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State of New York
Department of Correctional Services

Building Number 2
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Albany, New York 12226

VETERANS' PROGRAM FOLLOW-UP

JULY 1993



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149419

**U.S. Department of Justice
National Institute of Justice**

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Introduction

This paper provides a preliminary review of return rates for veterans who participated in a Veterans' Program at Groveland or Mt. McGregor. This review was conducted at the request of the Coordinator for Veterans' Programs, Mr. Don Little.

The Veterans' Programs operating at Groveland and Mt. McGregor were selected because of similar operating procedures and program requirements. The programs at both facilities are residential programs operating as therapeutic communities.

Overview of the Programs

The Veterans' Program at Groveland started in October 1989 with a group of 30 men. The program has since expanded, and currently has the capacity to serve 63 men. The Mt. McGregor program began in August 1987 and has a capacity of 36 participants.

While these programs are not identical, they both operate as therapeutic communities. The inmates live, work and program together. The communities are designed to provide an atmosphere where veterans can address issues in a supportive environment with other veterans. The programs deal with issues such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, chemical dependency, anger and aggression, and stress management.

Based on individual assessments, specific goals and objectives are established and personalized treatment plans are designed. Treatment includes both individual and group therapy components.

Sample Selection

The Veterans' Program staff at Groveland and Mt. McGregor provided a listing of all individuals who had participated in the Veterans' Program at their facility. The listing included inmate identification numbers, program start dates, program end dates, and reasons for leaving the program.

Groveland provided 151 cases and Mt. McGregor provided 238 cases for a total beginning sample of 389 cases. These 389 cases were then compared to Department release files to determine the number of these 389 individuals who had a release from Department custody which occurred after their program end date. Of the 389 cases, 209 were released after participating in one of the Veterans' Programs (71 from Groveland and 138 from Mt. McGregor).

	Groveland	McGregor	Total
Total Number of Cases Provided:	151	238	389
Total number released after reported program end date:	71	138	209

Reasons For Leaving The Program

The reasons provided for inmates leaving the program included: program change, program completion, transfers, releases, and removals for disciplinary reasons. Since the majority of cases left the program due to a transfer or release, there was no way to ascertain if the participant was a positive or negative program participant. Consequently, it was decided to distinguish cases based on time in the program. With the exception of disciplinary removals, the cases were grouped into two categories: those with six months or more in the program, and those with less than six months in the Veterans' Program.

Of the 209 cases, 111 individuals had six months or more of program time, 72 had less than six months in the program, and 26 individuals were removed for disciplinary reasons.

Status at program end date:

A) Program participant with 6 months or more program time.	111
B) Program participant with less than 6 months program time.	72
C) Disciplinary Removals regardless of program time.	<u>26</u>
Total	209

Cases With 12 Months Exposure Time

Consistent with previous Department recidivism studies, the sample population was required to have a minimum of 12 months potential exposure following release from the Department, to be included in the study. This requirement helps to alleviate dramatic variations in return rates for the first few months after release.

Of the 209 released program participants in the sample population, 146 cases had a minimum of 12 months since release as of December 31, 1992. These 146 cases with 12 months exposure periods were comprised of: 65 of the 111 participants with six months of program, 63 of the 72 cases with less than six months program time, and 18 of the 26 disciplinary removals.

Cases out 12 months or more:

A) Program participants with 6 months	65
B) Program participants with less than 6 months	63
C) Disciplinary Removals	18
	<hr/>
Total	146

(Due to the small number of disciplinary removals (18) these cases were excluded from the follow-up cohort).

Comparison Populations

To provide a point of reference, information is also provided on two comparison populations: 1) Non-Veteran Releases in the release years studied (N=68,587), and 2) Veteran Releases with no reported participation in a veterans' program (N=5,538).

These two comparison populations are used to establish baseline reference points for the sample of program participants. The veteran release population with no veterans' program history provides a particularly relevant comparison population, since the main distinguishing factor between this group and the program participants is program experience.

All releases had a minimum of 12 months from release and were tracked through December 31, 1992.

Follow-up Methodology

For these purposes recidivism is defined as a return to the Department's custody. Time to recidivism and likelihood of recidivating was evaluated using the analytic technique of Survival Analysis. This method was used to compare the probability of recidivating between the program participants and the two comparison populations. Survival analysis is used to determine the cumulative rate of return, based on the number of cases exposed, according to the months since release. This method controls for different exposure periods and allows for a comparison of return rates across the different groups.

Findings

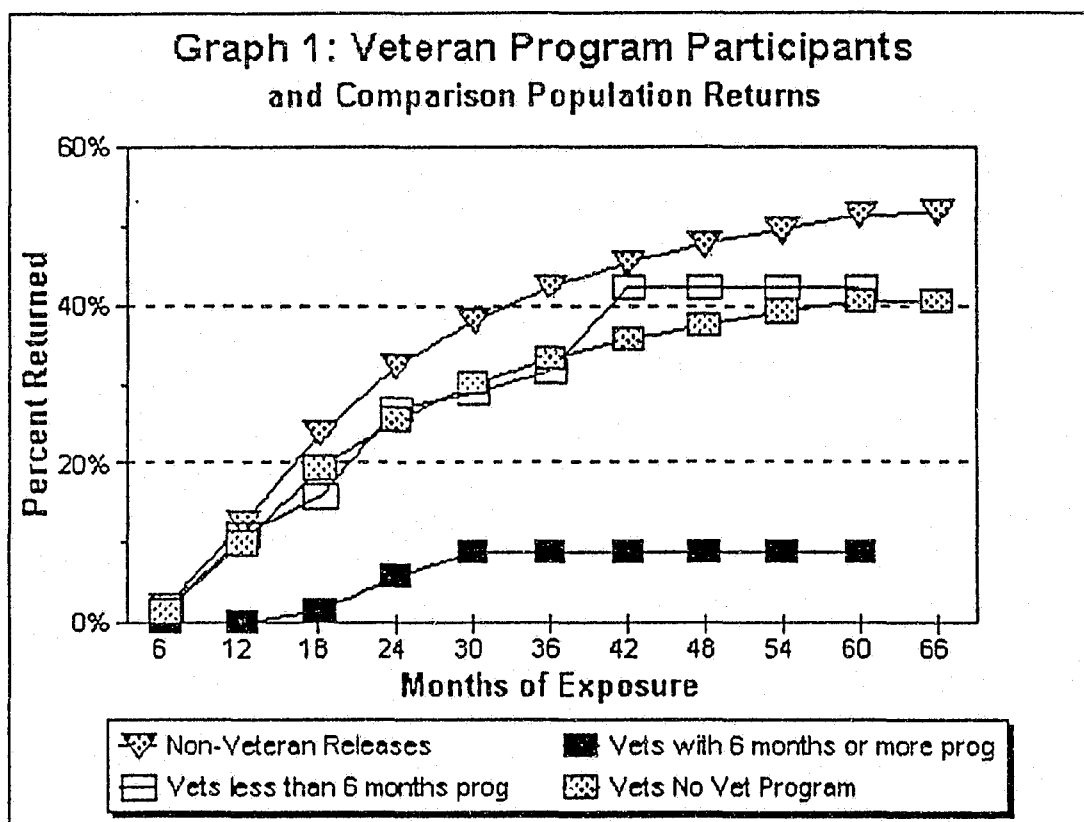
The following table summarizes the cumulative rates of return for the different populations at 12, 24, 36 and 48 months. For the interested reader, Appendix 1 shows the complete distribution of returns for the entire follow-up period.

Cumulative Percent Returned

Follow-Up Populations	12 Months	24 Months	36 Months	48 Months
1) Veterans with 6 months or more in the Veterans' Program	0.00%	5.85%	8.89%	8.89%
2) Veterans with less than 6 months in the program	11.11%	26.84%	31.64%	42.44%
3) Veterans with no Veterans' Program	9.99%	25.45%	33.20%	37.57%
4) Non-veteran releases	12.51%	32.23%	42.30%	47.69%

As shown in the preceding table, veterans with six months or more of program time have substantially lower rates of return than veterans without six months of program, veterans with no Veterans' Program experience, and non-veteran releases.

Graph 1 illustrates the patterns of return for each group during the entire follow-up period. Although the groups have been exposed for differing periods of time (e.g. non veteran releases for up to 66 months and program veterans up to 60 months), comparisons can be made for corresponding months.



After 60 months, the highest rate of return was for the non-veteran releases (51.55%). Veterans with less than six months program and veterans with no program experience had a very similar cumulative pattern of return, after 60 months the return rates were 42.44% and 40.57% respectively. Comparatively, after the same period veterans with six months or more of program had a cumulative return rate of only 8.89%.

Statistical Differences in Rates of Return

The observed difference in the rate of return for veterans with six months or more of program was tested for statistical significance using the standard significance test calculated by Survival Analysis in SPSS.

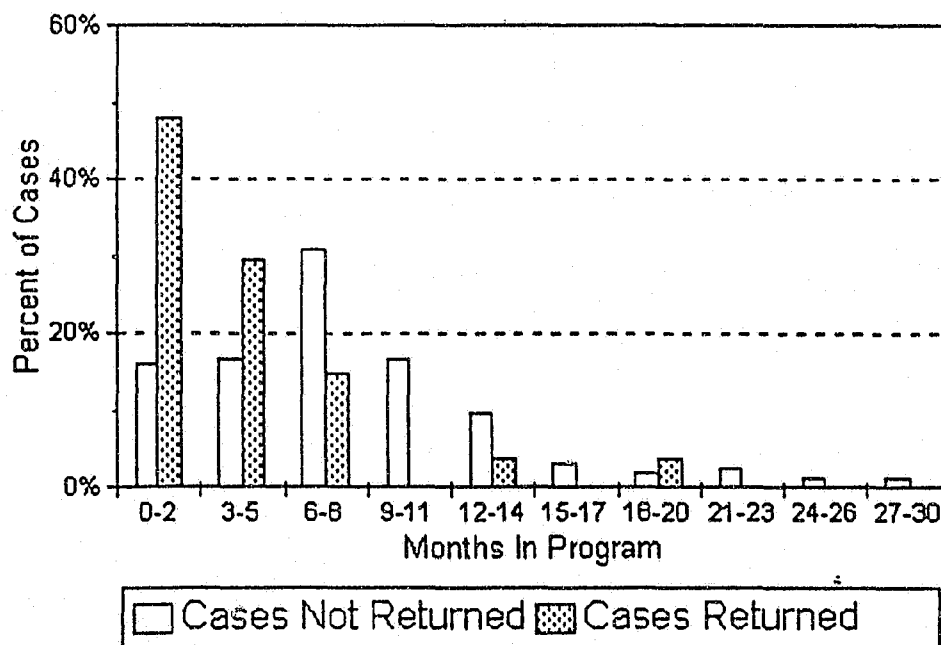
The rate of return was significantly lower ($p < .001$) for veterans who had six months or more of program time compared to those veterans with less than six months, veterans with no program, and non-veteran releases.

Time In The Veteran Program

Since veterans with six months or more in the program did significantly better than those with less than six months program time, time in the program was reviewed for those cases which did return and those cases which did not return to the Department.

As illustrated in Graph 2, 78% those individuals who were returned to custody had less than six months in the Veteran Program. On the other hand, 67% those cases which did not return had over six months of program time.

Graph 2: Time In The Veterans' Program
For Cases Returned and Not Returned



Conclusion

This report provides a preliminary review of the Veterans' Programs operated by the Department, based on a sample of participants from the Groveland and Mt. McGregor programs.

Although the current number of cases who have participated in the program and who have been released for a sufficient period of time for follow-up is relatively small (65), this initial review of the program looks very positive on the impact of reducing the rate of recidivism for program participants.

Veterans who participated in one of the Veterans' Programs for a minimum of six months, had a significantly lower rate of return than veterans with less than six months program experience, and those veterans with no program experience.

APPENDIX 1

Veterans with 6 months or more veteran program time

months	number entering	withdrawals	returns	exposed	percent terminated	percent survival	cumulative survival	cumulative returns
6	65	0	0	65	0.00%	100.00%	100.00%	0.00%
12	65	0	0	65	0.00%	100.00%	100.00%	0.00%
18	65	10	1	60	1.67%	98.33%	98.33%	1.67%
24	54	14	2	47	4.26%	95.74%	94.15%	5.85%
30	38	14	1	31	3.23%	96.77%	91.11%	8.89%
36	23	6	0	20	0.00%	100.00%	91.11%	8.89%
42	17	6	0	14	0.00%	100.00%	91.11%	8.89%
48	11	7	0	7.5	0.00%	100.00%	91.11%	8.89%
54	4	1	0	3.5	0.00%	100.00%	91.11%	8.89%
60	3	3	0	1.5	0.00%	100.00%	91.11%	8.89%

Veterans with less than 6 months veteran program time

months	number entering	withdrawals	returns	exposed	percent terminated	percent survival	cumulative survival	cumulative returns
6	63	0	1	63	1.59%	98.41%	98.41%	1.59%
12	62	0	6	62	9.68%	90.32%	88.89%	11.11%
18	56	3	3	54.5	5.50%	94.50%	84.00%	16.00%
24	50	7	6	46.5	12.90%	87.10%	73.16%	26.84%
30	37	5	1	34.5	2.90%	97.10%	71.04%	28.96%
36	31	9	1	26.5	3.77%	96.23%	68.36%	31.64%
42	21	4	3	19	15.79%	84.21%	57.56%	42.44%
48	14	7	0	10.5	0.00%	100.00%	57.56%	42.44%
54	7	5	0	4.5	0.00%	100.00%	57.56%	42.44%
60	2	2	0	1	0.00%	100.00%	57.56%	42.44%

Definitions:

Number Entering- The number of cases that survived to the beginning of the current interval.

Withdrawals- The number of cases that entered in the interval but whose follow-up ends somewhere in the interval.
These cases have not returned during there period of exposure.

Returns-Cases returned to the Department during the current interval.

Exposed- The number of cases entering the interval minus one half of those withdrawn during the interval.

Percent Terminated- Proportion of cases returning in a given interval based on the number of cases at risk.

Percent Survival- Proportion surviving is 1 minus the percent terminated for a given interval.

Cumulative Survival- An estimate of the cumulative probability of surviving to the end of an interval.

Cumulative Returns- An estimate of the cumulative probability of returning to the Department to the end of an interval.

Non- Veteran Releases

months	number entering	withdrawals	returns	exposed	percent terminated	percent survival	cumulative survival	cumulative returns
6	68587	0	1496	68587	2.18%	97.82%	97.82%	2.18%
12	67091	0	7083	67091	10.56%	89.44%	87.49%	12.51%
18	60008	7175	7287	56420.5	12.92%	87.08%	76.19%	23.81%
24	45546	6471	4679	42310.5	11.06%	88.94%	67.77%	32.23%
30	34396	5993	2695	31399.5	8.58%	91.42%	61.95%	38.05%
36	25708	5625	1570	22895.5	6.86%	93.14%	57.70%	42.30%
42	18513	4724	848	16151	5.25%	94.75%	54.67%	45.33%
48	12941	4218	467	10832	4.31%	95.69%	52.31%	47.69%
54	8256	3908	224	6302	3.55%	96.45%	50.46%	49.54%
60	4124	3711	90	2268.5	3.97%	96.03%	48.45%	51.55%
66	323	322	1	162	0.62%	99.38%	48.15%	51.85%

Veteran Releases with no Veteran Program

months	number entering	withdrawals	returns	exposed	percent terminated	percent survival	cumulative survival	cumulative returns
6	5538	0	80	5538	1.44%	98.56%	98.56%	1.44%
12	5458	0	473	5458	8.67%	91.33%	90.01%	9.99%
18	4985	519	492	4725.5	10.41%	89.59%	80.64%	19.36%
24	3974	566	279	3691	7.56%	92.44%	74.55%	25.45%
30	3129	541	183	2858.5	6.40%	93.60%	69.77%	30.23%
36	2405	538	91	2136	4.26%	95.74%	66.80%	33.20%
42	1776	475	55	1538.5	3.57%	96.43%	64.41%	35.59%
48	1246	411	32	1040.5	3.08%	96.92%	62.43%	37.57%
54	803	377	16	614.5	2.60%	97.40%	60.81%	39.19%
60	410	377	5	221.5	2.26%	97.74%	59.43%	40.57%
66	28	28	0	14	0.00%	100.00%	59.43%	40.57%

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