Psychological Assessment of Risk and Criminality (PARC) Jail Study

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PARC Jail Study

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Pasco Sheriff's Office

The PARC study assesses the evidence-based psychological and criminological risk factors for criminal behavior and re-offending among inmates in the Pasco County, Florida Detention Facility.
All data are collected by Dr. Verona, Dr. Fox, and undergraduate and graduate students in the DARC and SPRUCE Research Labs at the University of South Florida.

A USF undergraduate student conducting a Phase I survey in the booking area of the jail.

Data Collection

The PARC study collects data from incoming inmates in the Pasco County Jail. Data is obtained at two points: initial intake (I) and follow-up interview (II).

Phase I is administered in booking as the inmates are processed through the system. Inmates may be entering through an arrest or have been transferred from a different county. In this phase, we administer a standardized questionnaire containing multiple assessment tools measuring demographics, personality, mental health and substance use, criminogenic risk factors, and TBIs. The questions are completed on a tablet, where an inmate has the option to complete the questionnaire on their own, or have the questionnaire verbally administered.

Phase II is a three-hour long interview conducted by a trained interviewer and a secondary rater about a week after Phase I. Phase II contains multiple semi-structured clinical risk and needs assessments to include: Psychopathy Checklist- Revised (PCL-R), Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale, Wechsler Abbreviated Scale of Intelligence (WASI), Lifetime History of Aggression (LHA), Texas Christian University Drug Screen (TCUDs), Penn State Worry Questionnaire, PTSD Checklist for the DSM-5 (PCL-5), and several standardized assessments assessing personality, mental health and substance disorders, and antisocial tendencies.

Identifying and Treating Risks and Needs to Reduce Recidivism Among Jail Inmates

• The United States has one of the highest recidivism rates in the world. According to the U.S. Sentencing Commission, jail inmates have a **76.6% chance of returning to jail** within five years (Hunt & Dumville, 2016). In Pasco County, Florida, **42.3%** of the 16,043 individuals released from the PSO detention facility were re-incarcerated in Pasco County within one year.

• American jails are routinely overcrowded, with over 12 million Americans booked into local jails for minor misdemeanors to serious felonies every year (Zeng, 2018). Jail incarceration rates are increasing, driven largely by longer pre-trial detentions, due to the inability to pay bail (Turney & Conner, 2019). The U.S. Dept. of Justice estimates **47.0%** of those with a financial bond are unable to afford their bail.

• Jails detain high proportions of people with mental illness, substance abuse, trauma (e.g. adverse childhood experiences), neurodisability (e.g. traumatic brain injury), and structural risk factors, which can be directly tied to recidivism (Baillargeon et al., 2009; Craig et. al, 2018)

• Jails often lack sufficient funding and capability to provide treatment/services to inmates pre- or post-release, leading to a "revolving door".

• Over half of all U.S. jails are in rural or small/medium towns, leading to unique challenges, which have been understudied. Many of the social, geographic, and economic characteristics of rural areas contribute to increased risk for jail incarceration (Cromartie, 2018). The U.S. opioid epidemic has posed a public health and criminal justice crisis and has disproportionately impacted rural areas (Palombi et al., 2018).

Results

Sample Demographics

Sample Demographics	N	%	M	SD
Age	626	--	36.5	11.8
Male	426	68.1		
Female	199	31.8		
Non-binary	1	0.2		
White/Caucasian	454	72.1		
Black/African American	82	13.0		
Hispanic	94	15.0		
Less than $15,000	235	37.7		
$15,000 - $30,000	142	22.8		
$30,001 - $45,000	112	18.0		
$45,001 - $60,000	70	11.2		
$60,001 - $75,000	31	5.0		
More than $75,000	33	5.3		

Phase 1 Measures (N = 626)

Criminogenic Risk Scale	M	SD	Min	Max	Max Possible
Total Score	33.9	7.4	14.0	56.0	56.0
Criminal Peer Association	6.7	4.3	2.0	14.0	14.0
Low Self-Control	6.0	2.2	3.0	12.0	12.0
Street Code Adherence	7.6	2.5	4.0	16.0	16.0
Neighborhood Disorganization	7.5	1.8	3.0	12.0	12.0
Weak Social Bonds	6.1	1.6	2.0	8.0	8.0

MAYSI - Adapted	M	SD	Medium Risk	High Risk
Alcohol and Drug Use	2.9	2.5	22.5%	21.3%
Angry-Irritable	3.1	2.7	21.3%	8.3%
Depressed-Anxious	2.9	2.4	32.8%	17.1%
Somatic Complaints	3.2	2.0	44.6%	16.6%
Suicidal Ideation	0.7	1.3	7.2%	11.1%
Thought Disturbance	0.6	0.9	19.5%	14.1%
Traumatic Experiences	2.8	1.7	n/a	n/a

Adverse Child Experiences	M	SD	Min	Max	Max Possible
Total Score	4.2	2.8	0.0	10.0	10.0
ACEs: 0 or 1 (%, n)	20.2	126			
ACEs: 3+ (%, n)	68.5	427			
ACEs: 5+ (%, n)	45.9	286			
ACEs: 7+ (%, n)	23.9	149			

Comprehensive Health Assessment Tool	%	N
Head injury: 1+	54.7	347
Head Injury: 3+	23.5	149

Phase 2 Measures (N = 124)

Lifetime History of Aggression (LHA)	M	SD	Min	Max	Max Possible
Total Score	21.7	8.4	6.0	39.0	55.0
Aggression	9.1	3.9	2.0	19.0	25.0
Consequences	9.3	4.0	2.0	18.0	20.0
Self-Directed (Suicide Attempt)	1.2	1.9	0.0	7.0	n/a

Psychopathy (PCL-R)	M	SD	Min	Max	Max Possible
Total Score	18.6	8.5	3.0	40.0	40.0
PCL-R: 0 – 19 (%, n)	49.6	60			
PCL-R: 20 – 29 (%, n)	42.1	54			
PCL-R: 30 – 40 (%, n)	8.3	10			

Mini-International Neuropsychiatric Interview (MINI)	%	N
Lifetime Major Depressive Episode	55.5	61
Lifetime Psychotic Disorder	13.6	15
Lifetime Manic Episode	18.6	18

Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale		
Lifetime Passive Suicidal Ideation	40.9	45
Lifetime Active Suicidal Ideation	36.4	40
Past Suicide Attempt – Any	32.7	33
Past Suicide Attempt – Aborted	20.0	19
Past Suicide Attempt – Interrupted	20.2	22

Texas Christian University Drug Screen* (past year use and disorder)	%	N
Alcohol	71.0	125
Marijuana	65.9	116
Cocaine	26.1	46
Crack Cocaine	14.8	26
Hallucinogens	11.9	21
Methamphetamine	33.0	58
Heroin	18.2	32
Nonmedical Prescription Opioids	37.5	66
Nonmedical Prescription Depressants	33.5	59
Alcohol Use Disorder – past year	3.9	7
Substance Use Disorder – past year	27.3	48

Challenges for Jail Incarceration and Recidivism and Ways to Target Them

Dr. Bryanna Fox and USF PhD student Lauren Miley conducting a Phase II interview.

Conclusion

• The PARC Study offers the rare opportunity to gain insight on jail inmates risks and needs, improve jail practices and services, and address challenges faced by jail systems by developing and evaluating evidence-based classification and risk assessment protocols.

• Our data indicate the magnitude and nature of the risk factors and needs experienced by jail inmates in this sample, particularly in regard to criminogenic risk factors, mental illness and neurodisability, and substance use.

• Despite the relationship between these risks and needs on recidivism, limited resources are available in jails to address them, and case management or post-release treatment/services are typically not offered to mitigate these issues and reduce recidivism.

• The PARC Study can help improve rehabilitative, and reduce iatrogenic, effects of the jail environment during detention. Risk assessment protocols can also be evaluated for use in pre-trial detention decision making, improving the evidence base for jail policies.