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✓ The Impact of Furloughs
on Recidivism

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Executive Summary

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of the District of Columbia inmate furlough program. This was accomplished by determining whether or not furlough participants are less likely to be reincarcerated after release from prison than a comparable group of non-participants.

The population used in this evaluation included all males released from the Minimum Security Facility at Lorton, Virginia during 1977 and 1978. Two samples were drawn from this population; each consisted of 131 cases. One-hundred-thirty-one participated in the furlough program while in prison. The remaining 131 cases were non-furlough participants.

The furloughees in this study can be characterized as single, between 29 and 34 years old, with no known history of drug use. They were most often charged with murder, armed robbery or burglary and had one or more prior incarcerations. The average time furloughees spent in prison was between 2 and 3 years.

The non-furloughees in this study can be characterized as being between 29 and 34 years old, single with a known history of drug use. They were most often charged with burglary or robbery-no weapon and had one or more incarcerations. The non-furloughee spent between 1 and 2 years in prison.

The maximum possible follow-up time period for both samples was 2 years and 9 months. Since individuals in both samples were released anytime between January 1, 1977 and December 31, 1978, there were different lengths of follow-up for each releasee. The average follow-up period for furlougees was one year and eight months. The average follow-up period for non-furlougees was one year and nine months. Since the average follow-up periods for the two samples are nearly identical their recorded levels of recidivism may be compared. The non-furlougees in this study had a 44.3% rate of recidivism, whereas furlougees had a 31.3% rate of recidivism.

Analysis of the data indicates that the use of furloughs in the District of Columbia prisons is of significant value in the reduction of recidivism. After filtering out the effects of variables known to be related to recidivism (criminal and social factors), it was concluded that it was the furlough program that was the proximate cause in the reduction of recidivism.

The purpose of furloughs is to reestablish community contacts, allow for a gradual "decompression" from the effects of institutionalization and to create within the furlougees a feeling of self esteem and responsibility. It is apparant from this study that this reintegration tool is useful in the reduction in recidivism.

I. INTRODUCTION

This report is an effort to evaluate the effectiveness of the District of Columbia Furlough Program as a correctional tool. The question that will be addressed is: Is an inmate who participates in a furlough program during his term in prison, less likely to be reincarcerated after his release than an otherwise comparable non-participant?

The effectiveness of the furlough program is not only measured by a success-failure rating given to each case, but also by evaluating other variables, such as criminal and social background. The purpose of furloughs is to assist in the reintegration of offenders into the community. This evaluation assesses whether participation in the furlough program can be associated with lower rates of recidivism.

Over 350,000 prisoner furloughs were granted in the United States in 1975. In the District of Columbia, an estimated 38,000 furloughs were granted in 1974. Four years later (1978). The number of furloughs granted had decreased to 18,371 as the result of new criteria imposed by the U.S. Attorney General in 1976.

The distribution of furloughs by type of furlough granted in the calendar year 1978 was as follows: work training, 79%; educational, 7%; resocialization, 13%; medical, 1%.

Markley (1973) describes five major functions of furlough programs: (1) to reinforce family ties where they exist, (2) to reinforce self esteem of the offender by creating a situation of trust, (3) to benefit the offenders' children by allowing him to appear home periodically, (4) to contribute to release planning in a process of community linkage and (5) to provide a positive aid to rehabilitation and crime prevention.

Definitions

A. Recidivism - The District of Columbia Department of Corrections defines recidivism as, " The return to the Department's facility for any reason to begin service of a new sentence anytime after release from an incarcerated status".

This definition of recidivism has been modified for the purposes of this evaluation. All recommitments to a detention or a correctional facility were measured. Arrests, convictions and violations of halfway house rules were all considered to be failures in a halfway house. Arrests, convictions and parole violations were all considered to be failures on parole. These failure measures were monitored for each case until September 30, 1979 or until the participant successfully terminated parole, i.e., reached his "full-term" date.

B. Lorton Minimum Security Facility - Minimum Security serves as a pre-release center in which inmates are prepared for their re-entry into society. This facility is considered to be "semi-structured" in that it allows the residents to become involved in activities outside of the prison. The absence of fences and towers puts the inmate into a situation of trust. Because Minimum Security is the final step before release all candidates must meet certain criteria before residency is permitted; (1) the inmate must have been granted parole to become effective on or after a specified date, or (2) he must have one year or less until conditional release, or expiration date, or a likely parole release, and (3) a resident cannot have charges, detainers, a recent escape or other legal obstructions. While at minimum security an inmate may be granted furloughs for (1) emergency, (2) work release, (3) resocialization and (4) education.

C. Furlough - unescorted leave for the purpose of preparing the inmate for reintegration into the community. Inmates may gain self esteem and confidence through work release, resocialization and education furloughs. They may also make plans with their parole officers, employers and family for post release.

1.) Policy - furloughs cannot exceed 12 hours except in the case of emergency and resocialization (maximum: 72 hours). Candidates will not be granted furloughs automatically, each request must be reviewed by the C and P officer. The resident must be able to pay for all of his expenses.

- 2.) Eligibility- earned minimum custody status; demonstrated responsibility; favorable recommendation from Institutional Review Committee; must be mentally, physically and financially capable.
- 3.) Emergency Furloughs- granted to allow inmates to visit a dying relative; attend a funeral of a relative or obtain medical service not available at the facility.
- 4.) Resocialization Furloughs - granted for the purpose of reestablishing family and community ties and planning future employment. Used most extensively during holiday seasons or immediately prior to release.
- 5.) Work Release and Education Furloughs - used to rehabilitate the resident as a respected, self supporting citizen upon his return to the outside community.
- 6.) Exclusion- an inmate cannot be considered for a furlough until he is within 12 months of a parole hearing if convicted of any of the following crimes; murder, manslaughter, rape, kidnapping, robbery, assault with intent to kill, assault with intent to rape, assault with intent to rob, extortion involving threat or use of violence to person, indecent act with a minor or child molestation.

II. Methodology

For this study, all males released from the Lorton Minimum Security Facility during 1977 and 1978, were used as the population. Sample 1 consisted of the subgroup of all males who participated in the furlough program while in prison (n=131).

Sample 2, the control group of 131 non-furlough participants was chosen by systematically sampling every fifth case from the population of releasees from Minimum Security.

A code sheet was designed to gather information more efficiently and to ensure its' consistency. Data was taken from the Correctional Records Information System (CRISYS). Manual records were also reviewed to obtain information not in CRISYS. The following variables were collected for each case .

- . Birth Date
- . Marital Status
- . Drug Use
- . Education
- . Offense
- . Date Sentenced
- . Number of Prior Incarcerations
- . Method of Release from Prison (halfway house, straight out parole)
- . Date in Halfway House
- . Reason out of Halfway House
- . Number of furloughs
- . Type of furlough
- . Date of first furlough

- . Parole Performance
- . Date off Parole
- . Full Term Date

Many of the test cases were convicted and sentenced of more than one offense. The charge that was recorded for this study was the most severe. Severity was determined through a severity code used by the Metropolitan Police Department.

September 30, 1979 was the cut-off date for the post release follow-up in this evaluation. Only rearrests, convictions, parole violations and violations of halfway house rules occurring before this date were recorded.

III Characteristics of Sample

To ensure that there was no selection bias and that any differences in recidivism could be attributed to participation in the furlough program, the two groups were examined to identify any difference in composition.

TABLE I: Marital Status by Furlough Participation

	Married	Single	Total
Furlough	50 38.2%	81 61.8%	131 100%
Non-Furlough	43 34.1%	83 65.9%	126* 100%
Missing Observations -	5		

Table I indicates that the majority of inmates in this study were single (63%). Sixty-two percent of the furlough participants were single and 66% of the non-participants were single.

TABLE II: Age by Furlough Participation

	<u>34 years old and under</u>	<u>Over 34 years old</u>	<u>Total</u>
Furlough	84	43	127*
	66.2%	33.8%	100%
Non-Furlough	75	52	127*
	59%	41.0%	100%
*Missing Observations-	8		

Table II indicates that 63% of the test cases were 34 years old and under. Sixty-six percent of the furlough participants were 34 years old and under, compared to 59% of the non participants.

TABLE II: Drug History

	User	Non-user	Total
Furlough	44	64	108*
	40.7%	59.3	100%
Non-Furlough	41	40	81*
	50.6%	49.4	100%
*Missing Observations -	73		

Table III indicates that there was a larger percentage of drug users in the non-furlough sample (50.6%) than in the furlough sample (40.7)%.

TABLE IV: Prior Incarcerations

	<u>Priors</u>	<u>Non Priors</u>	<u>Total</u>
Furlough	84 64.1%	47 35.9	131 100%
Non-Furlough	96 73.8%	34 26.2	130* 100%
Missing Observations -	1		

Table IV indicates that 73.8% of the non-participants had prior incarcerations and 64.1% of the furlougees had prior incarcerations.

TABLE V: Charge Distribution

	<u>Person</u>	<u>Property</u>	<u>Statutory (Drugs/Weapons)</u>	<u>Total</u>
Furlough	109 83%	14 11%	8 6%	131 100%
Non-Furlough	76 58%	35 27%	20 15%	131 100%

Table V indicates that the furlougees were much more likely to have been convicted of crimes against person, whereas non-furlougees were more than twice as likely as furlougees to have been convicted of crimes against property or of statutory crimes.

TABLE VI: Time in Prison

	<u>Less Than 3 years</u>	<u>3 to 6 years</u>	<u>More than 6 years</u>	<u>Total</u>
Furlough	62 47%	52 40%	17 13%	131 100%
Non-furlough	96 73%	23 18%	12 9%	131 100%

Table VI indicates that 73% of the non-furloughees spent less than 3 years in prison. Forty-seven percent of the furloughees spent less than 3 years in prison and 40% spent between 3 and 6 years in prison.

The furloughees in this study can be characterized as below 35 years of age, single, with no known history of drug abuse. He was most often convicted of crimes against person and had one or more prior convictions. 47% of the furloughees spent less than 3 years in prison.

In comparison, the non-furloughees were below 35 years old, single and 50% had a known history of drug abuse. He was most often convicted of a crime against persons, and had one or more prior convictions. 73% of the non-furloughees spent less than 3 years in prison.

Non-participants were older, more drug involved, with longer criminal records, but had generally served less time on the current conviction than furlough participants. Furloughees were more likely to have been convicted of a personal crime. Where inter-group differences have been observed statistical controls will be used in later analysis to try to "filter out" any influences which could compound or contaminate the results.

IV FINDINGS

Three levels of analysis were performed to compare the recidivism rates of furlough and non-furlough releasees from the Minimum Security Facility. The first level of analysis compares the post-release performance of all furlough and non-furlough releasees (N=262).

The second level of analysis compares only furlough and non-furlough releasees who participated in the Community Correctional Centers (CCC) program. There were 187 individuals out of 262 (71%), who participated in the CCC program.

The final level of analysis compares furlough and non-furlough releasees' performance on parole. Two hundred-forty or 92%, of all releasees made parole. Twenty-two individuals recidivated while at a CCC and were not paroled during the time period of this study.

A. Overall Performance of Furlough Participants and Non-Participants

Recidivism of furlough participants versus non-participants was measured by recording all recurrences of incarceration. New incarcerations may have been due to parole violations, violations of Community Correctional Center (CCC) rules, escapes from a CCC, a new arrest or a new conviction. This means, for example, that if a releasee escaped from a CCC and subsequently was re-released from a correctional institution and did not recidivate on parole, he would still be measured as a failure.

TABLE VII: Furlougee and Non-Furlouees by Success or Failure

	Failure	Success	Total
Furlough	41 31.3%	90 68.7	131 100%
Non Furlough	58 44.3%	73 55.7	131 100%

Table VII indicates that furloughees had a higher success rate (68.7%) than non-furloughees (55.7). Forty-four percent of the non-furloughees either failed to complete the CCC program or terminated parole unsuccessfully.

Analysis of Tables I through VI shows proportional variations in the charge, drug history and time in prison when furlough participants are compared with non-furlough participants. To determine whether these variables had an affect on recidivism the following comparisons (Tables VIII, IX, X) are provided:

Table VIII: Success - Failure by Drug Use

	<u>Failure</u>	<u>Success</u>	<u>Total</u>
User	37 43%	48 57%	85* 100%
Non User	30 28%	74 72%	104* 100%

*Missing
Observations

Table VIII indicates that a larger percent (43%) of the releasees with a known history of drug use failed after release from prison when compared to non-users.

Table IX: Success-Failure by Charge

	<u>Failure</u>	<u>Success</u>	<u>Total</u>
Person	74 40%	111 60%	185 100%
Property	19 39%	30 61%	49 100%
Statutory	9 32%	19 68%	28 100%

Table IX indicates that releasees charged with crimes against property and crimes against persons had slightly higher rates of recidivism than persons charged with statutory crimes.

TABLE X: Success-Failure by Time Spent in Prison

	<u>Failure</u>	<u>Success</u>	<u>Total</u>
Less Than 3 years	66 42%	92 58%	158 100%
3 to 6 years	26 35%	49 65%	75 100%
More than 6 years	10 35%	19 65%	29 100%

Table X indicates that 42% of those who spent less than 3 years in prison, 35% of those who spent between 3 and 6 years in prison and 35% of those spent more than 6 years in prison, recidivated after release. Generally, releasees who spent shorter periods of time in prison performed slightly worse on parole than releasees who spent longer periods of time in prison.

Next, because of the affect of drug use and type of charge on recidivism, further examination must be made concerning the influence of these two variables.

Table XI indicates that the furlough program did have an affect on the recidivism rate of both releasees who had a known history of drug use, and those that had no prior drug use. There was a 34% rate of recidivism among the furloughees with drug histories, whereas there was a 66% rate of recidivism among the non-furloughees in the same category.

TABLE XI Furloughees and Non-Furloughees by Success-Failure
controlling for Drug Use

<u>Drug Use</u>	<u>Failure</u>	<u>Success</u>	<u>Total</u>
Furlough	15 34%	29 66%	44 100%
Non-Furlough	22 66%	19 46%	41 100%
<u>No Drug Use</u>			
Furlough	16 25%	48 75%	64 100%
Non-Furlough	14 35%	26 65%	40 100%

Analysis of Table XI indicates that 35% of the non-furlough participants with no known history of drug use failed after release from prison. Only 25% of the furloughees recidivated after release.

TABLE XII: Furloughees and Non-Furloughees by Success-Failure
Controlling for charge

<u>Person</u>	<u>Failure</u>	<u>Success</u>	<u>Table</u>
Furlough	36 33%	73 67%	109 100%
Non-Furlough	36 47.4%	40 52.6%	76 100%
<u>Property</u>			
Furlough	3 21.4%	11 78.6%	14 100%
Non-Furlough	16 45.7%	19 54.3%	35 100%

TABLE XII: (con't)

<u>Statutory</u>	<u>Failure</u>	<u>Success</u>	<u>Total</u>
Furlough	2 25%	6 75%	8 100%
Non-Furlough	6 30%	14 70%	20 100%

Table XII indicates that after controlling for the effect of the type of charge, furloughees consistently recidivated at a lower rate than non-furloughees. The beneficial effect of furloughs was most pronounced for property offenders and least apparent for statutory offenders.

The relation between furlough participation and recidivism remains strong even after controlling for the influences of drug history and charge.

Comparisons of the success of furloughees and non-furloughees in the community, controlling for the possible affects of age, marital status, prior incarcerations and length of time in prison all revealed similar findings. Furloughees consistently performed better than non-furloughees once released from prison.

B. Performance of Furlough Participants and Non-Participants in Community Correctional Centers.

One hundred-eighty-seven of the 262 cases went through a Community Correctional Center after their release from prison. The average time spent in a Community Correctional Center by the test cases in this study was four and one-half months. One hundred-nine furloughees and 78 non-furloughees made up the 187 Community Correctional Center participants.

TABLE XIII: Community Correctional Center participants by reason for CCC Termination

	<u>Failure</u>	<u>Success</u>	<u>Total</u>
CCC Furloughees	19 18%	89 82%	108 100%
CCC Non-Furloughees	19 24%	60 76%	79 100%

According to Table XIII 18% of the 108 furloughees had unsuccessful terminations from the CCC program while 24% of the 79 non-furloughees failed in the CCC program.

The following tests (Tables XIV through XVII) were performed to determine if other variables were having an impact in CCC performance:

TABLE XIV: CCC Performance by Drug History

	<u>Failure</u>	<u>Success</u>	<u>Total</u>
User	15 24%	49 76%	64 100%
Non User	12 16%	65 84%	77 100%

Table XIV indicates that drug users performed worse in a CCC than non-users. Twenty-four percent of the CCC participants with a known history of drug use failed to complete the CCC program. Sixteen percent of the CCC participants with no known history of drug use failed in the CCC program.

Table XV: CCC performance by Prior Incarcerations

	<u>Failure</u>	<u>Success</u>	<u>Total</u>
No priors	15 22%	52 78%	67 100%
Priors	23 20%	95 80%	118 100%

Table XV indicates that prior incarcerations had little, if any, affect on CCC performance. Twenty-two percent of the 67 CCC participants with no prior incarcerations failed to complete the CCC program. Twenty percent of the 118 CCC participants with one or more prior incarcerations failed in a CCC.

Table XVI: CCC Performance by Charge

	<u>Failure</u>	<u>Success</u>	<u>Total</u>
Person	27 21.1%	101 78.9	128 100%
Property	7 18.4%	31 81.6%	38 100%
Statutory	7 33.4%	14 66.7	21 100%

Analysis of Table XVI indicates that the type of charge may have had some effect on CCC performance. Twenty-one percent of the CCC releasees convicted of crimes against persons and 18.4% of the CCC releasees convicted of property crimes were rearrested compared to over 33% of the CCC releasees convicted of statutory crimes.

Analysis of the amount of time spent in prison by the reason for CCC termination indicated that prison-time had little affect on CCC performance.

Twenty-four percent of CCC participants who spent less than 3 years in prison were rearrested while at a CCC. Compared to 22% of the CCC participants who spent between 3 and 6 years in prison and 20% of the CCC and participants who spent over 6 years in prison.

As Illustrated in Table XVI the type of charge is related to CCC performance. To determine whether it was the type of charge or furlough participation that had an affect on recidivism, an analysis must be performed controlling for the possible effect of type of charge on CCC performance.

Table XVII: CCC Furloughees and Non-Furloughees by reason for termination Controlling for Charge

	<u>(Failure)</u>	<u>(Success)</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>Person:</u>			
CCC			
Furlough	17 19.3%	71 80.7%	88 100%
CCC Non-Furlough	10 25.7%	29 74.4%	39 100%
<u>Property:</u>			
CCC			
Furlough	1 8.3%	11 91.7	12 100%
CCC Non-Furlough	6 23.1%	20 76.9	26 100%
<u>Statutory:</u>			
CCC			
Furlough	2 25%	6 75%	8 100%

Table XVII: CCC Furloughees and Non-Furloughees by reason for termination Controlling for Charge (con't)

	<u>(Failure)</u>	<u>(Success)</u>	<u>Total</u>
CCC Non-Furlough	4 30.8%	9 69.2%	13 100%

Analysis of Table XVII indicates that the relationship between furlough participation and recidivism remains strong even after controlling for charge. Furloughees performed better than non-furloughees in each of the three categories of crime.

C. Performance of Furlough and Non-Furlough Parolees on Parole

One-hundred and twenty furloughees and 120 non-furloughees reached parole. Twenty-two releasees failed in a CCC and never made it to parole.

Table XVIII: Parole Performance by Furlough Participation

	<u>Failure</u>	<u>Success</u>	<u>Total</u>
Furlough	24 20%	96 80%	120 100%
Non-Furlough	45 37.5%	75 62.5%	120 100%

The data presented in Table XVIII illustrates that one in five parolees who participated in the furlough program failed on parole while more than one in three of the non-furloughees who made parole failed on parole.

The characteristics of furlougees and non-furlougees who made parole were examined to determine any difference in composition between the two groups. The percentage differences in the social and criminal characteristics of the non-furlougees and furlougees who made parole are the same as the percentages for all furlougees and non-furlougees, except that furlougees went through a CCC program more often than non-furlougees.

Further analysis of charge, drug history, time in prison, prior incarcerations and CCC participation was performed to determine their impact on recidivism.

Table XIX: Parole Performance by Charge

	<u>Failure</u>	<u>Success</u>	<u>Total</u>
Person	52 30.6%	118 69.4%	170 100%
Property	12 27.9%	31 72.1%	43 100%
Statutory	5 18.5%	22 81.5%	27 100%

Thirty percent of those convicted of crimes against persons and 27.9% of those convicted of property crimes failed on parole. Only 18.5% of those convicted of statutory crimes failed on parole.

Table XX: Parole Performance by Drug History

	<u>Failure</u>	<u>Success</u>	<u>Total</u>
User	17 21%	54 79%	81 100%
Non-User	18 19%	76 81%	94 100%

Twenty-one percent of the parolees with a known history of drug use failed on parole. Nineteen percent of those with no known history of drug use failed on parole.

Table XXI: Parole Performance by Time in Prison

	<u>Failure</u>	<u>Success</u>	<u>Total</u>
Less than 3 yrs.	44 31%	99 69%	143 100%
3-6 yrs.	18 26%	51 74%	69 100%
More than 6 yrs.	7 25%	21 75%	28 100%

Table XXI indicates that 31% of the parolees with less than 3 years in prison, 26% of the parolees with between 3 and 6 years in prison and 25% of the parolees with more than 6 years in prison, failed on parole. Those who had served more time incarcerated were slightly more likely to succeed on parole.

Table XXII: Parole Performance by Prior Incarcerations

	<u>Failure</u>	<u>Success</u>	<u>Total</u>
Yes	54 33%	109 67%	163 100%
No	15 20%	61 80%	96 100%

Table XXII indicates that parolees with prior incarcerations failed on parole more often than those being released from their first conviction/sentence.

Table XXIII: Parole Performance by CCC vs. Straight Out

	<u>Failure</u>	<u>Success</u>	<u>Total</u>
CCC to Parole	41 24.4%	127 75.6	168 100%
Straight to Parole	28 38.9	44 61.1	72 100%

Table XXIII indicates that participation in the CCC program also had a positive effect on parole performance.

To summarize 1.) The more time spent in prison, the better the success rate, 2.) Parolees convicted of statutory crimes had a lower rate of recidivism than those convicted on person or property charges, 3.) Parolees with no prior incarcerations had a lower rate of recidivism than those with prior incarceration and 4.) Parolees who went from a CCC to parole did better on parole than those who went straight to parole from prison.

Further analysis of these 4 variables (charge, prison time, prior incarcerations and CCC participation) was performed to determine if they had an affect on the relationship between furlough participation and recidivism.

In all three charge categories, person, property and statutory, furloughees had a lower rate of recidivism than non-furloughees. This indicates that furlough participation had an independent affect on recidivism. When controlling for prior incarcerations, parole furloughees with prior incarcerations and furloughees with no prior incarcerations, did better on parole than the non-furloughees in both categories.

In all three time-in-prison (less than 3 years, 3 to 6 years and over 6 years) categories, furlougees had a lower rate of recidivism than non-furlougees. This indicates, again that furlough participation had a positive impact on parole performance. Furlougees did better than non-furlougees regardless of whether they went straight to parole or went to parole from a CCC.

In summary, the relationship between furlough participation and parole performance remains strong even after controlling for the possible effects of CCC participation, charge, prior incarcerations and time-in-prison.

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