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Prison Experience and Reoffending: Exploring the Relationship between Prison Terms, Institutional Treatment, Infractions and Recidivism for Sex Offenders

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As research studies have consistently indicated, sex offenders tend to serve longer periods of incarceration than other types of violent felons. It has been further argued that this discrepancy disproportionately increases the negative influences of imprisonment. This study explores institutional factors that may impact post-release behaviors among convicted sex offenders. Findings indicate that misconduct in custody was positively associated with revocation and sexual recidivism. Moreover, those high-risk offenders who remain in prison for a longer period of time were more likely to reoffend following release.

Article

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Abstract

Given that sex offenders have been found to serve longer prison terms compared with other types of violent criminals, it has been suggested that the influence of imprisonment may impact subsequent reoffending. However, institutional factors are often overlooked in risk assessment studies and very few risk assessment instruments include institutional items within their models. The current study explores prison experience explanations for recidivism among convicted sex offenders and indicates that, with respect to time served, both institutional treatment and institutional infractions demonstrate a significant impact. Findings indicate that misconduct in custody was positively associated with revocation and sexual recidivism. Moreover, longer periods of incarceration significantly increase postrelease reoffending for high-risk sex offenders. Policy implications are made regarding further modifications to risk assessment instruments that will take into account institutional risk factors.

Keywords

prison misconduct, prison term, treatment, recidivism, risk factors, sex offender

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