

TIME TO POLICE CONTACT FOLLOWING RELEASE FROM PRISON AMONG A COHORT OF MEN WITH INJECTING DRUG USE HISTORIES IN VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA

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Introduction and Aims: The association between drug use and crime-related behaviour has been well established. Injecting drug use has shown to be a strong predictor of recidivism post-release. In this study we describe the rate of recidivism in a cohort of men recently released from prison who inject drugs, from Victoria, Australia.

Design and Methods: Data come from surveys conducted as part of the PATH prospective cohort study (N = 400) of incarcerated men who reported regular injecting drug use prior to their current sentence, along with linked-data from the Victoria Police LEAP contact database. Principal offences in LEAP were defined as, crimes against the person, property/deception, drug-related, public order/security, justice procedures, and other. A single time-to-event survival analysis was used to determine recidivism for arrest, caution, and/or summons applied for/issued.

Results:

Of the 400 men, 134 (34%) came in contact with Victoria Police in the three months post-release, with 61 contacts within the first month. Offences related to property/deception accounted for 58% of all contacts, followed by crimes against the person (13%), justice procedures (12%) and drug-related (10%). Few contacts were related to public order/security (5%) and other (1%).

Discussions and Conclusions:

The post-release period remains a period of acute risk, with a high prevalence of police contact observed during this time. Future research among this cohort will investigate whether involvement in property related crime was associated with substance use, and to determine the associations of those who desisted during this time. This may assist in the development of future supports following release from prison.

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