Mental health difficulties and service use of incarcerated women: The influence of violence perpetration and victimization

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Mental health difficulties and service use of incarcerated women: The influence of violence perpetration and victimization

Rachel C. Casey, MSW, PhD

Background

• Incarcerated women report high rates of mental health difficulties:
  - 73% have been diagnosed with a mental disorder
  - 60% have been diagnosed with a substance use disorder

• Incarcerated women have many experiences with violence that could potentially influence their mental health:
  - Between 25% and 30% have experienced physical victimization
  - Between 42% and 72% have experienced sexual victimization
  - Twice as likely to have experienced victimization as women in the community
  - 30% of women in state correctional facilities are incarcerated for violent offenses

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Research Questions

1. What patterns of mental health difficulties exist among incarcerated women?
2. What is the relationship between victimization and mental health difficulties among incarcerated women?
3. What is the relationship between victimization and mental health service utilization during incarceration?
4. What is the relationship between past victimization and past perpetration of violence among incarcerated women?
5. What is the relationship between perpetration of violence and mental health difficulties among incarcerated women?
6. What is the relationship between perpetration of violence and mental health service utilization during incarceration?

Methods

• Analyzed secondary data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics
  - 2004 Survey of Inmates in State Correctional Facilities
  - Final sample size of 2553 women

• Conducted statistical analyses using SPSS 24 and Mplus
  - Latent class analysis to examine patterns of mental health difficulties
  - Logistic regression to examine the likelihood with which violence-related variables predicted mental health-related variables

Findings from Latent Class Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Description</th>
<th>Prevalence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Serious Mental Illness (SMI) Subgroup</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mood and Drug Use Disorders Subgroup</td>
<td>30.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substance Use Only Subgroup</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resilient Subgroup</td>
<td>49.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Implications for Correctional Services

• Increase and calibrate mental health resources to meet need
• Implement peer-based programs
• Tailor interventions to target co-occurring disorders
• Wraparound milieu-based services for SMI subgroup
• DRT, CBT, or dual diagnosis treatments for mood and drug use D/O subgroup
• Substance abuse treatment for all
• Treat trauma associated with victimization
• Develop interventions tailored for violent female offenders

Implications for Community-Based Interventions

• Divert women with SMI away from criminal justice system
• Prevent and remediate drug-related crime
• Decriminalization through legal reform
• Establishment and standardization of drug courts
• Increase access to substance abuse treatment in community settings
• Prevent and treat trauma from victimization
• Reduce stigma and increase access to services
• Mobilize communities around bystander intervention
• Promote primary education targeting future perpetrators

Significant Findings* from Logistic Regression Analyses (N=2553)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Odds Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Childhood Sexual Victimization</td>
<td>3.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childhood Physical Victimization</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Sexual Victimization</td>
<td>1.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Physical Victimization</td>
<td>1.58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research References