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

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# Reducing Violence in Correctional Institutions: Revalidation of the RVNSV

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Presented at the 54<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences  
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# 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).

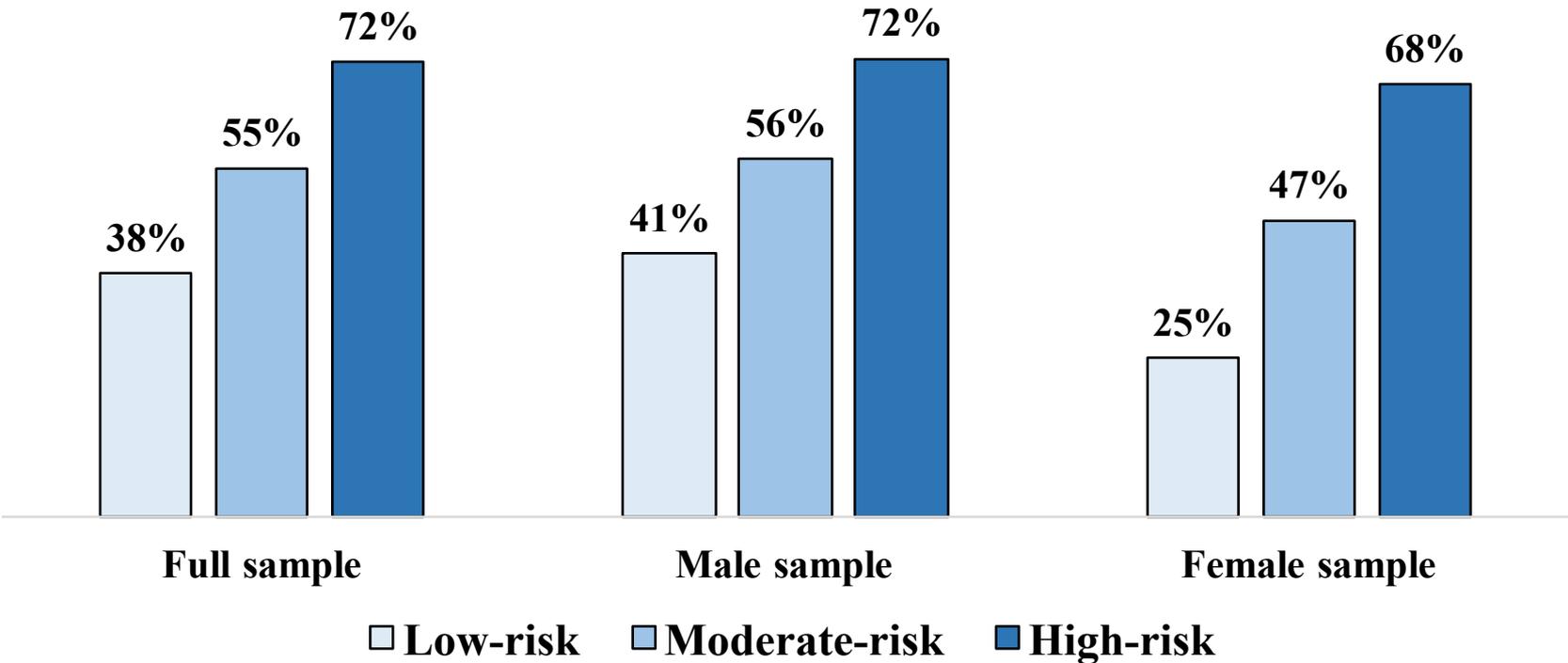
# Current Study

- 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 <sup>a</sup>	1.86*	1.72*	2.68*
RVNSV high-risk <sup>a</sup>	2.94*	2.59*	5.24*
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	.11	.11	.15

Note. <sup>a</sup> 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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