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Emerging Research Results

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Preliminary Assessment of the Women's Modular Intervention Program

KEY WORDS: *women offenders, secure units, correctional programming*

What it means

Preliminary assessment of the effectiveness of the Women's Modular Intervention (WMI), a program developed for the small but challenging population of women offenders placed in the secure units, shows encouraging results. Analyses demonstrate positive program gains and a reduction in institutional offences for participants, suggesting that WMI contributes to institutional safety and facilitates women's rehabilitation. Future analyses will provide further details of the impact of WMI participation.

What we have found so far

Two series of analyses were conducted. First, participants completed a battery of assessment measures both prior to and after program participation. Analysis led to the following findings:

Criminal attitudes: Participants indicated significantly lower tolerance for law violation, lower identification with criminal others, and more positive views of the judicial system post-WMI.

Problem solving & self-efficacy: Participants' abilities to identify problems and develop solutions, as well as gain a greater sense of perceived self-efficacy, significantly improved upon completion of WMI.

Motivation & stages of changes:¹ Although 53% of women remained at the same stage of change, a shift toward higher levels of motivation was noted post-WMI, with 31% of women increasing to a higher stage of change. Overall, the majority of participants were contemplating making changes prior to program participation (58%) and were actively making changes post-WMI (63%).

Women's self-esteem relating to how others perceive them, argued to have an impact on women offenders' criminal behaviour, also improved.

The second series of analyses examined institutional charges pre- and post-WMI completion. Of the

women found guilty of charges in the six months prior to program participation, a significant percentage did not receive an institutional charge in the six months post-program completion:

- Considering all charge types, 25% improved
- Considering only serious charges, 20% improved
- Considering only minor charges, 24% improved

Why we are doing this study

Women placed in the secure unit tend to have higher levels of risk and need compared to women at other security levels which means interventions are particularly needed with this group. WMI was developed in 2009 to address the gender-specific needs of women offenders residing in secure units. It focuses on the risk factors associated with women's criminal behaviour to aid in pro-social outcomes. The current review aims to preliminarily examine the effectiveness of WMI.

What we are doing

In order to ensure WMI meets its goals, a multi-method examination is underway. These preliminary results reflect an assessment of outcomes associated with WMI participation. Assessment measures completed before and after program participation by 66 women offenders across all regions were examined for pre-post differences. In addition, administrative data regarding involvement in institutional offences was examined for 76 women who successfully completed WMI.

For more information

Please e-mail the [Research Branch](#) or contact us by phone at (613) 995-3975.

You can also visit the website for a full list of research publications.

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¹ This refers to the different levels of one's readiness to change in treatment (i.e., pre-contemplation, contemplation, action, maintenance). Increasing to higher levels of change is considered a positive gain.

