

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION
REVIEW OF CURRENT RESEARCH
1977

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January, 1978

PUBLICATION: #10186 - 23 - 250 - 1-78 CR
Approved by: Alfred C. Holland, State Purchasing Agent

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>TITLE</u>	<u>PAGE NUMBER</u>
Introduction	1
<u>Overall Recidivism Studies</u>	2
An Analysis of Recidivism Rates Among Residents Released from Mass. Correctional Institutions during the Year 1974	3
<u>Reintegrative Program Evaluations</u>	5
Roxbury Community Rehabilitation Center: A Profile of Participants and a Recidivism Follow-up	6
A Study in a Coeducational Correctional Facility: Differential Effects of Psychoterapy and Other Programs	7
The Concord Achievement Rehabilitation Volunteer Experience: An Evaluation	10
The Effect of the Home Furlough Program on Rates of Recidivism	11
<u>Prediction Studies</u>	12
Development of Base Expectancy Prediction Tables for Treatment and Control Groups in Correctional Research	13
<u>Special Studies</u>	14
Impact Evaluation - Volume I: The Experience of Pre-Release Training	15
Impact Evaluation - Volume II: Supported Work: The Implementation of a Transitional Employment Enterprise	16
Massachusetts Department of Correction Review of Current Research 1975-1976	17
A Study of the Community Based Classification Boards, Oct.-Dec. 1976: Preliminary Findings	18
<u>Annual Statistical Reports</u>	19

INTRODUCTION

This report is intended as a supplement to a previous publication, "Massachusetts Department of Correction Review of Current Research, 1975-1976." The abstracts included here represent the research conducted by the Department during 1977 and the complete reports are available upon request from:

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The first section of this document focuses on one of the major evaluative goals of the Department of Correction Research Unit: the analysis of recidivism rates of individuals released from Massachusetts Correctional Institutions. The abstract included in that section discusses those residents released during 1974 and is based on a one year follow-up from the time of release for each individual.

The second section of this report deals with the evaluation of those programs established under Chapter 777, the Correctional Reform Act. These programs, such as furloughs, pre-release centers, and halfway houses are concerned with the reintegration of the offender back into the community through gradual release from the institutions. Abstracts presented here include an evaluation of the Roxbury Rehabilitation Center, the effects of the home furlough program, an evaluation of the Concord Achievement Rehabilitation Volunteer Experience (part of the State Hospital Program between MCI-Concord and the Walter E. Fernald State School) and an overview of the coeducational correctional experience at MCI Framingham.

The abstract presented in the Prediction Studies section summarizes a report specifically written in response to numerous requests for an explanation of the methodology used in many Research Unit reports. In an effort to control for possible selection bias in a particular sample, the Department of Correction's Research Unit has used Base Expectancy Prediction Tables instead of the more commonly used method of random allocation. This report explains the theory behind the development of these tables as well as illustrating their use by specific examples.

Special studies researched during 1977 include evaluations of the pre-release training experience, the implementation of supported work programs and a study of a special community based classification board within each of the four major correctional facilities (MCI-Walpole, MCI-Concord, MCI-Norfolk and MCI-Framingham).

The final section of this report provides a complete listing and brief description of each of the statistical reports published annually by the Department of Correction that are now available for 1976.

OVERALL RECIDIVISM STUDIES

AN ANALYSIS OF RECIDIVISM RATES AMONG RESIDENTS RELEASED
FROM MASSACHUSETTS CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS DURING
THE YEAR 1974

September 1977

Daniel P. LeClair

The present study contains an analysis of differential recidivism rates for individuals released from Massachusetts Correctional Institutions during the year 1974. Incorporated in the analysis is a series of comparisons between the finding of the 1974 releases and previous findings from the analysis of releasee populations in the years 1966, 1971, 1972 and 1973.

Our analysis revealed that many of the basic trends isolated in previous recidivism studies by the Department of Correction continue to occur. For example, it is clear that in recent years rates of recidivism have dropped for releases from Massachusetts State Correctional Institutions. For releases in the year 1966, the mean rate of recidivism was 30%; for 1971, it was 25%; for 1972, 22%; for 1973, 19%; and for 1974, 19%. Since the rates for 1973 and 1974 are the same, evidence of a possible leveling off of the downward trend exists.

A second major finding of our analysis was that strong evidence exists which demonstrates that Furlough Program participation, is an important variable in accounting for the reduction in recidivism that has occurred in Massachusetts over the past few years. For individuals who have received furloughs prior to release from prison, a significantly lower rate of recidivism occurs. Our analysis indicated that this reduction in recidivism is due to the impact of the Furlough Program and not to the types of inmates who were selected for furloughs. This finding also occurred in the analysis of the releasee chart for the year 1973.

A third major finding was that the security level of the institution from which an individual is released has a bearing on the chances that the individual will recidivate. Individuals released from minimum security institutions and pre-release centers have a significantly lower probability of recidivating than do individuals released directly from maximum and medium security institutions. Individuals released directly from maximum security institutions have the highest probability of recidivating. Again, our analysis revealed that this recidivism

differential held even after we controlled for selection factors.

A fourth major finding, documented in research studies on prior releasee populations, was that a shift has occurred concerning the proportion of recidivists in the various categories of return. Specifically, a lower proportion of recidivists are being returned for a technical violation of parole conditions. Instead, the category of return is more likely to be for reason of a new arrest or for receiving a new commitment from the courts. We attribute the decrease in the number of parole revocations for reason of a technical infraction of parole rules to the implementation of the Morrissey Vs Brewer decision. This trend must be taken into account as also having an impact on the rates of recidivism for recent years.

Analysis concludes that the drop in rates of recidivism that has recently occurred for releasees from Massachusetts Correctional Institutions is attributable in the interactive effects of three events. These events are: (1) the introduction of the Furlough Program; (2) the introduction of graduated release programs (pre-release centers, half-way houses, work release programs, and education-release programs); and (3) the implementation of the Morrissey Vs Brewer decision in the parole revocation process.

REINTEGRATIVE PROGRAM EVALUATIONS

ROXBURY COMMUNITY REHABILITATION CENTER: A PROFILE OF
PARTICIPANTS AND A RECIDIVISM FOLLOW-UP
MARCH 1977 JOSEPH LANDOLFI

The present analysis consists of an evaluation of the Roxbury Community Rehabilitation Center (CRC), a private organization operated by the Roxbury Multi-Service Center. The CRC was designated a community-based pre-release center by the Massachusetts Department of Correction in January, 1974.

The present study was designed with the purpose of answering the following research questions:

1. What variables distinguish between individuals who complete and individuals who do not complete their assignments to the CRC pre-release program?
2. Are those inmates who ended their terms of incarceration in the CRC less likely to be reincarcerated within one year of their release than are similar types of inmates who did not participate in the pre-release program?

The evaluation resulted in two findings. First, of the 90 individuals who participated in the pre-release program since the inception of the program through December 1975, 51 (57%) successfully terminated from the facility. The remaining 39 (43%) were either returned to the various Massachusetts Correctional Institutions or declared escapees. A statistical comparison of commitment, personal history background characteristics and criminal history background characteristics yielded thirteen (13) variables that produced statistically significant differences between the two completion samples. This analysis resulted in a profile based on the above mentioned variables of a typical CRC program non-completer.

Secondly, even after controlling for a possible selection bias it was determined that individuals who had completed the CRC program exhibited a lower rate of recidivism than similar types of individuals who did not participate in the pre-release program. The difference, however, between the two rates was not statistically significant.

A STUDY IN A COEDUCATIONAL CORRECTIONAL
FACILITY: DIFFERENTIAL EFFECTS OF
PSYCHOTHERAPY AND OTHER PROGRAMS
1977

This study of MCI-Framingham was divided into four general areas for investigation: a recidivism follow-up, including an analysis of background characteristics and recidivism; an analysis of the effect of selected programs on recidivism; an analysis of data collected by conducting inmate and staff interviews; and, an analysis of differential effects of selected programs on recidivism. A focus of this study was on the Division of Legal Medicine Counseling Program at MCI-Framingham.

Recidivism Follow-up

Overall, the Framingham experience had a significant impact in reducing recidivism for the 255 men and women who were followed up for one year subsequent to their release to the community. The actual recidivism rate for these individuals (16.5%) was significantly lower than their expected recidivism rate (28.2%), which was derived from base expectancy categories. The impact on recidivism tended to be greater for women, who had an expected recidivism rate of 32.0% and an actual recidivism rate of 17.1%, than it was for men, who had an expected rate of 19.7% and an actual rate of 14.9%.

The Framingham experience seemed to have the greatest impact, in terms of recidivism reduction, on men and women who were traditionally considered to be the highest recidivism risks...i.e., men and women who were young and who had a history of drug involvement and court appearances.

Program Analysis

Using the same sample, our investigation of furlough work release, education release, and DLM counseling programs indicated that furlough and work release programs seemed to have a positive impact on inmates in terms of recidivism reduction. No conclusions could be determined about the education release program because of the small number of participants. Recidivism rates were higher for participants in the DLM counseling program than they were for non-participants.

Differential Effects of Treatment Programs

This section analyzed the different effects of three treatment programs, furlough, work release, and DLM counseling on the

different types of inmates who participated.

Our analysis of the furlough program revealed that participation in furlough program was associated with significantly lower recidivism rates. The inmates who seemed to benefit most from this program were older, white, from non-urban areas, with a higher level of education and with extensive criminal histories. Most of these characteristics were generally associated with a higher socio-economic background.

As in the furlough program, participation in the work release program was shown to relate positively to lower recidivism rates. The inmates who seemed to benefit most from work release were older, less educated, from urban areas, with less stable work histories and more previous adult incarcerations. Some of these characteristics are associated with a lower socio-economic background which is in direct contrast with the findings for the furlough program.

Overall, participation in the DLM counseling program was found to be associated with higher recidivism rates. Also, no one type of offender was found to have benefited significantly from participation in DLM counseling. A major finding for this section was that younger inmates and inmates with a lower level of education who participated in the DLM counseling program were found to have significantly higher recidivism rates than their counterparts who were non-participants.

Inmate and Staff Interview Data

Interviews on furlough, work release, education release and DLM counseling programs were conducted with 40 inmates and 31 staff. Most staff and inmates had positive feelings about furlough and work release programs, but were concerned about the screening process for acceptance into these programs.

A relatively large number of both inmates and staff expressed a lack of knowledge about the education release program.

In general, staff feel much more positively about DLM counseling program than the inmates did. Trust and confidentiality were issues of concern for inmates. Both staff and inmates felt there was some pressure on inmates to participate in counseling.

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April, 1977

THE CONCORD ACHIEVEMENT REHABILITATION
VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE: AN EVALUATION

August 1977

Faye Farrington &
Shari Wittenberg

One aspect of Massachusetts' approach to Community reintegration of the offender is the State Hospital Program whereby inmates are released from the institution during the day to work in state hospitals. One such program is the Concord Achievement Rehabilitation Volunteer Experience (C.A.R.V.E.), which has been in existence since 1968. The purpose of the present study was to determine whether participants in the C.A.R.V.E. Program were less likely to be reincarcerated within 1 year after release than other releasees who had not participated in the program. Analysis revealed that the Recidivism Rate of C.A.R.V.E. participants (18%) was much lower than would have been expected (33%). Their Recidivism Rate was also lower than that of the General Releasee population of MCI-Concord (28%). A comparison of program completers versus non-completers showed a disproportionately high number of program completers who reported to have a skilled position before being incarcerated. This was the only statistically significant difference found between the two sub-samples. It was concluded that the C.A.R.V.E. Program was a positive rehabilitative experience for residents at MCI-Concord.

THE EFFECT OF THE HOME FURLOUGH
PROGRAM ON RATES OF RECIDIVISM
(Submitted for Publication)

December 1977

Daniel P. LeClair

In an effort to evaluate the effectiveness of the furlough program as a correctional device, an analysis of rates of recidivism for individuals released from Massachusetts' state correctional institutions in the years 1973 and 1974 was conducted. The following research question was addressed: are inmates who experience one or more furloughs during the term of their incarceration less likely to be reincarcerated within one year of their eventual release from prison than are similar types of inmates who do not participate in the furlough program during the period of their incarceration? Selection factors were controlled via the use of Base Expectancy Tables. Analysis of the data indicated that the participation in the Home Furlough Program led to a significant reduction in recidivism rates. The data were interpreted as providing preliminary evidence that the use of furlough programs during the period of incarceration provides a positive reintegrative function. It was concluded that programmatic contributions to the process of societal reintegration can be effective devices for reducing the repeated criminal behavior of the prison releasee.

PREDICTION STUDIES

DEVELOPMENT OF BASE EXPECTANCY PREDICTION
TABLES FOR TREATMENT AND CONTROL GROUPS
IN CORRECTIONAL RESEARCH

August 1977

Daniel P. LeClair

When dealing with the problem of possible selection bias in a sample, the Research Unit of the Massachusetts Department of Correction has traditionally used Base Expectancy Prediction Tables as an alternative to random allocation. This instrument was developed as a device through which an estimation is made of the varying degrees to which individuals in a given sample (usually a prison population) or subsample (such as a particular treatment group) are at risk of recidivating after being released into the community. Individuals are placed into risk groups based on statistical comparison with a separate population not receiving the specified treatment whose recidivism rates are already known. An Expected Outcome Rate is then calculated for the treatment group which is later compared with the Actual Outcome Rate.

The present report is a detailed explanation of both the theoretical and methodological aspects of developing these Base Expectancy Tables. To illustrate the method, an example was taken from an already published research study comparing the rehabilitative effects of two pre-release centers (Boston State Pre-Release and Shirley Pre-Release). Thus, after an explanation of the Base Expectancy Tables, this paper actually applies the table to these two pre-release centers by developing expected recidivism rates. This report was specifically written in response to the numerous requests received by the Research Unit for the specific methods used in developing Base Expectancy Tables.

SPECIAL STUDIES

IMPACT EVALUATION - VOLUME I
THE EXPERIENCE OF PRE-RELEASE TRAINING
MAY 1977 ELLEN CHAYET

Pre-release training is a component of a multi-faceted strategy (funded by the "Impact" grant) aimed at broadening and complementing programs for commitments to MCI-Concord. The program's objective was to reduce the high non-completion rate of these men at pre-release facilities. Eight training cycles were conducted at MCI-Shirley, a pre-release center, during the funding period. The goal of these workshops was to facilitate the potentially difficult transition from maximum security to pre-release status by dealing with areas directly concerning adjustment to community reintegration.

A total of 104 men participated; of these, 96 graduated, for a cycle completion rate of 92.3 percent. These graduates were compared to a control group of Concord commitments who were released directly to a community facility during the same time period as pre-release training occurred. Each group's inter-institutional movement was tracked for ten months subsequent to transfer to pre-release, which allowed for determination of program non-completion rates. Using the definition of a non-completer as anyone returned to a higher security level or declared escaped-at-large, we found that 32 of the 77 workshop graduates who were terminated from pre-release fit these criteria, for a non-completion rate of 41.6 percent. When compared to pre-release clients who did not receive any intervention, however, this rate was significantly higher (the program non-completion rate for clients transferred directly to pre-release was 16.9 percent). When actual Concord commitments were isolated from the sample that received training, the same relationship was found. Cycle graduates originally committed to Concord failed to complete pre-release at a rate of 40.0 percent, compared to 16.9 percent of the control group. Another finding highlighted a pattern demonstrated by pre-release training clients to continue as pre-release residents for prolonged periods of time.

The study concludes that although the pre-release training concept does not have a positive impact on community-based program non-completion rates, further study may be necessary. Issues such as the possibility of the existence of a selection bias in choosing high risk candidates for participation and the disproportionate number of cycle graduates still remaining at their placements as of ten months were cited. A strategy for addressing these questions by future research is outlined.

IMPACT EVALUATION - VOLUME II
SUPPORTED WORK: THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A
TRANSITIONAL EMPLOYMENT ENTERPRISE

September 1977

Ellen Chayet

As a portion of a comprehensive evaluation of the program components of the Special Impact - Corrections grant (June, 1975 to May, 1976), the implementation of Supported Work during that year was studied. Based on a model developed by the Vera Institute in New York, supported work was conceptualized as a transitional employment enterprise, designed to equip the marginally employable offender or ex-offender with the skills and attitudes requisite for employment in the community. The vehicle to achieve this was the operation of self-supporting business ventures, which served the dual purpose of training clients and actually enabling them to work for wages. The effort was subcontracted on a "purchase of slots" basis, slated primarily for residents of a community-based facility and parolees. This study concerns the experience of program participation of Supported Work clients who were referred via the Impact mechanism.

Four enterprises served as training sites for correctional clients. The endeavors provided experience in either paint deleading, building repair and maintenance, or graphic arts. A total of 53 individuals participated. Of those who terminated from the program in some manner (36), eight (22.2 percent) were positive terminations (resulting from finding another job or pursuing education); 17 (47.2 percent) were negative terminations (the employee was fired, rearrested, or returned to higher custody); and eleven (30.6 percent) were neutral terminations (individuals who moved, or who resigned due to health factors, or dissatisfaction with the program).

Clients were found to be registered as program participants for a relatively short time; 41.7 percent were employed for one month or less, whereas 25 percent remained for five months or longer. Given the number and length of suspensions evidenced, however (36.1 percent had been suspended at least once), length of program participation was readjusted to reflect these periods. The result indicated that actually, 47.2 percent of all terminated clients had actively participated in Supported Work for one month or less. Even when all clients were included in these calculations, over thirty percent were program participants for this period of time. Individuals employed for longer than five months constituted only 35.9 percent of the sample.

Implications of the findings in terms of program objectives were discussed. In view of the few number of individuals serviced, the rate of negative terminations from the program, and the short length of actual participation (as compared to concept parameters, which specified six months to one year as necessary to attain maximum program benefit), no definitive conclusions are drawn regarding either short-term or long-range program impact.

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION
REVIEW OF CURRENT RESEARCH
1975 - 1976
MAY 1977 SHARI WITTENBERG

This document represents a collection of abstracts of research studies conducted by the Department of Correction during 1975 and 1976. The reports abstracted include program evaluations, recidivism studies, special projects, and annual statistical reports, and are available upon request from the Department.

A STUDY OF THE COMMUNITY BASED CLASSIFICATION BOARDS,
OCTOBER-DECEMBER, 1976 PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

September 1977

Shari Wittenberg

A special Community-Based Classification Board was in operation from October to December 1976 for the purpose of reviewing inmates who were eligible to be transferred to a community-based correctional program from each of the four major correctional facilities (MCI-Walpole, MCI-Concord, MCI-Norfolk, and MCI-Bridgewater). A total of 321 individuals were reviewed by the Board during this three month period and were either recommended to the Commissioner for transfer to a lower security facility (46.1% of the sample) or were denied by the Board or by the Commissioner's office for transfer at that time (53.9% of the sample).

A high proportion (88.5%) of the 148 individuals approved for placement were in fact, placed into community based facilities, and those individuals had a success rate of 71.0%. Of the 173 individuals rejected for transfer to a lower security facility, 113 (65.3%) were actually transferred to a community based facility during the six month follow-up period. Their success rate was 77.0%, which was even higher than for those actually approved for placement. For the entire sample, therefore, the failure rate was only 22.1%, reflecting 54 failures out of 244 individuals reclassified to lower security facilities. Since previous research in Massachusetts pre-release facilities have shown failure rates to range between 30% and 50%, it was concluded that the Community Based Classification Board was successful in placing individuals into community based facilities during that period.

ANNUAL STATISTICAL REPORTS

ANNUAL STATISTICAL REPORTS

The following statistical reports are prepared yearly by the Department of Correction and are now available for 1976:

Yearly Statistical Report of the Community Rehabilitation System:
John Saia

Data in this report include population movement to and from pre-release centers and halfway houses, program data, and post-release data for community-based correctional facilities in Massachusetts.

Statistical Tables Describing the Background Characteristics and Recidivism Rates of Releases from Massachusetts Correctional Institutions in the year 1974
Division of Research

This report presents statistical tables on the 911 individuals released from the Massachusetts State Correctional Institutions during 1974. The tables contain two types of information: 1) statistical data describing the characteristics of individuals released from each Massachusetts Correctional Institution in 1974; and 2) the rates of recidivism for these individuals cross-tabulated according to the categories of the statistical data.

A Description of the Residents of the Massachusetts Correctional Institutions on January 1, 1977
Charles Metzler

The tables presented in this report describe the characteristics of the inmates in each Massachusetts Correctional Institution on January 1, 1977. The information, which is broken down by institution, includes background characteristics, present offense, criminal history, and furlough participation.

A Description of Releasees from the Massachusetts Correctional Institutions During 1976
Charles Metzler

The present report is a description of the characteristics of the inmates released into the community from the Massachusetts Correctional Institutions during 1976. It contains information on personal background characteristics, present offense, criminal history, and furlough participation.

Population Movement in the Massachusetts Department of Correction During 1976
Charles Metzler

Inmate population movement during 1976 is presented in this report. The information included represents numbers of admissions and releases of various types, the effect of changes in the volume of movements on the size of the institutional population, and numbers of transfers within the system.

A Statistical Description of Court Commitments to the Massachusetts Correctional Institutions During 1976 Charles Metzler

The tables in this report contain a statistical description of court commitments during 1976 to MCI-Walpole, Concord, and Framingham in terms of personal background characteristics, present offense, and criminal history characteristics.

A Statistical Description of Commitments to Mass. Houses of Correction During 1976 Charles Metzler

This report contains a brief description of commitments to the Massachusetts County Facilities (houses of correction) during 1976 including present offense, sentence, month committed, age at incarceration, sex, and marital status.

1976 Yearly Statistical Report of the Furlough Program Charles Metzler

A brief overview of the Massachusetts furlough program is contained in this report as well as comparisons of furlough characteristics over the past four years. Frequency distributions presented include personal background characteristics, present offense and criminal history variables for the year 1976.