

# Crime Scene

## Psychology Behind Bars and in Front of the Bench



THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE CRIMINAL  
JUSTICE SECTION OF THE CANADIAN  
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## EDITORS' NOTE

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This is the fourth edition of the *Crime Scene* newsletter under the new editorial team and I can hardly believe we have reached that point. The shoes of the prior team were quite large and there were certainly some growing pains as we moved to a new format and tried to encourage continued submissions to this wonderful resource (if I may so myself!) I have to thank all of you who have continued to contribute to the success of this publication. The recent North American Correctional and Criminal Justice Psychology Conference hosted in Toronto was another example of the excellent treatment providers and researchers we have in this field, many of whom contribute to *Crime Scene*. While this field can certainly be challenging and stressful at times, it leaves many opportunities for collegial discussion in various forms and venues. Keep the contributions coming!

- Ainslie

## VIEW FROM THE TOP, by Mark Olver, Ph.D., Chair

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This past CPA convention in Toronto hosted the second North American Correctional and Criminal Justice Psychology Conference (NACCJPC). As with the first convention, I found myself experiencing a veritable approach-approach conflict making difficult decisions on the many excellent symposia to attend. With over 200 presenting authors (and over 350 contributing authors) from throughout North America and a handful of other countries from around the world, the depth of content in criminal justice and correctional psychology was truly impressive. It was nice to reconnect with friends and colleagues, establish new connections, and to be privy to some of the latest international developments in correctional and criminal justice theory, research, policy, and practice. I would like to extend a sincere thanks to those of you who were able to come and attend (in some cases travelling thousands of kilometers) and/or present to help make this a success. Many thanks are in order to the NACCJPC Chair, Dr. Jeremy Mills, the NACCJPC Steering Committee, Drs. Guy Bourgon, Daryl Kroner, and Bob Morgan, and to the many members of the NACCJPC Marketing Committee and the many volunteers who donated their time, energy, and enthusiasm.

I would also like to take this opportunity to announce and congratulate the many award recipients; first to Dr. Howard Barbaree, the recipient of the Donald Andrews Career Contribution Award for his excellence in sex offender assessment and treatment research and practice, and Dr. Jane Barker, the recipient of the Significant Contribution Award, for her edited and co-authored book *Women and the Criminal Justice System: A Canadian Perspective*. And out of more than 100 student posters presented this year, three prizes each were awarded for the best graduate and undergraduate posters, with congratulations extended to Sophie Dickson and Allannah Casey (tie Graduate Level winner), Maria Tsoukalas (Graduate Level 1<sup>st</sup> Runner-Up), Kathy Keating (Graduate Level 2<sup>nd</sup> Runner-Up), Amanda Woods (Undergraduate Level winner), Rebecca Maitland (Undergraduate Level 1<sup>st</sup> Runner-Up), and Melissa Miele (Undergraduate Level 2<sup>nd</sup> Runner-Up).

So with another successful NACCJPC under our collective belts, I am pleased to announce that the very early stages of planning for NACCJPC-3 are already underway and will return to Ottawa (the site of the first NACCJPC) in 2015. Interested members who would like to volunteer in the planning of this event are welcome to contact me as the NACCJPC-3 organizational committees begin their formation.

This upcoming year will also be my third and final year as Criminal Justice Section Chair, as I anticipate some new administrative responsibilities at my current place of employment that will occupy a substantial portion of my time. I have enjoyed having the privilege serving as your Section Chair during this time period and appreciate the patience and collegiality of my fellow Executive and Section members as I learned the ropes (and heck, still continue to do so!) of this position. I plan to step down and have the Executive formally appoint a new Chair at the Criminal Justice Section Business Meeting at the next convention in Halifax, June 2012. In my capacity as Past Chair, I plan to continue my involvement in our newly developed Task Force for Psychology in Corrections and remain actively involved in the Executive as this position permits. Criminal Justice Section members (or other CPA members) who may be interested in the Chair Position are invited to make their interest known to me or one of the members of our Executive. Thank you for your consideration of this matter and I look forward to the upcoming year working with all of you.

Best regards,

Mark

## **COLUMN: KNOWLEDGE DEVELOPMENT AND TRANSFER, By Joseph Camilleri, Ph.D., Director-at-Large, Web Coordinator**

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**The dark side of forgiveness: The tendency to forgive predicts continued psychological and physical aggression in marriage** (McNulty, 2011). This study uses an impressive four-year longitudinal design to demonstrate that spouses who tend to forgive more often also experienced more physical and psychological aggression. McNulty (2011) discusses the implications these findings have on programs that promote forgiveness in relationships.

**Understanding impulsive aggression: Angry rumination and reduced self-control capacity are mechanisms underlying the provocation-aggression relationship** (Densen, Pederson, Friese, Hahm, & Roberts, 2011). In four studies, the authors found corresponding evidence for the influence of rumination and self-control on aggressive behaviour. Interestingly, they also showed that ingesting a glucose beverage improved inhibitory control, giving some indication that altering a mechanism associated with aggression is possible. They also comment on other possible manipulations that might affect these mechanisms.

**Pathways to women's crime: Differences among women convicted of drug, violence and fraud offenses** (Shechory, Perry, & Addad, 2011). Interesting comparisons were made between these types of offenders on demographic and anti-social characteristics. For example, unlike violent and fraud groups, the drug group appeared to be characterized by chronic delinquency.

**Psychopathic traits from the perspective of self and informant reports: Is there evidence for a lack of insight?** (Miller, Jones, & Lynam, 2011). This study provides some validation that people are capable of rating themselves on psychopathic traits.

**The rejection-rage contingency in borderline personality disorder** (Berenson, Downey, Rafaeli, Colfman, & Paquin, 2011). Appears to be the first test of the hypothesis that borderline personality rage occurs in response to perceived rejection. They found initial support for this hypothesis.

**Premotor functional connectivity predicts impulsivity in juvenile offenders** (Shannon et al., 2011). Using both forensic and nonforensic controls, Shannon and colleagues used fMRI to confirm the strong relationship between impulsivity and antisocial behaviour. Their findings have implications on understanding the etiology of juvenile delinquency.

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## **COLUMN: CANADIAN COMMITTEE OF POLICE PSYCHOLOGISTS (CCOPP) STORIES, by Dorothy Cotton, Ph.D., Director-At-Large, Police Psychology**

Howard Hyde, does that name ring a bell? Let me remind you....Howard Hyde was a man who died on November 22, 2007, at the Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia when his heart stopped. He also had a serious mental illness and he was also tasered. These little bits of information do not really tell much of the story, however. If you are involved with a police service—as an organizational consultant, one who does training in areas related to mental illness, or someone who participates in candidate selection or job assignment...you might want to have a look at the Inquiry Report that was released last winter--available at:  
[http://www.courts.ns.ca/hyde\\_inquiry/hyde\\_inquiry\\_report.pdf](http://www.courts.ns.ca/hyde_inquiry/hyde_inquiry_report.pdf).

Allow me to pique your interest by telling you a little about Mr. Hyde and his interesting, complex and tragic situation. On the surface, he appeared to be yet another person with a mental illness who died following an interaction with police, and in particular, following an encounter with a conducted energy weapon (CEW). But there was a long gap (30-something hours) between Mr. Hyde's initial contact with the police and his death. While it is true that somewhere in there a CEW was involved, it was many hours removed from his death. But these isolated bits of information tell us little about the overall situation, and even less about Mr. Hyde. Once you get past this brief summary, it turns out that the Howard Hyde situation is not only tragic but also informative in a number of ways.

For starters, let me tell you "the story :"

- Mr. Hyde had a long history of mental illness (schizophrenia), and while he was described as a sociable, outgoing and popular man with a variety of interests and talents well, he also was not fond of his medication --and was not fond of the psychiatric system.
- He was also not terribly enamoured with police as he had been apprehended in the past and "tasered," an experience he was traumatized by and very clearly never wanted to repeat.
- On November 21, 2007, his common-law partner called police to report an assault.
- Police attended and arrested him for this assault at about 1 am.
- He was taken to "booking" where he seemed anxious and stressed but was generally cooperative, until he misunderstood a comment from one officer, panicked and tried to escape from the area.
- He struggled with the officers there and as a result was tasered.
- He then became unconscious.
- CPR and mouth to mouth resuscitation were applied and he was revived.
- Paramedics arrived and he was taken to hospital by ambulance.
- He calmed down, was given psychiatric medication and was kept for the rest of the night in the ER.
- The next day police took him to court--he never did see anyone from psychiatry.
- He was taken back to booking, and while he was initially OK, he started getting upset and agitated after a while.
- Later they took him to the courthouse cells.
- He was arraigned later that day but was kept overnight again, now at the Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility in a health segregation cell.
- On the morning of November 22, 2007, he was taken from his cell to be transported to court.
- As he was walking down a long corridor, he became extremely frightened and tried to run away.
- He was resistive and then handcuffed and restrained.
- He was taken to a search cell, struggled, was "proned out,"--and stopped breathing and died.

One of the things that is particularly interesting about Mr. Hyde's story is that there does not appear to be bad guys and good guys. While there may be a number of things that could have been done better or differently, and the cast was certainly large enough to support the presence of any number of potential bad guys, there is no single point in the process or single person he encountered that one can point a finger at as "The Problem."

If you had to identify a single culprit, it would have to be lack of communication.

Con't on page 5

## COLUMN: CCOPP STORIES Con't

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As one pores over this excellent and comprehensive report, one thing that becomes apparent is that in many places along the way, a lot of information got lost. From the time that Mr Hyde's partner phoned 911 until the time he died, it seems that there were at least 50 people who had direct interaction with Mr. Hyde, such as: Police, paramedics, nurses, more police, sheriffs, a crown, correctional officers, another nurse...and the list goes on. There is a frequent refrain in the Inquiry Report that goes something like "...and that piece of information was not passed long," or "so and so did not have access to the information that..." or "no one reported that..."

Mr. Hyde's common-law wife reported things to the 911 dispatch person that never made it to the responding officers. These officers passed along some things to other officers, some of whom explained some things to other officers. Some doctors gave some information to some other doctors that never got passed on. Doctors gave half bits of information to police who passed on some but not all to correctional officers who edited and...on and on. Some people knew that Mr. Hyde had a mental illness, and some did not. Some people knew he was terrified of police, but others did not. Some people knew he was supposed to be taking medication, but was not, and others did not know this. Some people even tried to talk to Mr. Hyde and find out what the story was, but many did not. Some people knew he had been given medication at the ER and that it was wearing off, but most did not. Some people at the ER thought they knew what the role and responsibility of the police in this instance was, but they were wrong and did not either ask or listen to explanations, if the explanations were even offered. Some people assumed that certain things would happen to Mr. Hyde--like a return for a psychiatric assessment--but did not ensure that there was a way for that to happen. Some people chose their words poorly in speaking to Mr. Hyde..and some did not.

There are 80 fine and substantial recommendations at the end of this report. But those of us who are frontline worker bees can't really do much about most of them. (It really is a seminal report and you really ought to read it.) What can we individually learn from this report? We should talk so people listen and understand, we should listen when people talk, and we should ask when we don't know. We should assume we are always missing bits of information and take as a given that there are things we don't know, which just might lead us to find out what we don't know.

As far as I can tell, there were no psychologists involved in Mr. Hyde's last few days. Perhaps it would have made a difference if there had been. Or maybe not. My experience suggests that we are not always the best at communication either. We use jargon, we assume people understand, we keep information to ourselves for "privacy" reasons when it is not necessarily either required or appropriate, we never quite get around to writing that note or making that phone call....

Health care systems and criminal justice systems are complex. There are inevitably large numbers of people involved in every transaction. What do they need to know—and when do they need to know it?

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## COLUMN: FACE TO FACE WITH INTERGENERATIONAL CRIME, by Jean Folsom, Past Chair

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Nothing brings the issue of intergenerational crime to the forefront more than seeing an offender in the morning and then his incarcerated son in the afternoon. Working in a small correctional organization, it is impossible to avoid dealing with offenders who are related through this type of familial bond, whether the second generation offender is a teen or young adult. It can present challenges and opportunities to the correctional psychologist.

Parental incarceration can have a strong, negative impact on the lives of children. The sudden loss of a parent to incarceration can be a very traumatic event for a child. This is especially true when the parent was living in the home and taken away by police in front of the child. The huge emotional loss for a child whose parent is incarcerated is typically compounded by the financial hardship and social stigma faced by the family. The stigma of parental incarceration may lead to internalizing problems in the child such as shame and anger which can result from bullying and teasing (Novero, Loper, &Warre, 2011). The family may have to relocate for the remaining parent to find employment, to be closer to other family supports or to avoid the shame and harassment in their home community. Children whose mothers are incarcerated often experience more disruption to their lives than children of incarcerated fathers because the mother is typically the primary care-giver. These children may be removed from the home to be cared for by grandparents or foster parents. Loss, uncertainty and instability can become the norm for the children with parents in prison.

## COLUMN: Face to Face Con't

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How many children are affected by parental incarceration? In Canada, the majority of male and female offenders are parents (Withers & Folsom, 2007; Eljdupovic, 2008). Extrapolating from data collected at the Millhaven Reception Unit in Ontario, Withers and Folsom (2007) estimated that 357,604 Canadian children are affected by paternal incarceration. This figure represents 4.6% of the total Canadian population who are 19 years of age or younger. The number increases when children whose mothers are incarcerated are added. Such a large number of children means that they are living, going to school, playing sports, etc. in all of our communities. This is not, however, a uniquely Canadian problem. Similar situations exist in other countries as well.

Children of incarcerated parents face stressors beyond the imprisonment of a parent. Other factors associated with a parent's criminal lifestyle such as drug and alcohol abuse and domestic violence occur in some of their homes. Parental incarceration, then, is only one in a series of negative life events that impact the life of the child. It is little wonder that they evidence more problems than other children, including exhibiting more criminal behaviour. Withers and Folsom (2007) estimated that the children of federally sentenced fathers are 2 to 4 times more likely to be in conflict with the law than Canadian children in general. Once in prison, second generation offenders report experiencing more anger and violence and they violate prison rules more frequently (Novero, Loper, & Warre, 2011). For children with parents in prison, it can be quite a challenge to maintain contact with the incarcerated parent. Phone calls and visits may be infrequent and the visiting experience itself may provide little opportunity for activities that children can engage in with their parents. The prison setting and the security procedures required for visits may appear quite daunting to small children. Thus, imprisonment presents serious challenges to the preservation of a parent-child relationship.

The co-incarceration of a parent and child may be a catalyst for the family to become engaged in treatment. Typically, the incarcerated parent worries about his/her child being in prison and does not want the child to continue on a criminal path. It may be possible to engage the parent in interventions, such as parenting skills that could reduce the risk of the child becoming further involved in crime. Imprisonment may be a time when work can be done to improve the relationship between the parent and the child. It is likely that the incarcerated parent has not provided optimum parenting to the child and the child may harbour feelings of anger, abandonment and rejection. This may leave the child open to criminal influences. Therefore, working on the relationship between the parent and the child may alleviate some of the vulnerabilities that the child has to the criminal subculture and ultimately to crime.

Another option may be to examine the list of criminogenic needs of the second-generation offender to determine which ones that the incarcerated parent or the family as a whole may be of assistance in addressing. For example, many of the second generation offenders associate with other individuals who are involved in crime. Having the resource of a parent available to address this issue may be beneficial, especially if the parent were to speak of the personal negative consequences that this behaviour has had on his/her own life. Also, the parent may assist with making plans to involve the child in activities in the community such as sports clubs that would bring him/her into contact with other pro-social peers.

Having two generations of offenders on your caseload at the same time provides an opening to assist the entire family to break the cycle of intergenerational crime. Forensic/correctional psychologists are in a unique position to help the family because of their extensive knowledge of the factors associated with criminal behaviour. In spite of the challenges of working with two generations of offenders, it may well be worth the effort.

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## Consider how you can contribute to Crime Scene

- **Recently defended dissertation or thesis**
  - **Special feature**
    - **Kudos**
  - **Members on the move**
- **Book Review**

## RECENTLY DEFENDED DISSERTATIONS AND THESES

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### **The Effect of Sexual Arousal on Rapists' Implicit and Explicit Attitudes Towards Rape (Master's Thesis)**

By: Chantal A. Hermann

Carleton University, Ottawa, Ontario

Previous research on rapists' cognitions has primarily focused on rape-related constructs, not specifically on attitudes towards rape, and has been limited to explicit cognitions. Furthermore, recent studies have found that sexual arousal changes perceptions of deviant sexual acts and the reported likelihood of being sexually coercive in male undergraduate students (Ariely & Loewenstein, 2006). The influence of sexual arousal on implicit and explicit attitudes toward rape was examined using data collected from 24 rapists and 12 non-sex offenders. Results demonstrated that when sexually aroused rapists' implicitly evaluated rape less negatively but explicitly evaluated rape more negatively than when non-aroused. Sexual arousal had no significant influence on non sex offenders' implicit and explicit attitudes towards rape. The results of this study offer valuable insight about the potential role of sexual arousal and offence supportive attitudes in the commission of sexually aggressive behaviour.

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### **The Development and Initial Evaluation of a World View and Personality-based Short-course Psychotherapeutic Intervention Program for Jailed Alleged Child Rapists (Doctoral Dissertation)**

By: Joey Marie Fabe-Jegonia

Ateneo de Davao University, Davao City, Philippines

This three phased study addresses the need to develop psychotherapeutic interventions for incarcerated alleged perpetrators of child sexual abuse. In Phase 1, 51 male inmates at the Cagayan de Oro City Jail underwent initial evaluations of their demographic characteristics. Personality profiles were determined using the Basic Personality Inventory. From this group, 13 respondents with highest BPI deviation scores underwent further evaluation using the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT), Human Figure Drawing Test (HFDT) and personal interviews to determine their world views in Phase 2. These were then combined with earlier BPI scores to come up with baseline data on world views and personality profiles which formed the basis for the design, development, implementation and evaluation of a short course psychotherapeutic intervention in Phase 3. The intervention had 8 stages, covered 9 sessions and incorporated elements from Classical Adlerian Therapy, Reality Therapy, CBT and RET. Results indicate that the clients' world views tended to have themes related to family, religion, aggression, persecutory ideations, unrealistic thoughts and the constant struggle for survival. The main psychological issues identified were persecutory ideas, denial and unrealism, disorganized thoughts and depression. Post-intervention qualitative evaluations and case analyses indicate that the clients were able to form more adaptive reinterpretations of their pre-intervention worldviews and were able to develop realistic life goals after the therapy. To further validate the applicability of the designed intervention, the use of other tests and replication of the study on other sub-groups of jailed clients as well as the general population was recommended.

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## SPECIAL FEATURE

### **More Fun with Statistics! How to Use Logistic Regression to Predict Criminal Recidivism Risk**

By: Leslie Helmus & R. Karl Hanson

Corrections Research, Public Safety Canada

For more information, contact: [leslie.helmus@ps.gc.ca](mailto:leslie.helmus@ps.gc.ca)

In tandem with the growth of research on offender risk assessment, there has been a general increase in statistical sophistication within psychology. The days of a single null hypothesis significance test have given way to the world of effect sizes, confidence intervals, and meta-analysis. Additionally, our understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of certain effect size metrics has also increased.

In a *Crime Scene* article from 2008, Karl Hanson summarized some of the statistical developments pertaining to the accuracy of risk assessment scales. Specifically, the use of the correlation (technically, a point biserial correlation, given that recidivism is a dichotomous outcome) to examine predictive accuracy has fallen out of favour because it is influenced by variability in both the outcome variable (i.e., the base rate of recidivism), and in the predictor variable.

Con't on page 8

## SPECIAL FEATURE CON'T

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Areas Under the Receiver Operating Characteristic Curve (AUC from ROC) have long been recommended as the ideal effect size for risk assessment scales (Mossman, 1994; Rice & Harris, 2005; Swets, Dawes, & Monahan, 2000), but this metric, though less affected by base rates, is still strongly influenced by variability in the range of risk scores (Humphreys & Swets, 1991). Hanson (2008) suggested odds ratios from logistic regression as a promising metric for examining predictive accuracy, as they appeared substantially less influenced by variability in either the outcome or the predictor.

One important advantage of using logistic regression is that it allows estimation of both relative and absolute risk properties of a risk assessment scale (also referred to as discrimination and calibration, respectively, by Gail & Pfeiffer, 2005). Relative risk provides information about whether high risk offenders are more likely to reoffend relative to lower risk offenders (i.e., comparing recidivists and non-recidivists). Virtually all research on risk assessment has focused on relative predictive accuracy, using statistics such as correlations, AUCs, and Cohen's *d*. Absolute risk, or calibration, refers to the expected probability of recidivism (i.e., the likelihood of recidivism for a particular offender's score). There is surprisingly little research examining calibration. This is concerning given the importance of absolute recidivism estimates for certain contexts, such as civil commitment in the United States (e.g., see Doren, 2002).

We believe that evaluating the accuracy of risk assessment scales should consider both a) the ability of the test to discriminate between recidivists and non-recidivists, and b) the accuracy of absolute recidivism estimates from that scale. Additionally, calculating absolute recidivism estimates for a risk scale should include some consideration of enduring relative risk, given that individuals can change from non-recidivists to recidivists without changing their initial risk scores. Consequently, it is beneficial to use statistical methods that provide separate estimates of the discrimination ability of the scores and the estimated base rates.

In the past few years, researchers have been increasingly using and reporting logistic regression to examine both relative and absolute risk properties of offender risk scales. We have been using logistic regression in most of our recent research, and we are frequently asked what logistic regression is and how to interpret the results.

The purpose of this article is to provide a helpful and practical overview of logistic regression, including some preliminary statistical concepts that are often confused together (e.g., rate ratios versus odds ratios). Minimally, we hope that this article helps readers interpret the results of other papers using logistic regression or reporting odds ratios. Additionally, this article should provide a crash course for those interested in conducting logistic regression analyses to examine the predictive accuracy of risk assessment scales, or to compute recidivism estimates using logistic regression. For additional reading, Hosmer and Lemeshow (2000) have an excellent textbook on logistic regression. Helpful chapters on logistic regression are also available in Fleiss, Levin, and Paik (2003), and Field (2009).

### Probabilities and Odds

Before explaining logistic regression, it is useful to review some key concepts. Assume we have a sample of 100 offenders and 15 of them reoffended. The probability of recidivism ( $p$ ) is the number of recidivists divided by the total number of offenders

$$p = \frac{n_{recid}}{n_{total}} \quad (1.1)$$

In the example above, the probability of recidivism would be .15 (15/100).

The concept of odds is a slightly different way of quantifying recidivism. Instead of dividing the number of recidivists by the total sample size, the denominator is the number of non-recidivists.

$$\text{Odds} = \frac{n_{recid}}{n_{nonrecid}} = \frac{p}{1-p} \quad (1.2)$$



## SPECIAL FEATURE CON'T

The odds can also be expressed as the probability of recidivism divided by the probability of non-recidivism ( $1 - p$ , or sometimes referred to as  $q$ ). Probabilities vary between 0 and 1, whereas odds can vary between 0 and infinity. When the probability of recidivism is .5, the odds of recidivism are 1 (.50/.50). When the probability is less than .5, the odds will vary between 0 and 1. When the probability is greater than .5, the odds will be greater than 1.

In our example, the odds of recidivism would be .176 (15/85, or .15/.85). When base rates are low, the odds of recidivism are similar to the probability. As recidivism rates increase, the two numbers become more different.

### Comparing Groups: Rate Ratios and Odds Ratios

In some cases, it is useful to compare the recidivism rates of two groups. This can be done by computing a ratio using either odds or probabilities. If we use probabilities, it is called a rate ratio, and is calculated as

$$\text{Rate ratio} = \frac{n_{\text{recid}(\text{highrisk})} / n_{\text{total}(\text{highrisk})}}{n_{\text{recid}(\text{lowrisk})} / n_{\text{total}(\text{lowrisk})}} = \frac{P_{\text{highrisk}}}{P_{\text{lowrisk}}} \quad (1.3)$$

For example, assume we have a sample of 100 high-risk offenders (with 20 recidivists) and 100 low-risk offenders (with 10 recidivists). The probability of recidivism is .20 for the high risk group (20/100) and .10 for the low risk group (10/100). The rate ratio is 2.0 (.20/.10), which means that the high risk group is twice as likely to reoffend as the low risk group. For rate ratios, the choice of which group to include in the numerator and which to include in the denominator can be made based on which direction might be most useful to interpret. We could reverse our example, using low risk offenders as the numerator and high risk offenders as the denominator. In that case, the rate ratio would be .5 (.10/.20), which means that low-risk offenders are half as likely to reoffend as high risk offenders.

Odds ratios are calculated in a similar manner, but using a ratio of the odds as opposed to a ratio of the probabilities.

$$\text{Odds ratio} = \frac{n_{\text{recid}(\text{highrisk})} / n_{\text{nonrecid}(\text{highrisk})}}{n_{\text{recid}(\text{lowrisk})} / n_{\text{nonrecid}(\text{lowrisk})}} = \frac{\text{Odds}_{\text{highrisk}}}{\text{Odds}_{\text{lowrisk}}} \quad (1.4)$$

Using our example above, the odds of recidivism in the high risk group are .250 (.20/.80) and the odds of recidivism in the low risk group are .111 (.10/.90). The odds ratio is 2.252 (.250/.111). Unfortunately, odds ratios are less intuitive to interpret than rate ratios. The odds ratio does not mean that the high risk group is 2.25 times as likely to reoffend; rather, it means that the odds of recidivism for the high risk group is 2.25 times higher than the odds of recidivism in the low risk group.

One of the most common mistakes in logistic regression is to interpret odds ratios the same way as a rate ratio. I have heard people argue that they are so similar that it does not matter. We disagree. When recidivism rates are small, they can be quite similar, but in many situations, the difference between an odds ratio and a rate ratio can be large. If comparing a group with a 50% recidivism rate to a group with a 25% recidivism rate, Group A clearly has twice the recidivism rate of Group B (.50/.25 = 2). However, the odds ratio for this example is 3 (Group A odds = .50/.50 = 1; Group B odds = .25/.75 = .333; odds ratio = 1/.333 = 3). Saying that a group with a 50% recidivism rate has 3 times the recidivism rate of a group with a 25% recidivism rate is clearly incorrect and misleading.

Odds ratios are often calculated from 2 x 2 tables. A difficulty arises when one of the groups has no recidivists. Following the advice of Fleiss (1994), 0.5 can be added to each group to allow the calculation of odds ratios in the case of empty cells. For large sample sizes, the constant makes little difference. Worth noting, however, is that SPSS does not add a constant when calculating odds ratios in logistic regression. This can create complications when trying to compare odds ratios from SPSS to hand-calculated odds ratios adding a constant to each cell.

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### Going from odds to logits and log odds ratios

The problem with using odds and odds ratios in statistical analyses is that their variance is not symmetrical. For odds, recall that when the recidivism probability is less than .5, the odds can vary between 0 and 1, whereas the odds for recidivism probabilities over .5 can vary between 1 and infinity. Similarly for odds ratios, if the group in the numerator has a lower recidivism rate than the group in the denominator, the odds ratio will be somewhere between 0 and 1. If the recidivism rate is higher for the group in the numerator, the odds ratio can vary between 1 and infinity.

To remedy this problem, odds and odds ratios can be transformed to their natural logarithm (ln; also referred to as the logarithm to the base e), called a log transformation. The natural logarithm of a number ( $x$ ) is the power to which  $e$  would have to be raised to equal  $x$ , where  $e$  is an irrational constant approximately equal to 2.71828. When an odds has been transformed to its natural logarithm (ln), it is called a logit.

$$\text{LOGIT} = \ln \frac{p}{1-p} \quad (1.5)$$

For example, in a sample of 100 offenders with 15 recidivists, the odds of recidivism is .176 (.15/.85), and the logit is -1.737 (ln(.176)). In a sample of 100 offenders with 85 recidivists, the odds of recidivism is 5.667 (.85/.15), and the logit is 1.735 (ln(5.667)).

To transform a logit into a probability, either of the following formula can be used:

$$p = \frac{e^{\text{LOGIT}}}{1 + e^{\text{LOGIT}}} \quad \text{or, equivalently, } p = \frac{1}{1 + e^{-\text{LOGIT}}} \quad (1.6a \ \& \ 1.6b)$$

For the logit of -1.737, applying the formula gives a recidivism probability of .150 (.176/1.176), which is what we started with in the example.

Because the natural logarithm of 1 is 0, log odds (logits) and log odds ratios are centered on 0 as opposed to 1. Their variance is therefore symmetrical because the logged values can vary to infinity in either the positive or negative direction. Recall from the odds ratio example above that if we used the high risk group as the numerator, the odds ratio was 2. If we used the low risk group as the numerator, the odds ratio was .5. Although these are the same odds ratios but in different directions, the values are not symmetrical (in other words, the distance from these values to 1, where odds ratios are centered, is different). However, transformed to log odds ratios, the first odds ratio (2) is equivalent to a log odds ratio of .693 (ln(2)), whereas the second odds ratio (.5) is equivalent to a log odds ratio of -.693. As you can see, these two log odds ratios are now symmetrical (equal distance to 0, the center value).

### Logistic regression

Logistic regression is a form of regression in which the dichotomous dependent variable (recidivism) is transformed into log odds (Hosmer & Lemeshow, 2000). In order for the estimated recidivism rates to apply to any specific follow-up period, the length of the follow-up period must be the same for all offenders (i.e., fixed follow-up periods must be used). With one predictor variable (i.e., the score on a risk scale), logistic regression estimates two regression coefficients ( $B_0$  and  $B_1$ ).  $B_1$  (often referred to as a slope) is an estimate of predictive accuracy, or the average change in recidivism rates for adjacent scores. In other words,  $B_1$  estimates the average increase in recidivism (expressed as a log odds ratio) associated with each one-unit increase in the risk scale.  $B_0$  (often referred to as an intercept) is a measure of the recidivism base rate for the sample (technically, the log odds of the predicted recidivism rate for offenders with a risk score of zero). It is important to note that the  $B_0$  is a base rate estimate for scores of zero. Re-centering the risk scale can produce  $B_0$ s that examine base rates for any score, although for computing recidivism estimates, you will get the same values and confidence intervals no matter where the risk scale is centred.

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### Computing recidivism estimates

In regression, the predicted value on a dependent variable (recidivism) for a given score on the independent variable (the risk scale) is obtained by adding the intercept (the predicted value for a score of 0) to the product of the slope and the independent variable (formula is below).

$$y = B_0 + x(B_1) \quad (1.7)$$

where  $y$  is the predicted recidivism rate (as a logit) and  $x$  is the risk score for which you are trying to predict the recidivism rate.

For example, assume the  $B_0$  for a risk scale is -2.800 and the  $B_1$  is 0.320. This means that the predicted recidivism rate for a score of 0 is -2.800 (in logit units, or 5.73%), with each one-unit increase in risk score corresponding to an increase in recidivism of .320 of a logit. The predicted recidivism rate (as a logit) for a risk score of 3 would be calculated using formula 1.7

$$\begin{aligned} y_{(3)} &= B_0 + x(B_1) \\ &= -2.800 + 3(0.320) \\ &= -1.840 \end{aligned}$$

So the predicted recidivism rate (logit) for a risk score of 3 is -1.840. Using formula 1.6a to transform the logit into a probability, we find that the predicted probability of recidivism is .137 (.159/1+.159), or 13.7%.

If you do logistic regression analyses in SPSS, you can display the predicted recidivism rates for each score presented as a probability. Unfortunately, however, SPSS does not provide confidence intervals for the predicted probabilities (they are available in SAS and many other statistical programs).

### Computing the confidence intervals

To compute the standard error for the estimated recidivism rates (as logits), you will need the standard error of the  $B_0$  (referred to as  $SE_{B_0}$ ), the standard error of the  $B_1$  (referred to as  $SE_{B_1}$ ), and the correlation of the estimates ( $r$ ) derived from the logistic regression analyses. The correlation of estimates is an estimate of the relationship between  $B_0$  and  $B_1$ . It is not automatically provided in SPSS; you will have to select it from the options menu.

The standard error for a statistic derived from combining two correlated components (e.g., the  $B_0$  and the  $B_1$ ) typically involves summing the variances of both components, plus their covariance. The specific formula for the standard error of the logit (from Hosmer & Lemeshow, 2000) is

$$SE_{logit} = \sqrt{(SE_{B_0})^2 + 2 \cdot x \cdot r \cdot SE_{B_0} \cdot SE_{B_1} + x^2 (SE_{B_1})^2} \quad (1.8)$$

Note that  $x$  refers the risk score for which we are predicting recidivism, so the standard error must be calculated separately for each score.

From the standard error, confidence intervals for the estimated recidivism rates (as logits) for each score can be obtained. The confidence intervals are

$$95\% \text{ CI} = \text{logit} \pm (1.96 \cdot SE_{logit}) \quad (1.9)$$

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Once you have the logits for the estimated recidivism rates and the confidence intervals, you can transform them into probabilities using formula 1.6a, and into percentages by multiplying the probability by 100.

We will continue with the example we used to estimate the recidivism rate for a risk score of 3. The obtained logit for a score of 3 was -1.840. Assume the  $SE_{B0} = .085$ ,  $SE_{B1} = .018$ , and the correlation of estimates is  $-.877$ . Applying formula 1.8, the standard error of our estimated recidivism rate would be

$$\begin{aligned}
 SE_{logit} &= \sqrt{(SE_{B0})^2 + 2 \cdot x \cdot r \cdot SE_{B0} \cdot SE_{B1} + x^2 (SE_{B1})^2} \\
 &= \sqrt{.007225 - .008051 + .002916} \\
 &= \sqrt{.00209} \\
 &= .0457
 \end{aligned}$$

Using formula 1.9, the 95% confidence interval around our logit would be

$$\begin{aligned}
 &-1.840 \pm (1.96 \cdot (SE_{logit})) \\
 &= -1.840 \pm (1.96 \cdot .0457) \\
 &= -1.840 \pm .0896
 \end{aligned}$$

The 95% confidence interval would therefore range from -1.930 (-1.840 - .0896) to -1.750 (-1.840 + .0896)

Using formula 1.6a, we can transform the logit and the confidence interval into estimated recidivism rates. The predicted recidivism probability for a risk score of 3 in this example would therefore be .137 (95% CI of .127 to .148).

Readers should note that the confidence intervals for the predicted values are more strongly influenced by the overall sample size than by the measure's ability to discriminate recidivists from nonrecidivists. In this example, the standard errors were estimated using large sample sizes (>5,000); in more typical recidivism studies, the confidence interval would be substantially wider.

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## SPECIAL FEATURE

### The Public Wants Answers: Responding to Increased Homicide Rates

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An increase in homicide rates in Edmonton, Alberta<sup>1</sup> has left both the authorities and the general public scrambling for answers ("Edmonton murder rate 'horrifying': Critic", 2011). Is crime on the rise? Is our community still safe? This is not the first time that elevated homicide rates in a Canadian city have led to heightened scrutiny by the public and the media (e.g., "Winnipeg is Canada's murder capital", 2008). A typical response to media reports of increasing crime rates is to search for reasons and causes, in an attempt to set our minds at ease. Through previous research, many single factor explanations for increased homicide rates have been highlighted. However, a growing consensus in the literature reveals that homicide is determined by multiple factors, and that prevention efforts targeting single factors rarely have an impact on overall homicide rates (McCall, Parker, & MacDonald, 2008). Many variables that may have minimal effects independently may gain strength and relevance when combined with other variables.

The purpose of this paper is to discuss the importance of four correlates that have been linked to homicide, namely, population influx, alcohol consumption, firearms usage, and the victim-offender relationship. These factors can be applied to many North American cities. As a point of reference throughout this paper, particular attention will be given to the city of Edmonton or more regionally, Alberta. The homicide rate in the first half of 2011 makes Edmonton a relevant and current point of reference, as some are concerned that this may project an overall number of homicides that far exceeds that of previous years. It may prove impossible to find causal factors for increases in homicide rates; however, identifying and highlighting associated factors may improve our understanding and contribute to the control and prevention of violence and homicide in the future.

#### **Population Influx**

Population influx and increases in particular age demographics have a significant effect on the behaviour and attitudes of any given population. Widely known in criminological studies is the association between population size and crime (Nolan, 2004; Stafford & Gibbs, 1980). Specific to homicide rates, McCall et al. (2008) conducted a longitudinal study and found that high population turnover corresponds with elevated homicide rates. They purported that changes in a particular demographic of the population, namely young adults between the ages of 15 to 24 years, appears to be closely related to increases in homicide rates. The general forensic literature has shown that young males have long been considered the group most prone to committing violent crimes, including homicide (Quinsey, Harris, Rice, & Cormier, 2006). To illustrate, Fox and Piquero (2003) note that homicide rates rose sharply in the 1960s and 1970s, just as the baby-boomer generation reached late adolescence and early adulthood and it was suggested that the decrease in homicide rates in the early 1980s was likely due to the baby-boom cohort maturing into adulthood.

Although information about specific changes in the demographic make-up of Edmonton is unavailable, a remarkable change can be seen in the migratory patterns for the province of Alberta. From 2005 to 2009, Alberta has had a massive influx of young adults compared to other Canadian provinces (Figure 1; Statistics Canada, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010). As the number of members in the youthful population continues to increase by the thousands<sup>2</sup>, it is likely that this significant increase plays an important role in facilitating criminal activity in the community. An association between Edmonton's homicides and the considerable increase of youthful adults migrating into Alberta is purely speculative, but should be considered, keeping in mind our knowledge that unemployment and a lack of involvement in organized leisure activities is associated with risk for greater criminal activity (Andrews & Bonta, 2003). It is unlikely that there have been increased resources to compensate for this net migration. Hence, greater allocation of social and employment resources should be considered in order to promote pro-social activities and produce gainful employment for those in this particular age demographic. Given the findings discussed thus far, it is apparent that the demographic constitution of a population must be taken into account when attempting to understand its behaviours and actions.

<sup>1</sup>At the time of writing in July 2011, there were 30 reported homicides in the city of Edmonton. In the previous six years, reported homicides included 39 in 2005, 36 in 2006, 33 in 2007, 35 in 2008, and 27 in 2009 and 2010.

<sup>2</sup>Note that Figure 1 shows the net change in demographic population per province; hence, the values account for both the movement of individuals leaving and entering the province.

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### **Alcohol Consumption**

The association between alcohol consumption and criminal violence is cited throughout the empirical literature (e.g., Cookson, 1992). When examining homicide specifically, alcohol use has been found to have a significant positive correlation with adult homicide rates. For example, Rosnow (2004) has compared alcohol consumption to adult homicide rates in six Canadian regions from 1950 to 1999 (Maritimes, Quebec, Ontario, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and BC) and found that total alcohol sales in the provinces of Ontario and Alberta both had positive and statistically significant correlations with the total homicide rates in those regions. Given these findings, it is apparent that alcohol consumption is a key correlate of homicide in certain regions and not in others, such as was the case in Canada. The main point to reinforce is that alcohol consumption and homicide rates for the specific region under consideration be examined when attempting to uncover correlates of homicide. Pridemore and Eckhardt (2008) asserted that criminal violence involving alcohol is likely to occur at predictable times, when compared to offences that do not involve alcohol. They found that alcohol-related homicides most often occur on weekends and during the late-night or very early morning hours. Moreover, alcohol-related homicides usually arise from arguments or disputes with loved ones and acquaintances. This finding contradicts Wells and Graham's (2003) findings, which indicate alcohol-related violence is more likely to occur among strangers.

Generally, most provinces have seen increases in their gross liquor sales (e.g., BC Liquor Distribution Branch, 2010; Liquor Control Board of Ontario, 2010). When comparing the percentage increases over the past four to five years, Alberta has also seen an increase in their gross revenue (Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission, 2010). Of interest and relevance to Alberta specifically is that there has been a particularly steady increase in liquor sales at retail outlets rather than at hotels, bars, lounges, and concert venues. This suggests that people are increasingly using alcohol at home or their own private venues. Given these findings, we must not exclusively view public establishments as the root cause for alcohol-related issues, but must also consider alcohol consumed in the home and in private venues.

The Alberta Liquor and Gaming Commission have implemented significant changes recently in an attempt to control liquor-related issues within the province. Such changes include limiting *happy hour* to a reasonable time, instituting minimum pricing for alcohol, limiting the amount of drinks available per patron and certifying alcohol servers. It must be noted that the implementation of these regulations is not sufficient in itself. Continued enforcement of these laws is crucial to their success. Institutions responsible for selling alcohol must take ownership of their responsibilities to their patrons and the general public. Because alcohol consumption has a significant influence on societal behaviour, greater attention to preventative measures and enforcement of liquor control should be made.

### **Firearms**

Unlike population influx and the use of alcohol, use of firearms has a direct relationship with crime and homicide. The large discrepancy in the crime rates between Canada and the United States is often attributed to the legal use of firearms and greater firearm availability in some American states (Ouimet, 1999). A body of research has focused on the association between homicides and the use of firearms. Evidence linking firearm access and ownership to homicide is challenging to address, as it is extremely difficult to monitor and control firearm possession and access. Miller, Hemenway, and Azrael (2007) examined the relationship between firearm ownership and homicide victimization across the 50 U.S. states, and found that states with higher rates of household firearm ownership had significantly higher homicide victimization rates.

Gun control has been proposed as an important societal response to firearm-related homicides. In 1991, Bill C-17 was implemented in Canada in an attempt to ensure that the screening process for accessing guns was more restrictive (Bridges, 2004). Bridges (2004) examined the use of firearms for suicide and homicide prior to and after the passing of Bill C-17, and found the implementation of Bill C-17 to be associated with decreased rates of suicide and homicide. A series of studies by Leenaars and Lester (2001) revealed that the implementation of Bill C-51 (Canada's Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1977), which restricted some types of firearms and required individuals to obtain certification, also had an impact on reducing homicides. Despite the body of evidence that seems to support the effectiveness of firearm control laws, one cannot credit firearm laws entirely with reductions in homicide rates, as there appears to be a trend of decreasing homicide rates since the mid-1970s. Further research would be required to determine how much influence these legislations actually had.

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In Canada, more than half of the homicides that occurred in 2009 involved either knives or firearms (Statistics Canada, 2010). As for the specific methods employed in these homicides, 30% involved firearms, 36% involved stabbings, 20% involved beatings, and 14% comprised strangulation, suffocation, or other means not noted in the data. Of all firearms recovered in the past five years, 31% were registered, whereas 69% were not. Of the firearms for which ownership could be determined, 49% percent were owned by the accused, and 51% were owned by either the victim, or a third party. When one examines the deaths by firearms across provinces in 2007, a visible trend suggests that Alberta has more deaths by firearms, whether it be accidental discharge, suicide, homicide, or discharge with undetermined intentions (Statistics Canada, n.d.). For example, rates of deaths per 100,000 is 524 for Alberta, 408 for Saskatchewan, and less than 400 for B.C., Manitoba, Ontario, and Quebec. Although these values do not provide confirmatory evidence that firearms are necessarily the cause for homicides, specifically, it does suggest that deaths involving firearms is a slightly greater concern in some provinces and this may be some cause to raise alarm.

### **Victim-Offender Relationship**

Victim and offender relationship is regularly raised as an important variable to consider in homicide cases. In Canada, of the homicides solved in 2009, 39% of the victims were killed by an acquaintance, 33.6% by a family member, 9.3% by someone known to them through criminal activity, and 18.1% by a stranger (Statistics Canada, 2010). A study conducted in Denmark found that 51% of the 166 victims murdered between 1983 and 2007 were either currently or previously in a relationship with the perpetrator (Leth, 2009), and an analysis of 3901 homicide convictions in England and Wales revealed that 31% of convicted homicide perpetrators killed a family member or spouse (Rodway et al., 2009).

Demographic characteristics and the nature of the intimate relationships between the perpetrator and victim have also been closely examined. A greater number of women are killed by their estranged spouses, than by their current partner. There is also an increased risk of homicide for victims in the age range of 15 to 24 years (Statistics Canada, 2009). Moreover, the method of violence has also been shown to have some association with the offender-victim relationship. Rodway et al. (2009) found that an offender committing an offence against a stranger was more likely to use violent means, such as stabbing or shooting, and when offences occur against a family member, it is often over minor disagreements. Others have reported that, more often than not, homicides occur within the privacy of the home (Davis, 2010; Decker, 1993; Juodis, Woodworth, Porter, & Ten Brinke, 2009).

In Alberta, there has been increased attention and an increased amount of resources dedicated to the prevention of family violence, as shown by the Alberta government committing \$32 million to the cause. Various reports have indicated that women in Alberta experience the second highest rates of domestic violence across the country (with Saskatchewan being the highest; Table 2.2; Statistics Canada, 2009), and the second highest spousal homicide-suicide rates in the country (with Northwest Territories/Nunavut-combined being the highest; Figure 4.4; Statistics Canada, 2005). Furthermore, Alberta has the highest stalking rates in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2005). Hence, the increased attention to prevention of family violence in Alberta is certainly not without justification.

### **Other Relevant Factors**

The factors explored in this paper are certainly not exhaustive. Certain environmental and economic characteristics of communities, such as poverty, availability of social resources and neighbourhood organizations, may lead to an increase in criminal activity (McCall et al., 2010). The presence of gang-related activity as a result of ethnic or economic segregation may also be a contributing factor to homicide rates and violence in general (McCall et al., 2010). In light of these variables, it becomes critical that there be greater availability of entry-level positions and access to skills-based training since these are necessary building blocks for young adults and first-time offenders as they attempt to integrate into the community at large. Furthermore, community involvement, through participation in neighbourhood watch programs, has been shown to be effective at reducing crime in the past (e.g., Yarwood & Edwards, 1995). Hence, it is the social duty of all citizens to report instances of crime or violence to the authorities. General awareness and vigilance by community members would likely free up valuable law enforcement resources.

### **Conclusion**

The main purposes of this paper were to identify certain correlates that have been linked to homicide rates and to emphasize the necessity of community awareness and involvement in the fight against crime and homicide. Attitude change is most likely to occur only *after* individuals realize that the issue in question has implications for themselves and others, and that their actions have the capacity to bring about change (Stern, Kalof, Dietz, & Guagnano, 1995).

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Focus should be directed toward educating the public in regards to the influence their actions can have on crime in their communities. As an example, the global response to environmental concerns, or "going green" to conserve energy and reduce waste has become commonplace. Behaviours contrary to "green" practices are now often shunned. However, these widely accepted practices took place only *after* we could no longer ignore the detrimental effects our behaviour had on our environment and we consciously acknowledged the consequences of our actions. This shift in environmental awareness was made possible by our continued commitment to the issue and a willingness to change certain problematic aspects of our everyday lives. A similar attitude must be taken in regards to crime and homicide in our communities. Once attitude change is achieved, it is important to remain consistent and avoid a return to our complacent ways.

The lessons to be learned are that we must increase our focus on prevention and increase our awareness of correlates of homicide that include population influx, alcohol consumption, firearm ownership, victim-offender relationships and also relevant community characteristics. We must adopt a sense of ownership toward our community and the issues present within it. Complacency and diffusion of responsibility must be cast aside if we are to effectively decrease crime in our communities. As research and clinical psychologists, it can be argued that it is our duty to relay our findings and expertise to community members, law enforcement officials and policy makers. Relevant information may sometimes be constrained within the world of academia, and is not always made readily available to these groups.

The findings discussed in this paper are by no means new information to many individuals involved in crime prevention efforts. The intended goal was to highlight these contributing factors and bring attention to the fact that they need to be tackled simultaneously, if we hope to have a meaningful impact on decreasing homicide rates.

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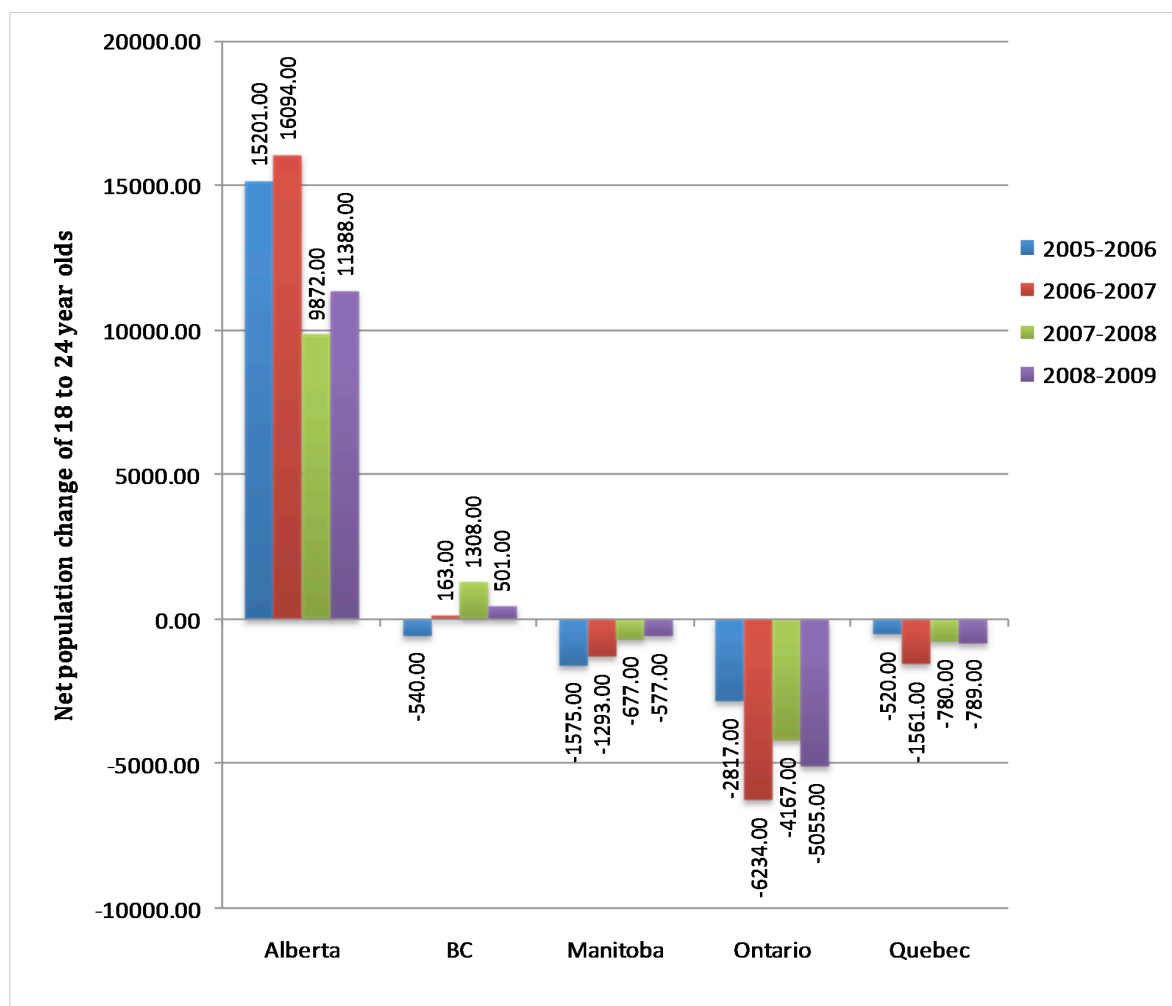
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**Figure 1.**

Net population changes in 18- to 24-year-olds (accounts for individuals who have left and those who have entered each province).

## SPECIAL FEATURE

### Offenders as fathers: Building capacity for fathering. Observations from a pilot program on fathering at OCI.

By: Smita Vir Tyagi<sup>1</sup> & Maggie Clarke<sup>2</sup>

#### *Introduction and rationale for developing a fathering program*

This article reports on our experience of running a fathering program for men at the Ontario Correctional Institute (OCI), a 220 bed, medium security provincial prison for adult male offenders in Brampton, Ontario. The program came about as a result of an awareness that many offenders come from backgrounds of childhood victimization and a number of them sadly go on to perpetrate the cycle of violence that they themselves have endured. Research and writing in this area supports this observation.

#### *Prevalence of victimization in male offender populations*

In offender populations, childhood victimization rates range from 40% (Fondacaro, Holt, & Powell, 1999) to 59% (Johnson et al., 2006) or higher. Weeks and Widom (1998) found that 68% of offenders reported physical abuse, sexual abuse or neglect before the age of 12. Stirpe and Stermac (2003) found that 60% of sexual offenders against children reported childhood sexual abuse and 91% reported physical abuse as children. Blanchette, Robinson, Alksnis, and Serin (1997) found that 68% of family violence offenders had witnessed or experienced violence in their family of origin and 47% had been physically abused themselves. Although the focus of this paper is males, rates of victimization in the female offender population are also extremely high (Browne, Miller, & Maguin, 1999; Owen & Bloom, 1995; Tyagi 2006); significantly higher than those found in clinical and community populations (Wyatt, Burns, Loeb, Solis, Carmona, & Romero, 1999; Vogeltanz et al., 1999).

#### *Relationship between early victimization and criminal offending*

Prospective research investigations have repeatedly demonstrated a strong link between childhood victimization and adult violence (Maxfield & Widom, 1996; Smith & Thornberry, 1995; Stouthamer-Loeber, Loeber, Homish, & Wei, 2001) supporting Widom's (1989) 'violence begets violence' hypothesis. Widom (1995), in one of the few notable prospective studies in the field, found that individuals who had experienced childhood abuse were significantly more likely to be arrested for criminal activity in adulthood. She found a strong correlation between childhood abuse and neglect and, drug related offences and sex crimes later in life. She also noted that among children who had been sexually abused, the odds were three and a half times higher for being arrested for prostitution. Re-analyzing Widom's (1989) longitudinal data, Grogan-Taylor and Otis (2003) reported that neglect, more than any other type of maltreatment, was a significant predictor of arrests for criminal behaviour in adulthood. Messina and Grella (2006) found similar results among women, with women who experienced five or more childhood traumatic events reporting the earliest involvement in drugs and crime (i.e., age at first arrest for drug-related crimes, property crimes, violent crimes, and sex related crimes).

Amongst violent offenders, Alksnis and Robinson (1995) found that those who had been exposed to any kind of violence in childhood were more likely to assault partners, children and non-family members as adults. As well, Raskin and Widom (2003) found that children who experienced neglect and abuse perpetrated intimate partner violence at higher rates than those who had not. Similarly, Dutton and Hart (1994) found that any type of childhood violence not only increased the risk of all types of violent offending, but those who had suffered childhood victimization were three times more likely than their non-abused counterparts to commit violence in adulthood.

#### *Rationale for a fathering program*

Research and clinical observations show that the impact of childhood victimization on personality development, deviancy, criminal behaviour, maladjustment (and recidivism) has deleterious consequences in offender populations.

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In correctional populations we have also seen that childhood maltreatment often accompanies severe and intractable deprivation including poverty, hunger, poor housing, substance use and parental unemployment. As such, it is of little surprise that offenders who have undergone these experiences frequently have little familiarity with healthy parenting, and in turn, subject children in their care to neglect, parental absenteeism, violence and abuse. Thus, for us there was little doubt that interrupting the cycle of victimization constituted a worthy and necessary goal of treatment.

While many treatment programs (e.g. domestic violence, sexual offending and substance abuse) often include sessions on the impact of adult perpetrated childhood maltreatment, the focus is usually very narrow in scope and discussed only briefly. A program specifically related to fathering would go well beyond these limitations and actually teach men effective parenting strategies which they could use in all aspects of their lives (e.g. healthy relationships, prosocial attitudes, etc.). Moreover, experience has shown that a number of offenders who have child-related court or CAS orders are often hard pressed to find community services to help them with parenting skills. Thus, many of these men would benefit from an in-custody program.

Lastly, a needs assessment at OCI found that 83% offenders had expressed an interest in taking a fathering program and more than half (56%) had said that they were going to be involved in a fathering role with biological as well as non-biological children immediately upon release (Tyagi, 2007). Some of the areas identified by offenders as topics of learning included: parenting skills, child development, skills in building (or re-building) better relationship with their estranged children, improve communication with their children, as well as ways to stop the cycle of unhealthy lifestyles and violence being passed on to their children (Tyagi, 2007). In the same study 22% of offenders indicated that they had current CAS involvement (or other legal conditions in their lives) and would be required to demonstrate behaviour that would convince the authorities that they would not be a risk to their children upon release.

Although, it could be argued that offenders' motivations to attend such a program are questionable because of secondary gain (e.g., men have to show CAS or their partner that they have changed, it looks good on their parole application etc.), this is no different than offenders who apply to participate in any other treatment program. It is agreed that offender motivations for attending treatment programs may be wide-ranging even suspect. However, there is a plethora of research in the correctional literature (Bonta & Andrews, 2007; Bourgon & Armstrong, 2005) which convincingly demonstrates that offenders who participate and complete programs are shown to make beneficial life changes and re-offend at lower rates than those who do not. As clinicians, we also see in our practice that even when motivations are questionable, offenders still learn, they learn in spite of themselves! The need to break the cycle of violence, as well as the interest and demands of the men themselves, led to the implementation of this fathering program.

### ***What program did we run?***

'Caring Dads' is a group program that helps fathers take responsibility for their use of unhealthy or abusive parenting strategies. In this program, men learn about child-centred parenting, learn to recognize and prioritize children's needs based on their developmental stage, develop an awareness of the impact of child maltreatment and domestic violence on children, and learn ways in which they can interrupt the cycle of abuse. Fathers learn to develop concrete problem solving skills for improving their relationships with their children, their children's mothers, and/or their children's caregivers (Scott & Crooks, 2004). The program consists of 17 group sessions and homework assignments. We ran the program twice weekly with sessions lasting 2.5 hours per session for a total of 14 sessions. We eliminated the first 3 motivational enhancement sessions as our client group was already quite motivated and eager to participate in the program.

The 'Caring Dads' program was chosen because it is an evidence-based program that has shown promising results in promoting change amongst male perpetrators of domestic abuse (Scott & Crooks, 2007; Scott & Lishak, 2011). Although 'Caring Dads' was primarily designed for men who have been abusive to partners and/or their children, its target group was most similar to our client group in that offenders have directly or indirectly perpetrated childhood maltreatment through neglect, being absent fathers, being abusive to children's mothers/caregivers, or exposing children to abusive or violent behaviours. The manualized program also covered content that was relevant to our client population and was graciously offered to us at no cost by the developers of the program.

### ***Where was the program run? Who ran the program?***

The program was run at OCI in Brampton, Ontario which is built on the principles of therapeutic milieu. It has 6 living units with dorm style living. Each unit has a social worker, affiliated psychologist and correctional officers who work as case managers.

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Offenders participate in different types of clinical and volunteer run programs during the day and are permitted to have open access visits with children and families. The program was co-facilitated by Dr. Smita Tyagi a staff psychologist at OCI, and Ms. Maggie Clarke, a doctoral practicum student at the University of Toronto.

### ***What inclusion criteria were used? Who took part in the program and how many completed it?***

As soon as the program was announced, we received a large number of requests, from offenders directly as well as social workers on the units. We would have liked to offer the program to everyone interested but it was necessary to short-list participants because we only had one group. Our short list criteria included but was not limited to the following: time left in sentence to complete program; functional literacy in spoken and written English, borderline or higher on intellectual functioning and information from unit staff indicating there were no evident barriers to group participation. Priority was given to men who were going to be involved in an active parenting role upon release. All other concerns were dealt with on a case by case basis. Questions were asked about the inclusion of sex offenders in the program, especially those that had child victims. Our position was that most offenders regardless of type of crime (and victims) were going to be involved in some kind of parenting role, either direct or indirect with children upon release. It was our belief that even if they did not have access to children at this time, they could potentially have access at some point, and would benefit from this kind of education and awareness. Hence, it was our decision to include them in the program.

A total of 14 men attended the program and 12 completed the program in its entirety. Three individuals completed only 9-10 sessions as they left OCI prior to their discharge date for reasons not connected to the program. Ten participants completed the evaluation form. Participants' index offences included property offences (6), Drugs or alcohol related offences (2), Sexual offences against minors (3), against adults (1), Domestic violence (1) and Accessory to Murder (1). At least 3/14 had prior domestic violence offences on their record and at least 10/14 reported serious problems with drugs or alcohol. Thirteen of 14 participants reported a history of childhood victimization which ranged from physical violence, neglect, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and witnessing violence. Ten of 14 participants reported that children had witnessed or been subject to childhood maltreatment (neglect, emotional or physical abuse, verbal abuse, being absentee fathers, etc.) when they were in a fathering role towards them. Their children's ages ranged from 16 months to 18 years and 9 of 14 men reported CAS involvement prior to coming into custody.

### ***What did we do?***

As facilitators, we made a conscious attempt to balance three things (1) address key parenting issues that have been identified in the literature as being relevant for offenders (2) address some of the needs identified in the needs assessment and (3) address unique problems (related to children) brought up by participants in the program. The selection of the program and its content addressed the first two needs. In delivering the program, we built a problem-solving and skill building component into each session which seemed to address the third need. Our goal was to help men develop pro-social parenting skills, change cognitions and beliefs around parenting, develop self-monitoring skills in relation to parenting choices, and rehearse healthy parenting responses. The sessions covered topics ranging from child centred parenting and 'being a great dad' to boundary setting, discipline, child development, impact of childhood maltreatment and ways to stop the cycle of abuse.

As facilitators, we also wanted to ensure that we delivered the program in a way that was based on sound pedagogical principles of adult learning. So we consciously included strategies such as real-life examples and metaphors relevant to participants, Socratic questioning, problem-solving, role-plays, art, self disclosure, small group work (practice exercises in triads), practice exercises on the unit, as well as didactic education. As facilitators, we found the group was attentive, participatory, engaged and remembered what they had learned as the group progressed. Below is an example of an art project where participants presented their interpretation of their family situations.

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Notice the placement of the children in this home. Two children from a current partner are huddled together with their mother while an older child from another partner is by herself peering from a window above, isolated and angry. For this individual who has a history of aggression and substance, use the challenge was integrating his older child into his new family and, using healthy parenting with all three children.

### What did the participants say?

At the end of the program, a confidential and anonymous evaluation form was completed by participants. Men were asked to rate the program on a number of criteria using a Likert scale of 1 to 5 (*strongly agree* to *strongly disagree*), as well as provide feedback in an open-ended question format. Below is a sample of participant comments when asked 'What did you learn from taking part in this program?'

- I learned what it takes to be a great Dad and I will use it also it was very helpful.
- I learned a lot. I learned how to discipline my child and that the punishment must be age appropriate.
- How I've really needed to change the way I raise my children. I didn't realize some of my errors that I can change very easily if I just stop and think is this good for me or my child (child centred).
- To be a better listener; To be a child centred dad; To be respectful to my child's mother and caregiver; That all the ideas and concepts that were presented to us I can apply to all aspects of my life.
- I had a lot to learn about being a Great Dad. One step at a time I'm on my way.
- I have to be respectful through my kid's mom and listen to what they have to say.
- I am more tuned to what my kids are saying. I learned to put my kids first.

While client satisfaction is only one of many dimensions of program evaluation, we note that all the participants in the program emphasized the need for a fathering program and expressed a need for more learning in this area. Although 3/10 participants had attended some kind of parenting program prior to this current program, most stated that they had not. Most (9/10) participants said they found the hand-outs 'Very Useful' and 8/10 men found the role plays and practice exercises 'Very Useful'. In response to the question 'What would you like to see covered that was not discussed or covered in enough detail, participants identified the following: Discipline, alternatives to punishment, more on problem solving, more on teenagers, and how to discuss procreation with your child. Nine of the ten participants rated the quality of the program as 'Excellent' while 1 rated it as 'Good'. Similarly, 9/10 said they would benefit from another parenting program and 8/10 'Strongly Agreed' that they would look for a parenting program upon release. All 10 participants stated that they found the discussions 'Very Helpful' and would recommend this program to other offenders in the institution.

In response to the question 'Do you have any suggestions to improve the Caring Dads program?' Here is a sample of their comments.

- We should have more of them here in this institution more often.
- More time, longer course; More role playing; More handouts; More arts and crafts
- More time in group instead of cramming it all together
- Would like to see it offered more; Longer program
- Longer classes; Maybe 20 or more
- More sessions; More time to put skills into practice; Thanx for offering this program and letting me be a part of it. I enjoyed it, and I am going to look for another group upon my release.

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Anecdotal data from units indicate that staff were very pleased about the program and reported that participants would often discuss what they were learning with case managers and were also seen to be discussing it with their peers on the living unit.

### ***What are some things to consider in running a program like this in the institution?***

The following are 10 key observations we have from running this program:

1. It is important not to exclude sex offenders because some still have access to their children and play a parental role to either their biological or their partner's children.
2. It is important to implement multimodal learning strategies (visuals, hands-on exercises, reading materials, written assignments, etc). This is very helpful given that participants invariably have diverse learning styles. It is not only a responsibility issue that we need to consciously address in a treatment program but is generally good pedagogical practice in any learning environment.
3. It is important to include participants from each unit of the institution for several reasons. Including too many participants from one unit encourages the risk of bringing unit politics into the program which is not helpful to the group environment. Having participants from different units encourages openness to ideas and stimulates learning. However, it is also important to have at least two participants from each unit so that they do not feel isolated and, have a buddy who can help or support them as they work on homework assignments.
4. It is important to do more consulting with case managers and social workers on each unit to assess the impact of the program or to discuss issues and concerns related to the individual's family. This type of consultation is a structural piece of the program that needs to be instituted formally as a desired process. The program also needs a formalized system that allows for information to be shared with case management teams and vice-versa.
5. In the pilot program, we did not have the opportunity to review individual participants homework except through brief check-in questions during group sessions. We believe that the program should include at least two individual sessions where individual progress on goals and homework can be reviewed and feedback given on individual change.
6. Participants were given practice exercises to use with their children and partners and those who had contact with their families (via visits and phone calls) were able to do the practice. Those who did not were encouraged to practice with other offenders on their living unit where possible (e.g., how to give feedback, active listening, etc.) This worked well when participants actually did the exercises on the unit, less so when they did not!
7. It is important to expand content related to stages of child development and spend more time on specific issues such as discipline, boundaries, dealing with children's mothers and caregivers. It would also be important (and useful) to introduce modules on impact of substance abuse on children, impact of parental incarceration on children, healthy nutrition and distribution of gender roles in the home. As well, it would be important to extend the number of sessions so there is adequate time for practice in problem solving and skill building.
8. It is helpful to compile a list of other reading materials and handouts for participants to read between sessions. Participants were given reading materials on research related to impact of childhood maltreatment, domestic violence, parenting styles, and child development. The facilitators also compiled a package of brochures and books (Region of Peel publications) on child development, preparing children for school, teen parties and drinking etc. that was given to each participant. This was additional information that supplemented what was being discussed in the program and was both practical and informative.
9. It is important for participants to have support in the community. Towards this end participants were given an individualized list of researched resources for parenting support in the community which offenders could use upon release.
10. Although we were not able to offer this service, facilitation of family meetings (partners, caregivers and children) could potentially become an integral part of the program, particularly where there are problematic issues related to family re-integration.

### ***Concluding comments***

We ran an in-custody fathering program on a pilot basis which was well received by both participants and staff. It had its challenges and we acknowledge that further development is needed in both content and structure, and that the program has yet to be subject to research on a systematic basis. We also recognize that staffing and program sustainability are issues that merit serious consideration. Lastly, we acknowledge that OCI was very supportive of this initiative and we know that institutional support is a key component to the success of a new program. It is axiomatic in program development that when there is institutional support there is potential for creative possibilities in developing long-term sustainability. Going forward, we will be continuing to work on all of the issues discussed above.

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We noted in our introduction the reasons that a program like this is important for fathers who are offenders. However, we believe that it is also essential to have programs such as these for mothers in custody, developed with a view to their unique needs and circumstances. Their parenting issues and concerns are equally worthy of our consideration given that it is they who often bear the primary role for caregiving of children. Parenting programs are also needed for young adults in custody, both male and female, a number of whom have become parents at a young age. In conclusion, we ask, does a program such as this offer a value added service to society? Can it enhance and supplement work done in other treatment programs? Can it help offenders strengthen their role in taking care of children? Can it help men break the cycle of victimization that results in maladjusted children who go on to become the maladjusted adults who are filling our prisons? If the answer to any one of these questions is yes, it is a worthwhile endeavour. Pardon, our bias is showing!

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## SPECIAL FEATURE

### Predicting Adolescent Sex Offence Groups from Adolescent Correlates

By: Jennifer E. Newman, Ashley K. Ward, Sonya G. Wanklyn, & David M. Day

Ryerson University

According to the National Institute of Justice, the estimated total cost of sexual assault in the United States is \$127 billion dollars every year (Miller, Cohen, & Wiersema, 1996). Furthermore, it is estimated that juveniles account for almost 20% of all rapes and approximately 50% of all reported annual cases of child molestation (Barbaree, Hudson, & Seto, 1993). In response to these staggering figures, increased research attention has been paid to the correlates of adolescent delinquency, including sexual offending (Johnson & Knight, 2000; Lipsey & Derzon, 1998). These correlates are often classified in the individual, family, peer, and school domains. For example, research has found that antisocial behaviour (Loeber & Farrington, 1998), health problems (e.g., traumatic brain injury) (Perron & Howard, 2008), childhood victimization (Seto & Lalumière, 2010), involvement with child protective services (Ward et al., 2010), peer rejection (Coie, Lochman, Terry, & Hyman, 1992), and frequent discipline problems in school (Loeber & Farrington, 1998) are strong predictors of juvenile delinquency. However, less is known about the specific correlates that may predict different offence types among adolescent offenders. The purpose of this study was to explore the correlates associated with three types of offenders: violent non-sex offenders, violent sex offenders, and those who have committed both violent non-sex and sex offences. The identification of salient correlates of each offending group may elucidate the developmental pathways of sex offending behaviour and inform early intervention and crime prevention programs.

#### Method

The client files of 224 male young offenders ( $M = 17.6$  years) who resided in one of two open custody facilities in a large urban centre in Ontario between 1986 and 1995 were reviewed for the presence of criminal correlates. A dichotomized (present/absent) coding scheme was developed to extract correlates occurring in the files between ages 13 and 17 years. The correlates were coded according to four life domains: individual, family, peer, and school. Individual variables included low intelligence or poor academic achievement, hyperactivity-impulsivity-inattention, antisocial behaviour, alcohol and/or drug use, health problems. Family variables included criminal family members, parental psychopathology, maltreatment, and involvement with alternative care. Correlates measuring poor relationships with peers and poor regard for school also were explored. Inter-rater reliability for the coding scheme indicated overall good agreement ( $\kappa = .68$ ).

The sample's criminal records were investigated up to age 17 years. These were obtained from four sources: the Ontario Ministry of Community Safety and Social Services, the Ontario Ministry of Correctional Services, the Canadian Police Information Centre, and predisposition reports on file at the open custody facilities. Offenders were divided into three groups based on their criminal record: those who had committed violent non-sex offences (VNSO) ( $n = 172$ ), those who had committed violent sex offences (labelled "pure" sex offenders or PSO) ( $n = 28$ ), and those who had committed both violent non-sex and sex offences (labelled "versatile violent" sex offenders or VVSO) ( $n = 24$ ).

#### Results

Table 1 describes offence characteristics of the three offender groups. One-way ANOVA's identified significant differences among the three groups for property, violent, sex, and total number of offences. Post-hoc analyses demonstrated that a greater number of property offences were committed by the VNSOs, compared to the PSOs ( $M_s = 3.0$  and  $1.7$ , respectively,  $p = .034$ ), and the VNSOs committed a higher number of total offences relative to the PSOs ( $M_s = 6.4$  and  $3.8$ , respectively,  $p = .003$ ). As expected, more violent offences were committed by the VNSOs ( $M = 2.0$ ,  $SD = 1.5$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and VVSOs ( $M = 1.6$ ,  $SD = 1.2$ ,  $p < .05$ ) compared to the PSOs, but no difference existed between the VNSOs and VVSOs. Also, there was no difference in the number of sex offences committed by the VVSOs and PSOs.

Three hierarchical logistic regressions tested the predictive associations between the adolescent correlates and offender groups. The first regression evaluated the correlates' relationships to the PSO and VNSO groups. This model was statistically significant ( $\chi^2(4) = 16.33$ ,  $p = .003$ ). The overall classification accuracy was 86.9%. Two individual-domain correlates distinguished the two offender groups; engaging in covert antisocial behaviour in adolescence increased the odds of belonging to the PSO group ( $OR = .32$ ,  $p = .016$ ), while health problems increased the odds of membership in the VNSO group ( $OR = 2.99$ ,  $p = .042$ ). One family-related variable, involvement in alternative care, was marginally significant and increased the odds of belonging to the PSO group ( $OR = .39$ ,  $p = .055$ ).



## SPECIAL FEATURE Con't

The second hierarchical logistic regression, which examined the adolescent variables' predictive association with the VVSO and VNSO groups, yielded non-significant results. The third tested the predictive utility of the correlates for the two sex offender groups (VVSO and PSO). The analysis yielded a statistically significant model ( $\chi^2(4) = 15.70, p = .003$ ) and the overall classification accuracy was 76%. Only one variable contributed to the model, covert antisocial behaviour; the presence of this correlate increased the odds of belonging to the VVSO group by a factor of 4.5 ( $p = .041$ ).

### Discussion

Our analyses indicated that, compared to VNSO males, the odds of being a PSO male were increased by 68% with covert antisocial behaviour and by 61% when involved with alternative care. The odds of being a VNSO were increased by nearly three times if offenders experienced health problems. Finally, experiencing covert antisocial behaviour led to over a four-fold increase in the odds of VVSO over PSO. The results reflect underlying heterogeneity of the sample and suggest that there may be unique pathways to violent and sexual offending. Given the finding that the VVSOs and PSOs were predicted by covert antisocial behaviour, they may share a similar developmental pathway. The relative lack of distinction between the VVSOs and the VNSOs was unanticipated, potentially reflecting a lack of statistical power to find differences.

The nature of the information contained in the offender client files made it difficult to capture dimensions of the correlates. Further research should investigate possible causal mechanisms linking these correlates to offending outcomes through mediating variables such as substance use and coping styles. Identifying the correlates for each offending subgroup may assist in identification of high-risk youth, and guide the development of prevention strategies tailored to each group's specific challenges in an effort to offset potentially devastating outcomes.

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**Table 1**  
Univariate Mean (SD) Comparison Tests Across the Three Offender Groups

Offence Characteristic	Offender group			F(2,221)	p
	VNSO (n = 172)	PSO (n = 28)	VVSO (n = 24)		
Age at admission	17.5 (0.7)	17.6 (0.8)	17.9 (1.0)	2.5	.074
Sentence length	130.5 (129.2)	114.4 (108.9)	163.3 (103.0)	1.1	.350
Age at first court contact	15.3 (1.8)	15.6 (1.6)	15.9 (2.0)	1.42	.244
Age at last court contact	24.1 (3.7)	24.1 (3.9)	24.8 (4.6)	0.32	.727
Total number of court contacts	6.4 <sub>a</sub> (4.2)	3.8 <sub>b</sub> (2.7)	6.4 (3.7)	5.49	.005
No. of offences					
Property	3.0 <sub>a</sub> (2.6)	1.7 <sub>b</sub> (2.1)	2.8 (2.4)	3.16	.044
Violent	2.0 <sub>a</sub> (1.5)	0.0 <sub>b</sub> (0.0)	1.6 <sub>a</sub> (1.2)	28.26	.001
Drug	0.1 (0.4)	0.1 (0.3)	0.1 (0.2)	0.67	.513
Sex	0.0 <sub>a</sub> (0.0)	1.3 <sub>b</sub> (0.6)	1.1 <sub>b</sub> (0.4)	454.21	.001
Breach	0.9 (1.4)	0.5 (0.9)	0.6 (1.0)	1.53	.219
Other	0.3 (0.9)	0.2 (0.5)	0.3 (0.5)	0.47	.623

Note. All values in rows with different subscripts (a, b) are significantly different from each other at the  $p < .05$  level using the Scheffé post-hoc test.

## SPECIAL FEATURE

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### The Best Convention Ever!

By: Jim Cheston, NAACJPC Co-Chair, Marketing Committee

When I saw the declaration, “The Best Convention Ever” on the cover of the Summer 2011 edition of the CPA Psynopsis magazine, my immediate reaction was “Yes, it certainly was – it was amazing!” While this thought lingered with the appreciation I was feeling for the superb quality of my experience at the Second North American Correctional and Criminal Justice Psychology Conference (NACCJPC2), it occurred to me that the cover title was not referring to the same conference that had instilled my warm feelings of appreciation and gratitude. It was referring to the CPA conference, with which NACCJPC2 had been held in conjunction.

As I looked through Psynopsis I noticed that NACCJPC2 was mentioned in the context of accounting for the record-breaking number of delegates at the 2011 CPA conference in Toronto. That article then expounded on the many positive attributes of the CPA convention that had contributed to its success. The many accolades that were attributed to the CPA convention, which I was unfortunately not able to attend, were equally resonant with the experience I had while attending NACCJPC2 during those four days. The fabulous keynotes by the leaders in our field and the “delicious smorgasbord” of workshops, symposia, poster and paper sessions – it seems that the CPA conference was as terrific for those who attended it as was NACCJPC2. However, since I only attended the latter, the remainder of this article will focus on that.

This second NACCJPC seems to me to have really solidified the potential that had been evident in our first conference in Ottawa in 2007. As good as that first conference was, NACCJPC2 felt like a much more solid and satisfying experience – and the major social event on the Friday night was not interrupted by a freak thunderstorm! This time a good time was had by all, mingling, dancing and of course, exchanging ideas and plans for the future.

The NACCJPC conference has truly become a world class event. The presentations by the international rostrum of keynote speakers were all exceptional and they reflected the depth, breadth and passion that characterizes our area of practice. The topics covered by Drs. Dovskin, Hanson, Hodgins, Skeem and Smith ranged from national policy to the latest in sex offender research and treatment, to neurobiological underpinnings of violent offending, to understanding the role of mental illness in criminal justice and the what and how of treatment programming to reduce recidivism. The keynote addresses alone left me with a new appreciation of just how varied and exciting correctional and criminal justice psychology has become. Reflecting on the additional myriad of topics and areas of interest covered by the many symposia, poster and paper sessions, it is clear that this is a very intriguing and appealing area of applied psychology.

If there was an aspect of NACCJPC2 I struggled with, it was the problem of repeatedly having to choose among attending multiple interesting quality presentations at the same time. Of course this left me with the related difficulty of not having had time to even think about attending any of the CPA events. I also heard colleagues wonder if perhaps the NACCJPC conferences could be held more frequently. I thought the suggestion of NACCJPC Chair, Dr. Jeremy Mills that we stick to the same four-year cycle as the Olympics was meaningful, in terms of the wait being justified by this level of exceptional performance.

A novel event at NACCJPC2 was the networking and professional development meeting of the Correctional Psychology staff of the province of Ontario. This was a great opportunity for psychology staff from across the province to meet and discuss topics of mutual interest and concern. The sharing of ideas and the problem solving that took place started a process that has the potential to bring a new level of cohesion and collaboration to a very dispersed group of professionals. I know that some other groups also held meetings and socials at the conference. This seems to be something that might be considered by others in future NACCJPC conferences to begin a similar movement toward creating opportunities for meaningful interactions and discourse.

It is entirely fitting that a conference of this calibre was a tribute to the life and career of Dr. Don Andrews. The extent to which Don and the group of our colleagues who have worked closely with him and have influenced us all in order to elevate correctional psychology to its present state, cannot be overstated. I feel it is also fitting to acknowledge that Dr. Jeremy Mills was the leading force behind conceiving the idea and creating the reality of the North American Correctional and Criminal Justice Psychology Conference. To say that NACCJPC2 was the best conference ever is not an overstatement to me, particularly in the context of a conference of this magnitude in an area of specialization at only the second rendition. This leads me to expect that in terms of NACCJPC conferences, we ain't seen nothin' yet! See you all in Ottawa in 2015!

## SECTION BUSINESS

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### CPA Criminal Justice Section, Business Meeting, June 3, 2011

The following is a record of the decisions made:

1. The membership was in favour of a 3<sup>rd</sup> NACCJPC conference to be held in Ottawa, 2015.
2. Of the current surplus (estimated at \$10,000), \$5,000 would be committed to the 2015 NACCJPC, with additional funds being committed in future years. The bills have not been tallied for the 2011 conference, but are estimated at \$12,000.
3. The Career Contribution Award will be permanently renamed the Don Andrews Career Contribution. A note will also be added to the website indicating the date at which it was changed.

To do list:

1. The full executive was re-elected by acclamation, with the exception of Leslie Helmus (Director-at-large, Conference Program), who did not stand for re-election. We now need to find someone to take on this role for 2011-2012.
2. There is an opportunity for revamping the website: Joe was to take the lead on coordinating what was to be done (note September 1 deadline).
3. Karen Cohen indicated that there is a prize for best section newsletter. Mark and Ainslie will consider when and how to nominate *Crime Scene*.

Information items:

1. Membership was 398 (260 non-student; 138 student)
2. We have \$23,000 in the bank, with \$12,000 committed to 2011 conference expenses.
3. Steve Wormith gave a plug for *Psychological Services*, the journal of APA Division 18.
4. Dorothy Cotton said the police psychology subsection is humming along with 125 members of the LISTSERV. She invited others to get involved (particularly in leadership roles).

TASK FORCE:

1. The draft Task Force (TF) Terms of Reference was reviewed including the membership. It was pointed out that there are several potential CSC-oriented initiatives discussed in the ToR, but TF representation was primarily psychologists from provincial, academic, and private sectors. It will be important for the TF to liaise with representation from CSC psychology.
2. Possible directions and foci for the TF were discussed, some of which could be done in concert with the Criminal Justice Section Executive. These included:
  - The creation and distribution of Fact Sheets,
  - Psychologist recruitment and retention in correctional settings,
  - Surveying and promoting education and training in correctional/clinical forensic psychology (e.g., training survey at the provincial level of clinical-forensic training opportunities, developing practice standards in correctional psychology),
  - Education initiatives targeting various audiences such as government, public, training institutions, and provincial licensing bodies (e.g., the importance of intervention with children and families, what is it that correctional psychologists do? Do correctional programs work?).
3. TF conference call to be scheduled for early fall to discuss next steps (e.g., defining, prioritizing, and implementing potential TF initiatives).

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**Deadline for May 2012 issue—April 6, 2012**

## RECENT PUBLICATIONS

**Babchishin, K. M., Blais, J., & Helmus, L. (in press). Do static risk factors predict differently for Aboriginal sex offenders? A multi-site comparison using Static-99R and Static-2002R. *Canadian Journal of Criminology and Criminal Justice*.**

There is much concern about the extent to which risk assessment tools designed to predict recidivism are equally valid for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal offenders. The current study compared Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal male sex offenders on items and total scores of the original and revised Static-99 and Static-2002 scales. The study included five independent Canadian samples with Static-99 and Static-99R scores (319 Aboriginals and 1,269 non-Aboriginals), three of which also had Static-2002 and Static-2002R scores (209 Aboriginals and 955 non-Aboriginals). Aboriginal sex offenders scored significantly higher than non-Aboriginal sex offenders on total scores and items indicative of general criminality, and tended to score lower on items indicative of sexual deviancy. Static-99/R total scores and items generally predicted sexual recidivism with similar accuracy for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal sex offenders. In contrast, significant differences were found for Static-2002/R total scores and several of their items, with lower predictive accuracy for Aboriginals. The results suggest that at least some items of the Static scales are not as predictive for Aboriginal than non-Aboriginal sex offenders, with differences found on Static-2002/R rather than Static-99/R scales.

**Gavukchyan, L. P., & Shamirian, A. S. Psychological Portrait of Juvenile Delinquents and Recommended Socio-psychological Actions. *Proceedings from The Current Issues in Theoretical and Applied Psychology, October 28-30, 2011. Yerevan State University, Yerevan, Armenia*.**

In the month of December 2009, research was conducted in the "Abovian" CEI with the aim of constructing the psychological portrait of juvenile delinquents. The main purpose of our research was to clarify the psychological characteristics of juvenile delinquents and to cultivate appropriate actions. Taking into consideration the above noted research, we recommend:

1. To encourage behavioural changes within the detainees, execute actions to clarify and decrease the incitement of high emotionality and tension.
2. To upraise suppressed resources by doing group and individual work in order to be able to survive and overcome life's new demands.
3. To secure engagement through team sports; the latter is one of the best methods of releasing accumulated negative energy.
4. To teach the appropriate skills that in the future can be considered a profession. Skills must be chosen based on the intellectual level of detainees. They should not require advanced logical thinking.
5. To create an environment in which the detainees feel self-motivated, accountable and capable of completing their tasks. Detainees must learn that their duties need to be completed even if they are tired or unmotivated.

**Helmus, L., Babchishin, K. M., & Blais, J. (in press). Predictive accuracy of dynamic risk factors for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal sex offenders: A comparison using STABLE-2007. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*.**

Although Aboriginal offenders are overrepresented in Canadian prisons, there is limited research examining the extent to which commonly used risk factors and risk scales are applicable to Aboriginals. Aboriginal ( $n = 88$ ) and non-Aboriginal ( $n = 509$ ) sex offenders on community supervision were compared on the dynamic risk factors of STABLE-2007. Data on sexual, violent, any crime, and any recidivism (including breaches) were collected with an average follow-up of 3.4 years. Aboriginal offenders scored significantly higher than non-Aboriginal offenders on STABLE-2007 total scores and on several items measuring general criminality. STABLE-2007 did not significantly predict recidivism with Aboriginal offenders (although it did for non-Aboriginals). The general antisociality items were generally significantly less predictive for Aboriginals than non-Aboriginals, while items assessing sexual self-regulation and relationship stability predicted similarly for both groups. These exploratory results suggest Aboriginal offenders are a higher-needs group but that some STABLE-2007 items are not predictive with this population.

## RECENT PUBLICATIONS

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**Helmus, L., Babchishin, K. M., Camilleri, J. A., & Olver, M. E. (2011). Forensic psychology opportunities in Canadian graduate programs: An update of Simourd and Wormith's (1995) survey. *Canadian Psychology, 52*, 122-127.**

Forensic psychology has gained momentum in North America in recent decades, and Canadian psychologists have made considerable contributions to the field. Strong student interest and a high demand for professionals, however, have not been sufficiently matched with the availability of formal forensic psychology graduate training, nor with sufficient scholarly discussion of this issue. The purpose of the current study was to update Simourd and Wormith's (1995) survey of forensic psychology training available in Canadian psychology graduate programs. Of the 39 universities with psychology graduate programs, 36 (92%) responded to the survey. Twenty-four universities (67%) offered some forensic opportunities for students, although there was considerable variability in the number of courses, students, and faculty members in the forensic psychology programs. Since Simourd and Wormith's (1995) survey, forensic training is available at 10 new universities. Of the 14 programs with forensic psychology content in 1995 and in the current study, however, more than half of them reported a decrease in the number of faculty and students working with forensic issues. Considering the continued demand for trained forensic psychologists in applied settings, further attention to the availability of both education and training in forensic psychology is therefore still needed.

**Helmus, L., & Bourgon, G. (2011). Taking stock of 15 years of research on the Spousal Assault Risk Assessment guide (SARA): A critical review. *International Journal of Forensic Mental Health, 10*, 64-75.**

This review offers a critical summary of 15 years of research and application of the Spousal Assault Risk Assessment guide (SARA). Main areas of focus are how the scale was developed, strengths and limitations of individual items, and professional uses, including who it has been validated on and the reliability and predictive accuracy of the scale. Based on current evidence, the SARA is a defensible method for intimate partner violence risk assessment; however, users should be cognizant of its strengths and limitations (discussed in this paper) in order to guide their ethical/appropriate application of the instrument.

**Helmus, L., Hanson, R. K., & Morton-Bourgon, K. (2011). International comparisons of the validity of actuarial risk tools for sexual offenders, with a focus on Static-99. In D.P. Boer, R. Eher, L.A. Craig, M.H. Miner & F. Pfafflin (Eds.), *International perspectives on the assessment and treatment of sexual offenders: Theory, practice, and research*, (pp. 57-83). Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell.**

**Helmus, L., Thornton, D., Hanson, R. K., & Babchishin, K. M. (in press). Improving the predictive accuracy of Static-99 and Static-2002 with older sex offenders: Revised age weights. *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment*.**

Actuarial risk assessment scales and their associated recidivism estimates are generally developed on samples of offenders whose average age is well under 50 years old. Criminal behaviour of all types declines with age; consequently, actuarial scales tend to overestimate recidivism for older offenders. The current study aimed to develop a revised scoring system for two risk assessment tools (Static-99 and Static-2002) that would more accurately describe older offenders' risk of recidivism. Using data from 8,390 sex offenders derived from 24 separate samples, age was found to add incremental predictive validity to both Static-99 and Static-2002. After creating new age weights, the resulting instruments (Static-99R and Static-2002R) had only slightly higher relative predictive accuracy. The absolute recidivism estimates, however, provided a substantially better fit for older offenders than the recidivism estimates from the original scales. We encourage evaluators to adopt the revised scales with the new age weights.

**Nunes, K. L., McPhail, I. V., & Babchishin, K. M. (2011). Social anxiety and sexual offending against children: A cumulative meta-analysis. *Journal of Sexual Aggression*. Advance online publication. doi: 10.1080/13552600.2010.549243**

We examined the extent to which sexual offenders against children (SOC) differ from men who do not offend against children (non-SOC) on social anxiety. In study 1, 30 SOC and 31 non-sex offenders (NSO) were compared on a self-report measure of social anxiety (Social Avoidance and Distress Scale; SADS). SOC and NSO had virtually identical levels of social anxiety. In study 2, we conducted a meta-analysis of existing comparisons of SOC with various non-SOC groups on the SADS. SOC were generally more socially anxious than non-SOC. These findings suggest that the average SOC is more socially anxious than the average male who does not sexually offend against children. It remains unclear, however, whether social anxiety plays a causal role in the initiation of child sexual abuse.

## RECENT PUBLICATIONS

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**Nunes, K. L., & Babchishin, K. M. (2011). Construct validity of the Stable-2000 and Stable-2007 scores. *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment*. Advance online publication. doi: 10.1177/1079063211404921**

We addressed the construct validity of Stable-2000 and Stable-2007 scores by examining correlations between selected items and validated independent measures of relevant constructs in samples of convicted sex offenders. In Study 1, the Child Molester Attitudes item of the Stable-2000 shared 23% of the variance with a self-report measure of beliefs supportive of child molestation,  $r(19) = .48$ . The Deviant Sexual Interests items of the Stable-2000 and Stable-2007 shared 7% to 66% of the variance, respectively, with an offense-history-based measure of pedophilic interests,  $r(18) = .27$  for the Stable-2000 and  $r(11) = .81$  for the Stable-2007. In Study 2, the Lovers/Intimate Partners, General Social Rejection/Loneliness, Rapist Attitudes, and Child Molester Attitudes items of the Stable-2000 shared 4% to 19% of the variance with self-report measures of, respectively, intimacy,  $r(90) = -.44$ ; loneliness,  $r(88) = .34$ ; beliefs supportive of rape,  $r(72) = .21$ ; and beliefs supportive of child molestation,  $r(78) = .36$ . The results generally suggest that the Stable items examined are associated with measures of similar constructs; however, the degree of convergence was lower than expected. More systematic and comprehensive research is needed to examine convergence of the Stable items with other relevant measures and additional aspects of construct validity. Such efforts will provide a clearer understanding of dynamic risk factors, appropriate areas of focus for treatment efforts, and, more generally, *why* some sex offenders recidivate.

**Nunes, K. L., Babchishin, K. M., & Cortoni, F. (2011). Measuring treatment change in sex offenders: Clinical and statistical significance. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 38, 157-173. doi: 10.1177/0093854810391054**

The main purpose of this study was to assess treatment change at both the group level and the individual level with a sample of 313 adult male sex offenders. Generally, the results from the group-level analyses were more positive than those from the individual-level analyses. The group-level analyses revealed significant change of medium magnitude on most of the measures, whereas the individual-level analyses indicated more modest gains, with approximately one third of participants showing reliable change and reaching functional levels posttreatment. When representative norms are available, clinical significance provides a clear and established method not only for assessing the effectiveness of sex offender treatment programs but also for evaluating the progress of individual clients.

## KUDOS

**Julia Berliant** for receiving an Ontario Graduate Scholarship. Julia is currently in the first year of her MA in psychology.

**Chantal Hermann** for receiving a SSHRC Doctoral Canada Graduate Scholarship. Chantal is in the first year of her PhD in psychology.

**Cathrine Pettersen** for receiving a Senate Medal for outstanding work in her undergraduate degree at Carleton University and a SSHRC Masters Award. Cathrine just finished her BA Honours in psychology and will be starting her MA in psychology with Kevin Nunes in September.

**Lesleigh Pullman** for receiving the Pearson Education Psychology Honours Thesis Award, an Ontario Graduate Scholarship, and a SSHRC Institutional Undergraduate Student Research Award. Lesleigh just finished her BA Honours in psychology and will be starting her MA in psychology at University of Ottawa supervised by Michael Seto.

**Mandie Woods** for receiving the NACCJPC Best Undergraduate Poster Award. Mandie is a third-year undergraduate who will be starting her honours thesis with Kevin Nunes in September.

## STUDENT WATER COOLER

**\*\*GRADUATE STUDENT POSTER PRIZE CO-WINNER—NAACJPC-2\*\***

### **Rehabilitation of Violent Prisoners: Does Re-entry Plan Quality Predict Recidivism on Parole?**

By: Sophie R. Dickson, Devon L.L. Polaschek, and Allanah R. Casey

Toward the end of his sentence for grievous bodily harm, John<sup>1</sup> participated in a cognitive-behavioural rehabilitation programme aimed at lowering his risk of violent reoffending. John did well in the programme, with therapists noting that he made positive progress on many of his risk factors. Upon release, John was motivated to give up crime. He moved to a rural area of New Zealand in order to distance himself from his gang and to turn his life around. Unfortunately, employment opportunities were limited and John struggled to support himself financially. He became increasingly isolated due to a lack of prosocial support people in his area. To cope with his situation, John began to abuse substances and one night, while intoxicated, robbed his nearest neighbour at gunpoint.

As John's experience demonstrates, even when an ex-prisoner is motivated to desist and is trying to avoid situations previously linked to offending, challenges they face re-entering the community can put them at risk of committing a new crime. Many New Zealand prisoners participate in cognitive-behavioural rehabilitation programmes based on the relapse prevention (RP) model, however, most high-risk graduates are still reconvicted (Polaschek, 2010). It may be that prisoners are not adequately prepared for re-entry into the community; making it difficult for them to carry gains made during rehabilitation into their post-incarceration lives. Rehabilitation programmes are increasingly focusing on release plans, recognizing that helping prisoners with the fundamental aspects of life after release may enhance survival potential. Release planning involves simply developing a plan regarding the prisoner's basic needs for survival after release, including accommodation, employment, financial resources, and social support. It is the quality of parolees' release plans that is the focus of this study.

Despite the growing awareness of the importance of release planning, little research has examined plan quality and its relationship to reoffending. Willis and Grace (2008, 2009) assessed the quality of release plans in a sample of male child sex offenders following participation in intensive RP-based treatment. Men who went on to reoffend had significantly poorer release plans than those who did not reoffend. Willis and Grace concluded that better quality release plans had helped to protect sexual offenders from reconviction. However, their preliminary design does not answer an important question: Is the quality of a graduate's release plan uniquely contributing to his survival or is it merely a statistical correlate of static or stable (i.e. pre-existing) risk?

Scoones, Willis, and Grace (2010) compared the predictive strength of release plan quality with typical risk assessment measures in another sample of child sex offenders. They found that release plans added significant incremental validity in predicting sexual recidivism to both static and dynamic measures of risk, suggesting that good plans may protect against reoffending regardless of risk. This research was conducted with a group of low-risk sexual offenders with a mean time to failure of 10.5 years, which limits how such findings can inform us about the high-risk offenders responsible for a large proportion of crime.

The current study was conducted with a sample of high-risk, violent offenders who had participated in an intensive prison-based rehabilitation programme. The study aimed to examine the quality of release plans in this sample and to compare the predictive strength of these plans with three well-validated risk assessment tools, based on both static and dynamic risk factors, to find whether release plans are explaining some variance in reoffending outcomes that is not explained by pre-existing levels of risk.

#### Method

Participants in the study were 49 men who had taken part in Te Whare Manaakitanga, an intensive prison-based violence prevention programme in New Zealand. We created a coding protocol to measure the quality of reentry plans for accommodation, employment, prosocial support, avoidance of antisocial peers, post-release treatment, release environment, and offenders' "safety plans" for how they planned to cope with high-risk situations.

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<sup>1</sup>John is a fictional character based on our experiences with many similar treatment graduates.

## STUDENT WATER COOLER Con't

Plans were assessed based on file information including programme records and end of programme reports (inter-rater reliability  $k = 0.81$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Codes were developed to assess for the presence of plans as well as their quality, pro-sociality, and/or stability. As an example, accommodation plan quality was scored: 0 = accommodation post-release is not indicated in release plan; 1 = accommodation is suggested but not confirmed; and 2 = accommodation post-release is confirmed.

We compared the predictive validity of our reintegration plan coding scheme to three risk-assessment tools: 1) the RoC\*RoI, an actuarial risk assessment measure designed by the New Zealand Department of Corrections which measures an offender's estimated risk of reconviction leading to re-imprisonment over the following five years; 2) the Violence Risk Scale (VRS; Wong & Gordon, 2000), a 26-item clinician-rated instrument based on 6 static and 20 dynamic risk factors. VRS scores are predictive of both general and violent recidivism; and 3) the Psychopathy Checklist – Screening Version (PCL: SV; Hart, Cox, & Hare, 1995) a 12-item, screening version of the well-known 20-item Psychopathy Checklist – Revised.

In order to measure outcomes, we obtained rates of reconviction 12 months after participants' release from prison. Rates of re-imprisonment were also obtained as a measure of more serious reoffending.

### Results

Of the 49 men in the sample, 27 (55.1%) had been reconvicted within 12 months following release from prison, while 9 (18.4%) had been reconvicted for violent offending. Thirteen (26.5%) had been re-imprisoned within 12 months.

T-tests showed that employment [ $t(48)=2.51$ ,  $p<0.05$ ] and total plan scores [ $t(48)=2.14$ ,  $p<0.01$ ] were significantly lower among those who were reconvicted compared to those who were not. Effect sizes indicate a medium effect for safety planning ( $d=0.56$ ), employment ( $d=0.71$ ), and total release planning ( $d=0.66$ ) on reconviction outcome.

Employment [ $t(48)=2.91$ ,  $p<0.01$ ], prosocial support [ $t(48)=2.04$ ,  $p<0.05$ ], and total plan scores [ $t(48)=2.62$ ,  $p<0.05$ ] were significantly lower among those who were re-imprisoned than those who remained in the community. Effect sizes indicated a medium size effect for accommodation ( $d=0.64$ ) and prosocial support ( $d=0.73$ ) on re-imprisonment outcome, while employment ( $d=0.86$ ) and total planning ( $d=1.13$ ) had large effect sizes.

A series of hierarchical logistic regressions were conducted to examine whether the total release planning scores contributed significant incremental predictive power to three risk assessment instruments – the RoC\*RoI, the VRS and the PCL-SV – in the prediction of reconviction and re-imprisonment. As shown in Table 1, all three risk prediction tools were significant predictors of reconviction outcome. Release planning did not add incremental predictive power to any of these models. Receiver operating characteristic curves (AUCs) were also calculated. AUCs for reconviction analyses indicated similar predictive power for each of the risk prediction models.

A different pattern of results emerged in predicting re-imprisonment outcomes. When entered alone, all three risk prediction instruments significantly predicted re-imprisonment. However, once total plan quality was entered into the regression model, plan quality was significantly predictive of re-imprisonment, but the RoC\*RoI and the PCL-SV were no longer significant predictors. The VRS however, remained a significant predictor, with both VRS scores and total plan quality adding unique power in predicting re-imprisonment. AUCs indicated similar predictive ability for each of the models combining risk assessment and plan quality, showing that plan quality combined with any of the three risk assessment measures led to comparable prediction of re-imprisonment. When each measure alone was used to predict re-imprisonment, the AUC value for plan quality was a significant 0.71, comparable to any of the risk assessment measures alone.



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Table 1 – Prediction of Recidivism Outcomes

		Reconviction				Re-imprisonment			
		B(SE)	Wald df=1)	OR	AUC	B(SE)	Wald (df=1)	OR	AUC
<b>Block 1</b>	RoC*RoI	5.32 (2.21)	4.87*	203.3	.76**	5.81 (2.90)	3.74*	335	.70*
<b>Block 2</b>	RoC*RoI	4.98 (2.26)	3.97*	145.15	.76*	6.66 (3.53)	3.38	779.21	.82*
	Total Plan Quality	-.32 (.19)	3.02	0.73		-.64 (.24)	6.78**	0.53	
<b>Block 1</b>	PCL:SV	.29 (.13)	5.34*	1.34	.66	.33 (.17)	3.88*	1.39	.67
<b>Block 2</b>	PCL:SV	.23 (.13)	3.35	1.26	.74*	.23 (.18)	1.70	1.26	.76*
	Total Plan Quality	-.29 (.20)	2.15	0.75		-.55 (.24)	5.35*	0.57	
<b>Block 1</b>	VRS	.10 (.04)	7.17**	1.11	.73**	.11 (.05)	5.53*	1.12	.73**
<b>Block 2</b>	VRS	.09 (.04)	5.82*	1.10	.77*	.10 (.05)	3.74*	1.11	.82*
	Total Plan Quality	-.27 (.18)	2.18	0.76		-.55 (.23)	5.86*	0.58	

\*p<0.05; \*\*p<0.01

### Discussion

This study found that a 7-item release plan coding protocol effectively discriminated between those who went on to be reconvicted or re-imprisoned within 12 months of release and those who did not. In fact, we found that when predicting re-imprisonment, the end-of-treatment release plan quality was as good a predictor as three, well-validated risk assessment tools: the RoC\*RoI, the PCL:SV, and the VRS. The next question was whether measuring the quality of release plans adds predictive validity beyond what is already tapped by the risk assessment tools. When predicting reconviction, plan quality did not add predictive power to any of the risk instruments (all three of which were significant predictors alone). However, when predicting re-imprisonment, the quality of release plans did contribute significantly to the risk instruments. In fact, the strength of its relationship to re-imprisonment rendered two – the RoC\*RoI and the PCL:SV – non-significant, when plan quality was introduced into the regression models. When combined with the VRS, both made significant individual contributions, suggesting the existence of somewhat independent, meaningful relationships to the risk of being re-imprisoned.

The overall trend was for individual release plan variables, and the overall quality of plans to be more strongly related to re-imprisonment than reconviction. We also saw that release plans only added significant predictive validity to the prediction of re-imprisonment. This weaker relationship to reconviction may be a consequence of the very high base-rates of reconviction in this sample, or the incomplete nature of commitments to desistance (i.e. many see themselves as “going straight” but still commit minor offences). It appears that higher quality release plans may protect offenders from being quickly re-imprisoned, despite their high levels of estimated risk. This suggests that enhancing resources put into release planning may lead to improved parole outcomes. These results add support to past research with child sex offenders that found a relationship between release plan quality and reconviction, and add weight to the idea that there is value in attending to how prepared offenders are for life after prison.

Some limitations of the research should be noted. First, the sample was small due to the low rates of parole granted to high-risk inmates. Second, there was limited information on which to base ratings, and coding was limited to what could be coded. These results however do suggest that release planning scores measure something significant and somewhat distinct from risk instruments, whether based on static or dynamic variables. Ongoing research is looking at how release plans translate into actual experiences for ex-prisoners upon re-entry into the community, and exploring whether the role the prisoner plays in creating the plans determines how predictive they are of reoffending outcomes.

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This study demonstrated that high-risk, violent men with better quality release plans were less likely to be reconvicted, and less likely to return to prison following release from prison. New Zealand Corrections has articulated an increased commitment to assisting with release planning for prisoners, which will hopefully help to reduce the impact these violent men have on our communities and holds promise in supporting the investment put into rehabilitating this population.

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## STUDENT WATER COOLER

**\*\*UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT POSTER PRIZE WINNER—NAACJPC-2\*\***

### The Validity of Self-Reported Risk Among Sex Offenders

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Research on sex offenders is strengthened by information about criminal history, victim characteristics, and demographic variables, which is typically coded from official files, such as police reports, criminal records, and assessment reports. However, such file reviews are time consuming and limited by the quality and availability of relevant file information. Researchers may be tempted to instead look in the direction of self-report to access demographic or criminal information and avoid these issues. Although there is often skepticism about offenders' self-reports (e.g., Gendreau, Irvine, & Knight, 1973; Hare, 1985; Holden, Kroner, Fekken, & Popham, 1992; Posey & Hess, 1984; Schretlen & Arkowitz, 1990), research with general offenders suggests high agreement between self-reported and file-coded criminal history information (e.g., Kroner, Mills, & Morgan, 2007). Research also suggests that some self-report risk assessment measures predict recidivism (e.g., Campbell et al., 2009). Similarly, research with sex offenders indicates that self-report measures can assess deviant sexual interests with reasonable accuracy (Banse, Schmidt, & Clabour, 2010; Laws, Hanson, Osborn, & Greenbaum, 2000; Worling, 2006). The purpose of the present study was to examine the agreement between scores on a widely used sex offender risk assessment instrument (Static-99) when scored solely from self-report information versus when scored by prison staff using official information.

### Method

Participants were 21 adult male sex offenders ( $M = 39.95$  years,  $SD = 8.51$ ) who were serving federal sentences within medium and maximum security prisons in Ontario. Nine of the participants were currently in prison for child molestation and 12 of the participants were currently in prison for rape. Participants were scored on the Static-99 by prison staff as part of formal assessments, with the most recent assessment scores utilized in this study. The Static-99 (Hanson & Thornton, 1999, 2000) is a 10-item actuarial scale used to assess the risk of male sex offenders. Participants' official scores on the Static-99 were compared to self-report information gathered under conditions of confidentiality. Self-report information was not available to score items 3 and 6 on the Static-99. Two items (five and eight) of the self-report items did not match the Static-99 items exactly. Item 5 of the Static-99 asks the amount of prior sexual convictions while the self-report measure asked amount of prior sexual offences. Item 8 of the Static-99 asks if the participant has any unrelated victims while item 8 of the self-report asked how many victims were not family members. These items were still included in the analyses despite the lack of an exact match to the Static-99 items. The prison staff who scored the Static-99 were blind to the self-reported Static-99 scores collected for this study. This file and self-report data were collected as part of a larger study (Hermann, 2010; McPhail, 2010; Sewell, 2010).

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### Results

Self-report and official Static-99 item and total scores are presented in Table 1. As shown in Table 2 moderate to substantial concordance between self-report coded and file-based Static-99 scores was found for most items. Reliability for Item 1 could not be calculated as the self-reported scores were constant. Participants tended to under and over report approximately equally (Table 2) and the self-report information had an average of 86% agreement to file information. Therefore in this sample 14% of the self-report information did not match the file-based information. As shown in Figure 1, there was also high agreement between the self-report and file-based Static-99 total scores.

### Discussion & Conclusion

Overall the self-report information coded into Static-99 variables had relatively high agreement to the file-based information. Offenders tended to accurately report information and under or over reported almost equally. Offenders reported this information under the condition of confidentiality for research purposes only. Studies using information gathered as part of a formal assessment may find different results. However, previous studies on general offenders have found similarly high agreement between self-report and official file information (e.g., Kroner et al., 2007) and Loza et al. (2007) found a self-report risk assessment measure was not affected by conditions of confidentiality versus formal assessments. Despite the high agreement found here it is important to note that our results should not be taken to suggest that self-report should replace file-information as the basis for formal risk assessments.

This study was limited by the fact that two Static-99 items could not be examined and not all items directly matched self-reported items. This study is also limited by the small sample size; however, the strong agreement is encouraging. Despite these limitations this study suggests that file review may not be necessary for research purposes and that self-reported risk may be valid under these research conditions.

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## STUDENT WATER COOLER CON'T

Table 1.  
Descriptive Statistics for Item Scores on Self-Report and Official Static-99

	Self-report		Static-99	
	n	%	n	%
1. Young age	0	0	2	9.5
2. Never married	12	57.1	11	52.4
4. Prior non-sexual violence convictions	14	66.7	12	57.1
5. Prior sexual convictions				
None	10	47.6	9	42.9
1	1	4.8	1	4.8
2 to 3	7	33.3	5	23.8
4 or more	3	14.3	6	28.6
7. Any non-contact offences	8	38.1	4	19
8. Any unrelated victims	18	85.7	18	85.7
9. Any stranger victims	8	38.1	8	38.1
10. Any male victims	4	19	15	23.8
Total	M = 4.19	SD = 2.06	M = 4.23	SD = 1.89

Table 2.  
Agreement of Self-Report and Static-99 Scores

Static-99 Item	K <sup>b</sup>	ICC <sup>c</sup>	Self-Report		
			Under (%)	Agree (%)	Over (%)
1. Age	-- <sup>a</sup>		9.5	90.5	0
2. Ever lived with partner 2+ years	.90		0	95.2	4.8
4. Prior non-sexual violence convictions	.60		4.8	81	14.2
5. Prior sexual offence		.95	19	81	0
7. Non-contact offences	.55		0	80.9	19.1
8. Unrelated victims	.22		9.5	81	9.5
9. Stranger victims	.59		9.5	81	9.5
10. Male victims	.85		4.8	95.2	0
Total		.96	19	62	19

Note. K= Kappa. ICC= Intra-Class Correlation

<sup>a</sup>Reliability was not computed for age as the self-report values were constant.

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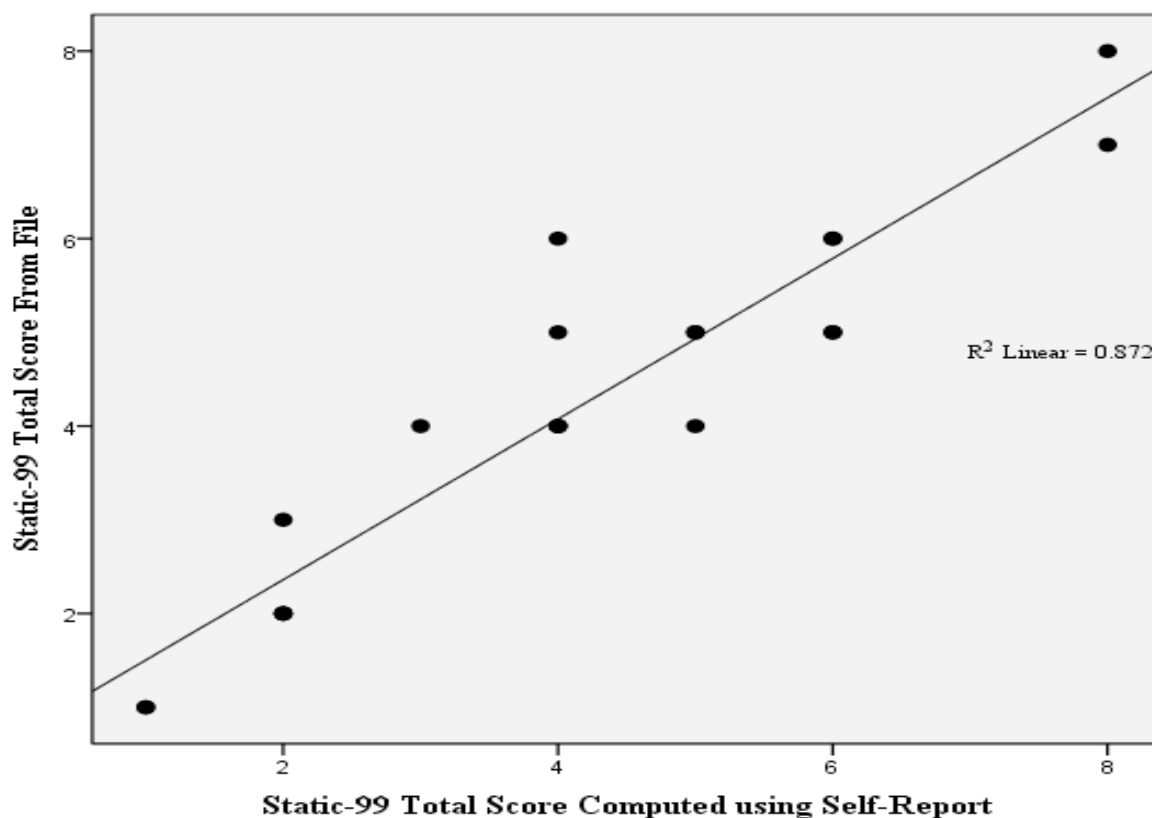


Figure 1. File based Static-99 Total Score Compared to Self-Report Static-99 total Scores, Excluding Items 3 and 6.

## UPCOMING CONFERENCES

### Static-2002R Training: How to Code, Interpret, and Report Static-2002R

**Presenter:** Leslie Helmus, M.A., Carleton University

**Sponsored by:** Forensic Psychology Research Centre (Carleton University)

**Details:** Friday November 25<sup>th</sup>, 2011, 8:30am-5:30pm

**Location:** 2017 Dunton Tower, Carleton University,  
Ottawa, Ontario



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UNIVERSITY

**Training Objectives:**

After completing the training, attendees will be able to:

- Discuss development and validation research on Static-2002R

- Correctly score all Static-2002R items

- Present recidivism estimates, percentile information, and relative risk ratios associated with Static-2002R

**Registration Fees:** \$50 for students  
\$150 for non-students

**For more information contact:** Dr. Shelley Brown, 613-520-2600 ext. 1505,  
[Shelley\\_brown@carleton.ca](mailto:Shelley_brown@carleton.ca), or visit [www.carleton.ca/fprc](http://www.carleton.ca/fprc)



**Forum 2011: Risk, Need, Responsivity  
Past Visions, Present Challenges, Future Directions:  
A Tribute to the Legacy of Don Andrews**

**October 17, 2011—registration and networking  
October 18 and 19, 2011—speakers and workshops  
The Clarion, North bay**

**Keynote Presentations:**

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Professor Emeritus, University of New Brunswick  
Managing Prisons Effectively

Dr. Steve Wormith  
University of Saskatchewan  
Don Andrews: Instrument of Change

**Plenary Presentations:**

Dr. Joel Dvoskin  
University of Arizona College of Medicine  
How to Spend a Fortune Making America Less Safe

Dr. Brian Grant  
Correctional Service of Canada  
Application of Risk-Need-Responsivity  
Principles in a Large Correctional Agency

Dr. Robert Morgan  
Texas Tech University  
Treating Offenders with Mental Illness:  
Enhancing Quality of Life and Improving Public Safety

Dr. Paula Smith,  
University of Cincinnati  
Program Implementation and Treatment  
Integrity: How to Translate Research into Practice

**Workshops:**

Dr. Paula Smith	Emily Henry	Caroline Page	Dr. Colin Cameron	Dr. Joel Dvoskin
Dr. Brian Grant	Dr. Robert Morgan	Dr. Larry Motiuk	Dr. Paul Gendreau	Dr. Steve Wormith
Dr. Bill Marshall	Dr. Ivan Zinger	Dena Derkzen	Dr. Carmen Gress & Bill Small	
Dr. Jim Cheston & Brad Gill-Tamcsu				

**For registration packages or further information please contact: Nathan Cadeau**  
Tel: (705) 494-3372; Fax: (705) 494-3420; email: [nathan.cadeau@ontario.ca](mailto:nathan.cadeau@ontario.ca)

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Child and Youth Mental Illness: Cultural Competency and Pathways to Reduce Recidivism  
October 28, 2011 Toronto, Ontario, Canada  
[www.careconferences.com](http://www.careconferences.com)

Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers (ATSA)  
30<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference  
November 2-5, 2011 Toronto, Ontario, Canada  
[www.atsa.com](http://www.atsa.com)

First Annual International Multidisciplinary Collaborative Conference on Violence Research and Evidence-Based Practice: Sexual Homicide  
November 7-8, 2011 Binghamton, New York, United States  
[www2.binghamton.edu/continuing-education/non-credit-programs/sexual-homicide/index.html](http://www2.binghamton.edu/continuing-education/non-credit-programs/sexual-homicide/index.html)

The American Society of Criminology Annual Meeting  
November 16-19, 2011 Washington, D.C., United States  
[www.asc41.com](http://www.asc41.com)

American Correctional Association Winter Conference  
January 20-25, 2012 Phoenix, Arizona, United States  
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