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From Sweden

The Drug-Free Program at the Hinseberg Prison for Women

The Hinseberg program has succeeded in its primary aim of providing a relatively drug-free environment for inmates.

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Introduction

To control and treat drug abuse among inmates, Swedish prisons established programs at four national prisons and one local institution. This report describes a drug treatment program begun in 1978 at the Hinseberg Prison for Women, Sweden's only national prison for women, and presents findings of a followup study of 80 women who participated in the program from 1979 to 1981.

Background

The Swedish prison system emphasizes keeping inmates in contact with society, especially with their families, employers, and education and recreation providers. The majority of all prison inmates are incarcerated for 1 year or less; therefore, the law provides for prisoners to take short leaves from the institutions to maintain these ties. During 1985 and 1986, Swedish prison inmates took nearly 40,000 furloughs, not including authori-

zations for work or study outside the prison or those serving time in therapeutic settings.

One consequence of the flexibility and openness of this system is the ease of smuggling drugs back into prison. Although prison officials use special search patrols with drug-detecting dogs, urine testing, and checks of visitors, some inmates succeed in smuggling drugs into the prisons.

Moreover, drug-using inmates who do not desire treatment for their drug habit exercise a negative influence on inmates who want to stop using drugs and take steps toward a drug-free life. This situation was also a major concern at Hinseberg.

The Hinseberg program

A newly sentenced woman usually arrives at Hinseberg from a detention facility. The time spent in detention, typically 1 to 2 months, is often the longest period the woman has been drug free since starting to abuse drugs. Many prisoners are glad to have a ban on drugs enforced on them during detention and are anxious about being placed in a facility where they are confronted with drugs and drug

use. Such prisoners often express a desire to serve their sentences without having to come into contact with drug users or drugs of any kind.

The program's main objective, therefore, is to offer inmates a drug-free environment. Only those who appear to be motivated to discontinue drug abuse are selected for the treatment program, and 20 women are accommodated in two special drug-free wings.

The prison staff assess all inmates who apply for the program, and those who are chosen sign agreements with the staff. The agreement specifies the conditions of the drug-free wings, which require inmates to be free of drugs, submit to urine tests, and participate in planned activities.

The program consists of work or study, physical training taken with staff, certain leisure activities (some outside the prison), and planning for life after release from prison. Weekly group discussions focus on the immediate problems of the collective group and on continuing a drug-free existence. The staff discuss individual treatment plans with inmates regularly. Participants in the program are not totally isolated from inmates in other wings, however; they interact with all prison inmates during work or study sessions.

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Purpose and methods of the study

The study's purpose was to answer questions about program participants and about the program's short- and long-term effects. The followup study did not claim to be a complete evaluation of the Hinseberg program; staff and inmate perceptions of the program were not examined.

The following questions addressed the program's short-term effects and relate to the period of incarceration:

- How many inmates entered the program during the study period?
- How many of these inmates completed their stay in the program according to plan, and how many dropped out?
- What were the main reasons for dropping out?
- What was the length of stays in the program?
- To what extent were inmates drug free while they were in the program?
- Are any factors concerning criminal or drug-use history associated with completing the stay satisfactorily or, alternatively, dropping out of the program?

Questions that examined the program's long-term effects were:

- How many people relapsed into serious crime after release from prison?
- Were any background factors related to a tendency to recidivate?
- How many subjects were documented as alcohol or drug abusers after they left the program, and how many were not?
- How many had a satisfactory occupation after release from prison?
- What differences, if any, exist between those who completed the program and those who dropped out?

- What differences, if any, were there between those who recidivated and those who did not, as far as drug abuse and occupation are concerned?
- How many persons showed satisfactory outcomes on the basis of all three criteria: no recidivism, no drug abuse, and a satisfactory occupation?

The study sample

Women accepted to the program were registered with the National Prison and Probation Administration and information gathered for the study was taken from inmates' individual records, which cover both the prison and parole supervision periods. Since recidivism into serious crime was defined as further offenses leading to a sentence of prison or probation, recidivism information was also taken from the records of the National Prison and Probation Administration.

The study sample consisted of 80 women who entered the Hinseberg program after January 1979 and had left by December 1981. They shared these characteristics:

- Nearly half were 25 years old or younger upon entering prison.
- Most had completed elementary school, but only a few had further education or vocational training.
- Only a few had held a job for a year or longer.
- Half had been in prison at least once before.
- Many had been sentenced principally for drug offenses.
- For 29 women there was documented abuse of alcohol during the year before entering the program.
- Thirty-seven women (of those whose age at starting drugs could be determined) had begun drug use between 11 and 15 years of age.

- At least 75 percent of the women had injected drugs at some point in their lives.
- Thirty-three women (of the 64 for whom information was available) used stimulants, 19 used opiates, and 12 used marijuana.
- Forty-two women (of the 62 for whom information was available) were assessed as serious abusers—that is, daily drug users—during the year preceding their prison terms.

Findings: Short-term aspects

The 80 inmates had 81 stays in the program (one woman entered the program during two separate sentences). Of these 81 stays, 42 were completed according to plan: the inmates were either released or went on to another prison in accordance with the treatment plan. Prisoners serving sentences of more than 1 year have the right to spend the final period of their incarceration at a community correctional facility. Inmates can also be transferred to another prison that offers, for instance, special study facilities.

Of the total stays, 39 were interrupted. In 14 cases this occurred at the inmate's request, and in 11 cases it was due to furlough abuse. Alcohol or drug use led to interrupted stays in 4 cases. Other breaches of the program agreement—such as refusal to take urine tests, manipulation of the tests, or refusal to participate in scheduled activities—interrupted the remaining 10 stays.

Investigators found that inmates most likely to complete the program had finished elementary school and had records of consistent employment. Inmates with histories of injecting drugs were more likely to leave the program than were those without such experience.

Time in the program

Approximately half the stays for the entire sample were for a period of 3 months, and half were for more than 3 months. Of these stays, 25 percent were for more than 6 months, as can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1
Time in program

Time	Completed cases	Interrupted cases	Total
Less than 3 months	14	27	41
3 to 6 months	18	7	25
More than 6 months	10	5	15
Total	42	39	81

Many inmates spent only a short time in the program because Swedish sentences for women are short and time in detention is counted toward time served; conditional release is granted after half a sentence has been served. Moreover, it is almost impossible to start or maintain programs with closed groups because of high inmate turnover rates. These aspects of the prison system limit what drug treatment can accomplish: at best, a recovery process can be started during a prison stay that can continue after release.

Freedom from drugs during the program

Urine specimens were taken and analyzed routinely for the presence of opiates, amphetamines, and cannabis. Special analyses for other drugs were available. Only six analyses tested positive during the study period (although routine testing for cannabis only became possible in 1980, a year after the program began). Four inmates tested positive once, and a fifth tested positive twice.

The study concludes that these findings show that the primary aim of the program—to provide a drug-free environment during incarceration—was achieved.

Findings: Long-term aspects

Criteria of the followup study

The prison staff hoped that the program would not only provide a drug-free envi-

ronment for inmates, but that a stay in the program would increase an inmate's capacity to adjust to society upon release. Although the study recognizes the difficulty in investigating and measuring such capacity and warns of the risk of oversimplifying the complex social life of the women, investigators used three criteria to assess how the inmates in the sample adjusted to life after prison: the absence of further offenses, the absence of drug use, and acceptable occupational status.

There were some methodological problems in the 2-year followup period. Although recidivism can be measured for the entire 2 years, parole supervision normally ceases 1 year after release from prison. Therefore, unless someone is charged with an offense, no information on drug use is available once parole ends. For example, the absence of a record of drug misuse by a woman during the 2-year followup period does not necessarily mean that she was under active parole supervision during the full 2 years. Occupational status information is also subject to this limitation.

Rate of recidivism

Half the 80 subjects recidivated and were sentenced to prison or probation during the followup period (see Table 2). Of those women returning to prison, slightly more than half had dropped out of the program. Investigators found that inmates with previous prison experience had a higher rate of further serious offenses during the followup period than

those who had not been imprisoned before. The tendency to be reconvicted was also greater for those who had injected drugs than it was for those who had not.

Women who had completed the program and were reconvicted tended to recidivate in the latter part of the followup period. Those who failed to complete the program and were resented tended to recidivate early in the followup period. The differences in these numbers, however, are not statistically significant, mainly because of the small sample.

Drug use after leaving the program

Drug misuse could only be measured by noting whether there was any record of drug or alcohol misuse in the treatment journal at any time during the 2-year followup period. If, therefore, a woman used drugs during the first month after release, but not again during the remaining 23 months, she was considered to have documented drug misuse for purposes of the study. Although analysis of drug use after leaving the program could only be performed on 69 out of the 80 women because of missing data, a tendency became clear. Investigators found that women who had dropped out of the program used drugs or alcohol considerably more than those who had stayed. Of those who completed the program, 50 percent remained drug free during the followup period; only 24 percent of the dropouts remained drug free.

Nearly 90 percent of the women who were resented were also documented as misusing drugs or alcohol. And 61 percent who were *not* resented had no documented drug misuse. Only 4 of the 26 women who remained drug free were resented.

Assessment of occupation

Assessment of the subjects' occupations included activities such as work, school, vocational training, job preparation programs, drug treatment, and child care. The assessment was based on the records of the parole officers and was an attempt to learn if parolees' occupations were deemed by the parole officers to be positive or negative experiences. Of the program dropouts, 68 percent received

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Table 2
New sentences during followup period

New sentence	Completed cases		Interrupted cases		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
None	22	52	18	47	40	50
Probation only	9	22	7	19	16	20
Imprisonment	11	26	13	34	24	30
Total	42	100	38*	100	80	100

* Missing data on one escapee

negative comments about their occupations; of those who completed the program, 41 percent had such comments. Conversely, 59 percent of the group who completed the program received positive assessments, compared to 32 percent of the group that dropped out.

In addition, a high proportion of women (76 percent) who recidivated received negative work assessments. Of those with positive work assessments, only 26 percent were reconvicted. The results are statistically significant.

Long-term results in relation to criteria used

Of the 80 subjects studied, 40 were sentenced to probation or prison during the followup period; 21 of those reconvicted had reused drugs and also received negative occupational evaluations. Therefore, slightly more than 25 percent of the total sample did not adjust satisfactorily based on the three criteria chosen by investigators.

Of the 40 subjects who were not resentenced, 7 could not be evaluated because of inadequate information. Of the 33 who were evaluated, 19 received positive occupational assessments and had no documented drug use. Therefore, nearly 25 percent of the total sample adjusted positively according to the three criteria: absence of offenses, absence of drug use,

and acceptable occupations. Of these 19 cases, 15 had completed their stay in the program and 4 had not. Nearly half the subjects with the most positive adjustments had fairly stable occupational records.

A comparison with the Osteraker Prison program

This study points to the differences between the Hinseberg program and another drug-free program within a Swedish national prison—the Osteraker Prison. (See *International Summaries*, "Results of the Drug Abuser Treatment Program at the Osteraker Prison." NCJ 102684.) The Osteraker treatment program involves only male prisoners and is considered to be a modified therapeutic community (similar to drug abuse programs provided in therapeutic communities but modified to meet the special circumstances of imprisonment). The Hinseberg program for women has no access to skilled therapeutic resources and is less staff-intensive than the Osteraker program. Also, Osteraker inmates have no contact with inmates in other parts of the prison, whereas at Hinseberg, inmates in the drug-free program work or study with women who are not in the program.

When comparing findings, the study points out that the proportion of stays completed according to plan is virtually the same—53 percent at Osteraker and 52 percent at Hinseberg. However, time in

the program is much longer with the Osteraker project (1 year for completed cases and 5 months for interrupted stays); at Hinseberg, only 10 of the completions were for longer than 6 months and of the women with interrupted stays, 27 left the program within less than 3 months.

The study also points out the differences in the primary aim of each program. At Osteraker, it is drug treatment; at Hinseberg, it is a drug-free environment for those who wish to remain drug free.

Developments in the Hinseberg Prison

The treatment program, while a modest effort, has had a favorable effect on the entire prison, improving the social climate for both inmates and staff. The weekly meetings of staff and prisoners allow staff to serve as social models for the women. In turn, the staff gain clearer and better goals for their work. Each prison officer is assigned an inmate with whom she builds a relationship, learning about the inmate's problems and situation. In this context, each inmate writes a life history and an account of her present situation, which will be the basis for her treatment. This plan accounts for length of stay and agreed on objectives.

Because of this positive effect, each inmate in the entire prison now has an officer assigned as a contact person, and weekly activity planning meetings are held for all inmates. Moreover, the prison now appears to be almost totally drug free, so there is less emphasis on protecting inmates from drug-dealing inmates. Instead, the system focuses more attention on helping all women to live drug free during their incarceration.

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