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INTENSIVE CASELOAD PILOT PROJECT:

RESEARCH REPORT

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Introduction:

Many probation and parole agencies have experimented with Intensive Caseloads. Although "Intensive Caseloads" can have various interpretations, the intent for this report refers to a relatively small caseload of high risk cases. Many states, most notably California, have experimented with this type of caseload with very mixed and ambiguous results. Quite often studies in this area have had difficulty in research design, implementation, measurement, and replicability of findings. This report will detail similar difficulties with the Texas study.

The theory behind Intensive caseloads basically hypothesizes that specially trained officers with small caseloads of high risk cases can more effectively supervise these cases than in a Regular Caseload. In this report, and attached tables and graphs, Intensive cases supervised on the Intensive Caseload Pilot Project will be referred to as Intensive. Intensive cases supervised on Regular caseloads, utilized as a control group, supervised as part of a Regular caseload of Intensive, Medium, and Minimum cases, will be referred to as Regular Caseload Intensives.

This report will detail the research methodology utilized to evaluate this project, summarize research findings regarding the project, and make policy recommendation based on these findings and other considerations.

Research Methodology:

The Division of Field Supervision has utilized an Intensive Caseload Project in Region V (Ft. Worth) for approximately 2 years. Caseload size has been approximately 40, which is about half the average caseload size in Region V. Three Parole Officers have been assigned Intensive caseloads during the project.

One of the major difficulties in the analysis of this project is the inconsistency in assignment of cases to Intensive caseloads. Initially cases were assigned based strictly on the case classification instruments. Case classified as Intensive were assigned to the Intensive caseload officers. However, as the project evolved, assignment to Intensive caseloads became based on a "halfway-back" model. In other words, cases experiencing difficulties or minor violations were assigned to the Intensive officers. This makes it difficult to develop a comparable control group for comparison and changes the nature and purpose of Intensive caseloads, which makes evaluation difficult.

Nevertheless, a research project was initiated to evaluate the impact of the Intensive caseload project. The sample consisted of all active cases supervised by the Intensive caseload officers in Ft. Worth in January 1985 and compared to a random sample of Intensive cases, supervised as part of a Regular caseload, in each of the other seven regions. Cases were dropped from the sample if they were in any parole violation status at the beginning of the study (January 1985) that had not been resolved. The final sample consisted of 113 Intensive cases from the 3 Intensive caseload

officers and 266 Intensive cases from officers around the state who carried Regular caseloads. Cases were followed for a six month period to determine subsequent release outcome.

Contacts:

As Table 1 and the attached graph indicates, the Intensive officers were able to make significantly more contacts per case per month than Regular caseload officers. Intensive officers averaged 3.4 contacts per case per month, while Regular caseload officers averaged only 1.6 contacts per case per month for their Intensive cases.

Implicit in the rationale for making additional contacts is the theory that increased contacts represents increased delivery of services and/or surveillance in an attempt to reduce criminal behavior. Table 2 and graph presents ambiguous results regarding this theory. While the 4.0 contacts per case category has the highest success rate, there is little consistency in the relationship between contacts and arrests. For instance, Intensive cases averaging 3.5 contacts per case per month had a 73% success rate, while Intensive cases on regular caseloads with only 1.0 contact per month had a 78% success rate. Controlling for risk (Table 3 and graph) does not change the ambiguous nature of the relationships. It should be stressed that the sample size in this study is small, the outcome measures relatively crude, the quality of contacts unmeasured, and the identification and assignment to Intensive cases rather arbitrary. In other words, little definitive knowledge can be gleaned from the above data, especially regarding the efficacy of contacts.

Outcome:

Table 4 and graph indicates little difference between Intensive and Regular caseloads regarding the percent of cases with no parole rule violations, while there is a significant 10% difference in the percent of cases that did not have arrests during the study period. Table 5 controls for risk, and this relationship continues to persist, with the most significant difference in the poor risk category. It would appear that the Intensive Caseload cases had a lower failure rate than the Intensive cases on regular caseloads. Again, it must be emphasized that there are serious flaws in this research that makes it difficult to evaluate the significance of these findings. For instance, many of the Intensive cases had been in violation prior to the study and were subsequently placed on the Intensive caseload. There was no ability to control for this history and thus compared to the control group of Intensives.

Analysis:

It would appear that the Intensive Caseload methodology positively impacts these cases as reflected in lower arrest rates. Even if this relationship is true and if this relation holds over time, (which is unknown) another component of this analysis would require evaluating the cost of effecting this reduction in arrests.

Utilizing caseload averages, Region V D.P.O.'s have averaged 80 cases per officer. The three intensive officers have averaged 40 cases. Therefore, this project required 3 officers vs. 1.5 under caseload assignment. Under a workload distribution, 120 Intensive cases would have required 2.5 officers (120 cases x 2.5 hrs/case = 300 hrs per month: 300 hr./120 hrs. per officer requires 2.5 officers). Thus, it could be estimated that a project of this nature requires anywhere from .5 to 1.5 additional officers for 120 Intensive cases.

In conjunction with this calculation, the reduction in arrests could be calculated on a hypothetical basis. Based on the previously cited data, 68% of Regular Caseload Intensives had no arrests vs. 78% of Intensive caseload cases, during the six-month follow-up. Utilizing 120 Intensives for this example, 38 Regular Caseload Intensives would have had an arrest, while 26 Intensive caseload cases would have had an arrest. Thus, theoretically, for the cost of .5 to 1.5 officers, 12 arrests could have been prevented. Over the 6 month period this roughly would translate into a cost of $7,500 to $22,500* to prevent 12 arrests or $625 to $1,875 per prevented arrest. What price justice?

Conclusions:

The original intent of an Intensive Caseload Project was to examine the possibility of reducing the recidivism rate of high risk cases. For reasons cited earlier, the research findings of this project are ambiguous. Further, the additional manpower requirements of this project have exacerbated work requirements in Region V. Without solid convincing data to support continuation of this project, in the current environment, it would be recommended that this pilot project be discontinued as an experiment in reducing recidivism. As indicated earlier, however, parole officers in Region V have utilized the Intensive Caseload Project as a "halfway-back" program. This may prove to be a meaningful sanction and methodology in lieu of revocation for some cases. An Intensive caseload based on this model should be evaluated and could be a rationale for continuation and possible expansion of this model as a useful sanction for parole officers to utilize.

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*.5 of an officer for 6 months would cost $7,500 based on an annual salary of $30,000/$22,500 for 1.5 officers.

TABLE 1

Intensive Caseload Study: Contacts Per Case Per Month

Caseload Type	Contacts Per Case Per Month
Intensive	3.4 (384 contacts/113 cases)
Regular	1.6 (426 contacts/266 cases)

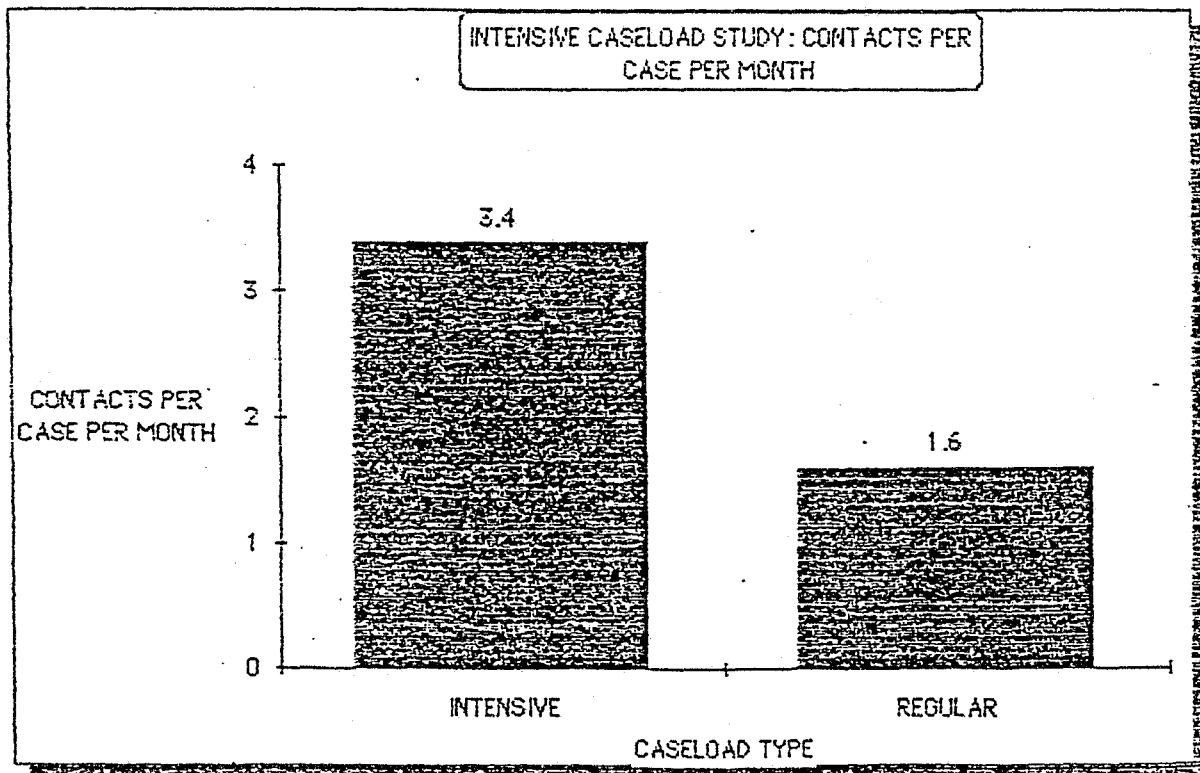INTENSIVE CASELOAD STUDY: CONTACTS PER CASE PER MONTH

TABLE 2

Intensive Caseload Study: Arrests by Contacts Per Month

Percent of Cases with No Arrest

Caseload Type

Contacts Per Case Per Month	Intensive	Regular
1.00		78% (28/ 36)
1.50		65% (44/ 68)
2.00		65% (86/132)
2.50		80% (24/ 30)
3.00		
3.50	73% (54/74)	
4.00	90% (35/39)	

INTENSIVE CASELOAD STUDY: ARRESTS BY CONTACTS PER MONTH
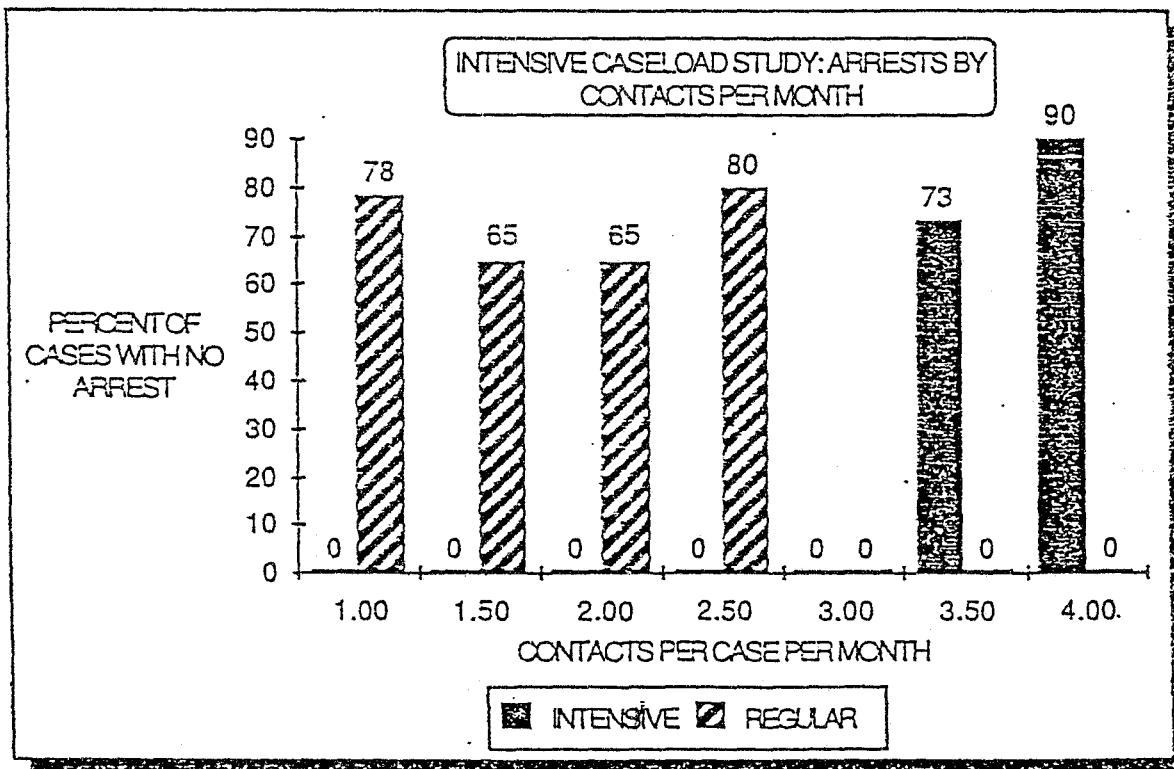
TABLE 3

Intensive Caseload Study: Arrests by Contacts Per Month by Salient Factor Score

Contacts Per Case Per Month		Percent of Cases with No Arrests by Salient Factor Score			
		Poor	Fair	Good	Totals
1.00	⎫	75% (9/12)	79% (11/14)	50% (2/ 4)	73% (22/ 30)
1.50	Regular	69% (11/16)	64% (18/28)	67% (12/18)	66% (41/ 62)
2.00	Caseload	48% (13/27)	67% (40/60)	72% (26/36)	64% (79/123)
2.50	⎭	86% (6/ 7)	77% (10/13)	100% (8/ 8)	86% (24/ 28)
3.50	Intensive	68% (13/19)	68% (23/34)	88% (15/17)	73% (51/ 70)
4.00	Caseload	92% (11/12)	93% (13/14)	75% (6/ 8)	88% (30/ 34)

INTENSIVE CASELOAD PILOT PROJECT

PERCENT OF CASES WITH NO ARRESTS BY NUMBER OF CONTACTS PER CASE PER MONTH:INTENSIVE (3.5-4 CONTACTS) VS. REGULAR (1-2.5 CONTACTS) CASELOADS: BY SALIENT FACTOR SCORE
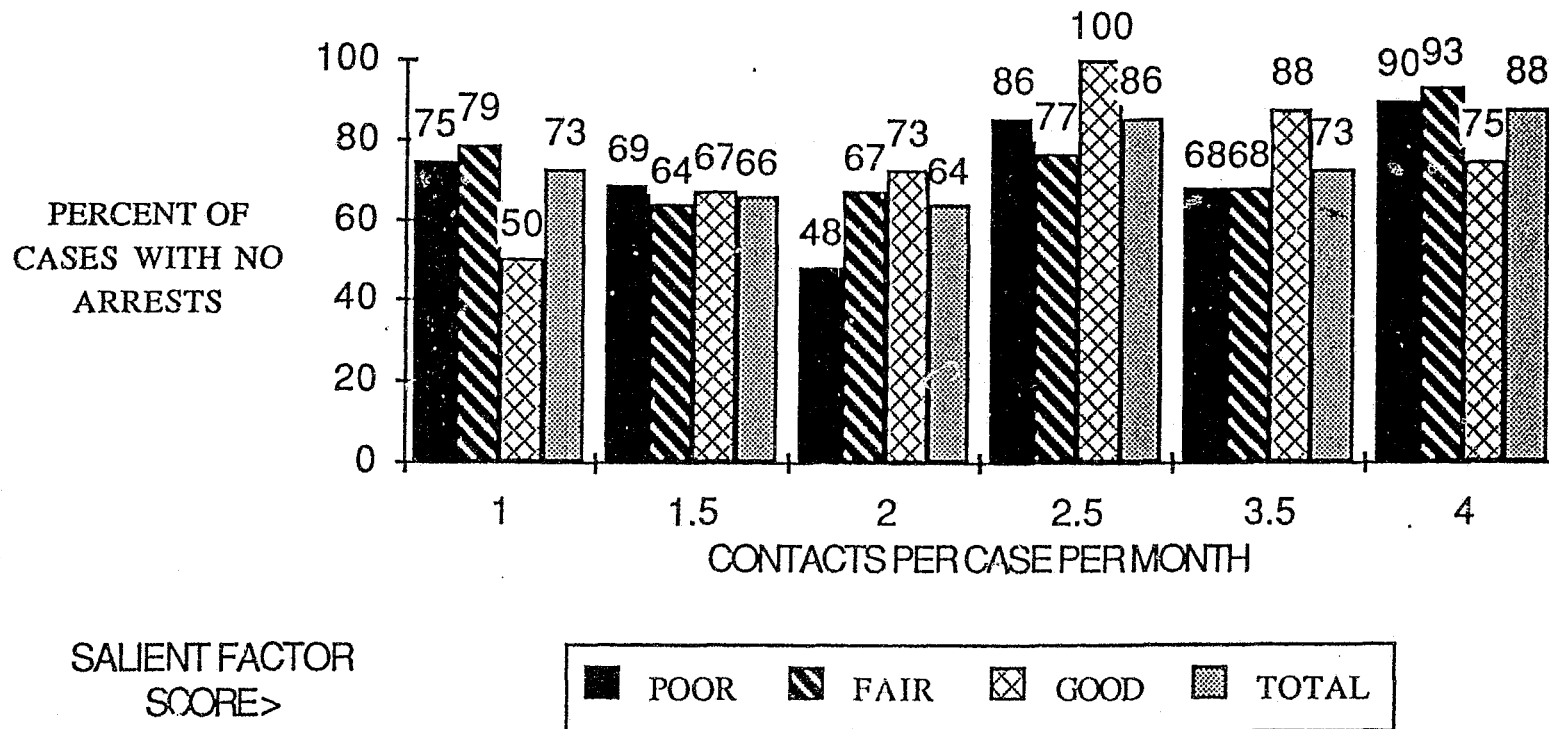

PERCENT OF CASES WITH NO ARRESTS

SALIENT FACTOR SCORE>

CONTACTS PER CASE PER MONTH

POOR   FAIR   GOOD   TOTAL

TABLE 4

Intensive Caseload Study: Parole Rule Violations and Arrests

	Percent of Cases with No:	
Caseload Type	Parole Rule Violations	Arrests
Intensive	66% (69/104)	78% (81/104)
Regular	62% (151/243)	68% (166/243)

INTENSIVE CASELOAD STUDY: PERCENT OF CASES WITH NO PAROLE RULE VIOLATIONS / ARRESTS
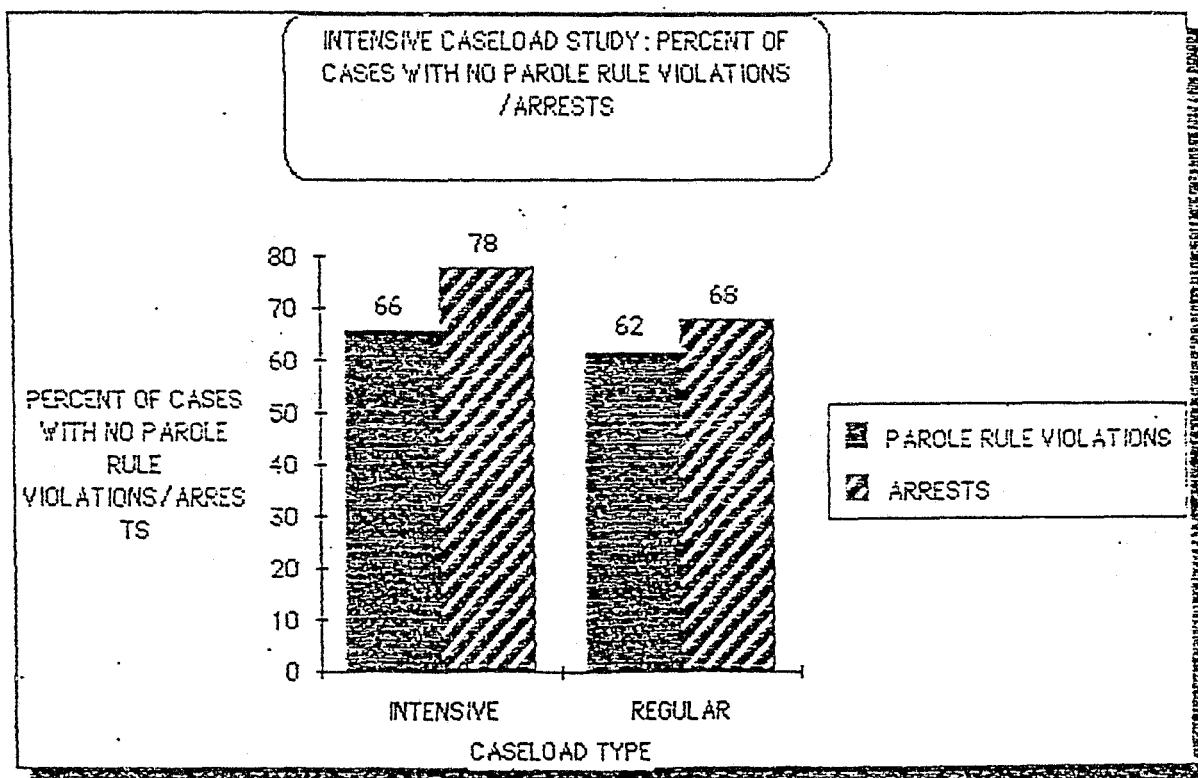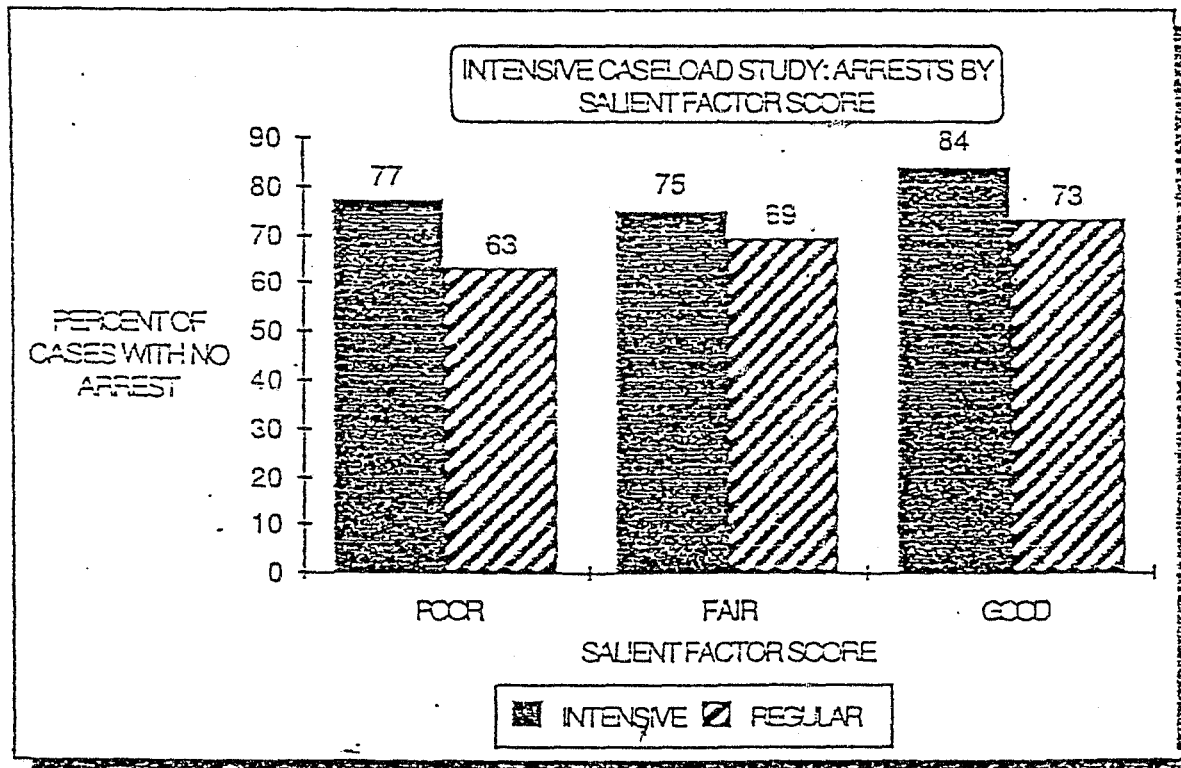
TABLE 5

Intensive Caseload Study: Arrests by Salient Factor Score

Percent of Cases with No Arrest
Salient Factor Score

Caseload Type	Poor	Fair	Good
Intensive	77% (24/31)	75% (36/ 48)	84% (21/25)
Regular	63% (39/62)	69% (79/115)	73% (48/66)

INTENSIVE CASELOAD STUDY: ARRESTS BY
SALIENT FACTOR SCORE

PERCENT OF CASES WITH NO ARREST

SALIENT FACTOR SCORE

INTENSIVE   REGULAR

INTENSIVE CASELOAD STUDY: PAROLE RULE
VIOLATIONS BY SALIENT FACTOR SCORE