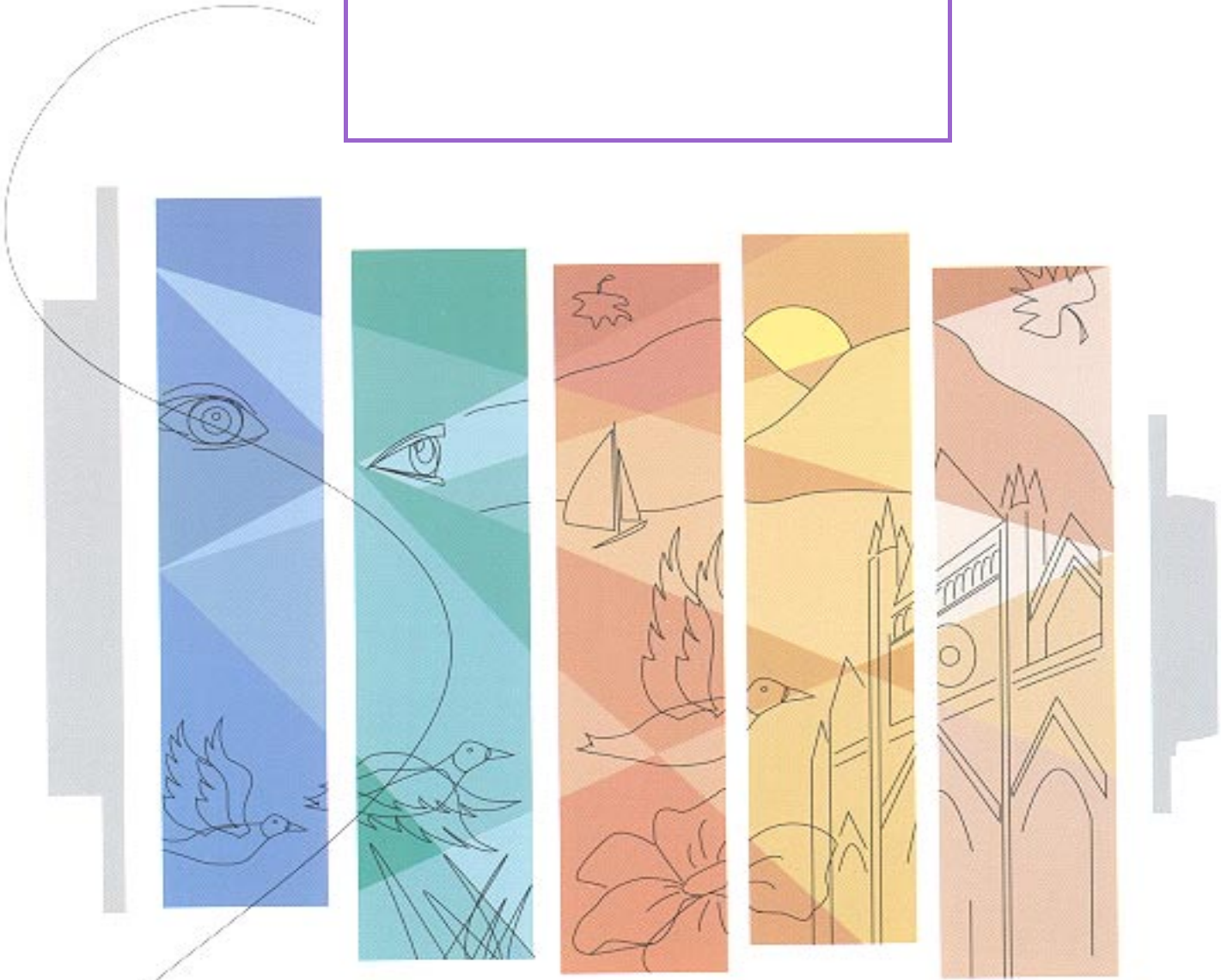




Research Branch
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**Survival Time Until Suspension for
Sex Offenders on Conditional Release**



Survival Time Until Suspension for Sex Offenders on Conditional Release

by

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Executive Summary

The suspension of federal sex offenders on conditional release is an important measure of post-release adjustment to the community and reflects one aspect of a relapse prevention program. While the reasons for suspending an offender can be quite varied, the execution of a warrant on any offender is most often associated with indicators of impending danger of re-offence. This research examines the use of survival analysis to explore the time until suspension for sex offenders on conditional release.

In 1991, the Correctional Service of Canada conducted a nation-wide census which collected case-specific information on over 3,000 federal male sex offenders. A follow-up of the National Census yielded a total of 793 sex offenders who were under community supervision at the time of the Census and formed a 'caseload' group. An additional 216 sex offenders who had been released from federal institutions post-Census formed a 'new release' group for follow-up.

Data on suspension warrants being issued and executed were gathered for both sex offenders on caseload at the time, and those released after the Census. In distinguishing between suspension warrants that have been issued versus those that have been executed, it is not until the offender has actually been arrested that the warrant is considered executed. For a variety of reasons, the delegated authority may choose to have the warrant withdrawn or cancelled before the offender is actually apprehended by the police. Information regarding the reasons for suspension were not gathered for this study. Previous research has found that the two major reasons for issuing suspension warrants were criminal charge and breach of condition.

Sex offenders on caseload were tracked from the time of the National Census, thereby allowing for a seventeen month follow-up period. When the suspension data were gathered, the caseload group had already been in the community, on average, for approximately three years. In contrast, the new release group was comprised of sex offenders identified as being in federal institutions at the time of the Census but subsequently released and available for follow-up. While the follow-up period for the new release group was variable, it ranged between 8.4 and 16.3 months, or an average of about one year.

Comparisons between federal sex offenders on caseload and those newly released were conducted in relation to the following: release type, marital status, sex offence history, type of sex offence, victimization pattern (age, gender, number, degree of harm), substance abuse, treatment and Community Risk/Needs Management Scale ratings. Comparative analyses revealed that sex offenders on caseload could be distinguished from new releases on a variety of characteristics. Those on caseload were more likely than newly released to be older, married, non-native, serving longer sentences, on full parole, have had both current and past sex offence convictions, have female victims 18 years old or more, more than one victim, and not to have forced or seriously injured their victims. Further analyses revealed that sex offenders in the 'caseload' group were less likely than new releases to have abused substances at the time of their offence or to have received treatment for sexual offending.

A follow-up of federal sex offenders on caseload at the time of the Census revealed that 144 (18.2%) had been issued suspension warrants and 78 (9.8%) had suspension warrants executed. For sex offenders released after the Census, 65 (30.1%) had been issued suspension warrants and 34 (15.8%) had suspension warrants executed. As expected, the suspension rates for newly released sex offenders were substantially higher than those who were on caseload at the time of the Census.

Using survival analysis, a statistical technique which estimates the time taken to reach some event and the rate of occurrence of that event, we evaluated a series of survival curves of time until suspension. In other words, we could do more than just identify who was likely to be suspended on conditional release but also examine how quickly suspensions occurred. Not surprisingly, survival time until suspension of conditional release was found to significantly differ between sex offenders on caseload and new releases. Moreover, survival was found to also vary in relation to suspension warrants being issued and executed. While both groups were found to have been issued suspension warrants at a continuous rate, newly released sex offenders were suspended at a faster rate than those on caseload. The survival rate (not being issued a suspension warrant) at six months was 91.7% for sex offenders on caseload and 82.8% for those newly released. At twelve months, survival rates had decreased to 86.1% for those on caseload and 74.6% for new releases. Finally, by the end of the study period 82.7% of the sex offenders on caseload and 68.8% of the new releases had survived without having been issued a suspension warrant.

A similar pattern emerged when survival times were compared between caseload and newly released sex offender groupings for suspension warrants being executed. Once again, the survival times until suspension on conditional release were higher for sex offenders on caseload (90.5%) than for newly released sex offenders (85.1%) by the end of the study period. Statistically significant differences were found among these survival curves.

In exploring survival time until suspension for sex offenders on caseload, a steady rate of decline was observed in the percentage of cases surviving in relation to each variable under consideration. The shape of the survival curves revealed that the steepest rates of decline in the percentage surviving were observed for sex offenders who were on day parole or mandatory supervision, single, had a past history of sexual offending, committed a sexual assault (e.g., rapists), had female victims 18 years old and over, had one victim, used force and physically injured their victims, had not been treated, and were assessed as higher risks and higher needs. Only for male victims was the survival curve observed to be flat.

An examination of survival times until suspension warrants executed was also conducted for sex offenders on caseload. A review of these survival curves indicated a levelling effect at the six month point for sex offenders in relation to the following: sex offence history, sex offender type, victim age, victim number, force, substance abuse, and treatment. Of special note, there was no difference in the survival curves of sex offenders on caseload with respect to treatment history. On the other hand, substantial differences emerged with respect to risk/need assessments. As expected, sex offenders on caseload assessed as [higher-risk, higher-need] were suspended at a greater and faster rate than [lower-risk, lower-need] cases.

A survival analysis of time until suspension for newly released sex offenders showed even more dramatic differences among the set of variables under consideration. For suspension warrants issued, the steepest rates of decline in the percentage surviving were found among those sex offenders who had been released on mandatory supervision, were single, had a past history of sexual offending, committed sexual assault, had female victims who were 18 years old and over, had one victim, used force and physically injured their victims, had abused alcohol/drugs, had not been treated, and were assessed as higher risks and higher needs.

As before, only for sex offenders with male victims was the survival curve basically flat.

As well, a review of survival times until suspension warrants executed was conducted for newly released sex offenders. Again, a notable levelling effect was observed for a number of variables in the percentage surviving by the six month point. Although the survival rates remained constant for sex offenders released on day parole and full parole, there was a steady decline in the percentage surviving on mandatory supervision throughout the follow-up period. Similarly, the survival curves for sex offenders with current but no past sex offenses appeared to level off and those with past sex offence histories continued to decline. It is noteworthy that the three survival curves for sex offender type levelled off and became undifferentiated by the end of follow-up. In relation to victim characteristics, the survival curves had levelled off at about six months for victims who were under 18 years, male, and more than one in number.

Curiously, no differences were observed in the survival curves of newly released sex offenders for suspension warrant executed with respect to treatment history. However, notably large differences surfaced in relation to risk/need assessments. Once again, sex offenders assessed as [higher-risk, higher-need] cases were suspended at a greater and faster rate than [lower-risk, lower-need] cases. In fact, a five-fold increase in the rate of suspension warrants being executed was found among newly released sex offenders who were classified as [high-risk, high-need]. Moreover, the 25% suspension rate of warrants executed for this group was substantially above the 15% overall base rate for newly released sex offenders.

In sum, survival analyses of time until suspension for sex offenders on conditional release yielded important information on post-release adjustment. As a relapse prevention strategy, the practice of issuing and executing suspension warrants for sex offenders was found to be strongly associated with the presence of "dynamic" or situational/victimization factors. This suggests that a systematic approach to assessing and re-assessing a sex offender's needs (e.g., marital situation, substance abuse, etc.) coupled with an awareness of sexual preferences (age-gender-number) and past sex offence history can improve the community supervision of sex offenders.

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I. Introduction

The Working Group on Sex Offender Treatment Review (Solicitor General Canada, 1990) and the Correctional Service of Canada's Task Force on Mental Health (CSC, 1991) both recommended further research on sex offenders for the purpose of developing and evaluating special treatment programs. Since these reviews had underscored the fact that a more co-ordinated programming and service strategy was needed, it was strongly recommended that, as a first step, a comprehensive study of sex offenders under federal supervision be pursued. Consequently, a nationwide 'Sex Offender Population Study' was conducted which had two major components: a Census identification of all federal sex offenders (Porporino & Motiuk, 1991) and an extensive case-file review of a large sample of sex offenders from across the country (Motiuk & Porporino, 1992).

Since the National Sex Offender Census was conducted, the federal sex offender population has grown rapidly and disproportionately to the total offender population - both in institutions and on conditional release (Motiuk & Deurloo, 1993). Over a recent two-year period, the total sex offender population has increased by 16%. The sex offender population in institutions has increased by 18% and the sex offender population under community supervision had increased by 12%. More important, however, the relative growth of the sex offender population has outpaced that of the non-sex offender population. These basic statistics have raised our awareness about three separate but related trends: population growth, increased expenditures and expansion of treatment capacity. Clearly, the correctional case management challenge of the 1990s will be to improve the way we recognize and respond to sex offender risk. The present study is a community follow-up investigation of the 'National Sex Offender Census' (Motiuk & Porporino, 1992).

National Sex Offender Census

At the time of the National Census, statistical information on key characteristics of sex offenders (i.e., nature of the offence), circumstances surrounding the offence(s) (i.e., degree of victim injury, involvement of alcohol/drugs) and treatment history were not available through the Correctional Service of Canada's existing automated Offender Information Systems (Gordon & Porporino, 1991). Therefore, a National Census of sex offenders was conducted in order to accurately identify the

number, types and characteristics of federally sentenced sex offenders.

The National Census yielded information on 3,066 sex offenders. While 70% of sex offenders identified by the Census were incarcerated, 30% were under community supervision. Interestingly, the Census revealed that the percentage of cases identified for incest was 6.2%, paedophilia was 21.0%, sexual assault was 40.4%, mixed sex offenses was 27.9%, and other sex offenses (i.e., exhibitionism) was 4.6%. The results of the National Census confirmed that the sex offender population is a diverse group and, as such, a differential treatment approach is required (Motiuk & Porporino, 1992).

Managing Sex Offenders Under Community Supervision

While it is assumed that treatment will reduce an offender's risk of sexual recidivism, it still remains to be demonstrated whether all sex offenders have the same need for specialized and intensive treatment (Gordon & Porporino, 1991). Gordon, Holden and Leis (1991) have concluded that we should improve our ability to identify higher-risk offenders and give them priority for intervention. This notion is consistent with 'risk principle' considerations which address the assessment of risk, the prediction of recidivism, and the matching of levels of treatment service to the risk level of the offender (Andrews, Bonta, & Hoge, 1990).

Although there is considerable empirical evidence to support the 'risk principle' (Andrews, Keissling, Robinson, & Mickus, 1986; Motiuk & Bonta, 1991), its operationalization with respect to the supervision of sex offenders on conditional release has not yet been fully realized. Nevertheless, it still reinforces the importance of being able to appropriately allocate resources and controls to best meet the community supervision needs of sex offenders. It is because of the extra demands that sex offenders pose for community supervision that further investigations are required in order to develop a framework for establishing program priorities, implementing programs and allocating resources to best meet the needs of sex offenders.

The Community Risk/Needs Management Scale

Previous research regarding the predictive value of offender risk/needs assessments has revealed the following:

criminal history factors were strongly related to outcome on conditional release (Nuffield, 1982), a consistent relationship existed between the type and number of needs that offenders present and the likelihood of their re-offending (Motiuk & Porporino, 1989); and most importantly, combined assessment of both the level of risk and needs significantly improved our ability to differentiate cases according to likelihood of re-offending (Bonta & Motiuk, 1992).

As part of the standards for conditional release supervision (Correctional Service of Canada/National Parole Board, 1988), Correctional Service of Canada's case management staff are required to use a systematic approach to assess the needs of offenders, the risk of re-offending and any other factors which might affect successful reintegration to the community. In keeping with this standard, a 'Community Risk/Needs Management Scale' is used to capture case specific information on 'Criminal History' and a critical set of 'Case Need' dimensions for the classification while on conditional release (Motiuk & Porporino, 1989b).

In field testing the Community Risk/Needs Management Scale, it was found that parole officers could easily differentiate federal offenders as to the nature and level of risk/needs presented, and these offender risk/need assessments were consistently related with conditional release outcome (Motiuk & Porporino, 1989b). It was also found that by simply combining case manager assessments of 'criminal history risk' with global ratings of 'case needs' almost 50% of offenders assessed as [high-risk, high-needs] were suspended within six months of their initial assessment. On the other hand, substantially fewer offenders assessed as [low-risk, low-need] were suspended (5%) while on conditional release. Of particular interest, this [low-risk, low-need] group was the largest category among the risk/need level groupings that were identified representing about one third of the total sample of cases that were assessed. Therefore, reducing the frequency of supervision for these lower-risk cases had important implications for the re-allocation and re-focusing of community supervision resources (Andrews et al., 1990).

Suspension of Parole or Mandatory Supervision/Statutory Release

The suspension provisions of the Corrections and Conditional Release Act (and formerly the Parole Act) allow the National Parole Board or a person designated by the Board (e.g., parole officer) to suspend, by warrant, the parole or statutory release (mandatory supervision) of an offender; authorize the arrest of the offender; and recommit the offender to custody until either the suspension is cancelled, the parole or statutory release is terminated or revoked or the sentence of the offender has expired. Warrants for suspension of community supervision are executed by a peace officer whenever the offender breaches a condition of parole or statutory release or when it is necessary and reasonable to suspend in order to prevent a breach or protect society.

With the exception of a few studies (Luciani et al., 1991; Motiuk & Porporino, 1989a; 1989b), there have been only a few investigations that have examined the nature and frequency of suspension rates for offenders on conditional release. Luciani et al. (1991) examined the suspension rates of 212 federal offenders on conditional release in the Ontario region. During a three month follow-up period, it was found that 12% of the sample had been suspended and returned to prison. About two thirds of the cases were suspended for committing new offenses whereas one third were suspended for technical violations. As expected, Luciani et al. (1991) found that the highest rate of suspension occurred among those offenders identified by parole officers on the Community Risk/Needs Management Scale as [high-risk, high-need] cases.

Using a representative sample of federal offenders on conditional release, Motiuk and Porporino (1989b) reported that almost one quarter of their sample were issued suspension warrants by the end of a six month follow-up period. Moreover, it was found that nearly 50% of offenders were suspended for involvements in criminal activity. Motiuk and Porporino (1989b) also found that about one quarter of the suspensions were due to alcohol consumption.

While there have been numerous studies that have examined sex offender recidivism (Furby, Weinrott, Blackshaw, 1989), we are not aware of any studies which have addressed the suspension of sex offenders while on conditional release. As a result, the present study seeks to examine suspension phenomena in relation to the

management of federally sentenced sex offenders while under community supervision.

II. Present Study

The National Sex Offender Census gathered case-specific information on the following: status (i.e., current offenses or previous history), details of the current sex offence (i.e., nature of the offence, number of victims, age and gender of victims, degree of injury, degree of force, presence of alcohol or drugs), past history of sexual offenses (i.e., patterns, seriousness) and treatment history (i.e., dates, type/nature, location, sponsors). The present study is basically an extension of the National Census and makes use of survival time models (Chung, Schmidt, & Witte, 1991) to analyze the time until suspension of sex offenders on conditional release.

Survival analysis, a statistical technique which estimates the time taken to reach some event and the rate of occurrence of that event, will be used to evaluate a series of survival models of time until suspension for the following set of characteristics: release type, marital status, sex offence history, type of sex offence, victimization pattern (age, gender, number, force/harm), substance abuse, treatment and Community Risk/Needs Management Scale ratings. This means that, using survival models in this study, we will be able to do more than identify who was likely to be suspended on conditional release, but also how quickly these suspensions would occur. Information regarding the reasons for suspension will not be reported for this study.

III. Method

Sex Offender Census

The Census identification of all federal sex offenders was conducted with the assistance of Correctional Service of Canada staff from national headquarters, regional headquarters (Atlantic, Quebec, Ontario, Prairie, Pacific) and the operational units (i.e., penitentiaries and parole offices) spread across the country.

The 'Census Checklist' was administered by case management staff during the month of March 1991. Instructions were given to all case management staff to identify all sex offenders on current caseloads - both in institutions and in the community. Regional contact persons served to collect the completed 'Census Checklists' and then forward them to research staff at National Headquarters to be entered into a sex offender database.

Subjects

From the Census data, a total of 793 sex offenders were identified as being on community supervision at the time of the Census and available for a 'caseload' follow-up. An additional 216 sex offenders who were released from institutions after the Census formed a 'new release' group for follow-up. Of those sex offenders under community supervision at the time of the Census, 12.7% were on day parole, 49.4% were on full parole, and 37.8% were on mandatory supervision. For the newly released sex offender group, 15.3% were on day parole, 22.7% were on full parole, and 62.4% were on mandatory supervision.

A descriptive comparison of selected case characteristics between the 'caseload' and 'new release' sex offender groupings is presented in Table 1. While it appears that the two groups do not significantly differ with respect to age and marital status, significant differences were found in relation to sentence length, ethnicity and release type. We found that newly released sex offenders were more likely to be serving longer sentences, Native and released on mandatory supervision.

Table 1.
Case Characteristics: Comparison Between Caseload and New Releases

Characteristic	Caseload (N=793)	New Releases (N=216)	p
Age:	Mean = 39.9 yrs. (SD=11.7)	Mean = 37.2 yrs. (SD=12.0)	ns
Sentence Length:	Mean = 4.0 yrs. (SD=2.2)	Mean = 4.5 yrs. (SD=3.0)	***
Marital Status:			ns
Single	54.4% (427)	57.2% (123)	
Married	45.6% (358)	42.8% (92)	
Ethnicity:			***
Native	11.0% (87)	20.0% (43)	
Non-Native	89.0% (706)	80.0% (173)	
Release Type:			***
Day Parole	19.2% (152)	15.3% (33)	
Full Parole	44.9% (405)	22.7% (49)	
Mand. Super.	35.9% (419)	62.0% (134)	

Note: SD = Standard Deviation; ns = non-significant; * p < .001.

Outcome Measure and Follow-up Period

Suspension data (warrants issued and executed) was retrieved from the Correctional Service of Canada's automated Parole Supervision System data base. While information regarding the reasons for suspension were not gathered for this study, we recall that previous research has found that the two major reasons for suspension were criminal charge and breach of conditions (Luciani et al., 1991; Motiuk & Porporino, 1989b).

In distinguishing between suspension warrants that have been issued versus those that have been executed, it is not until the offender has actually been arrested that the warrant is considered executed. For a variety of reasons, the delegated authority may chose to have the warrant withdrawn or cancelled before the offender is actually apprehended. If this happens, the suspension warrant is said to have been issued rather than executed.

Sex offenders on 'caseload' were tracked from the time of the National Census, thereby allowing for a 17 month follow-up period. When the suspension data was gathered, the caseload group had already been on conditional release for approximately three years. In contrast, the 'new release' group was comprised of sex offenders identified in the institutions at the time of the Census but subsequently released and available for follow-up. Therefore, the follow-up period for the 'new release' group is variable, ranging between 8.4 and 16.3 months, or an average of about one year.

IV. Findings

A. Sex Offender Suspension Rates

A follow-up of sex offenders who were on caseload at the time of the Census revealed that 144 (18.2%) had been issued suspension warrants and 78 (9.8%) had warrants executed. For sex offenders who had subsequently been released after the Census, 65 (30.1%) had been issued suspension warrants and 34 (15.8%) had warrants executed. As we expected, the suspension rates for newly released sex offenders were substantially higher than those who were on caseload at the time of the Census.

The following provides the rates of suspension warrants issued and executed for both sex offender groupings - caseload and new releases. These rates are reported in relation to release type, marital status, sex offence history, type of sex offence, victimization pattern (age, gender, number, force/harm), substance abuse, treatment and Community Risk/Needs Management Scale ratings. It should be noted that the sample may vary minimally due to incomplete information.

Suspension Rates and Release Type.

In Table 2, we present the suspension rates obtained for each type of conditional release. We note that for the caseload group, the largest proportion of sex offenders were on full parole (44.8%), whereas for the new release group the largest proportion of sex offenders were on mandatory supervision (62%). The rates of suspension warrants being executed for sex offenders on day parole and mandatory supervision were roughly equivalent (14.5% and 13.3%, respectively). We found that those on full parole had the lowest suspension rate (5.1%). Interestingly, for newly released sex offenders a different pattern emerged. Sex offenders released on day parole had the lowest rate of suspension warrants executed (4%) relative to those released on full parole (21.2%) or mandatory supervision (18.7%).

Table 2.
Suspension Rates and Release Type

CASELOAD SAMPLE¹
NEW RELEASE SAMPLE²

Type	Warrant Issued			Warrant Executed			Warrant Issued			Warrant Executed		
	N	%	n	%	n	N	%	n	%	n		
Day Parole	152	25.7	(39)	14.5	(22)	49	12.2	(6)	4.0	(2)		
Full Parole	356	12.6	(45)	5.1	(18)	33	33.3	(11)	21.2	(7)		
Mandatory Supervision	285	21.1	(60)	13.3	(38)	134	35.8	(48)	18.7	(25)		

Note: ¹ 17 month follow-up; ² 12 month average follow-up.

Suspension Rates and Marital Status.

A distribution of suspension rates for sex offenders in relation to marital status is presented in Table 3. As Table 3 shows, the proportion of sex offenders who were single while on conditional release was similar in both the caseload and new release groupings (54% and 57%, respectively). Not surprising, the rates of suspension warrants issued and executed were substantially higher among sex offenders who were single.

Table 3.
Suspension Rates and Marital Status
CASELOAD SAMPLE¹
NEW RELEASE SAMPLE²

Status	Warrant Issued			Warrant Executed			Warrant Issued			Warrant Executed		
	N	%	n	%	n	N	%	n	%	n		
Single	427	20.4	(87)	11.9	(51)	123	34.2	(42)	21.1	(26)		
Married	358	15.6	(56)	7.6	(27)	92	25.0	(23)	8.7	(8)		

Note: ¹ 17 month follow-up; ² 12 month average follow-up.

Suspension Rates and Sex Offence History.

In exploring the extent of sexual offending among the federal sex offender population, we categorized sex offenders identified in the Census into three groups: both current and past sex conviction(s); current but no past sex conviction(s); and no current, but, past sex conviction(s). An inspection of Table 4 reveals that the majority of federal sex offenders in the caseload group (72.3%) and release group (78.5%) were currently serving their first sentence for a sexual offence.

A closer look at Table 4 shows that for the caseload group, sex offenders who had previous sex offence convictions were more likely to have been suspended than sex offenders with no previous sex offence convictions. Similarly, for the new release group, sex offenders with previous sex offence convictions were substantially more likely to have been suspended.

Table 4.
Suspension Rates and Sex Offence History
CASELOAD SAMPLE¹
NEW RELEASE SAMPLE²

History	Warrant Issued			Warrant Executed			Warrant Issued			Warrant Executed		
	N	%	n	%	n	N	%	n	%	n		
both current and past sex conviction(s)	153	22.9	(35)	14.6	(22)	38	28.9	(11)	15.8	(6)		
current, but no past, sex conviction(s)	576	15.5	(89)	8.0	(46)	168	27.4	(46)	13.7	(23)		
no current, but, past sex conviction(s)	55	30.9	(17)	14.6	(8)	8	75.0	(6)	50.0	(4)		

Note: ¹ 17 month follow-up; ² 12 month average follow-up.

Suspension Rates and Type of Sexual Offence.

In examining the type of sex offence(s) with respect to homogeneity of sexual offending, Table 5 shows that the largest proportion of sex offenders in both caseload and new release groupings were convicted of sexual assault (e.g., rapists) only. It should be noted that other sex offenses (e.g., exhibitionism) and mixed offences (e.g., incest and paedophilia combined) are unrepresented in the Table. In the caseload group, we found that the highest rate of suspension was found among perpetrators of sexual assault (12.8%). For the new release group, a somewhat different pattern emerged. As Table 5 shows, the rate of suspension warrants being issued is highest for sexual assault (42.1%) and lowest for incest (16.7%). When we look, however, at the rate of suspension warrants being executed for new releases, the suspension rates are equivalent across the three types of sex offender.

Table 5.
Suspension Rates and Type of Sexual Offence
CASELOAD SAMPLE¹
NEW RELEASE SAMPLE²

Type	Warrant Issued			Warrant Executed			Warrant Issued			Warrant Executed			
	N	%	n	%	n	N	%	n	%	n	N	%	n
Incest	68	8.8	(6)	1.8	(1)	24	16.7	(4)	12.5	(3)			
Paedophilia	156	10.9	(17)	5.8	(9)	47	23.4	(11)	14.9	(7)			
Sex Assault	303	25.3	(77)	12.8	(39)	76	42.1	(32)	14.8	(15)			
Combined	527	18.9	(100)	9.3	(49)	147	32.0	(47)	17.1	(25)			

Note: ¹ 17 month follow-up; ² 12 month average follow-up.

Suspension Rates and Victim Characteristics.

In Table 6, the rates of suspension warrants - both issued and executed are presented in relation to a number of selected victim characteristics. We note that higher rates of suspension warrants being issued and executed were found among sex offenders whose victim(s) were adult female(s) and who had only one victim.

Table 6.
Suspension Rates and Victim Characteristics
CASELOAD SAMPLE¹
NEW RELEASE SAMPLE²

Variable	Warrant Issued		Warrant Executed		Warrant Issued		Warrant Executed	
	N	% n	% n	% n	N	% n	% n	
Age:								
< 12 yrs	149	11.4 (17)	6.7 (10)		51	11.8 (6)	5.9 (3)	
12-17 yrs	238	9.7 (23)	4.6 (11)		68	23.5 (16)	11.8 (8)	
18+ yrs	338	24.6 (83)	13.3 (45)		82	40.2 (33)	20.7 (17)	
Gender:								
male	108	10.2 (11)	5.6 (6)		29	6.9 (2)	3.5 (1)	
female	617	18.2 (112)	9.7 (60)		172	30.8 (53)	15.7 (27)	
Number:								
one	509	21.4 (109)	11.6 (59)		120	32.5 (39)	17.5 (21)	
two+	284	25.3 (35)	6.7 (19)		65	18.5 (12)	6.2 (4)	
Injured:	481	20.8 (97)	11.9 (57)		150	30.7 (46)	15.3 (23)	

Note: ¹ 17 month follow-up; ² 12 month average follow-up.

Suspension Rates and Substance Abuse.

Table 7 presents the rates of suspension in relation to current and past sex offences for the caseload and new release sex offender groupings. As Table 7 shows, there was a similar proportion in the caseload and new release groupings of sex offenders who were abusing substances at the time of current sex offence (54% and 57%, respectively) and in past sex offences (16% and 15%, respectively). It is noteworthy that the highest rates of suspension warrants being issued and executed were found among newly released sex offenders who were identified as substance abusers in past sex offences.

Table 7.
Suspension Rates and Substance Abuse
CASELOAD SAMPLE¹
NEW RELEASE SAMPLE²

Offence	Warrant Issued			Warrant Executed			Warrant Issued			Warrant Executed		
	N	%	n	%	n	N	%	n	%	n		
Current Offence	430	20.0	(86)	11.4	(49)	124	34.7	(43)	16.9	(21)		
Past Offence	128	20.3	(26)	10.2	(13)	33	48.9	(16)	27.3	(9)		

Note: ¹ 17 month follow-up; ² 12 month average follow-up.

Suspension Rates and Treatment History.

Suspension rates in relation to treatment history are presented for the two sex offender groupings (see Table 8). Approximately one third of the sex offenders in each of the caseload and new release groupings had received treatment. We note that having received treatment did not significantly influence whether or not a suspension warrant had been issued or executed.

Table 8.
Suspension Rates and Treatment History
CASELOAD SAMPLE¹
NEW RELEASE SAMPLE²

Treatment	Warrant Issued			Warrant Executed			Warrant Issued			Warrant Executed		
	N	%	n	%	n	N	%	n	%	n		
No	505	19.2	(97)	9.3	(47)	147	31.3	(46)	16.3	(24)		
Yes	288	16.3	(47)	10.8	(31)	69	27.5	(19)	14.5	(10)		

Note: ¹ 17 month follow-up; ² 12 month average follow-up.

Suspension Rates and Risk, Need, Risk/Need Level.

Although we were interested in exploring the predictive value of criminal history risk level and the case needs level for differentiating suspension rates among sex offenders in the caseload and new release groupings, another focus was to explore the relationship between a combined risk/needs level and conditional release outcome.

Table 9 presents the relationship between each risk level (low-, high-), need level (low-, medium-, high-) and combined risk/needs level (low-risk, low-need to high-risk, high-need) and suspension for the caseload and new release sex offender groupings. As expected, those sex offenders who were assessed as high-risk had the highest rates of suspension warrants executed in the caseload (13.9%) and new release (21.2%) groups. We also found that those sex offenders who were assessed as high-need had the highest rates of suspension warrants executed for the caseload (15.1%) and new release (24%) groups.

In Table 9 the risk/needs level combinations are ordered according to need levels within criminal history risk, from the lowest to highest. As can be seen from the results, when criminal history risk and case needs are combined, then consideration of an offender's needs is also critical. For both sex offender groupings - caseload and new release, we found that [high-risk, high-need] cases had the highest rates of suspension relative to [low-risk, low-need] cases. In fact, a five-fold increase in the rate of suspension warrants being executed was found among newly released sex offenders who were

classified as [high-risk, high-need]. Moreover, the 25% suspension rate of warrants executed for this group was substantially above the 15% base rate for newly released sex offenders.

Table 9.
Suspension Rates and Risk, Need, Risk/Need Level
CASELOAD SAMPLE¹ NEW RELEASE
SAMPLE²

Level	Warrant Issued			Warrant Executed			Warrant Issued			Warrant Executed		
	N	%	n	%	n	N	%	n	%	n		
Risk:												
Low	365	12.3	(45)	7.4	(27)	58	12.1	(7)	3.5	(2)		
High	263	26.1	(70)	13.9	(37)	118	38.1	(45)	21.2	(25)		
Need:												
Low	169	8.9	(15)	5.3	(9)	24	12.5	(3)	8.3	(2)		
Medium	278	19.4	(54)	9.7	(27)	52	13.5	(7)	1.9	(1)		
High	186	24.7	(46)	15.1	(28)	100	42.0	(42)	24.0	(24)		
Risk/Need:												
Low-Low	149	8.7	(13)	6.1	(9)	19	10.5	(2)	5.3	(1)		
Low-Med.	195	15.4	(30)	8.2	(16)	31	9.7	(3)	3.2	(1)		
Low-High	21	9.5	(2)	9.5	(2)	8	25.0	(2)	0.0	(0)		
High-Low	20	10.0	(2)	0.0	(0)	5	20.0	(1)	20.0	(1)		
High-Med	83	28.9	(24)	13.3	(11)	21	19.1	(4)	0.0	(0)		
High-High	165	26.7	(44)	15.8	(26)	92	43.5	(40)	26.1	(24)		

Note: ¹ 17 month follow-up; ² 12 month average follow-up.

B. Survival Time: Caseload Versus New Releases

In order to compare sex offenders on caseload and those newly released in relation to survival time before suspension warrants being issued and executed, the percentage of cases surviving over each month on conditional release is illustrated in Figure 1. While both groups were found to have been issued suspension warrants at a continuous rate, newly released sex offenders were suspended significantly faster than those on caseload [$\chi^2(1, N = 1,002) = 94.31, p < .001$].

We also see in Figure 1 that the survival rate (not being issued a suspension warrant) at 6 months was 91.7% for sex offenders on caseload and 82.8% for those newly released. At 12 months, the estimated survival times had decreased to 86.1% for the caseload and 74.6% for the new releases. Finally, by the end of the study period, 82.7% of the sex offenders on caseload and 68.8% of the new releases had survived without having been issued a suspension warrant.

Figure 1.

A similar pattern emerged when survival times for the caseload and newly released sex offender groupings were compared in terms of suspension warrants being executed (see Figure 2). Once again, the survival times on conditional release were higher for sex offenders on caseload (90.5% at the end of the study period) than for newly released sex offenders (85.1% at the end of the study period). We note that significant differences between the survival functions were found in Figure 2, [X^2 (1, N = 1,002) = 37.96, $p < .001$].

Figure 2.

C. Survival Time: Sex Offenders on Caseload

In working towards identifying the sex offenders on caseload who are more likely to move through their period of community supervision without interruption, we examined the percentage surviving without suspension warrants being issued and/or executed during community supervision. For sex offenders on caseload, we present a series of survival curves in relation to the following: release type, marital status, sex offence history, type of sex offence, victimization pattern (age, gender, number, force/harm), substance abuse, treatment and Community Risk/Needs Management Scale ratings.

Survival Time and Release Type.

Figure 3 shows the effect release type had on survival time for sex offenders on caseload. While we see that release type had a significant effect on survival time for suspension warrants issued [X^2 (2, N = 793) = 14.45, $p < .001$], we found that caseload sex offenders on full parole had the highest rate of survival (87.6%) by end of the follow-up period. In comparison, the survival rates for sex offenders on day parole was 76.2% and mandatory supervision was 80%.

Figure 3.

Again, in Figure 4, we find that for sex offenders on caseload, 94.9% of the full parole group, 86.2% of the day parole group and 87.4% of those under mandatory supervision had not been suspended at by the end of the follow-up period. Statistical analyses revealed that the survival curves in relation to suspension warrants being executed were significantly different from one another, [X^2 (2, $N = 793$) = 11.23, $p < .01$].

Figure 4.

Survival Time and Marital Status.

The effect of marital status on the rate at which suspension warrants were being issued and executed for sex offenders on caseload is presented in Figures 5 and 6. As a group, sex offenders on caseload who were single had significantly lower survival rates (suspension warrants issued) than their married counterparts (79.6% and 85.7%, respectively), [$X^2(1, N = 784) = 5.04, p < .05$]. When examining the execution of suspension warrants, unmarried sex offenders on caseload again exhibited significantly lower survival rates (88.1%) as compared to their married counterparts (92.7%), [$X^2(1, N = 784) = 4.20, p < .05$].

Figure 5.

Figure 6.

Survival Time and Sex Offence History.

The percentage of sex offenders on caseload surviving on conditional release according to sexual offence history - current and past sex offence conviction(s); current and no past sex offence conviction(s); and no current, but past, sex offence conviction(s) - is presented in Figure 7. We note that the slope of the survival curves for each of the three groups declines steadily over time. By the end of the follow-up period, 69.9% of the sex offenders with no current, but past, sex offenses had not been issued a suspension warrant. In contrast, 85.2% of sex offenders on caseload with only current sex offence convictions on their record had survived by the end of the follow-up period. We note that the three sex offence history groupings significantly differed from one another, [χ^2 (2, $N = 784$) = 17.69 $p < .001$].

Figure 7.

In relation to survival time until suspension warrants being executed, we present survival curves for each sex offence history grouping (see Figure 8). Although statistically significant differences between the survival curves did not emerge, we note a similar pattern was noted in that sex offenders on caseload who had committed sexual offenses in the past were more likely be suspended over time on conditional release. It is noteworthy that the survival curves for all three sex offender history groupings remain constant after six months.

Figure 8.

Survival Time and Type of Sexual Offence.

Figure 9 displays the survival time for sex offenders on caseload being issued suspension warrants by sex offender type. Statistical analyses revealed that the survival curves for incest, paedophilia, sexual assault significantly differed from one another, [χ^2 (3, $N = 528$) = 17.69, $p < .001$]. Interestingly, incest offenders and paedophiles on caseload had the best survival rates by end of follow-up (92.7% and 89.1%, respectively). We note that those sex offenders who were convicted of sexual assault had the lowest survival rate on conditional release (75.9%). Interestingly, for incest offenders and paedophiles on caseload, the slope of their survival curves began to level off at about the six month point, whereas for perpetrators of sexual assault, the survival curve continued to decline.

Figure 9.

In Figure 10, the same pattern of significant results was found for suspension warrants being executed, [χ^2 (3, N = 528) = 11.12, p < .01]. By end of follow-up, the percentage surviving was 98.5% for incest, 94.2% for paedophilia, and 87.5% for sexual assault.

Figure 10.

Survival Time and Victim Characteristics.

Survival curves for sex offenders on caseload grouped according to victim age is presented in Figure 11 (suspension warrants issued) and Figure 12 (suspension warrants executed). A similar pattern of results emerged in both Figures, however, the effects were more pronounced for suspension warrants being issued than the execution of suspension warrants. In both Figures, sex offenders on caseload whose victim(s) are over the age of 18 were the most likely to be suspended while under community supervision. A closer look at the survival curves revealed that there was relatively little difference in the survival rate for sex offenders whose victims were children - under the age of twelve and between the ages of twelve and seventeen. Significant differences were observed between the survival curves in relation to suspension warrants issued, [X^2 (2, N = 725) = 24.18, $p < .001$] and suspension warrants executed, [X^2 (2, N = 725) = 14.46, $p < .001$]. We note that the slope of the survival curves for sex offenders on caseload who had child victims began to level off at about the six month point, whereas for sex offenders who had victims 18 years of age and older it continued to decline in the percentage surviving.

Figure 11

Figure 12

The victim gender of sex offenders on caseload had a significant effect on survival time as presented in Figure 13 (suspension warrants issued), [χ^2 (1, N = 725) = 5.35, p < .05] and Figure 14 (suspension warrants executed), [χ^2 (1, N = 725) = 3.9, p < .05]. We found that, in both cases, sex offenders with female victims were the most likely to be suspended while under community supervision. By end of follow-up, 91.7% of sex offenders who had male victim(s) and 82.5% who had female victim(s) had survived on conditional release without suspension warrants being issued. Similarly, an examination of the survival curves for the execution of suspension warrants indicated that 96.3% of sex offenders on caseload who had male victims and 90.3% of sex offenders who had female victims had survived without suspension warrants being executed. Of special note, the survival curves for female victim(s) showed a steady decline throughout the entire study period, whereas the survival curves for the male victim(s) appeared to level off at around three months.

Figure 13

Figure 14

The survival curves for sex offenders on caseload according to number of victims is presented in Figure 15 (suspension warrants issued) and Figure 16 (suspension warrants executed). Curiously, we found that sex offenders who had only one victim were issued suspension warrants at a faster rate than sex offenders who had two or more victims, [$\chi^2 (1, N = 678) = 6.60, p < .01$]. More specifically, the percentage of sex offenders on caseload with one victim surviving by the end of follow-up was 80.9%. On the other hand, sex offenders with more than one victim had a survival rate of 88.3%.

Figure 15

In Figure 16, the survival curves for suspension warrants being executed for sex offenders on caseload according to number of victims also significantly differed from one another, [χ^2 (1, N = 678) = 4.09, $p < .05$]. Sex offenders with one victim had a survival rate of 89.1% by end of follow-up whereas those with more than one victim had a survival rate of 93.7%.

Figure 16

Survival analysis was conducted based on whether or not the sex offender had used force and thereby caused physical injury to their victim(s). The survival curves depicted in Figure 17 (suspension warrants issued) and Figure 18 (suspension warrants executed) showed that sex offenders on caseload who had used force and physically injured their victim(s) were the most likely to be suspended while on conditional release. The survival curves of suspension warrants issued for sex offenders who had physically injured their victims and those who had not were found to be significantly different, [χ^2 (1, N = 631) = 12.81, $p < .001$]. Sex offenders on caseload who had not physically injured their victims had the best survival rates (93.3%) by end of follow-up, whereas those who had physically injured their victim(s) had a substantially lower percentage surviving (80.8%).

Figure 17

In examining survival time for sex offenders on caseload according to physical injury, a similar pattern of results emerged for the execution of suspension warrants (see Figure 18). Again, the survival curves were found to be significantly different, [$\chi^2 (1, N = 631) = 11.98, p < .001$]. Sex offenders on caseload who had not caused physical injury to their victim(s) had the highest percentage surviving (98.0%) by end of follow-up, whereas sex offenders who had physically injured their victim(s) had the lowest percentage surviving (88.6%). We note that there is a steady decline in the rate of survival for sex offenders who caused physical injury, while the survival curve remained relatively flat and constant for sex offenders who had not physically injured their victim(s).

Figure 18

Survival Time and Substance Abuse.

Survival time analysis was conducted in relation to the use of alcohol/drugs in the current sex offence and past sex offence(s). A look at Figures 19 (suspension warrants issued) and 20 (suspension warrants executed) revealed that sex offenders on caseload who had used alcohol/drugs in the current offence had significantly lower survival rates (80.7% after 17 months) than offenders who had no involvement with alcohol/drugs in the current offence (92.0%) by the end of follow-up. Moreover, the respective survival curves significantly differed from one another, [χ^2 (1, N = 655) = 14.0, p < .001]. Although the percentages were somewhat higher for suspension warrants being executed, the survival curves in Figure 20 showed that sex offenders on caseload who used alcohol/drugs in the current offence had significantly lower rates of survival (88.8%) than sex offender who had not abused substances in the current sex offence (95.6%), [χ^2 (1, N = 655) = 8.22, p < .01].

Figure 19

Figure 20

Although not statistically significant, an almost identical pattern of survival curves was found for sex offenders who had used drugs or alcohol in previous sex offenses (see Figures 21 and 22). The percentage of sex offenders on caseload who had not abused alcohol/drug in past sex offenses surviving (suspension warrants not being issued) was 85.9%, whereas for sex offenders who had abused substances in past sex offenses the survival rate was 80.5% by end of follow-up. In relation to suspension warrants not being executed, the percentage of sex offenders on caseload who had abused alcohol/drugs in past sex offenses and survived was 93.7%. In contrast, for sex offenders on caseload who had not abused substances in past sex offence(s), the survival rate was 90.6%.

Figure 21

Figure 22

Survival Time and Treatment History.

The effect of sex offender treatment on survival time for sex offenders on caseload is presented in Figure 23 (suspension warrants issued) and Figure 24 (suspension warrants executed). As Figure 23 illustrates, the rate of survival (suspension warrant not being issued) was significantly higher for treated sex offenders (85.9%) than for non-treated sex offenders (80.0%) by end of follow-up, [$X^2(1, N = 793) = 6.01, p < .01$].

Figure 23

While having received treatment had a significant effect on the issuing of suspension warrants to sex offenders on caseload, the same phenomena was not found for the execution of suspension warrants (see Figure 24).

Figure 24

Survival Time and Risk, Need, Risk/Need Level.

Survival curves comparing sex offenders on caseload assessed as low- and high-risk cases are presented in Figure 25 (suspension warrants issued) and Figure 26 (suspension warrants executed). As expected, sex offenders on caseload assessed as high-risk were significantly more likely to be issued a suspension warrant (74.6% surviving) than low-risk cases (88.8% surviving) by end of follow-up, [χ^2 (1, N = 633) = 24.24, $p < .001$]. Although the two survival curves (low-, high-risk) were substantially apart from one another, it was the survival curve for sex offenders on caseload assessed to be high-risk which had a steeper and sustained decline, whereas for low-risk cases the survival curve levelled off at about six months.

Figure 25

The same pattern of results was observed when we examined the effect of risk level on the execution of suspension warrants. As Figure 26 shows, the percentage of sex offenders on caseload surviving on conditional release was significantly greater for low-risk (93.2%) than high-risk cases (86.6%), [X^2 (1, N = 633) = 8.49, p < .01]. Again, the two survival curves were substantially apart. However, a noticeable levelling of their slopes was found to occur at about the six month point after follow-up.

Figure 26

Survival time for sex offenders on caseload as a function of needs level is presented in Figure 27 (suspension warrants issued) and Figure 28 (suspension warrants executed). In Figure 27, survival analysis revealed that the three survival curves (low-, medium-, high-need) were significantly different from one another, [X^2 (2, N = 633) = 15.79, p < .001]. As expected, sex offenders on caseload assessed to be low-need survived the most (91.2%), followed by medium-need (82.0%) and, lastly, high-need cases who had the poorest survival rate (76.3%) by end of follow-up.

Figure 27

When we examined the need levels of sex offenders on caseload for suspension warrants being executed, the same pattern of results emerged as we had found for suspension warrants being issued. Although the three survival curves in Figure 28 were significantly different from one another, [$X^2(2, N = 633) = 9.9, p < .01$], sex offenders on caseload assessed as low-need had the best survival rate (94.7%), followed by medium-need (91.0%) and, lastly, high-need cases had the poorest survival rate (85.5%). As before, the high-need sex offenders had the steepest decline in survival, relative to low-need cases.

Figure 28

A final series of survival curves in this section examined the relationship between survival time and combined risk and needs level for sex offenders on caseload. In Figure 29 (suspension warrants issued) and Figure 30 (suspension warrants executed), we present only the two extreme risk/need level categories: [low-risk, low-need] and [high-risk, high-need]. As Figure 29 clearly demonstrates, sex offenders on caseload who were assessed as [low-risk, low-need] cases survived on conditional release at a much greater rate (91.3%) than sex offenders assessed as [high-risk, high-need] (74.6%) by end of follow-up, [$X^2(1, N = 314) = 17.0, p < .001$]. Another important finding was that the slope of survival curve for the [high-risk, high-need] cases was considerably steeper than for the [low-risk, low-need] cases. This means that as a group, sex offenders on caseload assessed to be [high-risk, high-need] were suspended at much higher and faster rate than [low-risk, low-need cases]. Again, survival curves levelled off for both risk/needs level groupings at around six months.

Figure 29

In Figure 30, we found that sex offenders on caseload who were assessed as [low-risk, low-need] cases had significantly fewer suspension warrants executed than [high-risk, high-need] cases. In fact, the survival rate for [high-risk, high-need] cases was 93.9% whereas for [low-risk, low-need] cases, the survival rate was 84.9%, [X^2 (1, N = 314) = 7.5, p < .01]. Again, the slope of the survival curves for the [high-risk, high-need] cases was the steepest. Although the [high-risk, high-need] sex offenders had the highest rate of suspension warrants being executed, the survival curve levelled off at six months.

Figure 30

D. Survival Time: Sex Offenders Newly Released

In turning to the survival of newly released sex offenders on conditional release, we again examined the percentage surviving without suspension warrants being issued and/or executed during community supervision. For newly released sex offenders, we present another series of survival curves in relation to the following: release type, marital status, sex offence history, type of sex offence, victimization pattern (age, gender, number, force/harm), substance abuse, treatment and Community Risk/Needs Management Scale ratings.

Survival Time and Release Type.

Upon examining the effect of release type on survival time for newly released sex offenders, a similar yet more potent effect was found. In Figures 31 and 32, we clearly see that the percentage surviving without suspension warrants being issued was highest for sex offenders released on full parole and day parole (85% each, respectively). Sex offenders released on mandatory supervision exhibited the poorest survival rate (61%). Statistically significant differences were found between the three survival curves for suspension warrants being issued, [$\chi^2 (2, N = 212) = 10.5, p < .01$]. However, the most noteworthy difference was the steep and steady decline in the percentage of sex offenders surviving when released on mandatory supervision. Interestingly, there was little differentiation between the survival curves of newly released sex offenders on day or full parole by the end of follow-up. In addition, we note that at about six months the survival curves levelled off for sex offenders released on day parole and full parole.

Figure 31

In a similar fashion, we explored the survival time for newly released sex offenders according to type of release in relation to suspension warrants being executed (see Figure 32). We found that by the end of follow-up, 95.9% of sex offenders who were released on full parole had survived, 89.7% on day parole had survived, and 80.5% of the sex offenders who were released on mandatory supervision had not been suspended. Statistically significant differences were not found for the three release type survival curves in relation to suspension warrants being executed. Again, an examination of the slopes of the three survival curves revealed that the sex offenders released on mandatory supervision continued to decline, while at six months post-release, the survival curves quickly levelled off for those released on parole.

Figure 32

Survival Time and Marital Status.

As shown in Figures 33 and 34, we found a marital status effect on survival time on conditional release for newly released sex offenders. Although the two survival curves in Figure 33 for suspension warrants being issued did not significantly differ, we discovered that newly released sex offenders who were single exhibited lower survival rates (65.4%) than their married counterparts (73.5%) by the end of follow-up.

Figure 33

In looking at whether or not suspension warrants had been executed (see Figure 34), we again found that sex offenders who were single had poorer survival rates (81.1%) relative to their married counterparts (90.1%) by the end of follow-up, [χ^2 (1, N = 208) = 4.40, $p < .05$]. A closer look at the slopes of the two survival curves revealed a slow but steady rate of decline over time.

Figure 34

Survival Time and Sex Offence History.

Survival curves of newly released sex offenders grouped according to sex offence history who were issued a suspension warrant are presented in Figure 35. While the slopes of the survival curves for each of the three groups showed a steady decline over time, it was newly released sex offenders who were not currently serving a sentence for a sex offence but who had previous sex offenses who exhibited the poorest performance on conditional release (21.4%). A note of caution is warranted, however, due the very small sample size of this group ($n = 7$). The next poorest survival rate was observed for sex offenders who were currently serving a sentence for a sexual offence and who also had a history of sexual offending (69.5%). Not surprisingly, first-time sexual offenders had the best survival rate on conditional release (73.2%). Statistical analyses revealed that these three survival curves differed significantly from one another, [$X^2 (2, N = 210) = 9.84, p < .05$].

Figure 35

Although not as dramatic in Figure 36, a similar and significant pattern was noted for newly released sex offenders in relation to the execution of suspension warrants, [χ^2 (2, N = 210) = 9.25, p < .05]. More specifically, the survival rate was 57.1% for newly released sex offenders who had committed sexual offence(s) in the past but were not currently serving a sentence for a sex offence. On the other hand, the survival rate was 82.4% for newly released sex offenders who were currently serving a sentence for a sex offence and had also been convicted in the past for a sexual crime. Of special note, the survival rate was 87.4% for first-time sex offenders by the end of follow-up.

Figure 36

Survival Time and Type of Sexual Offence.

In Figure 37, we display the survival curves in relation to suspension warrants being issued for newly released incest offenders, paedophiles and perpetrators of sexual assault . Statistical analyses of these survival curves revealed significant differences, [χ^2 (3, $N = 145$) = 5.89, $p < .05$]. While the survival curves depicted a steady decline in percentage of suspension warrants issued, incest offenders and paedophiles had the best survival rates by the end of follow-up, (77.6% and 76.6%, respectively). In contrast, perpetrators of sexual assault had the poorest survival rate (57.7%). A closer look at the slopes of the survival curves indicated that there was a steady decline in the survival rate of newly released perpetrators of sexual assault. At about six months after release, the survival curves of incest offenders and paedophiles began to level off.

Figure 37

Interestingly, a different and non-significant pattern of results emerged for survival time of newly released sex offenders with respect to suspension warrants being executed according to type of sex offender (see Figure 38). While there was very little difference in the survival rates across the three sex offender types, it was found that incest offenders were suspended at a much slower rate than the other types of sex offenders. By the end of follow-up, the survival rate for incest offenders was almost equivalent to that of the other sex offender types.

Figure 38

Survival Time and Victim Characteristics.

A set of survival curves for newly released sex offenders on conditional release according to victim age is presented in Figure 39 (suspension warrants issued) and Figure 40 (suspension warrants executed). A similar pattern of results emerged in both Figures 39 and 40. However, by the end of follow-up the effect of victim age was more pronounced for suspension warrants issued than executed. As we had found for sex offenders on caseload, sex offenders whose victim(s) were over the age of 18 years were the least likely to survive on conditional release. An examination of the slopes of the survival curves also indicated that the group next most likely to be suspended were sex offenders who had victims between the ages of 12 and 17 years. Curiously, newly released sex offenders who had victims under 12 years of age had the best survival rate (88.2%) while on conditional release. Although statistically significant differences were observed for survival curves in relation to suspension warrants being issued, [χ^2 (2, N = 198) = 13.47, p < .001], there were no significant differences found among the survival curves with respect to suspension warrants being executed.

Figure 39

Figure 40

Victim gender had a substantial effect on survival time for newly released sex offenders as demonstrated in Figure 41 (suspension warrants issued), [χ^2 (1, $N = 198$) = 5.35, $p < .05$]. Although no statistically significant differences were found between the two survival curves, a similar pattern emerged in Figure 42 (suspension warrants executed). Clearly, whether suspension warrants were issued or executed, newly released sex offenders who had female victims had the poorest survival time on conditional release. By end of follow-up, the survival rate (not issued a suspension warrant) was 93.1% for sex offenders who had male victim(s) and 69.7% for sex offenders who had female victim(s).

In a similar fashion, the survival time analysis for suspension warrants executed for newly released sex offenders showed that 96.6% of sex offenders who had male victims and 84.9% of sex offenders who had female victims had no suspension warrants that were executed (see Figure 42). Interestingly, the slope of the survival curve for newly released sex offenders who had female victim(s) continued to decline throughout the follow-up period. On the other hand, the survival curve for newly released sex offenders who had male victim(s) appeared to level off after three months.

Figure 41

Figure 42

The survival curves for newly released sex offenders according to number of victims are presented in Figure 43 (suspension warrants issued) and Figure 44 (suspension warrants executed). Newly released sex offenders with one victim were found to be issued suspension warrants at a faster rate than sex offenders who had more than one victim. Although the two survival curves in Figure 43 did not significantly differ from one another, we note that newly released sex offenders with one victim had a survival rate of 67.0% whereas sex offenders with more than one victim had a survival rate of 81.5% by the end of follow-up.

Figure 43

A statistical examination of the survival curves for suspension warrants executed (see Figure 44) revealed that newly released sex offenders who had one victim significantly differed from sex offenders who had more than one victim, [χ^2 (1, N = 185) = 3.62, p < .05]. More specifically, 82.5% of the one-victim sex offender group had survived whereas 93.8% of the two- or more victim grouping, by the end of the follow-up period.

Figure 44

Whether or not the newly released sex offender had used force and caused physical injury to their victim(s) was examined by means of survival analysis. We present the survival curves for suspension warrants issued (Figure 45) and executed (Figure 46) for this offence characteristic. While the survival curves for suspension warrants issued did not statistically differ (see Figure 45), newly released sex offenders who had physically injured their victim(s) had the poorest survival rates on conditional release. The survival rate for newly released sex offenders who had not injured their victim(s) was 81.1% whereas for sex offenders who had injured their victim(s) the survival rate was 68.8% by end of follow-up.

Figure 45

A similar, though not as strong, trend was observed for the execution of suspension warrants (see Figure 46). The survival rate for newly released sex offenders who had not injured their victim(s) was 90.5% whereas for those who had injured their victim(s) the survival rate was 84.8%.

Figure 46

Survival Time and Substance Abuse.

The effect of abuse of alcohol/drugs in the current sex offence and past sex offence(s) on survival time for newly released sex offenders was explored by survival analysis. In Figure 47 (suspension warrants issued), newly released sex offenders who had abused alcohol/drugs in the current offence had significantly lower survival rates than sex offenders who had not abused substances (64.9% and 77.1%, respectively). In addition, we found that the two survival curves differed significantly, [χ^2 (1, N = 180) = 5.55, p < .05].

Figure 47

We took a closer look at survival rates of suspension warrants being executed for newly released sex offenders in Figure 48. Again, we found that sex offenders who had abused substances in the current offence had substantially lower survival rates than sex offenders who had not abused substances (83.2% and 96.5%, respectively). We also note that the two survival curves for suspension warrants executed were significantly different, [χ^2 (1, N = 180) = 4.94, p < .05].

Figure 48

A similar and stronger pattern of results was found for newly released sex offenders who had abused substances in previous sex offence(s) (see Figures 49 and 50). In Figure 49, we present the survival rates (suspension warrants being issued) for newly released sex offenders. As Figure 49 shows, the survival rates for sex offenders who had not abused substances in past sex offenses was 79.6%, whereas for sex offenders who had abused substances the survival rate was 38.4%. We note that the survival curves in Figure 49 were found to significantly differ from one another, [χ^2 (1, N = 102) = 4.51, $p < .05$].

Figure 49

As for the survival rate with respect to suspension warrants being executed (see Figure 50), we found that 89.8% of newly released sex offenders who had not abused substances in past sex offence(s) had survived by the end of follow-up. On the other hand, 74.9% of the newly released sex offenders who had abused substances in past sex offence(s) had survived by end of follow-up.

Figure 50

Survival Time and Treatment History.

The effect of sex offender treatment on survival time for newly released sex offenders is presented in Figure 51 (suspension warrants issued) and Figure 52 (suspension warrants executed). Upon examining the survival curves presented in Figures 51 and 52, we discovered that treatment had no effect on survival time for newly released sex offenders with respect to suspension warrants being issued or executed.

Figure 51

Figure 52

Survival Time and Risk, Need, Risk/Need Level.

A set of survival curves comparing newly released sex offenders who were assessed to be low- and high-risk cases are presented in Figure 53 (suspension warrants issued) and Figure 54 (suspension warrants executed). As Figure 53 shows, the survival rates for newly released sex offenders were substantially lower for high-risk cases (59.4%) than for low-risk cases (59.4% and 89.5%, respectively). Moreover, these two survival curves were found to be significantly different from one another, [X^2 (1, N = 172) = 9.77, p < .01].

Figure 53

Although not as pronounced, a similar pattern was observed when we examined the effect of risk level on the execution of suspension warrants. As illustrated in Figure 54, the survival rate for newly released sex offenders was substantially lower for high-risk than low-risk cases (79.6% and 98.3%, respectively). As expected, the two survival curves were found to be significantly different, [$\chi^2(1, N = 172) = 8.94, p < .01$].

Figure 54

Survival time as a function of need level is presented for newly released sex offenders in Figure 55 (suspension warrants issued) and Figure 56 (suspension warrants executed). Statistical analysis showed that the survival curves presented in Figure 55 were significantly different from one another, [$\chi^2(2, N = 172) = 17.85, p < .001$]. Interestingly, newly released sex offenders who were assessed as medium-need cases had the best survival rate (84.6%), closely followed by low-need cases (82.5%) and substantially apart from high-need cases who had the poorest survival rate (58.4%) by end of follow-up.

Figure 55

A similar, though not as strong, pattern of results was again observed with regards to the execution of suspension warrants. Statistical analysis indicated that the survival curves in Figure 56 were also significantly different from one another, [χ^2 (2, N = 172) = 14.52, $p < .001$]. Again, newly released sex offenders who were assessed as medium-need cases had the best survival rate (100%), closely followed by low-need cases (87.1%), and substantially diverged from high-need cases who had the poorest survival rate (77.4%) by end of follow-up.

Figure 56

Finally, survival analyses were conducted for newly released sex offenders by risk/needs level. As we show in Figure 57, newly released sex offenders who were assessed to be [low-risk, low-need] cases had lower rates of suspension warrants being issued than sex offenders who were assessed to be [high-risk, high-need] cases (89.5% and 56.7% survival rates, respectively) by the end of follow-up. While the two survival curves were found to significantly differ, [χ^2 (1, N = 108) = 4.99, p < .05], the slope of the survival curve for the [high-risk, high-need] cases showed a steady and steep decline, whereas the curve for the [low-risk, low-need] cases levelled off at six months after release.

Figure 57

In Figure 58, we again found that newly released sex offenders who were assessed to be [low-risk, low-need] cases had fewer suspension warrants executed (94.7% survival rate) relative to their [high-risk, high-need] counterparts (84.9% survival rate), [X^2 (1, N = 314) = 7.5, p < .01].

Figure 58

V. Discussion

The suspension of federal sex offenders on conditional release is only one aspect of a relapse prevention program - an external, supervisory dimension (Pithers, 1991). However, it is an important measure of the sex offender's post-release adjustment to the community. Parole officers are equipped by Canadian society with extraordinary powers to issue a suspension warrant which once executed, lead to the arrest of an offender. Although the reasons for issuing a suspension warrant can be varied, the execution of a warrant by a parole officer is most often associated with indicators of impending danger of relapse by a sex offender. This research focused on questions concerning the percentage of sex offenders who return to federal custody, the differences in suspension patterns of sex offenders who were already on caseload and those sex offenders who were newly released, and changes in the rates of suspension over time.

As expected, the rate of suspension decreased as the length of time the sex offender was under community supervision increased. For sex offenders who were on conditional release at the time of the Census and subsequently followed-up, approximately 17.3% had suspension warrants issued and 9.5% had suspension warrants executed. For sex offenders who were subsequently released, approximately 31.2% had suspension warrants issued and 15.5% had warrants executed. Therefore, the suspension rate for newly released sex offenders was almost double that of the caseload group.

One limitation of the present investigation was not addressing the reason(s) for suspension. Future investigations concerning the use of suspension for sex offenders on conditional release should consider the reasons for suspension. Another limitation was our inability to explore more fully the effects of sex offender treatment on survival time. A focused look at the effect of treatment on suspension should consider the differential impact of various treatment programs (i.e., cognitive-behavioral, pharmacological, etc.), institutional versus community-based treatment programs, and relapse prevention programs.

Nevertheless, the analysis of survival time until suspension for federal sex offenders on conditional release revealed the following:

1) Time on conditional release: newly released sex offenders were suspended at a greater and faster rate than sex offenders on caseload.

2) Type of release: while newly released sex offenders were more likely to be released on mandatory supervision, they were also suspended at a greater and faster rate than sex offenders released on day or full parole.

3) Marital status: unmarried sex offenders were suspended at a greater and faster rate than their married counterparts.

4) Sex offence history: sex offenders with a history of sexual offending were suspended at a greater and faster rate than first time sex offenders. Sex offenders whose most recent offence was not sexual in nature but had committed sexual offences in the past were just as likely, if not more so, to be suspended while on conditional release than sex offenders with a past and current history of sexual offending.

5) Sex offender type: sexual assaulters (i.e., rapists) had the greatest and fastest rate of suspension on conditional release followed by paedophiles and then incest offenders.

6) Victim characteristics: sex offenders who had adult female victims, and who used force and caused physical injury had the greatest and fastest rate of suspension.

7) Substance abuse: sex offenders who had abused alcohol/drugs in the past or during the current sexual offence were more likely to be suspended and at a faster rate.

8) Risk/needs level: sex offenders identified as [higher-risk, higher-need] cases were substantially more likely to be suspended than [lower-risk, lower-need] cases.

In sum, the results from the sex offender follow-up investigation revealed that both static (e.g., sex offence history) and dynamic (e.g., marital situation, substance abuse) factors play an important role in the outcome of sex offenders on conditional release. Furthermore, it would seem that risk/need factors commonly associated with the general offender population also apply to the sex offender population. However, there are certain risk factors uniquely related to the supervision of sexual offenders (e.g., situational/ victimization patterns). This suggests that a systematic approach to assessing and re-assessing a sex

offender's needs, coupled with an awareness of sexual preferences (age-gender) and past sex offence history can improve the community supervision of sex offenders.

VI. References

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