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Research Snippet

Rates of Return to Custody for Offenders with Long Term Supervision Orders (LTSOs)

KEY WORDS: *return to custody, long term offender, long term supervision order, higher risk offender*

Impetus

Certain offenders, such as those convicted of serious sexual crimes, prompt apprehension amongst the public regarding safety upon community release.

When a judge perceives an offender as posing a significant risk to re-offend if not supervised in the community, he or she may designate the offender a long term offender and impose a long term supervision order (LTSO; a period of community supervision of up to ten years after the expiry of the offender’s sentence). During this period, the offender can benefit from the structure, support, and supervision provided by CSC in the community.

Since the long term offender designation was established in 1997, very little research on rates of return to custody of these offenders has been conducted.

What we did

Offenders with LTSOs were compared to statutorily-released (SR) offenders (i.e., offenders not granted conditional release) who were given a residency condition at release (i.e., required to reside in a halfway house).

In total, 3,378 offenders – 250 with LTSOs and 3,128 SR offenders – released during the years 2005 to 2009 on whom a residency condition was imposed were followed for a period of 6 months.

Comparisons were repeated with a limited sample of those offenders with a current or previous conviction for a sexual offence (which represents most offenders with LTSOs). The sample included total of 956 offenders – 167 with LTSOs and 789 SR offenders.

What we found

Overall, rates of return to custody for offenders with LTSOs were considerably lower than were those for SR offenders (see table below). Patterns were similar for both the full population of offenders and those who had offended sexually, though the difference in rates of return with offence were not significantly different for the latter group.

What it means

Results demonstrate that the community management and supervision of offenders with LTSOs has resulted in low rates of return to custody, relative to other offenders considered higher risk (i.e., SR offenders). In other words, CSC is generally able to successfully manage these offenders’ risk in the community.

An alternative explanation is that the large difference in rates of return without offence may indicate some offenders with LTSOs are not actually as high risk as suggested by their designation.

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For more information

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Rates of Return to Custody (%) Within Six Months

Return Type	All Offenders		Sex Offenders	
	LTSO	SR	LTSO	SR
Return without offence / Breach of long term supervision order	11.2	28.9	10.8	24.2
Return with offence	2.0	7.3	0.6	3.2

Note. Though breaches of a long term supervision order are actually offences under the Criminal Code, they were grouped with returns without offence as they represent similar behaviours.
All LTSO-SR comparisons significantly different except return with offence for sex offenders.