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Exploring the Women’s Needs and Risks Assessment (WRNA) in the Czech Republic

Tereza Trejbalova

*University of Nevada, Las Vegas, trejbal@unlv.nevada.edu*

Emily J. Salisbury

*University of Nevada, Las Vegas, emily.salisbury@unlv.edu*

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EXPLORING THE WOMEN’S NEEDS AND RISKS ASSESSMENT (WRNA) IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Tereza Trejbalová, M.A. & Emily J. Salisbury, Ph.D.
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

BACKGROUND

☑ Justice-involved women have different risks and needs than justice-involved men (Van Voorhis, Salisbury, Wright, & Bauman, 2008).

☑ Some specific risks and needs of these women include unhealthy relationships, low self-efficacy and trauma (Van Voorhis et al., 2008).

☑ Gender-responsive risk assessment tools are non-existent in the former Eastern Bloc.

☑ This project sought to implement and explore the benefit of a gender-responsive tool, Women’s Needs and Risks Assessment (WRNA), in the Czech Republic.

METHODS

☑ On-site, 3-day WRNA training of 15 staff members led by Dr. Salisbury. All staff members were employees of Světlá nad Sázavou women’s prison.

☑ WRNA materials translated into Czech by Tereza Trejbalová.

☑ Instrument piloted on 172 women in medium to maximum custody; 148 chose to participate in the study (86% response rate).

☑ Three waves of data collection:
  ☑ Wave I: Data from the WRNA instrument.
  ☑ Wave II: Prison misconduct data of the interviewees in the 6-month time period following the initial assessment. In this time period, 114 women did not commit any misconduct, while 27 did.
  ☑ Wave III: Prison misconduct data of the interviewees in the 12-month time period following the initial assessment. In this time period, 96 women did not commit any misconduct, while 45 did.

FINDINGS

Risk/Need Levels

☑ Although all women in the sample were held at medium and maximum custody per the prison classification system, the WRNA instrument revealed that the vast majority of the women actually were low to moderate risk for institutional misconducts. This over-classification is consistent with the wealth of prior research that shows male-based prison classification schemes punish women more harshly than is warranted.

Treatment Focus

☑ Over half of the women experienced significant problems in these areas: employment/financial, antisocial friends, and symptoms of depression/anxiety.

☑ The strengths manifested by over a half of the women are parental involvement, family support, relationship support, and self-efficacy.

Predictive Validity

☑ Scores on the following criminogenic needs were predictive of institutional misconducts after 12-months: criminal history, educational needs, employment and financial needs, antisocial friends, anger and hostility, symptoms of psychosis, child abuse, sexual abuse, PTSD, substance abuse history, recent substance abuse, gambling, family conflict, relationship difficulties, parental stress, and WRNA total score.

☑ In contrast, higher scores in relationship stability, parental involvement, relationship support, and self-efficacy indicate lower number of total prison infractions for the same time period.

CONCLUSION

☑ The predictive validity demonstrated by the WRNA areas and total score suggests that the WRNA would benefit Czech justice-involved women.

☑ Future directions: recalibrating treatment cut-off points for the Czech population; comparisons of American and Czech justice-involved women, focusing on cultural nuances.

☑ Limitations: lack of generalizability to other Eastern European countries; relatively small sample size; low base-rate of misconducts, especially serious misconducts.

REFERENCES