

Research in Review

Bureau of Management Information Services

Division of Planning, Research and Statistics

Editor: Gary Zajac (717)730-2725

Summary and Major Findings of Articles Reviewed in This Issue

Roger Matthews and John Pitts. 1998. "Rehabilitation, Recidivism and Realism: Evaluating Violence Reduction Programs in Prison." *The Prison Journal*, 78(4), 390-405. Page 3

This article presents a critique of the emphasis placed upon recidivism in the evaluation of correctional treatment programs. The authors make the case that program evaluation needs to consider a broader range of indicators when assessing programs, and argue that recidivism is often a weak measure of program success.

James W. Marquart, et. alii. 1999. "The Implications of Crime Control Policy on HIV/AIDS-Related Risk Among Women Prisoners." *Crime & Delinquency*, 45(1), 82-98. Page 5

This article finds that HIV infection among female prisoners is closely related to type of offense and drug addiction. The authors use the findings of their study to support a critique of the "war on drugs", arguing that imprisonment may actually contribute to an enhanced risk of HIV transmission among selected female offenders.

Michael Tonry. 1999. "Parochialism in U.S. Sentencing Policy." *Crime & Delinquency*, 45(1), 48-65. Page 6

This article presents a discussion and critique of recent developments in U.S. sentencing policy and examines these developments in light of sentencing practices that have evolved in Europe. The author suggests that U.S. sentencing policy could benefit from a closer study of practices that have been adopted elsewhere.

Wayne N. Welsh, Patricia H. Jenkins and Philip W. Harris. 1999. "Reducing Minority Overrepresentation in Juvenile Justice: Results of Community-Based Delinquency Prevention in Harrisburg." *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 36(1), 87-110. Page 7

This article presents the findings of an evaluation of a local program designed to divert at-risk minority juveniles from further involvement with the criminal justice system. This study found that the program did produce a significant reduction in recidivism rates, although the effects of the program on academic performance and truancy were less clear. *There is a DOC connection to this article.*

Special Section on Leadership in Corrections

The most recent *Corrections Management Quarterly* was a special issue focusing upon leadership in corrections. We thought that it would be interesting to highlight selected articles, given the recent focus on leadership development training within the department.

Jeremy Travis. 1999. "Viewing Corrections Through a Different Lens." *Corrections Management Quarterly*, 3(1), 30-35. Page 8

This article, written by the Director of the National Institute of Justice, urges correctional officials to engage actively in the ongoing debate regarding the two primary approaches evident in criminal justice policy making today: problem solving/rehabilitation and rule enforcing/punishment.

Mario A. Paparozzi. 1999. "Leadership: An Antidote to Bureaucracy and a Remedy for Public Disheartenment." *Corrections Management Quarterly*, 3(1), 36-41. Page 9

This article, by a retired New Jersey parole agent who is now a faculty member and President of the American Probation and Parole Association, explores various styles of leadership within traditional correctional organizations, concluding that leadership must be active and connected to best correctional practices.

Melvin Brown, Jr. and Dan Richard Beto. 1999. "Effective Correctional Leadership for the 21st Century." *Corrections Management Quarterly*, 3(1), 47-51. Page 10

This article, by corrections officials from Texas, outlines characteristics thought to constitute effective leadership in corrections. The authors conclude that the effective corrections leader must be visionary, a continual learner, adaptable, a creator of culture and a developer of people.

Research Notes on Offender Assessment and Screening

The scholarly journals screened for *Research in Review* included an unusually large number of articles on offender classification instruments in recent months. Given that these articles are rather heavy on statistics and methodology, at the expense of discussion and application, *brief reviews* of some of the better articles are provided below. They provide insight into some tools that can be useful to corrections professionals.

Kevin S. Douglas and Christopher D. Webster. 1999. "The HCR-20 Violence Risk Assessment Scheme: Concurrent Validity in a Sample of Incarcerated Offenders." *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 26(1), 3-19.

This article tests the validity of a violence assessment tool - the Historical, Clinical and Risk Management (HCR-20) instrument - against other such tools and against past indicators of violence (e.g. criminal history). The researchers found that the HCR-20 measured up well against similar tools, and was a reasonable predictor of violent behavior. They conclude that this tool warrants further exploration for use in prisons. The primary limitation of this study is a small, geographically restricted inmate sample.

Ann Ward and John Dockerill. 1999. "The Predictive Accuracy of the Violent Offender Treatment

Program Risk Assessment Scale." *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 26(1), 125-140.

This article reports on the ability of the Violent Offender Treatment Program Risk Assessment Scale (RAS) to aid in the assignment of violent offenders to treatment programs and for release consideration. The RAS can be completed with data drawn from inmate records. The RAS was validated on a small group of violent offenders in Australia. The authors found that scores on the RAS were highly related to future offending, especially violent offending. They conclude that the RAS can be useful in the classification and management of violent offenders. As with the previous study, the primary drawback of this piece lies in the small, limited sample.

Jennifer L. Boothby and Thomas W. Durham. 1999. "Screening for Depression in Prisoners Using the Beck Depression Inventory." *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 26(1), 107-124.

This study tests the utility of the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) for the assessment of depression in prison inmates, and for classification decisions. The instrument was tested on nearly 1,500 inmates in the North Carolina state prison system. The authors found a generalized feeling of depression within the sample population, especially among first offenders, females, younger inmates, and those held in close custody. The authors conclude that the BDI can be useful for the assessment of depression among inmates.

David J. Simourd and Jennifer Van De Ven. 1999. "Assessment of Criminal Attitudes: Criterion-Related Validity of the Criminal Sentiments Scale-Modified and Pride in Delinquency Scale." *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 26(1), 90-106.

This article reports on the validity and reliability of two instruments - the Criminal Sentiments Scale/Modified (CSS/M) and the Pride in Delinquency (PID) scale - for the prediction of recidivism. The authors tested the instrument on nearly 200 Canadian inmates. They found that score on the CSS/M were significantly related to the recurrence of violent offending, and that scores on the PID were significantly related to non-violent recidivism. The primary drawback to this study lies in the limited sample.

Coming in future issues of *Research in Review* - **Book Reviews**, including:

Alan T. Harland (ed.). 1996. *Choosing Correctional Options that Work: Defining the Demand and Evaluating the Supply*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Detailed Reviews

Roger Matthews and John Pitts. 1998. "Rehabilitation, Recidivism and Realism: Evaluating Violence Reduction Programs in Prison." *The Prison Journal*, 78(4), 390-405.

This article presents a commentary on the various approaches and methods used to evaluate correctional treatment programs, especially programs geared towards violent offenders. The authors present some provocative ideas about the strengths, weaknesses and limitations of correctional program evaluation.

The authors begin by noting that there has been increasing popular, political and professional interest in dealing with the young, violent offender. They discuss the growing move to "get tough"

with these types of offenders, focusing on the development of shock incarceration programs such as boot camps. They discuss recent evaluations of these types of interventions, noting that they have been criticized for possibly making young, violent offenders more aggressive and confident in their criminal abilities.

The authors note that these types of programs were developed as an alternative to the earlier model of counseling-based treatment that had been common in prisons for many years. This reflected a shift in focus from "helping" offenders to confronting them with harsh consequences for their behavior and demanding that they conform in thought and deed to commonly accepted social norms. They discuss the Canadian Cognitive Skills Program as an example. They also note that these competing approaches to rehabilitation were operating against another current of thought that suggested that "nothing works" to rehabilitate offenders.

The authors argue that the primary result of these experiments in inmate treatment has been a confusion about what actually does work to rehabilitate offenders. They assert that this confusion has been driven in part by inadequate attempts to evaluate these programs. They offer several specific criticisms of correctional program evaluation. First, they argue that classic experimental methods are often improperly applied in cases where true random assignment of inmates to programs cannot be assumed. Second, they assert that programs are often treated as "black boxes", with inadequate attention paid to why and how they produce a given outcome. On a related point, they argue that inadequate attention has been paid to issues of motivation and participation of offenders in programs.

Their most forceful criticism of program evaluation research concerns the common use of *recidivism* as an indicator of program success. They make the case that re-offending is a product of a complex interplay of individual and social variables. Correctional treatment programs may have little or no control over many of these variables. Further, there is no consensus on how to define or measure recidivism, leading to conflicting methodologies and incomparable studies across jurisdictions. Given these conditions, the authors argue that corrections program evaluators should carefully consider what offender variables can reasonably be said to be influenced by a given program. They are not confident that recidivism should be widely used as an indicator of program success.

The authors clearly have strong views on the assessment of correctional treatment programs. Their criticisms of commonly used methods bear consideration and reflection. It is probably reasonable to conclude that recidivism is an overused, and indiscriminately applied, indicator of program success. While recidivism may not be the best measure of program performance, it does serve to provide correctional program evaluators and administrators with some insight into whether a program aids offenders in making a positive transition to mainstream society. Thus, recidivism should not be ignored in program evaluation. Rather, it is important to place recidivism into a broader context of indicators, such as sobriety, employment and community reintegration. While the authors are a bit rambling in their discussion, they do provide some useful food for thought for anyone concerned about the assessment of correctional treatment programs.

James W. Marquart, et. alii. 1999. "The Implications of Crime Control Policy on HIV/AIDS-Related Risk Among Women Prisoners." *Crime & Delinquency*, 45(1), 82-98.

This article presents an empirical exploration of patterns of HIV infection among female inmates, and offers a critique of sentencing policies that are thought to contribute to these patterns of infection. This research is related to other AIDS studies that were reported in earlier issues of *Research in Review*, and provides additional insight into a significant health challenge facing many prisons.

The authors begin by discussing the rapid growth in the incarceration rates of female offenders nationwide. They argue that much of the increase in female incarceration is tied to drug offenses, noting that one-third of female inmates in 1991 were incarcerated for drug-related crimes. They also note that drug and alcohol abuse is common among female offenders. Finally, they discuss the prevalence of HIV infection among female inmates, asserting that it is more common among female than male inmates.

Having sketched the context of female incarceration, drug use and HIV infection, they then note a need for more information about the relationship between offense type, drug use and HIV infection among female offenders. In pursuit of this research question, they interviewed a random sample of nearly 400 female offenders upon intake to the Texas state prison system, questioning them about their patterns of criminality, drug use and sexual behaviors.

Most of their respondents were young, poor minority women, with significant substance abuse problems, histories of sexual abuse, spotty work records and unstable lifestyles (which closely follows national female inmate demographics). Most respondents reported engaging in at least one high risk behavior under consideration by this study, such as intravenous drug use or prostitution. Property offenders generally reported higher levels of single risk behaviors. Approximately one-third of the respondents indicated that they had engaged in more than one of these types of behaviors simultaneously. Drug offenders were the most likely to report multiple risk behaviors. Most respondents did not believe that they were at high risk for contracting HIV. The authors conclude that there is a relationship between offense, drug use, and HIV infection.

The authors use these findings in support of a critique of the "war on drugs", arguing that the incarceration of drug offenders, especially females, contributes to HIV infection rates in several ways. First, they argue that prisons have become a focal point of HIV infection in the U.S., with an HIV incidence rate of 362 cases per 100,000 inmates, compared to a rate of 18 cases per 100,000 people in the population. Thus, infection may spread more readily in this setting. Second, they argue that incarcerated female drug offenders often emerge from prison poorly prepared to function in mainstream society, reinforcing their return to behaviors that put them at risk for HIV infection. They conclude that sentencing policies, especially related to drug offenses, should take into consideration possible externalities imposed by large scale incarceration of low-level offenders.

The authors clearly embedded an agenda within their research. While they do not explicitly call for an overhaul of the "war on drugs", they do attempt to call into question many of the assumptions that support it. Despite the polemical nature of this piece, it does provide some additional information on HIV infection within prisons, and offers some interesting social commentary.

Michael Tonry. 1999. "Parochialism in U.S. Sentencing Policy." *Crime & Delinquency*, 45(1), 48-65.

This article provides a review, discussion and critique of recent developments and trends in U.S. and European sentencing policies. The author asserts that U.S. sentencing policy has ignored European sentencing practices that could contribute to a reduction of imprisonment rates in the U.S. While this piece is not specifically focused upon correctional management, it does provide an interesting commentary on an issue that directly impacts prisons.

The author begins by outlining the political, cultural and administrative forces that have contributed to the evolution of U.S. sentencing policy over the past two decades. In brief, he makes the claim that U.S. policy has taken a much harsher direction than is the case in most of the other first world nations, due in large part to political and popular sentiments that favor tough approaches to crime regardless of the empirical evidence for or against such policies. He notes that European nations in particular have been more open to experimenting with alternatives to incarceration.

The author then reviews these alternatives, focusing particularly on day fines, prosecutorial fines and community service. While acknowledging that these approaches have been tried in the U.S., he asserts that the efforts have been half-hearted at best. The primary focus of experimentation in U.S. sentencing has been on policies such as "three strikes", "truth in sentencing", "mandatory minimums" and "sentencing guidelines", which have not been widely adopted outside of the U.S.

The main thrust of this piece seems to be the author's contention that U.S. sentencing experiments, as opposed to those in many other developed nations, have increased the rate and expense of incarceration. The assumption underlying this argument is that much of this incarceration is wasteful, imposed in response to offenses that are dealt with in other nations by means other than incarceration.

Like the Matthews and Pitts article reviewed above, this piece is clearly polemical. The author operates from a position that is unabashedly critical of the increase in incarceration experienced in the U.S. over the past two decades. Despite the biases contained in this article, it does provide an interesting and competent review of divergent approaches to criminal justice, and is useful for anyone interested in the social, political and cultural causes and impacts of sentencing policy.

Wayne N. Welsh, Patricia H. Jenkins and Philip W. Harris. 1999. "Reducing Minority Overrepresentation in Juvenile Justice: Results of Community-Based Delinquency Prevention in Harrisburg." *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 36(1), 87-110.

This article presents the findings of a PCCD-funded evaluation of a Harrisburg-based program designed to mitigate the high rates of criminal involvement of minority youth in the community. The first author of this article - Professor Wayne Welsh - is the Principal Investigator in the NIJ-funded research partnership that is presently being built between the DOC and Temple University. Although the DOC has no involvement with juvenile delinquents, we thought that it would be useful to highlight the research of a scholar who is working closely with the department.

The authors begin by discussing the high rates of involvement in the justice system by minority youths. They note that much attention has been paid nationwide to the *overrepresentation* of such youths among juvenile offenders. In response to federal funding mandates, the PCCD Juvenile Advisory Committee (JAC) undertook a study in 1992 that found that minority youths accounted for at least three-quarters of all confined youth in Pennsylvania. The authors explore possible causes of this overrepresentation.

In response to this problem, PCCD funded a series of programs designed to divert minority youth from criminal involvement, primarily through efforts to model and encourage pro-social behavior among them. Programs funded in Harrisburg were linked into a coalition called the Youth Enhancement Services (YES).

This research reports on the evaluation of the YES initiative, looking specifically at the impact of the program on recidivism rates (defined as re-arrest), academic performance, school drop-out rates, and truancy. Due to restrictions on how juveniles could be selected and assigned to the program, the authors could not form a traditional control or comparison group in their research. Instead, they examined outcomes for groups of juveniles who had varying levels of participation in the program (high, medium, low).

The authors found that the recidivism rate for the high participation group was 25.8 percent, compared to 41.3 percent and 50.6 percent for the lower participation groups. Thus, they conclude that the program did have a substantial impact upon the subsequent criminal activity of juveniles who participated in the program. Echoing findings of previous evaluation studies, they also concluded that the amount of exposure to the program was directly related to the benefit of the program. Finally, the authors found that the program had weaker effects on academic performance, school drop-out rates and truancy. They conclude that this type of program holds significant promise for diverting minority youth from criminal involvement.

This research is a well-constructed evaluation of a program that may ultimately have promise for diverting juvenile offenders from eventual incarceration in the adult correctional system. It also lends insight into the research activities of our partner from Temple University.

Special Section on Leadership in Corrections

Jeremy Travis. 1999. "Viewing Corrections Through a Different Lens." *Corrections Management Quarterly*, 3(1), 30-35.

This article by the Director of the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) provides an interesting review of recent trends in criminal justice policy making, and discusses how correctional officials can and should contribute to the shaping of that debate.

The author begins by discussing the rapid growth of the criminal justice system over the past decade, with particular emphasis on the growing prison population. He makes the connection between this growth and the increasing use of sentencing practices such as mandatory minimums, three strikes laws and sentencing guidelines.

He also notes that citizens are ambivalent about crime. On the one hand, they are optimistic about decreasing crime rates and the efforts of communities to resist criminal activities. On the other hand, they are pessimistic about the ability to slow the growth of prison populations or to actually rehabilitate many classes of offenders.

The author suggests that this ambivalence can be explained, at least in part, by reference to two predominant themes or approaches to criminal justice in our society. The *problem solving* approach assumes that criminal behavior can be rationally analyzed and changed through intervention with individuals and communities. Common examples of the problem solving approach include community oriented policing and drug courts, as well as more established correctional interventions such as community corrections and drug treatment.

The *rule-enforcing* approach assumes that crime is something that must be controlled, rather than studied or changed. The emphasis here is upon containing offenders in order to prevent them from doing further damage to society. Examples of this approach include sentencing guidelines and "three strikes" laws. The rule enforcing approach draws upon two streams of correctional thought. Robert Martinson's conclusion that "nothing works" in rehabilitating offenders, combined with the notion that most crime is committed by a small number of offenders, supports the focus upon containment within the rule-enforcing approach.

The author does not explicitly assert that one approach is superior to the other, although a preference for the problem solving approach is evident in the discussion. Rather, he makes the point that corrections officials have much to contribute to the discussion surrounding these two approaches. He notes that corrections professionals are in a unique position to observe the impacts of sentencing policy. Thus, he urges corrections officials to actively participate in this discussion and notes that NIJ provides various forums for such discussion.

Mario A. Papanozzi. 1999. "Leadership: An Antidote to Bureaucracy and a Remedy for Public Disheartenment." *Corrections Management Quarterly*, 3(1), 36-41.

This article explores the operation of leadership within correctional agencies. The author presents a vision and description of such leadership that should be of interest to corrections professionals.

The author notes the importance of leaders in general, referring to their critical role in internal agency management and in the maintenance of good relations with external bodies and individuals. He discusses the various styles of leadership, collapsing them into three broad types: good, passive and bad. Good leaders have the ability to establish a meaningful vision for an organization, and to convince individuals both within and external to the organization of the value of this vision, winning their cooperation in enacting the vision. Passive leaders may possess the vision, but are not terribly effective in winning the agreement and cooperation of others. Bad leaders have neither the vision nor the marketing skill.

He then discusses the importance of good leadership within correctional settings. He asserts that correctional organizations often operate under a traditional bureaucratic model, with an emphasis upon stability, formal organizational structure and processes, and a reluctance to experiment and change. Good correctional leaders have the ability to identify and create opportunities for constructive change within their organizations, and to see these changes through to fruition.

The author proceeds to a discussion of how leaders are created. While noting that effective correctional leaders can be introduced into the organization from outside, he argues that the ideal leader emerges from within the organization. The internal leader possesses the requisite background and experience needed to operate within the complex setting of corrections. He then asserts the importance of cultivating and mentoring potential leaders within corrections organizations.

In closing, the author discusses the importance of connecting leadership to best correctional practices. The good leader marshals the best available correctional research and information to inform and support decisions, policies and programs that become the focus of the leader's efforts and talents.

Melvin Brown, Jr. and Dan Richard Beto. 1999. "Effective Correctional Leadership for the 21st Century." *Corrections Management Quarterly*, 3(1), 47-51.

This essay presents a discussion of characteristics that constitute high performance leadership within corrections organizations. While this piece is clearly subjective, the authors offer some interesting observations about what leadership might mean in corrections organizations in the coming decades.

The authors begin by reviewing recent trends in the American workplace. They point to the rapid change that characterizes much of what happens within work organizations. Leaders and their employees must be willing and able to operate under conditions of uncertainty and ambiguity. Corrections organizations are not immune from this phenomenon of constant change and growth.

The authors then suggest characteristics that can contribute to effective leadership within this dynamic organizational context. First, a leader must be a visionary, capable not only of understanding change, but also of creating and shaping it. Second, the leader must be capable of continual learning, and of encouraging this more broadly within the organization. Third, the leader must be adaptable, particularly under stress. Fourth, the leader must understand the central importance of organizational culture, and be capable of building a culture that contributes to high performance. Finally, the leader must be committed to developing the people within the organization, empowering them to reach their full potential.

The authors conclude by noting the effective correctional leader must also be capable of cultivating effective leadership in others, in order to create an organization that is capable of meeting the challenges that will continue to face the field of corrections.