

Findings of recidivism analysis

Factor	Measurement	Findings
Age	Age groups of 18-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64, and 65+.	As age increases, the likelihood of recidivism decreased.
Prior Prison Admissions	Prior prison admission groups of 0, 1-3, 4-6, 7-9, and 10+.	As number of prior prison admissions increased, the likelihood of returning to prison increased.
Substance Use Risk Rating	Risk rating determined by treatment assessor for the prisoner's most recent substance use checklist prior to release. Comparisons were made between prisoners who were not required to do the checklist, and those who were rated as low risk, moderate risk, high risk, and highest risk.	Prisoners identified as high or highest substance use risk were more likely to reoffend compared to those with a low or moderate risk rating or who were not offered the checklist. Nearly two-thirds of prisoners completed this checklist in both years, compared to the violent offending checklist (40%) and the sex offending checklist (7%), reflecting the role of substance abuse as a key driver of offending.
Security Rating	Security rating of prisoners on the day prior to release. Prisoners could either be rated minimum, medium, or maximum security.	Prisoners who were medium security were more likely to reoffend compared to prisoners who were minimum security. Maximum security prisoners had an even higher likelihood of returning to prison.
Aboriginal status	Comparison between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal prisoners.	Aboriginal prisoners had an increased likelihood of reoffending compared to non-Aboriginal prisoners. While Aboriginal prisoners tended to be younger, have a higher security rating, and have a substance abuse problem, the analysis indicated that even after all these risk factors were accounted for, Aboriginal prisoners still reoffended at a greater rate compared to non-Aboriginal prisoners. These enduring differences are likely due to other social disadvantage risk factors that were not included in the analysis.
Gender	Comparison between male and female prisoners.	Male prisoners were more likely to reoffend compared to female prisoners.
Sex Offender Risk Rating	Risk rating determined by treatment assessor for	Prisoners assessed as high risk on the checklist had a lower

	the prisoner's most recent sex offender treatment checklist prior to release. Comparisons were made between prisoners who were not required to do the checklist, and those who were rated as low risk, moderate risk, high risk, and highest risk.	likelihood of reoffending compared to prisoners who did not complete the checklist (i.e. non sex offenders). This reflects previous research which has found that sex offenders are far less likely to reoffend compared to other offender types. ⁸⁷ However, prisoners rated as highest risk on the checklist were equally as likely to reoffend as non sex offenders.
Educational Attainment	Comparisons were made between prisoners who did no secondary schooling, those who did some secondary schooling (but no other qualifications after leaving school), and those who completed secondary schooling and/or acquired tertiary or vocational qualifications.	Prisoners who completed secondary education or pursued post-secondary qualifications (including vocational or tertiary) had a lower likelihood of recidivism compared to prisoners who completed some secondary education yet did not pursue further qualifications. Prisoners with less than secondary education had poorer outcomes, but this did not reach statistical significance.
Treatment Program Completion	Status of whether a prisoner had completed at least one treatment program prior to release.	Prisoners who completed a treatment program had an increased likelihood of reoffending. While prisoners who present more risk to the community are more likely to undertake a treatment program, risk was accounted for in the analysis and so it cannot be used to explain this result. Those who did not complete programs would include those who refused to complete a program, prisoners where suitable programs were not available, or prisoners who were not in prison long enough to complete a program (such as property offenders, who typically have a high recidivism rate). ⁸⁸ Regardless of the effectiveness of programs themselves, it would therefore be expected that prisoners who completed a program would be less likely to reoffend. This was not the case, and indicated that the treatment programs provided were harmful to prisoners.
Mental Illness	Comparisons were made between prisoners with a psychiatric care flag on TOMS (determined by medical staff) and prisoners without the flag.	No statistically significant difference was found between prisoners with the psychiatric care flag and those who didn't. However, the relationship did approach statistical significance and so should not be completely discounted.

⁸⁷ NZ Department of Corrections, *Annual Report 1 July 2012 – 30 June 2013* (September 2013).

⁸⁸ Hanson, K & Harris, A. *Dynamic predictors of sexual recidivism 1998-1*. (Department of Solicitor General Canada, 1998); Payne, J. *Recidivism in Australia: Findings and Future Research* (Australian Institute of Criminology, Research and Public Policy Series, No. 80, 2007).

		Prisoners with a mental illness have been found to be far more likely to have a substance abuse problem and have prior prison admissions, ⁸⁹ and so this may have diminished the independent effect of this factor. In addition, this flag is known to be inconsistently used in the state's prisons and so some caution should be applied to this result.
Violent Offending Risk Rating	Risk rating determined by treatment assessor for the prisoner's most recent violent offending checklist prior to release. Comparisons were made between prisoners who were not required to do the checklist, and those who were rated as low risk, moderate risk, high risk, and highest risk.	No significant difference was found between prisoners with different risk ratings. The independent effect of this factor rating may have been diminished by the fact that violent offending risk rating and substance use risk rating were highly correlated ($r = 0.50$).
Intellectual Impairment	Comparisons were made between prisoners with an intellectual impairment flag (assessed by medical staff) and those without the flag.	No significant difference was found between prisoners with the intellectual impairment flag and those who didn't. The intellectual impairment flag demonstrated no evidence at all of an association with recidivism, with the data suggesting that prisoners with an intellectual impairment do not have an increased likelihood of reoffending when other risk factors are taken into account.

⁸⁹ Peters, Roger H., Bartoi, Molly G., & Sherman, Patti B, *Screening and assessment of co-occurring disorders in the justice system* (CMHS National GAINS Center, 2008).