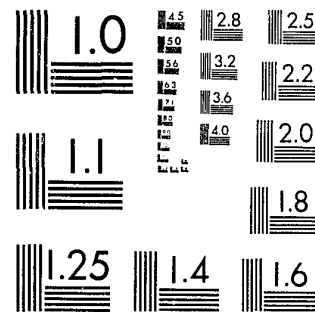


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**X**  
SAMPLE SURVEY OF  
COMMITMENTS WITH I. Q. SCORES UNDER 80

The present survey investigated the characteristics of male new commitments with I. Q. scores under 80 received at Elmira.

This report examines the case records of 50 new commitments with I. Q. scores under 80 in order to compile information on their personal characteristics, prior criminal histories and institutional records.

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SAMPLE SURVEY OF  
COMMITMENTS WITH I.Q. SCORES UNDER 80  
HIGHLIGHTS

ACQUISITIONS

- 1) Purpose: This survey was designed to compile information on young, male commitments with I.Q. scores under 80 for program purposes.
- 2) Sampling Procedure: A sample of 50 inmates with I.Q. scores under 80 was selected from the new commitments received at Elmira during 1977. Approximately 6% of the reviewed cases had I.Q. scores under 80.
- 3) Range of I.Q. Scores: The vast majority (43) of the 50 cases with I.Q. scores under 80 had scores between 70 and 79.
- 4) California Academic Test (C.A.T.) Scores: Of the 41 surveyed cases with C.A.T. scores available, 73% (30) had reading and math achievement scores at the third grade level or below.
- 5) Lack of Trade Skills/Histories of Irregular Employment: All of the sample cases reported the absence of any trade skills. Furthermore, 96% reported unemployment or sporadic employment histories.
- 6) Ethnic Distribution: This survey found that a disproportionate percentage of the sample cases with I.Q. scores under 80 were Black (70%) as compared to 53% of the total 1977 new commitments in the 16 to 20 age range. On the other hand, only one of the sample cases was White as compared to 27% of the total 1977 new commitment population.
- 7) Commitment Crime: This survey found 72% of the sample commitments had been committed for felonies while the remaining 28% are youthful offender commitments. The majority (72%) of the youthful offender commitments are the result of robbery convictions. A slightly higher percentage of the sample group was committed for violent offenses than the overall 1977 commitment population.
- 8) Program Involvement and Adjustment: Approximately 84% of the sample population are reportedly involved in educational, vocational or maintenance programs to some degree. Available case records reported low achievement in these programs, however, in approximately one-third of the sampled cases.
- 9) Program Implications: In view of the I.Q. scores of a majority of the sample cases (86% between 70 and 79) and the general lack of severe adjustment problems, it does not appear that most of the sample cases could appropriately be classified as mentally retarded. In general, it appears that the surveyed cases might be considered as being of "borderline intelligence" with respect to their I.Q. scores and adaptive behavior.

(Continued)

HIGHLIGHTS  
(Cont'd)

While this survey found that facility staff had made efforts to involve these inmates in regular facility programming, the borderline I.Q. scores of these individuals coupled with their generally very low C.A.T. scores and their nearly total lack of employment skills or experience raise questions on the ability of these individuals to fully benefit from these programs. As such, the findings of this survey may be seen to support the Department's current efforts to establish specialized programs for such inmates with developmental disabilities in order to maximize the potential benefit of their facility programming and to thus increase the probability of their post-release adjustment.

SAMPLE SURVEY OF  
1977 COMMITMENTS TO ELMIRA  
WITH I.Q. SCORES BELOW 80

This sample survey is designed to develop a profile of the characteristics and institutional records of a group of young offenders committed to Elmira Reception Center in 1977.

Purpose of Report: The basic purpose of this report is to compile data on the personal characteristics, prior criminal histories, and institutional records of a sample of young commitments to Elmira in 1977 in order to develop a fuller profile of this sub-group in the inmate population.

In recent years, the Department has sought to develop programs for this particular sub-group in the overall inmate population. In order to facilitate this process and to further identify the special needs of this group, this report seeks to generate detailed information on a sample of these individuals.

Characteristics Examined: In developing this profile, the following characteristics were examined: level of intelligence; educational level (including special education) and academic achievement scores on commitment; reason for commitment; prior juvenile and adult criminal record; sentence length; ethnic group and county of commitment; drug usage and drug law violation; employment history; personality characteristics such as psychiatric history and levels of frustration tolerance, impulse control and general achievement; and institutional adaptation including both program and custodial adjustment.

Sampling Procedure: The present sample of 50 inmates with I.Q. scores below 80 was selected from among the first 845 commitments received at Elmira during 1977, using the classification forms submitted to the Bureau of Records and Statistical Analysis. The sample is drawn from the 1977 commitments as it is necessary to create a time span within which program and custodial adjustment can occur. All 50 of these cases scored below 80 on their initial I.Q. score and below 85 on any follow-up test.

Inmates with initial I.Q. scores below 80, who tested over 85 on a follow-up test, were excluded due to the instability in their I.Q. scores.

I.Q. Tests: The Beta Non-Verbal I.Q. test is the initial test employed at Elmira Reception Center. This test is group administered, and does not require the ability to read. Each of the six sub-test is preceded by a practice exercise. Hence, individuals who do not verbally communicate will be tested as long as comprehension of directions is demonstrated on the practice exercises. The Revised Beta Examination is a restandardization by Lindner and Gorvitz, of the Army Beta Examination of W.W.I.

The WAIS test was the most generally used follow-up test in the sample. Fifty percent (50%) of the sample population were tested more than once, and all of the initial test scores were under 80 while all the follow-up scores fell below 85.

The entire population of 1977 commitments between the ages of 16 and 20 years is used as the comparison group throughout most of this study. The number of 1977 commitments within this age group is nearly synonymous with that of the 1977 commitments at Elmira Correctional Facility, as nearly all young commitments are received there. If comparison data is not available for this restricted age group, data from the entire population of 1977 commitments is used. Furthermore, some data, collected from the sample group is unique so there is no comparison data readily available.

I.Q. Scores of Sampled Cases: The table below indicates that 86% (43) of these 50 sampled scored between 70 and 79 on their initial I.Q. test upon reception.

INITIAL I.Q. INDICATOR BY I.Q. SCORE

	Beta	WAIS	
50-54	1		1 (2%)
55-59	1		1 (2%)
60-64	1		1 (2%)
65-69	3	1	4 (8%)
70-74	12	6	18 (36%)
75-79	18	7	25 (50%)
	36 (72%)	14 (28%)	50 (100%)

Beta is used as the primary I.Q. indicator in 36 of the 50 cases. The remaining 14 cases reported the WAIS I.Q. score as the initial indicator of I.Q. 50% of all sample cases scored in the 75-79 range while 36% of the scores fell into the 70-74 range with the remaining 14% scoring below 70 on the initial I.Q. test.

Approximately 70% (25 of 36) of the cases that reported an initial Beta score did a follow-up WAIS test. 54% of those who took both tests scored in a higher range on the WAIS test (follow-up test) while 32% scored in the same range and the remaining 14% scored lower on the WAIS indicator. All persons within the sample group scored below 80 on at least one of the tests, and no one scored above 84 on any given test. The modal range on the WAIS indicator was 75-79 for blacks and Puerto Ricans and 80-84 for the remaining ethnic groups.

INITIAL BETA SCORE BY WAIS FOLLOW-UP SCORE

WAIS FOLLOW-UP TEST								
BETA INDICATOR	50-54	55-59	60-64	65-69	70-74	75-79	80-84	Total
50-54						1		1(4%)
55-59								0
60-64								0
65-69						2		2(8%)
70-74					4	1	7	12(48%)
75-79					1	5	4	10(40%)
80-84								0
	0	0	0	0	5(20%)	9(36%)	11(44%)	25(100%)

Self-Reported Grade Level. Of these 50 cases, 41 reported grade levels of seventh grade or above. The sampled case with the lowest I.Q. score (50-54 category) reported the highest grade level (10-12 grade).

I.Q. BY SELF-REPORTED GRADE LEVEL

SELF -REPORTED GRADE LEVEL					
I.Q. SCORE	1-3	4-6	7-9	10-12	TOTAL
50-54	0	0	0	1	1 (2%)
55-59	0	1	0	0	1 (2%)
60-64	1	0	0	0	1 (2%)
65-69	0	0	13	1	4 (8%)
70-74	1	1	13	3	18 (36%)
75-79	2	3	13	7	25 (50%)
	4(8%)	5(10%)	29(58%)	12(24%)	50 (100%)

CAT Scores. Among the individuals in the sample whose file included CAT scores, 73% (30 of 41) scored below 3.0 on their math and reading achievement test.

As such, the CAT scores of these individuals appear to indicate their self-reported grade levels significantly over-represent their educational level.

I.Q. SCORE BY C.A.T. SCORE\*

I.Q. SCORE	C.A.T. SCORE				Total
	1 - 3	4 - 6	7 - 9	Not Available	
50-54	1	0	0	0	1 (2%)
55-59	1	0	0	0	1 (2%)
60-64	0	0	0	1	1 (2%)
65-69	3	0	0	1	4 (8%)
70-74	14	2	1	1	18 (36%)
75-79	<u>11</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>25 (50%)</u>
	30(60%)	10(20%)	1(2%)	9(18%)	50(100%)

\*Only one person in the sample population had math and reading C.A.T. scores that fell into different ranges. The scores for that particular individual are only one grade apart and the final C.A.T. score is an average of these two scores.

Ethnic Distribution. Approximately 53% of the total 1977 commitments (16-21 years of age) were Black, while 26% were White, 20% were Puerto Rican and the remaining 1% were included in the "other" category. The sample group depicted a vastly different ethnic distribution, particularly within the Black and White subgroups. Only 2% (1 person) of the sample group were White while 70% were Black, 26% were Puerto Rican and 2% were "other". Consequently, there were 24% fewer Whites and 17% more Blacks found with this low I.Q. sample, as compared to the population from which the sample was drawn. The proportion of Puerto Ricans, in the sample, was 6% greater than the population percentage.

ETHNIC GROUP BY I.Q. - 16 to 20 YEARS OF AGE MALES

Ethnic	Low I.Q. Sample	Total 1977 Commitments (16-20 years)
White	1 (2%)	570 (26.3%)
Black	35 (70%)	1144 (52.8%)
Puerto Rican	13 (26%)	431 (19.8%)
Other	1 (2%)	23 (1.1%)
	<u>50 (100%)</u>	<u>2168 (100%)</u>

In 1977, this office issued a similar study, examining the characteristics of a low I.Q. sample drawn from the 1976 commitments to Elmira Correctional Facility. The ethnic distribution of this earlier sample is analagous to that of the present sample. Consequently, the probability of the ethnic distribution, of the present sample, occurring as a result of sampling error is lessened.

ETHNIC GROUP BY YEAR OF SAMPLE

Ethnic	1976 Low I.Q. Sample	1977 Low I.Q. Sample
White	1 (2%)	4 (8%)
Black	35 (70%)	33 (66%)
Puerto Rican	13 (26%)	13 (26%)
Others	1 (2%)	0 (0%)
	<u>50 (100%)</u>	<u>50 (100%)</u>

County of Commitment. Eighty-percent (40) of the low I.Q. sample commitments were committed from New York City while the remaining 20% were committed from the upstate counties. Only 4% (2) commitments came from counties with populations less than 150,000. The total 1977 commitment population (under 21 years) reflected a lesser skew with only 63% of the commitments originating from New York City.

COUNTY	LOW I.Q.	I.Q.	TOTAL MALE POPULATION - UNDER 21 YEARS	
New York City	40	(80%)	1372	(63.5%)
Albany	-		41	(1.9%)
Broome	-		23	(1.1%)
Dutchess	1	(2%)	25	(1.1%)
Erie	3	(6%)	57	(2.6%)
Monroe	3	(6%)	81	(3.7%)

(Table continued)

COUNTY	LOW I.Q.	I.Q.	TOTAL MALE POPULATION - UNDER 21 YEARS	
Nassau	-		88	( 4.1%)
Niagara	-		38	( 1.8%)
Oneida	-		9	( 0.4%)
Onondaga	-		72	( 3.3%)
Orange	1	(2%)	32	( 1.5%)
Rensselaer	-		4	( 0.2%)
Rockland	-		19	( 0.9%)
Schenectady	-		6	( 0.3%)
Suffolk	-		52	( 2.4%)
Westchester	-		33	( 1.5%)
Counties Under 150,000	2	(4%)	210	( 9.7%)
	50	100%	2162	

Drug Use. The majority of both the sample and the total commitment population were reported as drug users, 70% and 75% respectively. Interestingly, 57% of the sample group, reporting the use of drugs, restricted the reported use to marijuana only. The remaining 43% of the sample drug users reported use of numerous drugs including heroin, cocaine and methadone.

I.Q.

Drug Use	Low I.Q. Sample	Total 1977 Commitments (16-20 Yrs.)
Drug User	35 (70)	1623 (75)
Drug Non-User	15 (30)	545 (25)
	50	2168

Commitment Crime. Approximately 72% of the low I.Q. sample commitments had been committed for felonies (36 out of 50) while 28% were youthful offender commitments. The percent of felony dispositions for the total 1977 male commitments, within the 16-20 years range, was higher (78%) than the percent of felonies within the sample group, but the difference is not large enough to attain significance. Additionally, as noted below, the majority of Youthful Offender commitments, in the same population, had been arrested for violent crimes.

While 6.3% of all male 1977 commitments (16-20 years of age) had been convicted of homicide, 14.0% of the sample group were committed for that offense. In contrast, the percentage of burglaries for the total population was 2½ times greater than that for the sample group. Consequently, though the low I.Q. sample group had a slightly higher percentage of Youthful Offender commitments, a slightly higher percentage of the sample was committed for violent offenses than the overall 1977 commitment population.

REASON FOR COMMITMENT BY I.Q.-INMATES 16-20 YEARS

Crime	Low I.Q. Sample	Total 1977 Commitments (16-20 yrs)
Murder	1 (2.0)	63 (2.9)
Homicide	7 (14.0)	135 (6.3)
Rape	1 (2.0)	52 (2.4)
Sex Offenses (except Rape)	1 (2.0)	20 (0.9)
Robbery	20 (40.0)	883 (40.8)
Assault	1 (2.0)	63 (2.9)
Burglary	2 ( 4.0)	252 (11.7)
Grand Larceny	0 ( 0.0)	52 ( 2.5)
Dangerous Drug	1 (2.0)	64 (2.9)
Forgery	- (0.0)	5 (0.2)
Dangerous Weapon	1 (2.0)	39 (1.8)
All other felonies	1 (2.0)	51 (2.3)
Youthful Offenders	14 (28.0)	477 (22.1)
Juvenile Delinquency	-	6 (0.3)
	50 (100%)	2162 (100%)

It is noteworthy that the majority (72%) of the Youthful Offender commitments in the low I.Q. category, had been charged with robbery, while 21% were accused of burglary and the remaining 7% (1) were arrested for sexual abuse.

\*Data was unavailable for six cases.

Prior Adult Criminal Record. Only 18% of the sample commitments had no prior adult record (no previous arrest) before the instant offense while 54% had no prior commitment, though they had been arrested 1 or more times. The general population displayed a similar trend; although there is a smaller percentage of prior arrest among the general population, the difference of 4.4% is not significant; i.e., it is very probable that it occurred by chance alone.

PRIOR ADULT CRIMINAL RECORD BY I.Q.

Crime	Low I.Q. Sample	Total 1977 Commitment(16-20 yrs.)
No Prior Adult	9 (18%)	294 (13.6%)
No Prior Inst. Com.	27 (54%)	1206 (55.6%)
Local Commit. Only	11 (22%)	578 (26.7%)
State of Fed. Commit.	3 (6%)	76 (3.5%)
Not Stated	0 (0%)	14 (0.6%)
	50 (100%)	2168 (100%)

Juvenile Criminal Record. Fifty-two percent of the sample cases reported histories of juvenile delinquency while the remaining 48% either reported no juvenile arrest or failed to report the juvenile history.

Minimum Sentence. The large majority of all commitments in the 16-20 year age group received unspecified minimum sentences. This trend was most pronounced among commitments 16-18 years old and can be attributed to the numerous youthful offender commitments. Generally, the minimum sentence pattern of the sample group reflects that of the total population of 1977 commitments, 16-20 years of age.

MINIMUM SENTENCE BY I.Q. BY AGE ON COMMITMENT

	LOW I.Q.		GENERAL POPULATION	
Min. Serv.	16-18 years	19-20 years	16-18 years	19-20 years
12-29 mo.	4 (14.3%)	1 (4.5%)	64 (5.8%)	144 (13.4%)
30 mo.	1 (3.6%)	3 (13.7%)	4 (0.3%)	9 (0.8%)
31-59 mo.	-	-	43 (3.9%)	74 (6.9%)
60-119 mo.	1 (3.6%)	2 (9.1%)	41 (3.8%)	65 (6.1%)
120-239 mo.	-	-	16 (1.5%)	21 (2.0%)
20 years +	-	1 (4.5%)	10 (0.9%)	12 (1.1%)
Unspecified	22(78.5%)	15(68.2%)	919 (83.8%)	746 (69.7%)
	28 100%	22 100%	1097 100%	1071 100%

Maximum Sentence by Crime on Commitment

The distribution of maximum sentences by crime on commitment depends upon the severity of the offense and the crime category (whether felony, youthful offender or juvenile delinquent) and crime class. Among the commitments in the sample population, only 2% (1 commitment) received a life maximum. Although 50% of the sample commitments received a maximum of 3 or 4 years, over half of those sentences can be attributed to the Youth Offender status which restricts the maximum sentence to 4 years. The modal maximum sentence for sample felony commitments is 61 to 120 months and it encompasses approximately 39% of all felony commitments. Contrarily, only 24% of all felony male commitments (age restricted) in 1977 fell into that maximum sentence range. Furthermore, 55% of all the low I.Q. sample felony commitments received a maximum sentence of more than 5 years, while only 48% of all the male felony commitments received such lengthy sentences. In summary when the affect of the Youth Offender commitments is held constant, the maximum sentences for the sample commitments tends to be slightly higher than these for the general population commitments of the same year.

MAXIMUM SENTENCE BY CRIME OR COMMITMENT - SAMPLE, LOW I.Q., POPULATION

	3 yrs.	37-47 mo.	4 yrs.	49-59 mo.	5 yrs.	61-120 mo.	121-239 mo.	20 yrs.+	Life or Death
Murder	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)							1 (2.0)
Homicide	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)			2 (4.0)	3 (6.0)	2 (4.0)		1 (2.0)
Rape	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)				1 (2.0)			
Sex Off/N.R.	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (2.0)						
Robbery	2 (4.0)	0 (0.0)	4 (8.0)		3 (6.0)	8 (16.0)	2 (4.0)	1 (2.0)	
Burglary	1 (2.0)	0 (0.0)				1 (2.0)			
Assault		0 (0.0)	1 (2.0)						
G.L./N.A.		0 (0.0)							
G.L./Auto		0 (0.0)							
Danger Drug	1 (2.0)	0 (0.0)							
Forgery									
Dang. Weap.			1 (2.0)						
All Other Fel.							1 (2.0)		
Y.O.	5 (10.0)		9 (18.0)						
J.D.	9 (18.0)	0 (0.0)	16 (32.0)	0 (0.0)	5 (10.0)	14 (28.0)	4 (8.0)	1 (2.0)	1 (2.0)

### Trade Skills/Work History

All of the sample cases reported the absence of any trade skills, while 70% reported unemployment; 26% reported sporadic employment and 4% reported full employment at the time of arrest. The types of reported employment varied, however, they all fall within the range of unskilled labor.

### Program Involvement and Adjustment

Approximately 42% of the sample population are reportedly involved in academic-vocational programs, while 26% work as porters or maintenance persons, and 16% are employed in industries. Half of the remaining 16% reported no program involvement while the other 8% offered no information concerning program participation.

The degree of program adjustment is fairly difficult to measure as program adjustment varies throughout the many programs in which the individual participated. Consequently, this report includes the most frequently and continuously reported degree of adjustment. The degrees of adjustment ranged from poor to very good, with 16% reported as poor, 38% reported as fair, 26% reported as good and 10% reported as very good. The remaining 10% either failed to report program adjustment or the report was so unstable that any adjustment determination would be futile.

The level of achievement was reported in the periodic progress evaluations. 32% of all sample cases reported low levels of achievement while 4% reported high achievement.

### History of Mental Disturbance

Approximately 34% (17) reported some psychiatric contact prior to the present conviction. Only 6% were court ordered diagnosis while the remaining 28% originated elsewhere. The continual use of medication was reported for 12% of the population, with all but one case reporting the use of thorazine. Additionally, 4% (2 cases) of the sample were epileptic and used dilantin an anti-convulsive medication. The potential for suicide was cited in 12% (6) of the sample cases, all of whom had previous psychiatric contacts.

### Personality Characteristics

Initially, the following four personality characteristics were included in the data collection: frustration tolerance, impulse control, level of motivation and level of achievement. However, the reports of motivational level were frequently unstable, varying from program to program, and have been excluded from the analysis. The remaining three personality characteristics showed greater stability throughout the incarceration period.

Low frustration tolerance was reported in 22% of the sample cases. The reports originated in the psychiatric evaluations, classification analyses and the periodic progress evaluations. Often, poor impulse control, which was reported in 42% of the cases was found in conjunction with low frustration tolerance.

### Aggression/Victimization

Approximately 40% of the sample cases reported incidents of aggression within their present institutionalization, while 16% reported incidents of victimization. (An encounter was classified as victimization if the individual was reported as being verbally harassed or physically assaulted by a fellow inmate).

The majority (45%) of the cases reporting aggressive incidents reported inmate assaults while 15% reported incidents of sexual abuse, 15% reported assaults on Correction Officers and 25% reported assaults on both Correction Officers and inmates. There was little indication of victim precipitation among the numerous assaultive incidents.

Most of the sample victimization were limited to verbal abuse with only 12% (2 cases) reporting physical abuse.

Special Education. Eighteen percent of the cases reported involvement in special education classes for slow learners with 2% (1 case) actually being institutionalized in a M.R.D.D. facility. Another 8% (4 cases) had been in educational programs for emotionally disturbed children.

None of the cases reported specific learning disabilities; however, 22% did report some type of defective vision, and an additional 2% (1 case) reported a speech impediment.

Discussion: Program Implications. The present survey was initiated to develop a profile of inmates with I.Q. scores below 80 for program purposes.

In view of the current interest in programming for this category of inmates, the following section examines the program implications of the findings of this survey.

Percent of Young Commitments with I.Q. Scores Under 80. Similar to the findings of the Department's previous study of the I.Q. scores of young offenders committed to Elmira, this survey found that approximately 6% of the surveyed cases had I.Q. scores under 80.

I.Q. Scores and Adaptive Behavior. As noted previously, 86% of the sample cases had I.Q. scores between 70 and 79. It is interesting to note that although only 16% of the case histories reported poor program adjustment, more than twice as many specifically commented on the low achievement within the programs. Perhaps, the reports of program adjustment partially reflect participant cooperation in conjunction with participant progress. Generally, it appears that the surveyed cases might be considered as being of "borderline intelligence" with respect to I.Q. scores and adaptive behavior.

A large portion of the sample population is reported as being impulsive and often times easily frustrated. These personality characteristics may account for the numerous incidents of aggression reported throughout the case histories.

Development of Specialized Programs for Inmates of Borderline Intelligence. The problem then becomes whether or not a specialized program for these inmates is warranted in terms of its cost and probable impact on the involved inmates.

The present survey found that the sample cases depicted an absence of occupational or academic skills. Moreover, 32% of the sample population were specifically cited as being low achievers within their respective programs, indicating the probable perpetuation of illiteracy and unemployment.

Another argument for the establishment of a specialized program for these inmates arises from the numerous reports of poor impulse control in conjunction with a high rate of aggressive incidents occurring among the sample cases. (Although this study failed to discern a significant number of victimizations, this failure may be partially attributed to the use of case folders as the data collection instrument).

As such, it may be concluded from the findings of this survey that there is a sizeable number of borderline I.Q. inmates with poor achievement records (prior to and throughout institutionalization) and little impulse control, many of whom have histories of mental disturbance. These inmates might be considered as appropriate candidates for a special program after their cases are reviewed on an individual basis by facility counseling staff with respect to their mental capacities, adaptive skills and other relevant personal characteristics.

**END**