 45.5 percent of the sample was for violence, for 27 percent , dishonesty, and drugs or antisocial behaviour for 25 percent. On average, the sample was at lowmoderate risk of re-offending (RoC*RoIM=.37, SD=.19).

Measures

The Dynamic Risk Assessment for Offender

Re-entry (DRAOR). The DRAOR was developed to assess recidivism risk in the community and to inform case planning and risk management (Serin, Mailloux & Wilson, 2012). It has 19 items divided into three subscales: stable dynamic risk factors, acute dynamic risk factors, and protective factors. Each item is rated

¹ There were many more men than women in the database, so each member of the sample of women was matched on age, ethnicity, index offence, and RoC*RoI scores. Ethnicity and index offence matches were exact. RoC*RoI scores and age were matched as closely as possible. RoC*RoI scores with a difference of 0.05 or less and an age discrepancy of seven years or less were accepted as a match.

using a three-point scoring format (0, 1, 2). A score of '0' indicates the absence of the item, a '2' indicates it is strongly present, and a '1' rating is used to indicate it is somewhat present, or the evidence is inconsistent.

The DRAOR has been in use in the Community Probation Service since April 2010. For prisoners released on parole, the supervising probation officer scores the DRAOR during every report in or non-trivial contact they have with the offender. Depending on offenders' risk levels and how long they have been on parole, the DRAOR is typically administered twice-weekly to fortnightly. To score the DRAOR, probation officers use information gathered from interviews with offenders, their families or partners, treatment providers, and other external sources (e.g., police intelligence activity).

Figure 1.

Dynamic Risk Assessment for Offender Re-entry Subscale Structure

Stable Subscale	Acute Subscale	Protective Subscale
Peer associations	Substance abuse	Responsive to advice
Attitudes towards authority	Anger/hostility	Prosocialidentity
Impulse control	Opportunity/access to victims	High expectations
Problem-solving	Negative mood	Costs/benefits
Sense of entitlement	Employment	Social supports
Attachment with others	Interpersonal relationships	Social control
	Living situation	

RoC*RoI. The RoC*RoI (Bakker, Riley, & O'Malley, 1999) is an actuarial risk assessment tool developed in New Zealand and cross-validated on two samples, each of 24,000 offenders. The RoC*RoI is based on static criminal history and demographic variables and is generated by computer algorithm. The RoC*RoI is expressed as a probability and represents an offender's estimated risk of reconviction leading to reimprisonment over five years in the community. The RoC*RoI demonstrated moderate to high predictive validity during development (AUC = .76; Bakker et al., 1999). More recent analyses have confirmed its predictive validity over three years post-release (Nadesu, 2007).

Recidivism. It is desirable to use several different indices of recidivism to fully understand the relationship to recidivism predictors (Lōsel, 2001). However, the archival database was limited to a single recidivism variable: the first conviction (including breaches of release conditions and parole) within a maximum of one year after release. Time from release from prison to data extraction averaged 277 days (range 10 to 365 days).

Results

Do women and men score differently on the DRAOR?

The third DRAOR rating following release was used for all analyses. DRAOR subscale scores are presented in Table 1, along with a total score (calculated by summing the stable and acute subscales and subtracting the protective subscale). Women scored higher on the stable and acute subscales and lower on the protective subscale compared to their male counterparts. These differences were not statistically significant (all *p*-values are larger than the conventional 0.05 cut-off for statistical significance testing) and are small effects (as indicated by a Cohen's *d* value below 0.20). Similarly, women had higher DRAOR total scores than men, but this difference was not statistically significant.

Table 1.

Means and Standard Deviations for Women and Men: DRAOR Subscales and Total Scores

	Women	Men			95 percent	
Subscale	M (SD)	M (SD)	t(288)	р	CI	d
Stable Total	5.59 (2.43)	5.26 (2.54)	1.13	.26	[31, 2.49]	0.13
Acute Total	5.17 (2.32)	4.75 (2.24)	1.54	.13	[11, .94]	0.18
Protective Total	6.68 (2.41)	7.07 (2.44)	1.36	.18	[95, .18]	-0.16
DRAOR Total	4.07 (6.09)	2.98 (6.06)	1.53	.13	[31, 2.49]	0.18

Are there differences in re-offending rates?

Twenty-seven percent of women (n=39) and 17 percent of men (n=24) re-offended within the first year of release. Of the women recidivists, the largest proportion was convicted for breaching the conditions of their release/parole (64 percent of those reconvicted; n=25). Eight women recidivists were convicted for dishonesty offending (20.5 percent), five for drivingrelated offending (13 percent), and one for the possession of a weapon. Of the men who re-offended within one year, the largest proportion was also convicted for a breach of release conditions/parole (50 percent; n=12). Five male recidivists were convicted for violence (21 percent), two for dishonesty (8 percent), two for driving-related offending (8 percent), and the remaining three men were convicted for cultivating cannabis, disorderly behaviour, and contravening a protection order. The mean survival time for women was 222 days and for men, 246 days. Women had significantly higher rates of recidivism than men (see Box 1 for statistical procedure and outcomes).

Does the DRAOR predict recidivism for both women and men?

Box 1.

Examining differences in recidivism rates using Kaplan-Meier survival analysis

Kaplan-Meier survival analysis enables us to pictorially display and statistically compare whether one sample fails faster and more often than another from the time of release. In the figure below, we compare recidivism for women and men within one year of release. The horizontal axis represents time in days since release, and the vertical axis represents the proportion of offenders at that time who had not been reconvicted. The analysis shows not only that more women were reconvicted, and more quickly than men after the first few days, but that the difference in reoffending rates between women and men was statistically significant (Tarone-Ware statistic of equality (df=1), $\chi^2=4.23$, p=.040).

Recidivism survival curves for men and women over first 12 months after release



The relationship between the DRAOR and recidivism was investigated using Cox regression survival analysis (see Box 2 for the regression procedure and statistical outcomes). This technique allows us to examine (1) whether, as we would expect, the DRAOR (using all three subscales) predicts recidivism, and (2) what contribution each subscale makes to that prediction. The DRAOR predicted recidivism for both women and men. For both genders, no one subscale independently predicted recidivism, suggesting that although together they make a significant contribution to recidivism prediction, they overlap each other in their relationship to recidivism, and so the independent contribution each makes (i.e., the amount of non-overlap with the others) is small, and non-significant.

Box 2.

Predicting recidivism using Cox regression

We examined the predictive validity of the DRAOR subscales using Cox regression survival analysis: a type of regression used when the research participants don't all have the same length of follow-up. Regressions were run for women and men separately; the three DRAOR subscales were entered in together as the predictor variables. The criterion or dependent variable was recidivism and the time variable was days to recidivism for those who re-offended within one year, or 365 days for non-recidivists. The three subscales significantly predicted recidivism for women, $\chi^2(3, N=145) = 18.63, p <.001$, and for men, $\chi^2(3, N=145) = 9.73$, p = .021. For both women and men, no one subscale made a significant unique contribution.

For women and men, does the DRAOR add to the prediction of recidivism using the RoC*RoI?

The Roc*RoI is easily generated, but the DRAOR takes a lot more time and resources. So the last question we considered was whether the DRAOR adds to the ability to predict recidivism if we just used the RoC*RoI alone. This is an *incremental validity* analysis (see Box 3). First, for both women and men, the RoC*RoI was a significant predictor of recidivism on its own. Second, when the DRAOR total score was added to the RoC*RoI, the DRAOR made a further significant contribution. In other words, for both women and men, recidivism prediction is significantly improved by adding the third DRAOR score completed after release to the RoC*RoI alone.

Box 3.

Examining incremental validity using Cox regression

Cox regressions were also performed to assess whether the DRAOR total score contributes incrementally to the RoC*RoI in the prediction of recidivism. Regressions were run for women and men separately; the RoC*RoI was entered in the first block and the DRAOR total score was entered in the second block as the predictor variable. The criterion or dependent variable was recidivism and the time variable was days to recidivism for those who re-offended within one year, or 365 days for non-recidivists. The RoC*RoI alone was a significant predictor of recidivism for women, $\chi^2(1, N=145) = 17.62, p < .001, and for men, \chi^2$ (1, N=145) = 10.15, p=.001. The DRAOR total score made an additional significant contribution to the prediction of recidivism for women, Wald(1)=9.43, p=.002, OR=1.079, and men, Wald(1)=5.05, p=.025, OR=1.078. OR is an odds ratio statistic representing change in risk of recidivism per unit increase in the predictor (i.e., DRAOR total). OR values greater than 1.0 indicate that higher scores on the predictor are associated with increased recidivism: values less than 1.0 indicate decreased recidivism. In the current study for example, an OR of 1.079 would be interpreted to mean that for every 1-point increase in DRAOR total scores, there would be a 7.9 percent increase in recidivism (Olver, Wong, Nicholaichuk, & Gordon, 2007).

Discussion

This study tackled the controversial question of whether tools developed for use with men should also be used with women. We investigated whether the DRAOR predicts recidivism equally well for samples of women and men released on parole. We found that the DRAOR did significantly predict recidivism for both genders. As in previous DRAOR research (e.g., Hanby, 2013; Yesberg & Polaschek, in press;) we found the DRAOR subscales overlap each other in their ability to predict recidivism, and that explains why for both women and men no DRAOR subscale was itself a significant unique predictor.

The finding that no one subscale stood out in the prediction of women's recidivism when in the company of the other two subscales is contrary to the women-specific literature, where research has found that protective factors, and in particular positive social support, are most predictive for women (McCoy & Miller, 2013). It is also contrary to previous research on the DRAOR with men, which found that the stable subscale was independently predictive of men's

recidivism (Yesberg & Polaschek, 2013). However, because for both women and men, the majority of recidivism comprised breaches of parole conditions, additional research will be needed to establish whether stable, acute or protective factors are particularly important for avoiding actual new offending for both genders.

The DRAOR total score incrementally predicted recidivism above the static RoC*RoI for both genders: an encouraging result and one that supports research regarding the enhanced predictive ability of tools that incorporate dynamic risk factors (e.g., Olver, Wong, Nicholaichuk & Gordon, 2007). It seems that even by the third score, the DRAOR is providing additional recidivism-relevant information for those who administer it. And of course it is far more informative from a day-to-day management perspective than the RoC*RoI can ever be.

Despite being matched on RoC*RoI scores – and the RoC*RoI predicting recidivism for both genders women had significantly higher rates of recidivism in this study than men. This result was a surprise, but may be explained by the high proportion of administrative and justice offences – particularly breaches of parole conditions – in the recidivism analyses. More than twice as many women as men were reconvicted for breaching conditions of their parole, leading to higher overall rates of recidivism for women. Perhaps in this sample women complied with parole requirements less often than men with a similar RoC*RoI, or perhaps women were subject to stricter breach enforcement from probation officers than their counterpart men. We usually analyse reconvictions with and without breaches to establish their relative contributions to our results, and future research comparing women and men should also do so, to examine whether this disparity is reflected in actual new offending. The way in which recidivism was coded is one of the most obvious limitations of this study.

The predictive validity of the DRAOR in this study supports the gender-neutral approach to risk assessment: although the DRAOR was developed from research largely based on men, it was still equally successful here at predicting recidivism for women serving prison sentences of two years or more, over and above static risk estimates (the RoC*RoI). At this stage it does not appear that women offenders need their own DRAOR. However, these results do not preclude the possibility that the inclusion of genderspecific variables might improve the prediction of recidivism, or that a similar tool developed specifically for use with women might be a better tool for women. Interestingly, because the DRAOR was about equally good with women and men, a tool that was better with women would, by definition, be superior to the DRAOR with men.

Future research could examine some of the more promising women-specific variables (e.g., mental illness) and whether their inclusion in risk assessment improves recidivism prediction for women. Research on risk assessment with women offenders is still in its early days. These initial results are promising and provide preliminary support for the use of the DRAOR with women offenders in New Zealand as a recidivism prediction tool. However, this type of research is only the first step in answering a much more important question: does the DRAOR *change* recidivism outcomes, when probation officers use it to actively manage the women and men they supervise?

References

- Andrews, D. A., & Bonta, J. (2010). The psychology of criminal conduct (5th ed.). New Providence, NJ: LexisNexis Matthew Bender.
- Andrews, D. A., Guzzo, L., Raynor, P., Rowe, R. C., Rettinger, L. J., Brews, A., & Wormith, J. S. (2012). Are the major risk/need factors predictive of both female and male reoffending? A test with the eight domains of the Level of Service/Case Management Inventory. International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology, 56, 113-133.
- Bakker, L., Riley, D., & O'Malley, J. (1999). Risk of reconviction: Statistical models predicting four types of re-offending. Wellington, NZ: Department of Corrections Psychological Service.
- Blanchette, K. (2002, January). Classifying female offenders for effective intervention: Application of the case-based principles of risk and need. In Forum on Corrections Research (Vol. 14, No. 1, pp. 31-35). Correctional Service of Canada.
- Bloom, B., Owen, B., & Covington, S. (2004). Women offenders and the gendered effects of public policy. Review of Policy Research, 21, 31-48.
- Daly, K. (1992). Women's pathways to felony court: Feminist theories of lawbreaking and problems of representation. Southern California Review of Law & Women's Studies, 2, 11-52.
- Daly, K. (1994). Gender, crime, and punishment. Yale University Press.
- de Ruiter, C., & Nicholls, T. L. (2011). Protective factors in forensic mental health: A new frontier. International Journal of Forensic Mental Health, 10, 160-170.
- de Vries Robbe, M., de Vogel, V., & de Spa, E. (2011). Protective factors for violence risk in forensic psychiatric patients: A retrospective validation study for the SAPROF. International Journal of Forensic Mental Health, 10, 178-186.
- Douglas, K. S., & Skeem, J. L. (2005). Violence risk assessment: Getting specific about being dynamic. Psychology, Public Policy, and Law, 11, 347-383. doi: 10.1037/1076-8971.11.3.347

- Hanby, L. (2013). A longitudinal study of dynamic risk, protective factors and criminal recidivism: Change over time and the impact of assessment timing. (Unpublished Doctoral thesis) Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada.
- Hanson, R. K., & Harris, A. J. R. (2000). Where should we intervene? Dynamic predictors of sexual offense recidivism. Criminal Justice and Behavior, 27, 6-35.
- Hanson, R. K., Harris, A. J. R., Scott, T., & Helmus, L. (2007). Assessing the risk of sexual offenders on community supervision: The Dynamic Supervision Project. Public Safety Canada.
- Lōsel, F. (2001). Evaluating the effectiveness of correctional programs: Bridging the gap between research and practice. In G. A. Bernfeld, D. P. Farrington & A. W. Leschied (Eds.), Offender rehabilitation in practice (pp. 67-92). Chichester: Wiley.
- Manchak, S. M., Skeem, J. L., Douglas, K. S., & Siranosian, M. (2009). Does gender moderate the predictive utility of the Level of Service Inventory-Revised (LSI-R) for serious violent offenders? Criminal Justice and Behavior, 36, 425-442.
- Mann, R. E., Hanson, R. K., & Thornton, D. (2010). Assessing risk for sexual recidivism: Some proposals on the nature of psychologically meaningful risk factors. Sexual Abuse, 22, 191-217. doi: 10.1177/1079063210366039
- McCoy, L. A., Miller, H.A. (2013). Comparing gender across risk and recidivism in nonviolent offenders. Women & Criminal Justice, 23, 143-162. doi: 10.1080/08974454.2012.759054.
- Nadesu, A. (2007). Reconviction patterns of released prisoners: A 36-months follow-up analysis. Wellington, NZ: Department of Corrections.
- Olver, M. E., Wong, S. C. P., Nicholaichuk, T., & Gordon, A. (2007). The validity and reliability of the Violence Risk Scale – Sexual Offender Version: Assessing sex offender risk and evaluating therapeutic chance. Psychological Assessment, 19, 318-329.
- Serin, R. C., Mailloux, D. L., & Wilson, N. J. (2012). The Dynamic Risk Assessment of Offender Re-entry (DRAOR). Unpublished user manual.
- Statistics New Zealand (2012). New Zealand's Prison Population. Retrieved from http://www.stats.govt.nz
- Van Voorhis, P., Wright, E. M., Salisbury, E., & Bauman, A. (2010). Women's risk factors and their contributions to existing risk/needs assessment: The current status of a gender-responsive supplement. Criminal Justice and Behavior, 37, 261-288.
- Yesberg, J. A., & Polaschek, D. L. L. (2013). Assessing dynamic risk and protective factors in the community: Examining the validity of the Dynamic Risk Assessment for Offender Re-entry. Manuscript submitted for publication.
- Yesberg, J. A., & Polaschek, D. L. L. (in press). What can the DRAOR tell us about high-risk offenders? A preliminary examination. Practice: The New Zealand Corrections Journal.

Prevention first and victims at the centre – NZ Police's journey to reduce victimisation

Inspector Fiona Prestidge

Manager Victim Focus, NZ Police

Author biography:

Inspector Fiona Prestidge leads the development of capability within New Zealand Police for responsiveness to victims and the reduction of repeat victimisation. She has 28 years' police service, including three years as Area Commander in New Plymouth prior to moving to Police National Headquarters in 2010.

In late 2012, New Zealand Police (Police) began a radical reorientation of approach by putting victims at the centre of our business. This is the story of the first year of implementation of the Victim Focus Framework, and outlines what Police

are doing, and why.

The Prevention First operating strategy was launched late in 2011, and aimed to place prevention at the forefront of everything done by Police, in order to reduce reported crime (target of 13 percent), and reduce the number of cases referred to the Justice system (target of 19 percent), both by 2014/15. Part of this "...Putting the victim at the centre turns the police response into a problem-solving one, addressing risks of repeat victimisation, regardless of the course of investigation and case resolution."

percent of adults experience 54 percent of all crime¹. Police-recorded crime also shows inequality, with repeat victimisations (offences occurring to the same person twice or more in a 12-month period) comprising

about a quarter of recorded victimisations of people.

Therefore, embarking on a programme specifically aimed at reducing repeat victimisation may be a significant contributor to reducing total recorded crime.

The core objective of the Victim Focus Framework is to reduce repeat victimisation. Our goal is an 18 percent reduction in

strategy is the Victim Focus Framework, which is not only a framework for targeting repeat victimisation, but a change to the very DNA of Police by putting victims at the centre of all that we do. It is both a practice framework and a philosophy.

Why the focus on repeat victimisation?

For many years, Police had the key outcome of a reduction in recorded crime. Current targets continue to be challenges. Police have a broad suite of approaches, including tackling the drivers of crime, deploying our resources in the smartest fashion, capturing efficiencies from improved back-office systems, and giving all staff in the field access to Police information systems on mobile devices.

The picture we have of crime suggests that focusing on repeat victimisation will be helpful in making the experience of victims more central to policing. The NZ Crime and Safety Survey, a self-report survey (not Police recorded crime), shows the stark truth that six repeat victimisation in three years. This will be achieved by enhancing the quality of service to victims, especially to those most vulnerable to risk of repeat victimisation.

The traditional police response to victims is liable to be one size fits all. A victim reports a crime, police investigate and resolve. The offender moves to 'centre stage' and remains there throughout the offendercentric criminal justice system. Putting the victim at the centre turns the police response into a problem-solving one, addressing risks of repeat victimisation, regardless of the course of investigation and case resolution. In approximately 40 percent of instances of people being victimised,² Police apprehend one or more offenders, most of whom Police charge in court. Addressing the needs of vulnerable victims ought to happen largely independently of apprehension and offender outcomes.

¹ http://www.justice.govt.nz/publications/global-publications/c/ NZCASS-2009/main-findings-report-summary

² These victimisations include offences against persons and offences against property owned by individuals rather than organisations. Offences against persons typically have higher apprehension rates than offences against property.

Victimisation History Scorecard

The National Intelligence Application, Police's core information system, now captures a person's victimisation history, and has a calculated score that analyses predictors of the risk of repeat victimisation. The Victimisation History Score (VHS) operates in a 12-month window, and is based on the severity of the offence, likelihood of repeat victimisation for that crime type, with weightings where it is the same offender or offence group. It is fast-moving, recalculating with each additional victim event, and down-grading monthly according to a half-life formula. The VHS displays as a traffic light icon when a victim's name is queried. Red represents high-risk repeat victimisation, including anyone with five or more victimisations within 12 months. Amber represents emerging repeat victims, with green being lower level victimisations or those who are toward the end of the 12-month period.

The VHS is a simple risk indicator for staff in the field to inform proactive preventative interventions at the time of initial contact. Also it enables systematic management of those at increased risk of victimisation through the tasking and co-ordination of response at a local level.

Graduated Response

There are three levels of response a victim may receive. Bronze is the standard response to a victim, which must include giving crime prevention advice. Every victimisation reported to Police is an opportunity to get a specific crime prevention message to the victim. A silver response is where it is appropriate to give an additional response because of an increased risk of repeat victimisation. The key component is a personal visit with the victim that focuses on crime prevention subsequent to the initial reporting of the offence. The top level of graduated response is gold. This is required for any victim with a red traffic light icon, and requires a case management approach, with a formal Victim Intervention Plan (VIP) developed and implemented.

The VIP relies on good engagement with the victim, a problem-solving approach, and collaborating with relevant agencies to help address the factors contributing to the repeat victimisation risk. In provincial areas the majority of VIPs relate to family violence. In metropolitan areas there is usually also a large proportion for repeat burglary.

Some examples of actions are: seeking Housing NZ relocation away from a neighbourhood where a victim is repeatedly targeted; Victim Support providing financial assistance for a burglar alarm; encouraging victims to follow through with community agency assistance; and ensuring safety plans are in place for family violence situations. For some VIPs the sole initial focus is for the police officer to gain the trust of the victim, and encourage a willingness to engage with safety and prevention advice. This must happen before the factors around being victimised can be worked on together.

Challenges

The most vulnerable repeat victims are often not '*ideal victims*'³. The minority 'ideal victim' easily gets community sympathy, is an upstanding citizen, blameless, randomly victimised, trusting and co-operative with police. The reality of the red-flagged highest-risk victims is they are likely to be associated with offenders, if not offenders themselves, to make risky choices, carry negative baggage about police, and often have mental health or drug or alcohol issues. This presents a challenge to police officers to suspend judgement and look through the new lens of vulnerability to risk of victimisation.

The challenge for Police's new network of district victim managers, and for all police leaders, is to lead this change in mindset and attitudes. It is not just a matter for individual officers to deal with their own attitudes to enable a whole-hearted engagement with difficult victims, but collectively Police's culture is changing too, and leadership is a critical component. Leadership talk about the priority of those most victimised is essential, but more so is walking the talk, that is, taking victim-centred preventative action.

Another challenge is to learn what makes quality and effective interventions. As the framework has only been operational for one year we are yet to evaluate effectiveness of the graduated response model. There's a desire to understand what makes effective interventions, and where the greatest effort should be invested. Where should the balance be struck between high-volume lower-level victimisations, and the comprehensive effort for those most victimised?

Conclusion

No other police jurisdiction in the world has established a comprehensive system of addressing repeat victimisation across all crime types. NZ Police have started this exciting journey, but it is naive to think there will be quick results. This is a long-term, problemsolving approach and culture change programme that will enable police to embed this radical reorientation and put victims at the centre of what we do.

³ This phrase comes from N. Christie, 'Ideal Victim' in *From Crime Policy to Victim Policy*, ed. Ezzat A. Fattah, London: Macmillan, 1986, 17-30



Prison-based employment interventions: effects on recidivism

Dr Sarah Beggs Christofferson

Senior Advisor Psychology, Department of Corrections

Author biography:

Sarah Beggs Christofferson, Ph.D. PGDipClinPsyc, has worked at the New Zealand Department of Corrections for the past seven years in frontline clinical and national office roles. She is currently Senior Advisor in the Office of the Chief Psychologist.

Background

Employment and crime - is there a link?

The relationship between work and crime has long held interest for researchers and those working in the field, and there is considerable evidence to suggest an empirical link between the two. For example, 65 percent of incarcerated offenders in a large scale UK study (Harper & Chitty, 2005) were assessed as having problems in the arena of employment, education, and training. Post-release, problems in the employment domain have been established as "a moderately strong predictor of recidivism" based on a meta-analysis by Gendreau, Goggin, and Grey (1998, p. 18). Conversely, the potential protective effect of positive employmentrelated factors (such as having a job) was highlighted by Serin, Lloyd, and Hanby (2010), who argued that such factors can "insulate" individuals against offending when situations arise that may otherwise have been risky for them (p.66).

What is the link - how do employment problems affect criminal behaviour?

Several different perspectives exist regarding the causal mechanisms underlying the employment-crime link (see Uggen, 1999). One prominent theory posits poverty and inequality as leading sources of crime in a society, due to offenders as a group having had reduced opportunities for success or financial gain through legitimate means. On this basis, criminal motivation would be expected to diminish as employability and legitimate opportunity increased. This would therefore provide a rationale for investment in enhancing the employment prospects of offenders, with the overall aim of reducing recidivism. A second perspective is that it is not economic or social position per se that produces crime, but rather that the presence of informal social controls acts to prevent it. This kind of social control has been described as having "a stake in conformity" (Toby, 1957, cited in Uggen, 1999), and is thought to arise when individuals have a higher degree of engagement in various prosocial aspects of society,

such as relationship bonds with others, and stable employment. Based on this theory, assisting prisoners into the workforce may be effective in reducing reoffending by creating or strengthening their sense of connection with prosocial society, thereby increasing the likelihood they will adhere to society's rules and regulations in the future. Indeed, it has been suggested (Wilson, Gallagher, & MacKenzie, 2000) that mere contact with an employer role (such as a prison work supervisor or instructor) may enhance commitment to the more conventional aspects of society, and so reduce the likelihood of a return to crime.

Can addressing employment problems reduce re-offending?

Even if employment-related factors are shown to be relevant to a person's initial involvement in crime, and/or their risk of committing further offences, it does not necessarily follow that targeting these factors for change will result in reduced re-offending. Much research has now been undertaken to explore this question. The evidence, though mixed, is encouraging: systematic and meta-analytic reviews show that many work-based initiatives for prisoners have demonstrated positive effects, including enhanced post-release employment prospects and reduced re-offending (Bouffard, MacKenzie, & Hickman, 2000; Cheliotis, 2008; Wilson et al., 2000). Given that work-based interventions are typically able to cater to large numbers of prisoners relative to other types of programmes, it is also important to note that even modest effect sizes on recidivism can equate to sizeable reductions in overall crime rates (Wilson et al., 2000). Additionally, Sedgley, Scott, Williams, and Derrick (2010) have pointed out that with the costs of incarceration being so high, even small decreases or delays in reimprisonment have the potential for substantial savings. A cost-benefit analysis by Aos, Phipps, Barnoski, and Lieb (2001) suggested overall savings in excess of six dollars per dollar of cost for implementing a work-based programme. Finally, aside from crime rate and fiscal considerations, work-based interventions for prisoners are also associated with a

number of other beneficial outcomes, such as a sense of responsibility, personal value, independence, and dignity (Scott, 2010). Being employed tends to increase the concentration of reinforcement received for prosocial and non-criminal behaviours, and is also negatively correlated with various risk factors such as substance abuse, financial stress, and lacking a stable residence (Andrews & Bonta, 2010).

The New Zealand Context

Two major employment-related interventions are offered in New Zealand prisons: Offender Employment (OE), and Release To Work (RTW). OE involves a number of stand-alone Corrections-run industries operating in New Zealand prisons (e.g., a piggery is run at one prison), along with industry activities run in partnership with private businesses (e.g., photocopier assembly and repair work). Offenders engaged in OE interventions undertake formal training on the job and in classroom based settings, leading to New Zealand Qualification Framework Unit Standards and trade related qualifications. Offenders engaged in OE employment typically work for 30 to 35 hours a week, though this can vary considerably. The RTW programme involves temporary release from prison. Participants hold paid positions in the community, have normal employer-employee relationships, and earn market wages which they are able to save to support themselves after release. Strict eligibility criteria exist for RTW, and places are normally reserved for minimum security prisoners nearing release. As an added advantage, almost 50 percent of participants retain their positions when they are released from prison.

Effectiveness of the New Zealand interventions

Analyses are undertaken regularly by the Department of Corrections in order to examine the effectiveness of the suite of interventions available to offenders. Presented below are selected findings drawn from a report by Maré and Hyslop (2011), in which logistic regression analyses were used to explore the relationship between programme participation and recidivism outcomes among cohorts of prisoners released between 2007 and 2008. The use of regression procedures allowed for the statistical control of the potentially differing pre-existing risk profiles between those who participated in interventions and those who did not, as measured by the departmental RoC*RoI risk index (Bakker, O'Malley, & Riley, 1999).

The findings from Maré and Hyslop's (2011) report that pertain to the two employment interventions are presented below in Table 1. For the time periods under analysis, there were 1,300 prisoners who engaged in OE during their incarceration, 245 who engaged in RTW, and a comparison group of 3,012 prisoners who did not complete any interventions. The first column of Table 1 shows the raw recidivism rates for the comparison group, divided into the four outcomes typically used in departmental analyses – reconviction and reimprisonment at 12 and 24-month follow-ups. The remaining two columns of Table 1 provide the results of the logistic regression analyses exploring the effects of OE or RTW participation. The figures in these columns are average percentage-point differences between participants and the comparison group, controlling for their different risk profiles (RoC*RoI). For example, a percentage-point difference of -10 would indicate that the regression-derived recidivism estimate among participants was 10 percentage points lower than the comparison group rate (e.g., five percent compared to 15 percent).

Table 1.

Comparison group raw recidivism rates, and estimated intervention effects for OE and RTW (expressed as percentage-point differences).

	Comparison Group (No Intervention) RawRecidivism Rates	OE	RTW
	n = 3012	n = 1300	n = 245
Reconviction within 12 months	50%	-4.6*	-16.7*
Reimprisonment within 12 months	3%	-4.8*	-8.2*
Reconviction within 24 months	66%	-5.1*	-12.1*
Reimprisonment within 24 months	41%	-4.8*	-6.1

* p < .05

To summarise the findings in Table 1, it can be seen that participation in OE was linked with a statistically significant reduction of around five percentage points for all recidivism outcomes (after controlling for risk). The findings for RTW were more variable, with more substantial reductions of between 12 and 17 percentage points for reconviction, but lower figures for reimprisonment at around six to eight percentage points, a reduction which was non-significant at the 24-month follow-up.

Discussion and summary

Analyses based on New Zealand Department of Corrections data indicate reduced recidivism rates among released prisoners who participated in interventions relating to employment during their incarceration, relative to their non-participant counterparts. These results are particularly encouraging when it is considered that the outcome in question (re-offending) is likely to be impacted on by

a large number of factors, including post-release events and circumstances that may vary long after OE or RTW participation.

The analyses by Maré & Hyslop (2011) reported here represent an improvement in research design relative to many other studies in this area, in which possible selection biases have been noted.

For example, in the Bouffard et al. (2000) and Wilson et al. (2000) meta-analyses it was noted that for many of the studies included, the possibility of pre-existing differences between the treatment and control groups were not taken into account. For example, individuals who engaged in the interventions may have been less likely to re-offend anyway, regardless of their participation. Not taking such factors into account limits the confidence we can have that the differences in recidivism can be attributed to the intervention. In the Maré & Hyslop report by contrast, a multi-component index estimating risk of re-offending (RoC*RoI) was included in the analyses.

Despite this improvement, the findings were subject to some other limitations that are important to note. Firstly, the suggested causal impact of OE and RTW participation on reduced recidivism rests heavily on the adequacy of the RoC*RoI scale to control for differences in prisoners. While, as discussed above, this represents an improvement on previous studies, there are many important factors that may differentiate those who engage in interventions from those who do not, which may not be represented adequately (or at all) by the RoC*RoI. Examples of these include motivation to change, behavioural compliance in the prison setting (potentially affecting prisoners' eligibility for these interventions), and dynamic risk factors (as defined by Andrews & Bonta, 2010) such as antisocial attitudes, antisocial associates, and impulsivity. While such differences (if present) would clearly pose a threat to the interpretation of the employment interventions having reduced recidivism, it has been argued that these kinds of selection effects could be "less for educational and work-related programs than psychologically based interventions that may require a greater level of person commitment and motivation" (Wilson et al., 2000, p 363).

Further, the outcome criteria for the findings reported above involved dichotomous information only with regard to re-offending (i.e., whether or not the person received a new conviction or was reimprisoned within the timeframes). While this methodology yielded significant results, it is possible that more subtle improvements may have been masked. For example,

...data indicate reduced recidivism rates among released prisoners who participated in interventions relating to employment during their incarceration... an individual who was recorded as having reoffended after completing an intervention may have shown changes in the frequency or seriousness (e.g., wilful damage rather than violence against a person) of their offending. Potential positive outcomes such as these, though 'hidden' by recidivism being recorded dichotomously,

could nonetheless have a substantial beneficial effect on the overall crime rate and the impact on the public.

Although employment interventions may carry the advantage of being more easily made available to larger numbers of prisoners relative to more intensive interventions, it is important to emphasise that workbased interventions should not be viewed as the simple solution to reducing re-offending in all cases. In accordance with Andrews and Bonta's (2010) risk principle, higher risk offenders (who will potentially be responsible for a large proportion of total re-offending, as well as more frequent and serious re-offending) are likely to require more intensive, psychologically-based programmes addressing their offending behaviour directly, in order to reduce their risk. Similarly, offenders falling into the moderate risk category may require a moderate intensity offence-related intervention. While employment-based interventions may also be beneficial for the moderate and high risk offenders, particularly if they have an identified need in that area, it is recommended that these be viewed as adjunct interventions.

30

In summary, completers of two employmentbased interventions run in New Zealand prisons have been found to have significantly reduced rates of re-offending up to two years following release relative to a comparison group who did not complete interventions. This provides further support for the identification of employment-related factors as an important criminogenic need, and provides a rationale for system investment in work-based interventions for offenders. The inclusion of a multi-component risk scale in the regression model represents an important methodological advantage over many previous studies in this area. Future research would benefit from also taking into account dynamic risk factors, including motivation to change, and behavioural impulsivity. Employment-based interventions are often able to be made available to large numbers of prisoners, thereby escalating the benefit they may have on overall re-offending rates. Among moderate and high risk offenders, employment-based interventions can be viewed as a useful adjunct intervention to more intensive psychological programmes directly addressing their offending behaviours.

References

- Andrews, D. A., & Bonta, J. (2010). The Psychology of Criminal Conduct (5th ed.). Cincinnati, OH: Anderson.
- Aos, S., Phipps, P., Barnoski, R., & Lieb, R. (2001). The comparative costs and benefits of programs to reduce crime. Olympia: Washington State Institute for Public Policy.
- Bakker, L., O'Malley, J., & Riley, D. (1999). Risk of Reconviction: Statistical Models Which Predict Four Types of Reoffending. Wellington: Department of Corrections.
- Bouffard, J. A., MacKenzie, D. L., & Hickman, L. J. (2000). Effectiveness of vocational education and employment programs for adult offenders: A methodologybased analysis of the literature. Journal of Offender Rehabilitation, 31, 1-41.
- Cheliotis. L. K. (2008). Reconsidering the effectiveness of temporary release: A systematic review. Aggression and Violent Behavior, 13, 153-168.
- Gendreau, P., Goggin, C., & Gray, G. (1998). Case need domain: "Employment". Forum on Corrections Research, 10, 16-19.
- Harper, G., & Chitty, C. (2005). The impact of corrections on reoffending: A review of 'what works'. London: Home Office. Available online at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/ pdfs04/hors291.pdf
- Maré, D., & Hyslop, D. (2011). Evaluating the impact of prisoner rehabilitation, education and training programmes
 Preliminary analysis. Unpublished report for the New Zealand Department of Corrections.
- Scott, T.-L. (2010). Offender perceptions on the value of employment. Journal of Correctional Education, 61, 46-67.

- Sedgley, N. H., Scott, C. E., Williams, N. A., & Derrick, F. W. (2010). Prison's dilemma: Do education and jobs programmes affect recidivism? Economica, 77, 497-517.
- Serin, R. C., Lloyd, C. D., & Hanby, L. J. (2010). Enhancing offender re-entry: An integrated model for enhancing offender re-entry. European Journal of Probation, 2, 53-75.
- Uggen, C. (1999). Ex-offenders and the conformist alternative: A job quality model of work and crime. Social Problems, 46, 127-151.
- Wilson, D. B., Gallacher, C. A., & MacKenzie, D. L. (2000). A meta-analysis of corrections-based education, vocation, and work programs for adult offenders. Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency, 37, 347-368.

Developing a world class family violence programme for New Zealand

Mark Hutton

Manager Rehabilitation Interventions Design and Support, Department of Corrections

Danielle Kallil

Senior Adviser Rehabilitation Interventions Design and Support, Department of Corrections

Author biographies:

Mark Hutton is Manager of the Rehabilitation Interventions Design and Support Team at the New Zealand Department of Corrections National Office. He has worked at the Department since 2011, and in the government sector since 1999. During this time he has held service development and project management roles in the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Justice.

Danielle Kallil attended Otago University and completed a Bachelor of Laws with Honours and a Bachelor of Arts. After graduating, she practised commercial law for a couple of years. She has been with the Department of Corrections for three years and is now a senior advisor for the Rehabilitation Design and Support Team. She is responsible for the portfolio management of key rehabilitation interventions such as the drug treatment units within prisons, problem gambling treatment within prisons and the redesign of the family violence programme for male offenders in the community.

Background

Domestic violence is one of New Zealand's most serious social issues. Police are called to around 200 domestic violence situations a day – which is the equivalent to one every seven minutes on average¹. In addition, the economic cost of domestic violence on the individual, family, community and country as a whole is considerable. For example, in 1996 the estimated economic cost of domestic violence in New Zealand was between \$1.2 and \$5.8 billion per annum.²

In 2011/12 approximately 6,000 court respondents were ordered to attend domestic violence programmes either by the Family Court or under sentencing of the District Court³. These respondents attend programmes which are prescribed by the Domestic Violence Regulations and provided by community based organisations funded by the Ministry of Justice and the Department of Corrections.

In February 2013 the Department of Corrections Psychological Services published a literature review which looked at the status of community-based domestic violence interventions in Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, the United States and New Zealand.⁴ This review found that, at best, programmes appeared to have a weak positive impact on recidivism rates. The review also noted very poor completion rates, with almost half of those starting a domestic violence programme failing to complete it. This situation is not unique to New Zealand:

"Internationally, compliance with and completion of community-based offender programmes is a problem and domestically violent offenders in particular have higher attrition rates than most."⁵

As a result of the findings of the literature review, the Department of Corrections sought to revise its approach to the rehabilitation of community-based domestic violence offenders.

Corrections is committed to funding interventions based upon best practice in offender rehabilitation. Therefore, under the Department's reducing re-offending programme, a three streamed work project to develop domestic violence rehabilitation has been created. This work seeks to provide a better match of the risk and nature of offending with the intensity of the interventions offered. Full implementation of the three work streams will refer:

- high risk offenders to Psychological Services
- medium risk offenders to a Medium Intensity Rehabilitation Programme
- low to low-moderate risk offenders to community domestic violence rehabilitation programmes.

Source: Women's Refuge website www.womensrefuge.org.nz
 Ibid.

³ This is the sum of Department of Corrections starts in the 2011/12 year and the Ministry of Justice estimated starts in the same period

⁴ Community Based Domestic Violence, Marilize Slabber et al Department of Corrections, 2012

⁵ Ibid. p.10.

The programme

Under work stream three of the reducing re-offending programme, Corrections has now designed and developed a new family violence programme for male offenders in the community who are at a low to low-moderate risk of re-offending.

The Department has previously developed rehabilitation programmes based upon the risk, needs and responsivity model⁶ which have proven to show positive outcomes for offenders in reducing re-offending. The new family violence programme has been developed based upon this model; to positively and effectively address the needs of low to low-moderate risk male offenders in the community.

The new family violence programme comprises 26 sessions in total, and programme length is approximately 60 hours. This is deemed an appropriate intensity to meet the needs of those offenders who

will be referred to the programme. The programme content includes the following modules based upon the main four criminogenic needs⁷:

- Assessment and orientation. This up front assessment focuses on offender engagement, risk assessment and initial safety planning.
- Beliefs and attitudes that support abuse and violence. This module focuses on identifying and managing problem beliefs and attitudes that support abuse.
- Managing emotions. This module focuses on identifying and managing problem emotions that support abuse.
- *Alcohol, drugs and family violence*. This module focuses on strategies to minimise harm and manage urges and cravings.
- Relationship skills. This module focuses on developing pro-social relationships including sexual respect.
- *Impact on others*. This module focuses on pro-social parenting, custody issues and managing children's behaviour in a pro-social way.
- *Exit process*. This process includes safety planning and a family/whanau accountability session.

A key aspect of the new programme is that it incorporates upfront assessment of offenders by providers to ensure that the right offenders attend the programme. This will further ensure that the level of intensity of the intervention is matched to the appropriate level of need. The upfront assessment also focuses on identifying the rehabilitation needs of offenders at the outset, and therefore sets offender specific targets for rehabilitation during the programme. It is anticipated that this upfront assessment will contribute to improved completion rates.

The design process

A thorough and robust design and consultation process was undertaken in relation to the development of the new programme. An external expert design team was procured to work with the Department to design the programme. The design team was supervised by a

⁶⁶A key aspect of the new programme is that it incorporates upfront assessment of offenders by providers to ensure that the right offenders attend the programme.⁹⁹ departmental principal adviser to ensure the programme was developed in accordance with best practice in offender rehabilitation and accommodated the recommendations of the literature review.

Providers and Corrections staff were consulted throughout the design and development of the programme. This was achieved through two

rounds of regional briefings to which all Ministry of Justice approved programme providers were invited⁸. The first round of regional briefings outlined the results and recommendations of the literature review and gave an outline of the direction, scope and timeframe of the project. The second round of regional briefings informed providers and Corrections staff on the high level design of the programme. The response to these briefings was generally very positive, with well over 100 staff and providers attending each round.

Provider focus groups were also facilitated by probation district managers and rehabilitation and employment representatives. All Ministry of Justice approved providers were invited to attend these local focus groups, and key questions were developed by the design team with the objective of allowing providers the opportunity to input into the detail of the design. All information from the focus groups was collated and reviewed by the design team.

⁶ Andrews, D.A. & Bonta, J. (2010) The psychology of criminal conduct. New Providence, NJ: lexis Nexis

⁷ Ibid

⁸ The Department of Corrections has traditionally contracted with providers who are approved by the Ministry of Justice under the Domestic Violence (Programmes) Regulations 1996

An advisory committee was also created to review the design and development of the programme package. This committee comprised government agency representatives, provider representatives (procured through a request for proposal process) and senior Corrections staff. This was a very productive process and allowed for review and feedback from key stakeholder groups.

Finally, an inter-agency collaboration forum was created for this project comprising other government agency representatives (including Police, Ministry of Social Development, and Ministry of Justice). This forum was set up to ensure key messages were communicated and collaboration between government agencies continued.

The implementation

Initially it was anticipated that the national rollout of the new programme would take place in July 2014 with a review process incorporated. However, a comprehensive pilot in the 2014/15 financial year will now take place prior to full national implementation (full national implementation is now anticipated to take place in July 2015). The pilot will focus on seeking to improve completion rates, building provider capability and ensuring offender accessibility to the programme (for example, testing the best mode of delivery for the programme in relation to its length and required sessions per week). The pilot approach will therefore allow Corrections to test the flexibility and effectiveness of different delivery models.

A real time evaluation of the programme during the pilot will also take place. This evaluation will monitor and review programme delivery, completion and attrition rates and the targeted demographic (i.e., ensuring the offenders placed on the programme are part of the appropriate cohort for the targeted level of intensity).

Finally, as part of the design process, a training model has been developed and approved, and all providers who deliver the programme under the pilot will be trained prior to pilot implementation. This will help ensure that the facilitation of the programme is to a high standard and consistent across different providers and regions.

Conclusion

The new family violence programme provides an intervention based upon best practice in offender rehabilitation. The pilot approach seeks to significantly improve completion rates and test different modes of delivery to ensure offender access to the programme. Full implementation of the new programme will contribute to a sector-wide response to family violence by ensuring targeted and effective rehabilitation for family violence offenders. It will also improve sector capability and contribute to Corrections' goal of reducing re-offending.



Preparing Core members for Circles of Support and Accountability in New Zealand

Jim van Rensburg

Principal Psychologist, Department of Corrections, Te Piriti STU, Auckland Prison

Author biography:

Jim van Rensburg is a registered psychologist. Since 2002 Jim has been heading the special treatment programme at Te Piriti Special Treatment Unit for men who have sexually offended against children.

What are Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA)?

CoSA is internationally accepted as best practice to release and integrate into the community higher risk child sexual offenders who don't otherwise have adequate social support. The offender is the core member of the circle and is supported by between three and seven volunteers from the community, forming the inner circle. The inner circle is supported and advised by an outer circle of professionals, including the probation officer, psychologist, police and any other professionals whowork with the offender.

CoSA has the following purposes:

- to provide the core member with social support that would help to ensure his successful integration into the community
- to keep him accountable and guide him away from risk related situations and attitudes
- to ultimately contribute to public safety by preventing further victims.

For a comprehensive study on the background and functioning of circles of support, readers are referred to the landmark work by Hanvey, Philpot and Wilson (2011) entitled "A Community-based Approach to the Reduction of Sexual Reoffending – Circles of Support and Accountability".

Evidence based effectiveness of CoSA

Various studies have been undertaken in Canada and the UK to demonstrate the effectiveness of CoSA in reducing re-offending. The first was a Canadian study (Wilson, Picheca & Prinzo, 2005), where they compared a group of 60 core members with a carefully matched control group of men who were released without CoSA support. The average follow up period was 55 months for the core group and 53 months for the non-core group. The re-offending rate for the non-core group was 16.7 percent, while the core group's rate was five percent – a reduction of 70 percent. The core group's re-offending rate for non-sexual offences was also significantly lower, 28.3 percent as opposed to 43.4 percent of the control group.

In 2009 Wilson, Cortoni & McWhinnie conducted a national replication of the 2005 study. They matched 44 core members with 44 control subjects and controlled for risk and a variety of other factors. The following is an excerpt from the executive summary of their report :

"Results show that the offenders who participated in COSA had significantly lower rates of any type of reoffending than did the matched comparison offenders who did not participate in COSA. Specifically, offenders who participated in COSA had an 83 percent reduction in sexual recidivism in contrast to the matched comparison group (2.1 percent vs. 12.8 percent), a 73 percent reduction in all types of violent recidivism (including sexual - 8.5 percent vs. 31.9 percent), and an overall reduction of 72 percent in all types of recidivism (including violent and sexual -10.6 percent vs. 38.3 percent). Overall, COSA participants were responsible for considerably less sexual, violent, and general offending in comparison to the matched comparison group." (Wilson, Cortoni & McWhinnie, 2009, p.2).

A report on Circles South East, depicting the results of circles in the Hampshire and Thames Valley region in the United Kingdom covered results for 71 core members over an average follow-up period of 52 months (Bates, A, Saunders, B., Wilson, D, Wilson, C & Wilson,R., 2012) It showed that none of the core members committed a contact sexual offence during that period, while four were convicted of non-contact sexual offences. The report also reviewed the results of a control group who were referred for a circle, but for a variety of reasons did not make use of one. Ten men of this group were convicted of contact sexual offences and two for non-contact offences during a similar follow-up period.

The New Zealand CoSA project

CoSA was introduced in New Zealand by way of a pilot project run from the Department of Corrections' Te Piriti Special Treatment Unit (STU) for the treatment of men who have sexually offended against children. It was deliberately introduced in a slow and cautious manner to ensure public safety and to avoid unwanted public and media attention. The pilot project was primarily aimed at men who were serving preventive detention sentences or who had complex needs and were on Extended Supervision Orders in the community. The main aim of the project was to assess the viability of CoSA in New Zealand. Having successfully produced ten circles in which none of the core members re-offended sexually and where six of them have been out in the community for more than two years, the pilot project was deemed to have been successful and came to a close at the beginning of 2013.

CoSA is currently being introduced at Kia Marama STU as well. Work on CoSA has to date been by staff of the Special Treatment Units and members of the community on a voluntary basis in addition to their existing roles and responsibilities. For CoSA to expand in New Zealand, it is the author's view that there is a need to establish a formal support structure for circle co-ordinators with management resources and facilities to enable them to fulfil their duties. In overseas jurisdictions where CoSA is applied, there is a circle co-ordinator for every five new circles.

The evidence from the Canadian and British CoSA projects, as well as our own pilot project, shows that the support and guidance provided by circles have a positive impact on core members' behaviour. But circle volunteers can also play a constructive role in the preemptive recall or breach actions of core members who repeatedly display risky behaviour.

Cost-effectiveness

The introduction of a CoSA governance structure will obviously increase the cost of circles as an intervention. Elliott and Beech (2012) undertook a comprehensive cost benefit analysis of CoSA interventions in the UK in which the effect of a governance structure was accounted for. On the basis of 20 active circles per year, they determined that the average cost per circle comes to £11,303 (\$22,202NZ) per annum. According to their analysis the cost of re-offending amounts to £147,161.

Core member issues

Circle readiness

36

Core membership of a circle is voluntary, but having successfully undergone treatment is a prerequisite. However, it does not mean that an offender who has been successfully treated is necessarily ready to be a core circle member. Although circle volunteers are selected on the basis of a reasonable match with the offender, it does not guarantee a successful functioning circle. One of the learning points from the pilot project was that men who have been incarcerated for many years may have successfully completed treatment, but often lack the social skills and confidence to effectively interact with the complexities that await them upon release. They will typically be under strong scrutiny from various agencies, have to be extremely careful about their movements and conduct, have to cope with tight budgets and deal with persistent rejection in their efforts to find and keep accommodation and employment. These stressors can and often do lead to them reverting to old, unhelpful coping strategies, such as isolating themselves and then becoming prone to other risk-related behaviours.

The Circle Preparation Group (CPG)

To prepare core members for these complex situations has become the focus of a special group (aptly called the Circle Preparation Group) for 10-12 men in Auckland Prison's Te Mahinga Unit. They have met the eligibility criteria for, and are preparing to be part of circles of support. They meet weekly with the author and a programme facilitator for intensive sessions involving feedback on their own behaviour and coping mechanisms and to discuss real scenarios that they are likely to encounter upon release.

Because of the voluntary nature of the CoSA programme the numbers for whom circles can be developed are small and turnover is very slow. Some members have been in the group for more than two years as they wait on more volunteers to join their circle. Many more men apply for membership than can be accommodated. Eligibility is determined by the level of readiness to engage in a circle and men who already have one or two appropriate supporters who could form the basis for a circle, will usually have an advantage. A panel consisting of a senior psychologist from Te Piriti, two lead service managers from community probation, and a senior custody staff member from the unit, is responsible for the selection of new members of the Circle Preparation Group.

Social learning

While in the Circle Preparation Group, offenders are encouraged to be employed and to take part in social and sporting activities in the unit, which often opens its doors to visitors and volunteers who provide services to, or support offenders in various activities. The interaction of members of the Circle Preparation Group with staff, other prisoners and visitors or supporters, provides excellent material for feedback and social learning. For example, a particularly shy and quiet member was asked to watch documentaries and news items on television and to convey those to the group as if they were members of his circle with whom he wanted to engage in small talk. After several weeks of hard work, his circle volunteers reported that they could see a big difference in his confidence level and willingness to engage in conversation about matters of general concern. Circle volunteers have social needs like any other people. When there is good rapport between them and the core member, it usually makes for a very successful circle.

The Circle Preparation Group is also the place where members are prepared to address the Parole Board respectfully and to deal with their anxiety, which is normally very high at that point. In one instance a member whose circle was ready to receive him upon release, was stood down for a year (the normal statutory cycle in which the Board meet with these men). The main reason was that he became so anxious that he forgot the names of several of his supporters when he had to introduce them to the Board. The Board expressed doubt as to whether he had effectively bonded with his circle or would accept their guidance.

Circle preparation and desistance

The Circle Preparation Group is a safe place where group members demonstrate their successes and failures on their journey towards desistance from offending. One of the key opportunities where these are demonstrated is during temporary releases, when the men are allowed to go on outings for up to 72

The Circle Preparation Group is a safe place where group members demonstrate their successes and failures on their journey towards desistance from offending.

hours with a sponsor, usually a circle volunteer. By the time men are allowed to go on these releases, they are deemed not to be at risk of offending while under 24/7 supervision of their sponsors. But it is important to assess whether they continue to exhibit desistancesupportive behaviours while out in the community. When sponsors report back that men were demanding, passive, aggressive, staring at children or exhibiting other problematic behaviour, more therapeutic input would follow. This happens very seldom and usually targeted behaviour will include common courtesy, hygiene and risk avoidance. Only three men have been removed from the group over the past three years because they exhibited persistent risk-producing behaviour while in the unit. The importance of an effective Circle Preparation Group was underlined when three others were recalled in the second year of circles. Although they all attended a preparation group, it was during the early days of circle formation and the focus was more on finding volunteers than preparing

core members. These men were not recalled because they offended, but for breaching their parole conditions, which are typically very strict and aimed at avoiding situations that could increase their risk of re-offending.

Core members and circle volunteers

By far the most difficult aspect of the CoSA process is finding and recruiting suitable volunteers to support offenders. In jurisdictions such as those in Canada, the UK, Vermont and some European countries, state funded community based organisations have the responsibility of recruiting and training volunteers. New Zealand has not yet reached that stage, although some grassroots groups have indicated a desire to take up the challenge.

Meanwhile the Circle Preparation Group has been the forum from where supporters are recruited. This can happen in a variety of ways, but usually starts with one or two supporters known to the offender. They may or may not be willing to be circle members for him, but are often prepared to be his sponsors for temporary releases. On these releases they would introduce him to other people who may potentially be interested to become supporters or circle members. This method

> of taking the offender to the people, rather than bringing them to the prison, appears to produce better outcomes as most people seem to find it threatening or at least challenging to visit prisons. Once the new supporters have indicated an interest, they will be visited (at this stage by the author), the CoSA support role explained to them,

and, if they agree, they will be assisted to complete all the forms necessary to register as volunteers and circle supporters. They will subsequently be subject to at least two training sessions to equip them for their support and accountability functions. As stated above, core members are required to have a number of temporary releases before they will be considered for release from prison. The expectation is that they will meet with their circle supporters during these outings and begin to form a bond that will hopefully grow stronger post release. The feedback from the volunteers after temporary releases is invaluable and usually leads to fine-tuning during the preparation phase.

Core members and the probation officer (PO)

Because of the many variables involved in the release of a prisoner, a PO is normally only assigned to a particular offender after the release of the prisoner. The PO plays a critical role in managing the post release conditions of these offenders and involving circle volunteers in the process. Most probation sites responsible for 'circle' offenders upon release, are therefore prepared to assign a PO prior to the release of the prisoner. The PO is then introduced to the offender and will undergo training with the circle members. The PO will normally provide information about the parole conditions and the way in which they will be managed. Volunteers will have the opportunity to ask questions and get clarity about potentially complicated areas, such as complying with curfew hours. In that way, all parties are informed and aware of what to expect. Circle training aims to obtain maximum transparency between all the parties concerned. That can only be obtained when all parties enter the circle relationship with a reasonable degree of trust in each other. In circles where that was the case, some exceptionally good results have been achieved and it led to notable pro-social conduct on the part of offenders.

Discussion

The preparation of core members for circles of support and accountability appears to be necessary in order to ensure the successful integration with their circle members and probation officers, which turns out to be critical for their successful handling of the many complex situations and decisions that await them upon release. The Circle Preparation Group has been proven to not only be an ideal forum for offenders to prepare themselves for core membership of circles, but also as the launching pad to recruit circle volunteers.

For CoSA to continue to be a viable option for offenders, it is the author's view that expansion is needed and this cannot be undertaken or sustained without changes to the way in which CoSA is developed and supported. The state is likely to be the main funding body, as the management of child sex offenders is unlikely to attract funding interest from other sources. However, there is a need to engage or establish a community based organisation to take responsibility for driving the CoSA processes from within the community.

References

- Bates, A, Saunders, B., Wilson, D, Wilson, C & Wilson, R., 2012, Circles South East: The First Ten Years 2002-2012, Circles South East Ten Years One Hundred Circles Community Safety – What can be Done Ten Year Report April 2002 – March 2012. Circles South East.
- Elliott, I., Beech, A., 2011, A U.K. Cost-Benefit Analysis of Circles of Support and Accountability Interventions, Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment, 20(10), p.1-19
- Van Rensburg, J. (2012). The dawn of Circles of Support and Accountability in New Zealand. Sexual Abuse in Australia and New Zealand: An Interdisciplinary Journal, 4(2), 30-35.
- Wilson, R., Picheca, J., Prinzo, M., 2005, Circles of Support and Accountability: An Evaluation of the Pilot Project in South-Central Ontario, Correctional Service of Canada
- Wilson, R., Cortoni, F., McWhinnie, A., 2009, Circles of Support and Accountability: A Canadian national replication of outcome findings, Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment, 21, p.412-429.
- Wilson, C., & Hanvey, S. (2011). The beginning of the circle The history of Circles of Support and Accountability. In S. Hanvey, T. Philpot, & C. Wilson (Eds), A communitybased approach to the reduction of sexual reoffending. London: Jessica Kingsley.

Assessing the literacy and numeracy of prisoners



Jill Bowman

Principal Research Adviser, Department of Corrections

Author biography:

Jill joined the Department of Corrections Research and Evaluation Team in 2010. She manages a variety of research and evaluation projects, and has a particular interest in literacy and numeracy, the employment outcomes of offenders and desistance. As well as working for Corrections, she volunteers at Arohata Prison, teaching quilting to the women in the Drug Treatment Unit.

Summary

To reduce re-offending by 25 percent by 2017, Corrections must assist prisoners to address the issues that led to their offending, as well as providing them with skills to live a productive life when they return to the community. Achieving success with rehabilitation and other support programmes requires the Department to design and deliver them according to prisoners' learning abilities.

However, the Department has lacked definitive data on prisoners' literacy and numeracy capability. To address this, Corrections conducted research over the summer months of 2012/2013 to establish skill levels.

Around 600 prisoners were assessed. The study sample was representative of the prison population in terms of age, ethnicity, sex, and risk, allowing the results to be generalised to that population. Results showed that around 71 percent of prisoners (compared with 43 percent of a comparable, non-offender population) could be characterised as "below the level at which a person is able to cope with the demands of everyday life and work in a complex, advanced society." Around 65 percent were below this level in terms of numeracy skills.

Introduction

Prisoners with low levels of literacy and numeracy face serious obstacles to desisting from offending when they are released. Prisoners who struggle with literacy and numeracy find it more difficult to engage in rehabilitation programmes while they are in prison, meaning their offending-related problems may remain unaddressed. After leaving prison, the normal challenges associated with settling back into the community are compounded. Former prisoners with low levels of literacy and numeracy are less likely to find work than others who have educational qualifications. Low levels of functional literacy and numeracy can also cause frustrations for offenders in their everyday lives, potentially creating stresses that trigger re-offending. Knowing prisoners' literacy and numeracy competency is important for the Department of Corrections. It enables the Department to provide rehabilitation programmes that are pitched appropriately so that all offenders can benefit. It also allows Corrections to design and provide education and training opportunities for prisoners of all levels of ability. Providing "foundation skills", such as basic literacy and numeracy skills training to prisoners who have difficulties in these areas, is thus extremely important. Further, assisting all prisoners to improve their skill level while they are in prison, regardless of where they sit on the skill continuum, will contribute to improved quality of life when they are released.

Until now, the Department has lacked accurate information on which to base its programme design and delivery. Small-scale studies have been conducted in the past but, because of their size, they may not have been representative of the entire prison population. One study suggested that 90 percent of prisoners were "illiterate".

The purpose of this research was to accurately estimate the literacy and numeracy competencies of prisoners across the entire prison population.

How the research was done

Between December 2012 and March 2013, all prisoners coming into custody at six prisons¹ were asked to take part in literacy and numeracy assessments. This included offenders commencing a period on remand as well those who were newly sentenced, those transferring in from another prison, and those returning from temporary off-muster periods. Offenders were generally assessed within six weeks of their first day in prison.

Auckland Region Women's Corrections Facility, Waikeria Prison, Spring Hill Corrections Facility, Hawke's Bay Regional Prison, Rimutaka Prison and Otago Corrections Facility

Literacy and numeracy levels were assessed using the Literacy and Numeracy for Adults Assessment Tool. This tool is widely used by educators in New Zealand to provide information on learners' literacy and numeracy levels as well as evidence of improvements. The tool assesses competency against six reading steps and six numeracy steps (the "Learning Progressions"), with advancement to a higher step reflecting a significant learning development.

At step 1, learners have basic levels of ability. For example, at step 1 for literacy, they can recognise only short, simple words and words with which they would naturally be familiar, such as the names of their children or where they live. By step 3, they can understand more demanding text, their vocabulary includes more complicated words, and they can use a dictionary. At steps 5 and 6, they understand most text, including academic texts, and have an extensive vocabulary.

At step 1 for numeracy they can count to 20, but would typically use fingers to add and subtract. By step 3, learners can multiply and divide numbers up to 10 x 10. By step 6, they can solve difficult problems involving fractions, decimals and percentages.

A learner is considered "able to cope with the demands of everyday life and work in a complex, advanced society" at step 4 of the Learning Progressions for literacy and step 5 of the Learning Progressions for numeracy. At step 6 on the Learning Progressions, learners are considered ready to undertake a degree course.

Assessments using this tool are normally undertaken on-line but, because prisoners do not have access to the internet, a paper-based version was used.

The Department contracted Workforce Development Limited, which provides foundation skills to prisoners, to administer the assessments at five of the prisons. A masters student doing complementary research with prisoners was engaged to conduct the assessments at Rimutaka Prison. All completed assessment forms were collated by a Workforce Development co-ordinator.

Assessors explained the research to prisoners, including what would be involved for them. Participants were able to ask questions and those who agreed to take part signed a consent form. Prisoners were informed they were free to withdraw from the process at any stage.

What the research showed

40

A total of 592 prisoners (72 women and 520 men) completed either the reading assessment or the numeracy assessment, or both. Although assessors encouraged all participants to complete both the reading and numeracy assessments, some prisoners chose to complete only one; consequently, 556 (94 percent) completed the reading assessment and 575 (97 percent) completed the numeracy assessment.

The composition of the research sample was broadly similar to the general prisoner population, allowing the results to be generalised across all prisoners.

Around 71 percent of prisoners were assessed at step 3 or below for reading, indicating that most prisoners were reading below the level regarded as able to cope with the demands of everyday life in modern society. Twenty-nine percent of prisoners were assessed as achieving at step 4 or above.

Figure 1.

Reading and numeracy results for all prisoners



Overall, numeracy results were more evenly distributed across the six steps than the reading results. Nearly two-thirds (65 percent) of the prison population could be expected to be at step 4 or below and thus would have difficulties with numeracy in everyday life. Thirtyfive percent were at steps 5 or 6.

Results by gender

Women prisoners performed slightly better than men in both reading and numeracy, with a smaller percentage placed at lower steps, and a higher percentage at the upper steps. Thirty-three percent of women achieved at steps 4, 5 or 6 for reading, compared with 30 percent of the men. Thirty-nine percent of women achieved at steps 5 and 6 for numeracy compared with 35 percent of the men.

Figure 2:

Reading results by gender



Figure 3. Numeracy results by gender



Results by ethnicity

Forty-five percent of New Zealand European prisoners achieved at steps 4, 5 or 6 for reading, but only 23 percent of Māori and 16 percent of Pacific prisoners achieved at this level. While nearly half (49 percent) of New Zealand European prisoners participating in the numeracy assessment achieved at steps 5 or 6, just over one-quarter (26 percent) of Māori and 36 percent of Pacific prisoners achieved at this level.

Figure 4.

Reading results by ethnicity



Figure 5.

Numeracy results by ethnicity



Literacy results by risk

The risk profiles (RoC*RoI scores) of the sampled prisoners were analysed in relation to the assessment results to determine whether a correlation was evident between risk level and literacy ability. The analysis showed no obvious relationship. While the lack of relationship between low literacy and re-offending risk may appear surprising, it is likely that poor literacy itself is not a criminogenic factor - that is, in the absence of true offending "drivers" (such as violence propensity, drug and alcohol dependence, impulsivity and associations with criminal others), a person with poor literacy is not necessarily at risk of becoming an offender. It seems likely instead that poor literacy (and numeracy) make it more difficult for people who are offenders to successfully achieve the transition to a law-abiding lifestyle.

Conclusions

This research provides the first reliable picture of levels of literacy and numeracy skills amongst prisoners in New Zealand. The results show that poor literacy and numeracy is more extensive than is found in the general population, which is consistent with comparisons between prison and general populations in other countries.

While the results indicate that the need for remedial education for these deficits is not insignificant, it is certainly a less dire picture than suggested by earlier but less robust studies. Indeed, literacy results indicate that nearly 30 percent of prisoners (compared with 57 percent of a comparable non-offender population) are "likely to be able to cope with the functional demands of everyday life, and work in a complex, advanced society" while the numeracy results show that 36 percent of prisoners are at or above this level. Further, three percent of prisoners in terms of literacy and 13 percent in terms of numeracy are at a stage where they can be considered "ready to undertake a degree course".

Results of this study are being used within the Department to improve planning for foundation skills delivery, and for programme content design.

Translating the right relationship into right practice: Right Track in NZ prisons

Carolyn O'Fallon

Principal Research Adviser, Department of Corrections

Author biography:

Carolyn O'Fallon is a Principal Research Adviser in the Research and Evaluation Team at the Department of Corrections. She has been in the role since May 2013. She has honed her skills in research, evaluation, survey development and policy for the past 20-odd years, working primarily in the transport and tourism sectors. Her major evaluation projects include the quarterly evaluation of the Right Track roll out; a multi-year evaluation of the effectiveness of education and training programmes in prisons in meeting offender needs and reducing re-offending; and giving advice to other teams on evaluations, reviews and surveys.

Introduction

In the first issue of Practice: the New Zealand Corrections Journal, Lisa Young described the concept of the 'right relationship' between a prisoner and staff as a key component for prison-based practice. She observed that having right relationships helps manage the tension between security, care and rehabilitation responsibilities inherent in frontline roles. This would contribute to the Department's priorities of improving public safety and reducing re-offending. The right relationship concept underlies the Right Track framework, a behavioural-based practice framework for staff and managers currently being rolled out to all publicly operated New Zealand prisons. This article outlines the Right Track framework, its early piloting in Auckland Prison, and the current roll out to all prison sites, as well as key lessons from formative and process evaluations.

The Right Track framework

Right Track was introduced to provide a structured approach to deliver the Department's active management concept and stages of change model, which were adopted in 1998 as part of 'integrated offender management'. The framework consists of roles, processes, competencies and tools for staff practice within the custodial environment. It encourages frontline staff to develop suitable relationships with prisoners and to then actively engage with them to promote positive change. It defines desired staff behaviours, emphasising good communication, empathy, sound judgement and decision-making, as well as personal integrity.

First developed by Prochaska and DiClemente (1984), the stages of change model has been placed at the heart of the Right Track framework. In effect, by using the stages of change model (Figure 1) to identify a prisoner's readiness to change their behaviour, staff interactions with prisoners can be directed to

42

motivate them to set suitable targets (goals) and tactics (actions) to achieve those targets. The aim is to maximise the offender's participation in rehabilitation, reintegration, work and study and to manage and motivate offenders' behaviour so they change for good.

Figure 1.

The Stages of Change (source: after Prochaska & DiClemente, 1984)



The Right Track framework is thus offender-centric, with frontline staff empowered to support prisoner movement through the stages of change by:

- using a 'One Team' approach: collaboration across services (custodial, health, offender employment, case management, prison management, psychologists, chaplains and others)
- working across prisoner security, care and rehabilitation dimensions
- creating a culture of constructive behaviour between staff and prisoners
- encouraging continuous improvement by emphasising that change is a process and not a 'one hit wonder'
- training and supporting staff to make the right choices and take the right actions at the right times with prisoners.

Training and development

To achieve this, all staff who come into contact with prisoners are trained in the stages of change, and to understand how to apply change targets and tactics for offenders at each stage. The core training is one to two full days (depending on the role), supplemented by further 'bite size' training, of half to two hours' duration, on specific topics as the need arises. Regular practice forums are another feature, to introduce new material and provide additional support and the opportunity to reflect on practice. Following the core training, a one-day 'Working with Others' module provides support in working with other cultural and ethnic groups, particularly Māori, using cultural principles and concepts.

To support implementation at sites, the practice framework also included staff coaching by external coaches, Right Track and Māori practice leaders, staff designated as 'Go2 support people' and Right Track co-ordinators. External coaches have been able to take an impartial view across a site to identify any issues impeding the successful embedding of Right Track practices and to provide one-on-one coaching to those in leadership roles. Some of these coaching roles will be continued beyond implementation to support embedding, sustainability and evolution of custodial practice.

Right Track in practice

At regular multi-disciplinary Right Track meetings, staff share information about offenders, as well as identifying any problems, barriers and solutions. To facilitate communication and interaction, file noting for prisoners was moved to a centralised electronic database, with a special section for Right Track-based notes. Figure 2 illustrates the core elements of the Right Track practice.

Figure 2.

Core components of Right Track practice



Resources, including templates and guidelines, have been developed to assist in the review and development of practice. These are located on the intranet for easy access by all staff.

Testing Right Track at Auckland Prison

Implementation at Auckland Prison was undertaken from May to November 2012, prior to a national roll out in the remaining 15 sites from November 2012. The main goal of the pilot in Auckland was to develop a practical understanding of the effectiveness of the Right Track framework and to test the processes needed to implement, embed and sustain practice over time. Trialling it in a prison with a range of security classifications also provided an opportunity to demonstrate its value to other prisons.

External consultants were contracted to conduct a three-stage evaluation of the pilot. The first stage gathered formative feedback on the implementation process to help improve the Right Track framework. The second stage explored custodial practice and assessed the extent to which Right Track was embedded within everyday custodial practice, while the third was to demonstrate outcomes and achievements. The third evaluation was completed mid-2013.

Overall, the third evaluation found that, nearly a year after implementation, Right Track was embedded in staff practice across Auckland Prison, with indications of measurable improvements in prisoner behaviour. While there were differences in the way staff engaged in Right Track on a day-to-day level across the site, the evaluators reported that this engagement was generally satisfactory. Staff were found to be applying Right Track principles, as demonstrated by sharing information and collaborating across services, engaging in offender-centric behaviour, developing broader understandings of offenders, and making informed decisions as to how to support them. 'Early adopters' - staff motivated to engage and support the change processes - were observed to be leading practical day-to-day application of Right Track at the unit level. In essence, practice was shifting from a 'theoretical' understanding to one of applied practice.

A review of Right Track meeting minutes covering a 12 month period at Auckland Prison showed increases in the number of Right Track meetings on site, increased services representation (eg psychologists, health, chaplains), and more reporting of appropriate tactics being identified and used.

In May 2013, the Department's Executive Leadership Team approved a real-time evaluation to be carried out while Right Track was being implemented in the remaining 15 sites, with findings to be reported on a quarterly basis. The key questions to be addressed in this (still current) evaluation are:

- Has the training been successfully delivered, and well-received by staff?
- To what extent are staff applying the new systems and processes?
- Are staff displaying the kinds of attitudes and behaviours that Right Track prescribes?
- Is Right Track being implemented consistently across prisons?

The first quarterly report for May-June 2013 indicated that adequate progress was being made in the roll out of Right Track training, and regular Right Track meetings were already occurring in two-thirds of the 148 units at the 16 prison sites.

The move to electronic file notes and Right Track Assurance Tool reporting were well received. There were signs of more file notes being entered, although the content and quality was an area for further effort. A file note resource guide was developed to help address this.

The first quarterly evaluation report raised concerns about the potential loss of momentum and visible leadership due to practice leader secondments and external coaching finishing at the end of the formal implementation period, which could see the entire Right Track initiative being compromised. As a result, a team was set up to seek a robust, regionally-based solution to the issue of site leadership of Right Track over the medium term. Outcomes of these actions will be presented in future quarterly updates.

Key messages to date

The multiple evaluations of Right Track implementation have identified some factors contributing to successfully developing practices leading to the 'right' relationships and behavioural changes with prisoners and ultimately to support reducing re-offending and improving public safety.

- **Build capacity in staff continuously:** while the content and delivery of the core training was found to be appropriate and relevant at the time, as staff begin to apply the Right Track framework, they need additional practice-based training to help them address new and unique challenges in their work with prisoners.
- Work collaboratively: increased collaboration of services, via file note sharing and Right Track meetings, and cross-service training, is considered a major strength of the approach.
- Visible and sustained support mechanisms: practice forums, refresher courses, bite sized training and reflective practice opportunities

throughout the implementation period and beyond are effective in embedding appropriate practice.

- **Visible leadership at all levels:** practice leaders and coaches, as well as Right Track-trained principal and senior custodial officers (Go2 leaders), need to be continually reaffirming expectations that all staff, regardless of their formal role, should 'walk the talk', and act as role models for offenders (and each other).
- Sufficient time and resources: access to desktop computers, and time to enter file notes, minutes and other reporting activities, are important (some issues around both were identified); similarly, staff need time and opportunity to reflect on their practice through discussions with their peers at regular Right Track meetings.
- **Sustain motivation:** staff sharing successes and learning, through meetings, staff forums, monthly reporting, and the intranet, help sustain staff motivation and interest.

In the longer term, it is anticipated that the Department will be in a position to measure the effect of the Right Track framework on prisoner behaviour, through things such as the frequency of incidents (abuse, threats and physical assaults), recorded levels of self-directed goal setting, and general compliance with offender plans.

In conclusion, Right Track principles position all frontline prison staff directly into the role of 'change agents' – promoting and encouraging prosocial change and growth in offenders. Doing so is challenging, and, for some, quite stretching. However, it is a critical element of the Department's efforts to reduce reoffending by 25 percent by 2017. At this stage, the signs are that Right Track is well on track.

References

- Prochaska, J. and DiClemente, C. (1984), The Transtheoretical Approach: Crossing Traditional Boundaries of Therapy, Dow Jones/Irwin: Homewood.
- Young, Lisa. (2013), The Right Relationship, Practice: The New Zealand Corrections Journal 1(1):24-26.

Book review: *Prison violence – Causes, Consequences and Solutions*



Kristine Levan (2012)

ISBN 978-1-4094-3390-3

Reviewed by Neil Beales

Chief Custodial Officer, Department of Corrections

Reviewer biography:

Neil Beales has worked in corrections since 1991. He started as an officer in the English and Welsh Service progressing through the ranks to deputy governor and working at a number of different prisons including Adult, Young Offender and Juvenile institutions until moving to New Zealand in 2009 to take up the post of Prison Manager of Auckland Prison. He held this position until being appointed as the Chief Custodial Officer for the New Zealand Department of Corrections and took up this post in November 2012.

Prison Violence – Causes, Consequences and Solutions is one of two recent additions to the Department's Information Centre, focusing on the subject of violence within prisons.

Whilst not a particularly lengthy read at only 112 pages, the author manages to include and discuss a wide range of factors that contribute to or create the environment for prison violence to perpetuate.

This book primarily examines the American penal system and culture. However, there is a chapter that discusses the international context, although clearly only in broad terms, acknowledging

...the topic of prison violence is complex, largely misunderstood and one that deserves the highest attention...

as classification, 'supermax' facilities, gangs, sexoffender treatment and managing weapons in prisons.

Correctional officer training receives a mention, however, I was left with the view that the author holds a particular negative opinion of correctional officers and this unfortunately is reflected more than once in the book. For example, halfway down page two, already

> we read that correctional staff may resort to either actual violence or threats of violence in order to achieve the goal of control within a facility. Whilst I am not naïve and understand that staff are not immune to such acts, it is disappointing that the author has not reflected that such instances are

that international comparisons are often difficult and problematic. The subject of prison violence, however, knows no such boundaries and many of the topics covered in the book easily translate to a non-American audience.

The book includes chapters covering topics such as correctional philosophies, a range of theories including general criminological and others (I was particularly interested in the discussion on importation and deprivation theory), prison hierarchy and culture (including sub-culture). The effect of prison violence is covered in chapter five and considers how society, community and the individual are affected. There is a final chapter in which the author suggests potential solutions or areas that require attention to move towards a solution.

A subject that was very close to home for me, and covered off well, was in regard to what is being done about prison violence. This chapter covered issues such very much in the minority and the vast majority of correctional staff will not resort to such actions to achieve their goals. Furthermore, the author fails to consider in any great detail the issue of violence against staff or the impact this has on staff culture, safety or morale. I feel that this detracts from what is otherwise a very informative read and, for the most part, well argued.

Overall, this book raises some very important and, sadly, rarely discussed issues, and does so in a way that encourages thought and debate. This is good as the topic of prison violence is complex, largely misunderstood and one that deserves the highest attention from prison practitioners, policy makers and the public.



46

Information for contributors

The Department of Corrections welcomes submissions for *Practice: the New Zealand Corrections Journal* on topics relevant to all aspects of Corrections work which aim to promote professionalism and practice excellence.

Practice: the New Zealand Corrections Journal is a publicly funded journal which is available free of charge. The journal is also available on the Corrections website (www.corrections.govt.nz/resources/journal.htm). A limited number of hard copy journals are also published.

Submissions

We seek articles from knowledgeable professionals working in any part of the corrections arena.

Submissions may include:

- **Substantive articles:** Substantive articles of around 3,000 – 4,000 words are generally requested by specific invitation to the author by an Editorial Board member. However, if you would like to submit an article, please contact CorrectionsJournal@corrections.govt.nz
- Practice articles: Contributions for practice articles are welcomed from all Corrections staff and professionals working in the wider field. Articles can include accounts of innovative or effective workplace practice, case reports, research, education, review articles, conference and workshop reports, and personal observations and should be around 1,000 – 2,000 words.
- **Reviews:** We welcome book reviews of around 500 words.

All work must be the original work of the author/s.

Names and other details must have been changed to protect offender/victim confidentiality.

Submissions should not have been published before or be under consideration for publication elsewhere; should not contravene any laws, including those of defamation and privacy; should disclose any conflict of interest; and should meet any applicable ethical or research standards. Submissions should not violate a third party's intellectual property rights and the authors will have obtained any permissions, should these be required, for material sourced from other copyrighted publications, etc.

We may publish submissions that have been published elsewhere, if the authors have obtained the required permissions, but we will give preference to original submissions.

All articles will be considered by the editorial board of *Practice: the New Zealand Corrections Journal.*

The Department of Corrections will not make any payment for contributions to *Practice: the New Zealand Corrections Journal* and does not hold itself responsible for statements made by authors.

Style

Practice: the New Zealand Corrections Journal is a 'Plain Language' publication. Writing should be clear, concise, and avoid jargon or technical language.

We appreciate that authors may be at varying levels of familiarity with professional journal writing and for those less used to this style, we hope this won't be a barrier to approaching us. We are always available to talk through ideas and to discuss how best to present your information

Format

Where possible, articles for submission should include an executive summary, followed by an introduction. The body of the article should have clear subject headings, followed by references (see note below).

All authors should also send a brief biography (approx 50 - 100 words).

Referencing

Please keep notes to a minimum and follow APA (American Psychological Association) standard referencing format (http://www.library.cornell.edu/ resrch/citmanage/apa offers a quick guide). References should only include publications directly referred to in the text and not be a complete review of the literature (unless that is the purpose of the article).



47

Images

Photographs and illustrations are always welcome. Photographs should be taken at a resolution of 1MB or higher in order to be of suitable quality for the printed version of the journal.

Copyright

In most instances, copyright of a submission made to *Practice: the New Zealand Corrections Journal* will be owned by the New Zealand Department of Corrections. When you are the author and copyright owner of your submission, you retain copyright in your submission, but in order to publish your submission the Department of Corrections may need to obtain a licence from you and, if relevant, any other authors before we can publish in *Practice: the New Zealand Corrections Journal*. The Department of Corrections acknowledges your moral right to be identified as the author of the submission.

Where you do not own the copyright in your submission, for example where your employer owns the copyright, you must ensure that the copyright owner has authorised you to licence the submission under the terms set out in these guidelines.

By putting forward your submission to the Department of Corrections for publication in *Practice: the New Zealand Corrections Journal*, you and any other authors of your submission (if applicable) agree to licence the Department of Corrections to publish your submission on the following terms:

- You agree to comply with these guidelines
- You warrant that you have the right, or have obtained such authorisation or the relevant licence/s, as may be required, including from any co-authors of the submission
- You grant a non-exclusive and perpetual licence to the Department of Corrections in order for the Department of Corrections to:
 - reproduce, publish, communicate or disseminate your submission in any media format including in hard copy, on the Corrections website, electronic library databases, or via information service providers, as part of *Practice: the New Zealand Corrections Journal*

- reproduce your submission free of charge for the non-commercial purposes of education, study and/or research without requiring specific permission from you (note that such reproduction will be conditional on your submission being reproduced accurately, including acknowledgement of your authorship, and not being used in a misleading context
- allow your submission to be disseminated as a whole or part of the text, image and other content contained within your submission in text, image, other electronic format or such other format or on such other medium as may now exist or hereafter be discovered, as part of electronic products distributed by information service providers.

Please note that the Department of Corrections will not pay you for the licence or right to publish your submission. The Department of Corrections will not benefit from any financial gain as a result of you granting such a licence.

Contact us

If you would like to submit an article or review to *Practice: the New Zealand Corrections Journal*, or if you have any queries, please email CorrectionsJournal@corrections.govt.nz.

Department of Corrections, Private Box 1206, Wellington, New Zealand www.corrections.govt.nz