Repetitive In-Prison Violence and Self-Harm

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Background

- Little is known about the differences between those who commit single or repetitive incidents of violence in prison.

- Although well known in community that violence and self-harm appear linked, and many health services already routinely assess for both behaviours but not common practice in prison practice.
Study

Aims:

- To identify if there are demographic, incident style & post-incident management differences between prisoners who engage in single or repetitive incidents of:
  - Violence (physical harm to another or ‘assault’)
  - Self-harm (physical harm to self)
  - Both violence and self-harm
Method

Participants

- To include all perpetrators of at least 2 (repetitive) violence and/or self-harm whilst at study prison between 2010-2014 (n = 117).
  - 111 had 1+ assault incident
  - 107 had 1+ self-harm incident

- Prison in London as both Cat B Local (April 2010- May 2012) & Cat C Resettlement (May 2012- Dec 2014).

- Comparison group: Single incidents of violence or self-harm at study prison but also had no other assault/SH incident at ANY stage of prison sentence recorded on PNOMIS (n = 61).
Method (cont)

- Demographic and offence/sentencing details as recorded by PNOMIS since 2010.
- Review all incident details as recorded by PNOMIS at ANY stage of prison since 2010.
- Adjudications (any stage since 2010)

- Lots of other data…. (not to be talked through today)
Results

Is violence or self-harm most likely in repeated in-prison perpetrators?

- Repetitive assaults only: 29%
- Repetitive self-harm only: 30%
- Both violence and self-harm: 41%
- So, for the mathematicians amongst you, if repeat one behaviour there may be around 60% likelihood will (at some point) engage in the other in prison.
### Number of Incidents x Time In Prison (repeated only)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>No. incidents</th>
<th>Days</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mean (SD)</td>
<td>Mean (SD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSH only</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>6.5 (11.8)</td>
<td>601.6 (478.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assault only</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>3.6 (1.8)</td>
<td>668.6 (503.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Ass: 2.7 (2.7); DSH 5.5 (7.9)</td>
<td>869.2 (656.1)*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Significant difference in time only between DSH only & Both (ANOVA p=.041)
- For single category groups: No sig correlation between number of assaults or self-harm and time in prison
- For Both group: Positive sig correlation between no. of incidents (assault .3; self-harm .46) and time in prison.
Assault: single vs repeated

**Chi-Square**

**Current Offence**
No sig difference in current offence type between single and repeated assaults (all DSH only removed) which included at least 1 assault except:

- **Repeated assaults: sig less theft/burglary** (p=.038)

Violence, weapon offences etc. not sig.

**In prison behaviour:**
Repeated assaulters sig more incidents overall (p =.02) plus specific incidents of:

- **DSH** *(number and presence)*
- **Damage to property** *(number and presence)*
- **Miscellaneous** *(number and presence)*
- **Barricades** *(presence but not number)*

No relationship with weapons, drugs, mobiles amongst others
Assault only vs both Assault and DSH

Chi-Square & ANOVA
No differences in: whether staff or prisoner assault first; current offence differences nor security category but...

In prison behaviour
‘Both’ Group have sig. more incidents classed as:
- Damage to property
- Fire
- Incidents at height
- Drug

Management of Behaviour
Significantly more charges, verdicts and sanctions against the BOTH group.

e.g. Charges: Assault Only: 6.7 (8.9)
                Both:    16.8 (20.2)
Very similar numbers for sanctions
Conclusions

When working with one type of risk:

- **Consider assessing for both types of behaviour**
- General rule-breaking in-prison behaviour may indicate raised risk for both self-harm and assaults.
- The longer that someone is in prison the more likely they are to ‘cross-over’ to the other behaviour.
- Recent community violent offending is not a good factor to distinguish single from repeat violence likelihood in prison.
- Consider impact of sanctions on risk of engaging in a different behaviour
- Engagement in both assaults and self-harm may indicate a general maladjustment to prison.
- **Consider a single case management approach to manage both risks.**
Next steps

Analysis of:

- Further demographic data
- Assault and DSH content and post-incident management
- Temporal analysis
- Interaction effects
- Repetitive DSH vs Both

Research being repeated in another (very different) establishment.
Contact

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