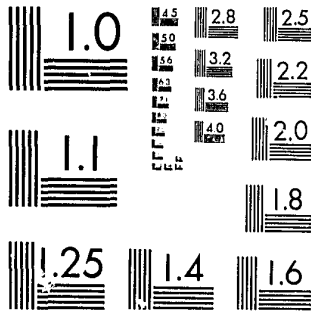


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### HIGHLIGHTS

The present study provides a summary of reported incidents of inmate assaults on correctional employees for the period of April 1, 1979 through March 31, 1980. 325 separate incidents were reported which involved 422 employees and 334 identified inmates. The following represents a brief overview of the findings of the present study.

- 1) Nine facilities account for approximately 90% of all reported incidents of assaults on employees during the study period. The combined total of Clinton, Green Haven, and Great Meadow Correctional Facilities comprised approximately 55% of overall statewide total. Each of the 9 most commonly reporting facilities, with the exception of Bedford Hills, had a designed capacity and, in fact, housed over 800 general confinement inmates during the study period.
- 2) To control for population size, a rate of assault per facility population was computed. Bedford Hills, which reported 17 incidents, or only 5.2% of the overall total and which had a total population of 423 inmates, had a rate of assaults of one assault per 24.8 inmates, the highest in the state. Great Meadow had the second highest rate of assault, one assault per 27.7 inmates, and Clinton, which reported the most assaults, 65, had a rate of one assault per 40.5 inmates.
- 3) Over 80% of all reported assaults on employees involved physical contact without the use of weapons such as punches, kicks, wrestling holds, etc.
- 4) 65% of all assaults on employees occurred between the hours of 8:01 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Almost 88% occurred between 8:01 a.m. and 8:00 p.m.
- 5) Assaults most commonly occurred in cell block areas including stairwells and corridors. Special housing units, which housed only 3.1% of the total population, were the reported location of over 23% of the assaults on employees.
- 6) 94% of the assaults on employees involved one inmate and 80.4% involved one employee.
- 7) Of those employees who were assaulted, 86% were Correction Officers.
- 8) An examination of certain demographic characteristics of inmates involved in assaults on employees indicates that:
  - a) 65% of inmates involved in assaults were Black; Blacks represent 53% of the overall inmate population.
  - b) 76.6% of the inmates involved in assaults on employees were committed for violent offenses; approximately 65% of the overall Department population were committed for violent offenses.

- c) 70.3% of the inmates involved in assaults on employees were below age 30; inmates under age 30 comprise 53% of the overall prisoner population.

The following would typify incidents of assaults on correctional employees in New York State facilities based on an examination of such incidents during the period of April 1, 1979 through March 31, 1980:

- 1) Assaults occur in large (over 800 capacity) facilities, they occur in housing areas between the hours of 8:01 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., and they involve physical contact without the use of weapons.
- 2) The typical inmate involved in incidents of assaults on employees would be Black, incarcerated for committing a violent offense, and below 30 years of age.
- 3) Assaults typically involve an individual Correction Officer and an individual inmate.

## ASSAULTS ON CORRECTIONAL EMPLOYEES

April 1, 1979 - March 31, 1980

### Introduction

The present study represents an effort to investigate the problem of inmate assaults on correctional personnel in New York State correctional facilities. The study includes data collected on incidents reported to the Communication Control Center (CCC) of the Department of Correctional Services Central Office in Albany as Unusual Incidents from April 1, 1979 through March 31, 1980. Each reported unusual incident is categorized by CCC personnel according to the type of incident reported. Incident categories include, among others: Inmate Assaults on Inmates; Inmate Assaults on Employees; Contraband; Fire; Use of Chemical Agents; and Suicide Attempts. Those incidents categorized as Employee Assaults were identified by reviewing the monthly reports prepared by CCC personnel and each such incident was then more closely examined by reviewing the daily logs maintained by the CCC which include summary descriptions of all unusual incidents. If additional information was required, the actual unusual incident report submitted by the facility pursuant to Departmental Directive #4004 was examined.

325 separate incidents of inmate assaults on correctional employees were reported during this study period. The following study examines the characteristics of the incidents, including, among other things, the location, time and type of assault and certain demographic characteristics of the inmates involved in the assaults including their age, ethnic group, and commitment crime. A previously submitted study dated July, 1979 examined incidents of assaults on correctional employees for the period of April 1, 1978 through March 31, 1979. The previous study identified 282 separate incidents of assaults on employees. The Department has therefore experienced approximately a 15% statewide increase in assaults on employees from fiscal year 1978/79 to fiscal year 1979/80 while the under custody inmate population has increased from 21,895 in March, 1979 to 22,173 in March, 1980, approximately a 1.3% increase.

Part A: Characteristics of Incidents of Assaults on Employees

The following tables (Tables A-H) summarize the characteristics of assaults on employees during the period of April 1, 1979 to March 31, 1980.

Frequency and Rate of Assaults

Table A represents a breakdown of the monthly frequency of incidents of assaults on employees for each facility during the study period. The monthly mean number of assaults on employees was 27.1 assaults/month. The greatest number of assaults, 40, was reported during January, 1980 while the lowest number, 18, was reported during both October and December, 1979.

Table A indicates that Clinton Correctional Facility (including both Clinton Main and Clinton Annex) reported the greatest number of assaults during the study period, 65 assaults or 20% of the statewide total. Green Haven Correctional Facility reported 60 assaults or 18.5% of the statewide total, and Great Meadow, 56 assaults or 16.9% of the statewide total. The three above-mentioned facilities therefore reported approximately 55.4% of the statewide total of 325 incidents of assaults on employees. Additionally, 9 of the 33 facilities, i.e. Attica, Auburn, Bedford, Clinton, Eastern, Elmira, Fishkill, Great Meadow, and Green Haven reported 293 or 90.1% of all reported incidents. (Note: subsequent tables will list the 9 above-noted facilities separately and combine all other facilities together to comprise a separate category.)

TABLE A

Assaults, By Month and Facility  
April 1979 - March 1980

Facility	1979									1980			Total	
	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	#	%
Arthur Kill	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	6	1.8
Attica	1	1	0	2	0	6	2	2	0	2	5	2	23	7.1
Auburn	1	2	0	5	3	2	2	2	3	3	1	4	28	8.6
Bedford	5	5	1	1	2	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	17	5.2
Clinton	5	9	3	2	8	4	1	8	7	5	10	3	65	20.0
Coxsackie	2	1	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	9	2.8
Downstate	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	.6
Eastern	0	1	2	1	1	1	1	3	0	1	0	1	13	3.7
Elmira	2	0	3	2	1	3	0	0	0	4	0	2	17	5.2
Fishkill	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	5	0	2	0	1	14	4.3
Hudson	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	.3
Great Meadow	1	4	7	8	5	5	3	7	3	5	5	3	56	16.9
Green Haven	2	5	5	6	2	3	3	8	3	14	5	4	60	18.5
Ossining	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	2	2	1	8	2.5
Otisville	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	.3
Taconic	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	4	1.2
TOTALS	20	30	27	29	25	27	18	38	18	40	30	23	325	

With the exception of Bedford Hills Correctional Facility, each of the 9 most frequently reporting facilities had total designed capacities of over 800 inmates and, in fact, housed over 800 general confinement inmates at the conclusion of the study period. (Of the remaining facilities, only Ossining had a general confinement capacity and a general confinement population of over 800 inmates.) Bedford Hills, the only major female facility in the State, had a general confinement capacity of 411 inmates and housed 415 inmates at the conclusion of the study period. The total prisoner populations and designed general confinement capacities of the 9 most frequently reporting facilities at the end of the study period, March 31, 1980, is displayed in Table B.

TABLE B

Facility Populations as of March 31, 1980

Facility	General Confinement Population	General Confinement Capacity	Percentage of Occupancy
Attica <sup>1</sup>	1,688	1,700	99.3
Auburn	1,591	1,572	101.2
Bedford <sup>1</sup>	415	411	101.0
Clinton <sup>2</sup>	2,474	2,518	98.3
Eastern	858	851	100.8
Elmira <sup>1</sup>	1,527	1,543	99.0
Fishkill	1,253	1,167	107.4
Great Meadow <sup>3</sup>	1,480	1,472	100.5
Green Haven <sup>3</sup>	1,872	1,868	100.2
TOTAL	13,158	13,102	100.4
TOTAL ALL OTHERS	7,758	8,030	96.1
OVERALL DEPT. TOTAL	20,916	21,132	98.9

1) Includes Reception and Classification

2) Includes Reception and Classification, Annex, Merle Cooper Program

3) Includes Transit Unit

As noted in Table B, the percentage of occupancy for the 9 most frequently reporting facilities, as determined by dividing the designed capacity by the total population, was somewhat higher than the percentage of occupancy for all other facilities and the Department overall. This provides some support for the argument that overcrowding in prison may result in increased violent behavior among inmates which is then directed toward staff.

In an effort to compare assault rates statewide and to control for population, the rate of assault per total inmate population was computed. (Please note: this rate includes both general confinement and restricted housing populations, since, as will be

noted in a subsequent section, a significant proportion of assaults on correctional employees occurred in restricted or special housing areas.) Although Clinton reported the highest number of assaults on correctional employees during the study period, 65, the rate of assaults per total inmate population at Clinton was one assault per 40.5 inmates. Bedford Hills, on the other hand, which reported 17 assaults and which had a total prisoner population of 423 inmates, had an assault rate of one assault per 24.8 inmates, the highest rate in the state. The assault rate at Great Meadow was one assault per 27.7 inmates, and at Green Haven, one assault per 32.5 inmates. The assault rate for all of the 9 most commonly reporting facilities combined was one assault per 46.9 inmates, for all other facilities, one assault per 245.5 inmates, and statewide, one assault per 67.1 inmates.

Type of Assaults

Table C represents a breakdown of the types of assaults on correctional employees which were reported during the study period, i.e. whether or not weapons were used.

As indicated in Table C, a vast majority of the reported assaults, 80.6%, involved physical contact without weapon use. Thrown objects were the second most common method of assaulting correctional employees. Statewide, thrown objects comprised 9.2% of the total types of assaults, however, at Great Meadow, 19.6% of the 56 assaults were the result of employees being hit with thrown objects.

TABLE C.

Type of Assault	Type of Assault, By Facility										TOTAL	
	ATTICA	AUBURN	BEDFORD	CLINTON	EASTERN	ELMIRA	FISHKILL	GREAT MEADOW	GREEN HAVEN	OTHERS	%	#
Punch, Kick, Grab, Push	73.9%	89.2%	76.5%	87.7%	92.3%	76.5%	85.7%	67.8%	78.3%	81.5%	80.6	262
Stab or Slash	13	3.6	0	3.1	0	5.9	0	1.8	3.3	3.1	3.4	11
Hit with Club, Broom Handle, Etc.	4.3	0	5.9	0	0	0	7.1	5.3	3.3	3.1	2.8	9
Thrown Object	4.3	3.6	5.9	6.1	7.7	11.7	0	19.6	13.3	3.1	9.2	30
Other	4.3	3.6	11.7	3.1	0	5.9	7.1	3.5	1.7	3.1	3.7	12
TOTAL	99.9%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	99.9%	100%	99.9%	99.9%	99.7	325
TOTAL NUMBER	23	28	17	65	13	17	14	56	60	32		

# Time of Assault

Table D represents a summary of the times in which assaults on correctional employees occurred during the study period. As anticipated, assaults most typically occurred during the hours when inmates had the most freedom of movement and when staff had the most contact with the inmate population.

Approximately 65% of all assaults on correctional employees occurred between the hours of 8:01 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. and approximately 88% occurred between 8:01 a.m. and 8:00 p.m.

TABLE D

Time of Assault	Time of Assault, By Facility											TOTAL	
	Attica	Auburn	Bedford	Clinton	Eastern	Elmira	Fishkill	Great Meadow	Green Haven	Others	%	#	
12:01 am - 4:00 am	0	0	5.9%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	.3	1	
4:01 am - 8:00 am	0	3.5	0	3.1	0	0	14.3	3.6	5.0	12.5	4.3	14	
8:01 am - 12:00 Noon	47.8	35.7	29.4	35.4	23.1	23.5	42.9	26.8	28.3	18.7	31.0	101	
12:01 pm - 4:00 pm	30.4	28.6	29.4	32.3	23.1	53.0	21.4	37.5	35.0	40.6	34.4	112	
4:01 pm - 8:00 pm	8.7	32.1	23.5	20.0	38.4	23.5	21.4	21.4	23.3	25.0	22.4	73	
8:01 pm - 12:00 Mid	13.1	0	11.8	9.2	15.4	0	0	10.7	8.3	3.2	7.7	25	
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	99.9%	100%	100%	325	
TOTAL NUMBER	23	28	17	65	13	17	14	56	60	32			

## Location of Assaults

Table E provides a summary of the location within the facility where assaults on employees occurred during the study period. Housing areas, including attached corridors and stairwells, were the most common location for assaults during the study period. 43.7% of the total number of assaults occurred in these areas.

It is interesting to note that the second most common location for assaults on employees was special housing areas. 23.1% of all assaults occurred in such areas while only 3.1% of the entire inmate population was housed in such areas. At Bedford, 47% of the facility

total, occurred in special housing. At Attica, 35% of the facility total occurred in special housing areas, and at Clinton, 19 assaults, or 29% of the facility total, occurred in special housing. At Green Haven, on the other hand, only 13.3% of the facility total occurred in special housing and 65% occurred in general confinement housing areas.

TABLE E

## Location of Assault, By Facility

Location of Assault	Attica	Auburn	Bedford	Clinton	Eastern	Elmira	Fishkill	Great Meadow	Green Haven	Others	TOTAL	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	#
Housing Area	34.8%	35.7%	41.2%	35.4%	46.1%	41.2%	50.0%	41.1%	65.0%	37.5%	43.7	142
Special Housing Unit	34.8	25.0	47.1	29.2	7.7	29.4	7.1	23.2	13.3	15.6	23.1	75
Hospital, Satellite	8.7	3.6	11.7	18.5	7.7	11.8	7.1	3.6	5.0	6.3	8.6	28
Gym, Recreation Room	0	0	0	0	7.7	0	0	0	0	3.1	.6	2
Yard	4.4	10.7	0	1.5	0	0	0	5.3	0	3.1	2.7	9
Mess Hall	4.4	14.3	0	4.6	7.7	0	14.3	12.5	1.7	9.4	6.7	22
Program Areas, Service Areas	8.7	3.6	0	1.5	15.4	17.6	7.1	3.6	13.3	18.7	8.0	26
Other Areas	4.4	7.1	0	9.2	7.7	0	14.3	10.7	1.7	6.3	6.5	21
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	99.9%	100%	100%	99.9%	100%	100%	100%	99.9	325
TOTAL NUMBER	23	28	17	65	13	17	14	56	60	32		

## Participants in Incidents of Assaults on Correctional Employees

The following tables, Tables F-H, represent a breakdown of the number of inmates involved in the 325 separate incidents of assaults, the number of employees involved, and the job title of the employees involved. A subsequent section provides a summary of certain demographic characteristics of the inmates involved in assaults on employees.

As shown in Table F, in 93.9% of the incidents, an individual inmate was involved in the assaults on employees.

TABLE F

Assaults on Employees, By Number of Inmates Involved

Number of Inmates	Number of Incidents	Percentage
1	295	93.9
2	10	3.2
3 or more	9	2.9
TOTAL	314*	100

\*11 unspecified cases

In Table G the number of employees involved in each of the 325 separate incidents of assault is displayed. 80.4% of such incidents involved the assault of one correctional employee. Incidents of assaults on correctional employees are therefore typically one on one confrontations between an individual employee and an individual inmate.

TABLE G

Assaults on Employees, By Number of Employees Involved

Number of Employees	Number of Incidents	Percentage
1	254	80.4
2	37	11.7
3 or more	25	7.9
TOTAL	316*	100

\*9 unspecified cases

Table H represents a summary of the title of the employees involved in the incidents of assaults. As noted in Table H, 422 employees were involved in the 325 separate incidents during the study period. Of these 422 employees, 364, or 86.2%, were Correction Officers. Correction Officers are the most numerous employee group in the facility, have the most direct contact with the inmate population, and are often required to perform duties not particularly popular with the inmate population, i.e. conduct frisks, intervene during fights, etc.

TABLE H

Employees Involved in Assaults, By Title

Title	Number	Percentage
Correction Officer	364	86.2
Sergeant	31	7.5
Lieutenant	3	.7
Captain	1	.2
Civilian	23	5.4
TOTAL	422	100

Part B: Characteristics of Inmates Involved in Assaults on Correctional Employees

The following set of tables (Tables I-K) represent a breakdown of certain demographic characteristics of those prisoners who were involved in reported assaults on employees during the study period of April 1, 1979 through March 31, 1980. The age, ethnic group, and commitment crime of such inmates are presented along with the age, ethnic group, and commitment of the general population.

The 325 separate incidents of assaults involved 334 identified inmates. (In some incidents, the identity of the assailant was unknown.) Those inmates who were involved in more than one incident during the study period were not distinguished in the present study.

As reported in Table I, of the 334 identified inmates, 217, or 65%, were Black. Blacks comprised 53% of the overall under custody population as of December 31, 1979. White inmates, who represented 26.9% of the overall population, comprised only 12.6% of those inmates involved in assaults, and Puerto Rican inmates, 19.5% of the total population and 21.9% of those inmates involved in assaults. Black inmates are therefore somewhat overrepresented in incidents of assaults on employees while White inmates are underrepresented and Puerto Ricans proportionate to overall number of Puerto Ricans under custody.



TABLE I

Inmates Involved in Assaults, By Ethnic Group

Ethnic Group	Number	Percent	Percent of Total Inmate Population*
White	42	12.6	26.9
Black	217	65.0	53.0
Puerto Rican	73	21.9	19.5
Other	2	.5	.6
TOTAL	334		

\*Under custody population as of December 31, 1979

Table J indicates that the most commonly reported commitment crime for those inmates involved in assaults on correctional employees was Robbery. 41.6% of the inmates were committed for Robbery as compared to 34.8% of the overall under custody population as of December 31, 1979. Those inmates committed for all violent offenses, including Murder and Other Homicides, Robbery, Assault, and Rape, comprised 76.6% of the inmates involved in assaults on employees while 64.9% of the overall under custody population were committed for such violent offenses.

TABLE J

Inmates Involved in Assaults, By Commitment Offense

Offense	Number	Percent	Percent of Total Inmate Population*
Murder & Other Homicide	78	23.3	19.4
Robbery	139	41.6	34.8
Assault	18	5.4	4.5
Rape & Other Sex Crimes	21	6.3	6.2
Furglary	22	6.6	11.3
Youthful Offender	16	4.8	3.9
Other	30	9.0	19.9
Not Specified	10	3.0	-
TOTAL	334		

\*Under custody population as of December 31, 1979

Finally, Table K represents a breakdown of the age of the inmates involved in assaults on employees during the study period. The most commonly reported age group were those inmates in the 21-24 age group. 31.1% of the inmates involved in assaults were in the 21-24 age group as compared to 21.7% of the overall under custody population. 70.3% of the inmates involved in assaults were under 30 years of age while 52.9% of the overall population were under 30 as of March 31, 1980. Younger prisoners, i.e. those under 30, are overrepresented among the inmates involved in assaults on employees.

TABLE K

Inmates Involved in Assaults, By Age

Age	Number	Percent	Percent of Total Inmate Population*
16-20	51	15.3	14.2
21-24	104	31.1	21.7
25-29	80	23.9	24.0
30-34	52	15.6	17.6
35-39	30	9.0	10.4
40+	17	5.1	12.1
TOTAL	334		

\*Under custody population as of March 31, 1980

### Conclusion

The results of the present study are, for the most part, consistent with the results of a previously submitted study on assaults on employees during the period of April 1, 1978 through March 31, 1979. The typology that was developed as a result of the present study and which is presented in the "Highlights" section is identical to the typology that was developed as a result of the previous study. It is significant to note, however, that there has been a 15% increase in the number of reported assaults from the period of April, 1978 through March, 1979 to the period of April, 1979 through March, 1980. The facility which reported the largest increase was Clinton Correctional Facility which reported 32 assaults on employees from April, 1978 through March, 1979 and which reported 65 such assaults from April, 1979 through March, 1980, a 100% increase. The facility with the most significant decrease in assaults on employees was Cossackie which reported 21 assaults during the previous study period and only 9 assaults during the present study period.

There are, therefore, some very distinctive characteristics of incidents of inmate assaults on correctional employees in New York State correctional facilities. These characteristics have remained consistent over the course of two separate one year study periods. Further study would be required to determine the reason why certain facilities continue to experience a high frequency of assaults on employees, why certain facilities have experienced an increase in such incidents, and why others are experiencing a decrease. Additional study may also help explain why certain inmates are involved in more assaults on employees than others and why certain employees are victimized more than others.

It is apparent that many factors, some more readily measurable than others, must be examined before we can begin to completely understand the problem of inmate assaults on correctional employees. This study has been an effort to explore some of the more readily measurable characteristics of such incidents and to suggest areas for further study.

**END**