IMPACT OF THE SURE AND SWIFT JAIL SANCTION PROGRAM
REDDUCING RECIDIVISM IN THE COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project examines the Adult Parole Division parolees that were placed in the Sure and Swift (S&S) jail sanction program in which parolees were placed into jail for 1 to 5 days for violations of their parole. The independent variables were length of S&S stay and placement in S&S. The single dependent variable was violation within 6 months. Both relations were non-significant which is consistent with other studies of jail programs. Despite these findings, we argue for the continuation of S&S program and that responses to violations which are consistent, proportional, certain and immediate.

ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT

Department of Corrections

Division of Prisons:
- All inmates are housed in one of the 23 state and/or private run correctional facilities.
- Inmates can participate in various work, treatment, and/or trade programs to aid in rehabilitation.

Division of Adult Parole:
- Parolees are issued individualized parole conditions
- Parole officer action parolee violations through the Colorado Violation Decision Making Process which is the standardization of responses to parolee violations across the state of Colorado.
- Sanctions are issued to parolees to address the violations.

Department’s Goal:
- Reduce recidivism (return of offenders to prison).

CDOC RECIDIVISM & RETURNS RATES

METHODS OF STUDY

Parolee Cohort Group: July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019

Research questions:
1. After the introduction of the sure and swift sanction was introduced was there another violation that occurred within six months?
2. Does the number of days in sure and swift reduce violations within six months of the sure and swift?

FINDINGS

Figure 2

Six Month Recidivism by S&S Days in Jail

Pearson X² (24) = 32.29, Pr = .12

Figure 2.1

Six Month Recidivism by Number of Previous Violations

Pearson X² (5) = 3.78, Pr = .58

Discussion:
- Non-significant relationship between both IVs and DV.
- Offenders do not view jail as punitive (Wodahl et al., 2015).
- More important than the type of sanction is the speed and certainty of the punishment (Wodahl et al., 2015).

PROFESSIONAL/SCHOLARLY BACKGROUND

- Community Supervision: Supervision conditions should be individualized and based on risk (CO Division of Probation Services, 2013).
- Response to violations: Sanctions must be issued to address non-compliant behavior but be clearly defined & graduated (Johnson et al., 2011; Taxman et al., 1999; Gustafetto & Daigle, 2012).
- Drug abuse: 2/3rd of all offenders have substance use disorder and jail sanction reduce violations not recidivism (NDIA, 2019; Lattimore et al., 2016).
- Jail Sanction programs: These programs have presented mixed results for recidivism reduction but shown to reduce technical violations. Hamilton et al., 2016; Perseall, 2014; Wodahl, Boman, & Garland, 2015.

TAKEAWAYS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results:
- Deterrent-based S&S jail sanction showed mixed results on changing offender’s behavior and ultimately recidivism.
- Offenders were non-significantly to have another violation within 6 months based on previous violation or length of Sure and Swift stay.

Policy recommendations:
- S&S policy must meet the needs of the community.
- Responses parole violations must be consistent, proportional, certain, and immediate.
- Limit longer than 5 day S&S sanctions otherwise unintended consequences can occur including loss of employment, loss of housing, breaking of social bonds (CO Division of Probation Services, 2013).

Limitations:
- Focused on only a year worth of data and recidivism typically studied over a 3-year period.
- Only single test of the variables was conducted which questions the reliability of the tests.
- Lacked a control to compare those who were not impacted by S&S sanction which potentially creates a bias.
- COVID-19 pandemic crisis occurred during the project.

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