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The Influence of Halfway House Work Release Program Participation on Offender Recidivism

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Abstract

This research explored the relationship between halfway house work release program (HHWRP) participation and recidivism of male adult offenders. While this study showed participation to be successful in reducing recidivism, results are not statistically significant enough to prove halfway house work release programs as a reliable method of reducing recidivism.

Purpose

High rates of recidivism in the United States is a current criminal justice issue. In order to absolve this issue, research must be conducted to determine useful methods of reducing recidivism rates.

Method

Using data collected from Washington state prison records obtained over the course of 1990 to 1993, the researchers compared the level of education achieved, race, prior drug dependency, and prior alcohol dependency of 218 prisoners, 112 of which HHWRP participants. The researchers analyzed this data to try and find a connection of HHWRP to lowered recidivism rates

Sample Characteristics for Recidivism

Independent Variables	%
Experimental Group	24.1%
Control group	34%
Education	
Less than High School	12.5%
Some High School	33.3%
High School / GED	27.9%
Higher Education	28.6%
Race	
White	24.5%
Non-white	34.4%
Drug Dependency	31.6%
Alcohol Dependency	28.4%

Findings

Of the 63 prisoners who committed recidivism, 12.5% achieved less than high school education, 33.3% had some high school education, 27.9% finished high school or got their GED, and 28.6% achieved higher education. The 63 prisoners were also 24.5% white and 34.4% non-white. 31.6% of those who recidivated were dependent on drugs prior to incarceration and 28.4% were dependent on alcohol.

Despite HHWRP participants recidivated at a lower rate than non-participants, the data is not significant enough to conclude HHWRP are an effective tool of reducing recidivism. Although the results were not statistically significant, they were close to being so with a significance of 0.061.

Full Sample Binary Logistic Regression for Recidivism

Independent Variables	b	SE	B	Sig.	Exp(B)
Experimental Group	-0.583	0.311	-0.583	0.061	0.558
Education	0.66	0.251	0.066	0.793	1.068
Race	0.554	0.314	0.554	0.078	1.741
Drug Dependency	0.982	0.610	0.982	0.107	2.671
Alcohol Dependency	-0.807	0.614	-0.807	0.189	0.446

Future Research

With our research results being very close to being statistically significant, a larger sample could have aided us in detecting real differences. Future researchers could also try to find if race, years of education, and alcohol and drug dependencies were factors of participants recidivating. This data set had missing data which was managed by recoding the variables and may have affected the results as well. There were many participants who did not recidivate so future research could find concrete evidence that halfway house work release programs are an effective tool in reducing recidivism.