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Research Snippet

Concurrent Disorders and Substance Abuse Disorders among Visible Minority Offenders

KEY WORDS: *visible minority offenders, concurrent disorders, substance abuse, mental health, correctional intervention*

What it means

An examination of criminal history, institutional behavior, and participation in programming found that visible minority offenders with (1) concurrent mental health and substance abuse disorders, and (2) substance abuse disorders alone, generally have comparable outcomes to offenders of all ethnicities with similar disorders.

What we found

When considering offenders with (1) concurrent mental health and substance abuse disorders, and (2) substance abuse disorders alone, visible minority offenders may be less likely to drop out of correctional programs than offenders of all ethnicities (see table below).

Like other offenders, visible minority offenders with substance abuse problems (whether alone or with concurrent mental health disorders) had more federal sentences, more prior involvement with criminal courts, and more returns to custody. As was true for offenders with concurrent disorders in general, visible minority offenders with concurrent disorders had significantly higher rates of institutional charges than offenders with a substance abuse disorder and with neither type of disorder.

Why we did this study

More information on visible minority offenders is required to help ensure services meet their needs. Past research assessed program participation, institutional outcomes, and community outcomes for

715 offenders with (1) mental health disorders only; (2) substance abuse disorders only; (3) concurrent mental health and substance abuse disorders; and

(4) a comparison group with neither type of disorder (Wilton & Stewart, 2012). Additional analyses were undertaken to compare visible minority offenders with concurrent or substance abuse disorders to the full offender sample.

What we did

Results for 88 visible minority offenders (6 with concurrent disorders, 20 with only substance abuse, and 62 with neither disorder) were compared to the full sample of 715 offenders included in the original research. Although 6 visible minority offenders with concurrent disorders is limiting, the high needs and responsivity factors of offenders with concurrent disorders warrants inclusion of this group. The one visible minority offender with only a mental disorder was excluded from the analyses. The sample included 30 Black, 23 South Asian, 8 Arab/West Asian, 8 Southeast Asian, 5 Chinese, and 4 Latin America offenders, and 10 offenders of "other" ethnicities.

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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Outcomes of Program Assignments across Groups

Group	Proportions of Program Assignments by Outcomes					
	All Offenders (n = 1,298 assignments)			Visible Minority Offenders (n = 123 assignments)		
	Complete	Dropout	Incomplete	Complete	Dropout	Incomplete
Concurrent	64%	21%	15%	67%	--	33%
Substance Abuse	61%	19%	20%	71%	7%	22%
Comparison	64%	18%	18%	63%	19%	18%