

3-2017

Reducing Violence in Correctional Institutions: Revalidation of the Inmate Risk Assessment for Violent, Nonsexual Victimization (RVNSV)

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Citation Details

Labrecque, R. M., Scherer, H., & McCafferty, J. T. Reducing Violence in Correctional Institutions: Revalidation of the Inmate Risk Assessment for Violent, Nonsexual Victimization (RVNSV). Presented in March at the annual meeting of the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences in Kansas City, MO in March 2017.

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Reducing Violence in Correctional Institutions: Revalidation of the RVNSV

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Presented at the 54th Annual Meeting of the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences
on March 24, 2017 in Kansas City, MO



Institutional Victimization

- Jail and prison administrators are responsible for ensuring inmate safety and institutional order.
- Estimates indicate inmate victimization is a serious problem:
 - Beck (2015) found 13% of prison respondents and 17% of jail respondents were involved in a physical altercation in the previous year.
- Research suggests victimization causes psychological damage and increases antisocial behavior.
- *Critical need to identify correlates of inmate victimization and to develop informed preventative strategies.*

Correlates of Victimization

- A systematic review of the inmate victimization literature by Steiner et al. (2017) reveals:
 - 16 multivariate studies published between 1980 and 2014
 - Several predictor variables identified:
 - Inmate background characteristics
 - Routines in prison
 - Prison-level variables
- Not all inmates share the same risk for victimization.
- *How should administrators make use of this information to best inform policy and practice decisions?*

Offender Risk Assessments

- An alternative approach is to use an actuarial risk assessment and triage preventative strategies toward the high-risk.
- Risk assessments provide systematic and objective information to guide supervision and treatment decisions.
- Overwhelming support for risk instruments in predicting a variety of criminal outcomes.
- Good reason to believe prediction instruments can serve other purposes, including predicting inmate risk for victimization.

Inmate Risk Assessment for Violent, Nonsexual Victimization (RVNSV)

- Labrecque et al. (2014) created and validated the RVNSV on a sample of 12,024 adult male inmates in Canada.
 1. *Meets three or more sex offense criteria*
 2. *Ever an instigator of institutional misconduct*
 3. *Ever placed in segregation for punishment*
 4. *Uses drugs when stressed*
 5. *Poor regard for others*
 6. *Past mental health diagnosis*
- RVNSV found to be predictively valid in all three validation samples (AUC = .73, .74, and .73, respectively).

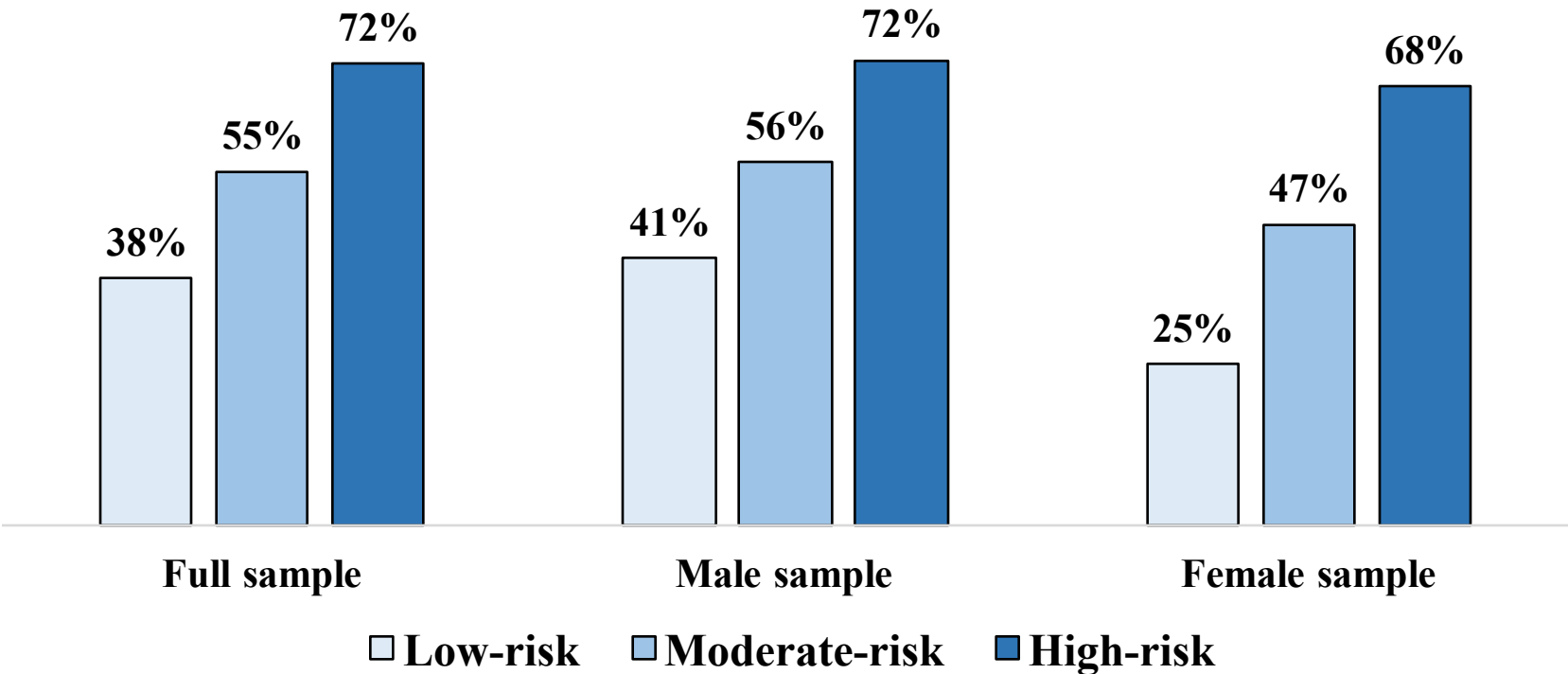
Current Study

- This study uses data from the Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative (SVORI) evaluation to assess the predictive validity of the RVNSV.
- Between 2004 and 2007, SVORI evaluators interviewed a sample of 2,054 inmates—1,697 males and 357 females—across 12 states who were incarcerated for serious/violent offenses.
- Evaluators collected information on inmate's demographics, criminal history, lifestyle behaviors, and victimization experiences in custody.

Descriptive Statistics

	Full sample (<i>N</i> = 2,054)	Male sample (<i>N</i> = 1,697)	Female sample (<i>N</i> = 357)
% minority	58.1	60.3	47.6
% married	10.3	9.6	14.0
% high school/GED	60.0	59.5	62.2
% RVNSV risk category			
<i>Low-risk</i>	52.6	51.4	58.3
<i>Moderate-risk</i>	9.1	9.3	8.4
<i>High-risk</i>	38.3	39.4	33.3
% institutional victimization	52.5	54.9	41.2
Mean prior arrests (SD)	14.0 (12.3)	14.0 (12.3)	14.0 (12.3)
Mean years served (SD)	2.4 (2.5)	2.5 (2.6)	1.7 (2.1)

Victimization Rates by RVNSV Risk Level



Correlations and AUC for RVNSV and Victimization

	AUC [95% CI]	r_{pb} [95% CI]
Full sample	.69 [.67, .72]	.34 [.30, .38]
Male sample	.68 [.66, .71]	.32 [.28, .36]
Female sample	.75 [.70, .80]	.43 [.34, .51]

Logistic Regression Predicting Victimization

	Full sample	Male sample	Female sample
Male	1.43*	—	—
Minority	.70*	.61*	1.26
Married	.72*	.72	.73
High school/GED	1.07	1.10	.87
No. of prior arrests	.99	.99	1.00
Time served	1.24*	1.26*	1.22*
RVNSV mod-risk ^a	1.86*	1.72*	2.68*
RVNSV high-risk ^a	2.94*	2.59*	5.24*
Pseudo R ²	.11	.11	.15

Note. ^a Reference group is RVNSV low-risk.

* $p < .05$.

Conclusion

- Violence in correctional institutions poses serious problems for the successful control and treatment of inmates.
- Knowledge of victimization risk can be useful in developing preventative strategies that reduce opportunities for violence.
- The RVNSV is a practical method for helping administrators reach that goal.
- This study provides support that the RVNSV is an effective and valid predictor of male and female inmate victimization.

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