

Criminal Justice Involvement among Clientele is a Major Concern for State Mental Health Agencies

- Mental health and criminal justice systems provide services at various points along the interface of these systems to reduce offending and re-offending, including:
 - Diversion programs - Mental Health Courts

 - Re-Entry
- Little information about scope of offending to guide service development.
- This study provides data on the prevalence, type and temporal patterns of arrest for a large sample of adults followed for roughly 9.5 years

The Massachusetts Mental Health / Criminal Justice Cohort (N = 13, 816)

Inclusion Criteria:

- Receiving case management, inpatient treatment or residential services from Massachusetts Department of Mental Health between 7/1/91 and 6/30/92
- 18 years of age or older

Tracking Arrest:

- Arrest data were obtained from the Massachusetts Criminal History Systems Board's "Criminal Offender Record Information" (CORI System)
- 3,856 cohort members (27.9%) experienced at least one arrest
- The group compiled 41,860 charges; 27,004 for felonies and 14,856 misdemeanors

Demographic Characteristics and 10-year Arrest Rates of Service Use Cohort Members

	N	Percent	Arrest Rate ¹
Gender			
Male	7765	56.2	36.1
Female	6051	43.8	17.5
Race			
White	11144	82.8	26.5
Non-White	2414	17.8	33.3
Age in 1991			
18-25	1142	8.3	50.7
26-32	2188	15.8	43.8
33-40	3075	22.3	34
41-47	2827	20.5	26.4
48-54	1975	14.3	18
55 and older	2601	18.8	6.7
¹ "Arrest rates" are the percentage of cohort members with at least one arrest during the 10-year observation period			

Arrest Types and Prevalence:

Crimes against Persons

• Serious Violent Crime: Murder; non-negligent manslaughter; forcible rape; robbery (including armed robbery); aggravated assault and battery (a) with a dangerous weapon, (b) against a person over 65, (c) against a disabled person, (d) to collect a debt (N=1874, 10.5%)

• Less Serious Crimes against Persons: Domestic violence (not resulting in a charge of "Serious Violent Crime"); simple assault; simple assault and battery; threatening / intimidation; indecent sexual assault (i.e., not rising to the legal definition of forcible rape), violation of a restraining order (N=1,096; 7.9%)

• Assault and Battery on a Police Officer (N=389, 2.8%)

Property Offenses

Serious Property Offenses: Burglary; larceny of an item worth more than \$500, welfare fraud; receiving stolen property; uttering (passing bad checks); breaking and entering; arson; motor vehicle theft (N=1,329; 9.6%)

Less Serious Property Crimes: Theft /shoplifting of an item worth less than under \$500; malicious destruction of property (N=1,446; 10.5%)

Motor Vehicle Offenses: Operating (a) without a license, or (b) without compulsory insurance, or (c) so as to endanger; attaching plates illegally; leaving the scene of an accident; driving while intoxicated (N=1,121; 8.1%)

"Nuisance," Drug and Other Offenses

Crimes against Public Order: Being a disorderly person; disturbing the peace; setting a false alarm; bomb hoax; trespassing; consuming alcohol in a public place (violation of "open container law) (N=2,231; 16.1%)

Crimes against Public Decency (sex offenses excluding forcible rape): Offenses related to "sex for hire" (soliciting sex, prostitution, "being a common night walker"); indecent exposure; lewd and lascivious behavior (N=503, 3.6%)

Drug-Related Offenses: Possession of a controlled substance; possession with intent to distribute, distribution or manufacture of, or trafficking in a controlled substance; conspiracy to violate Controlled Substance Act (N=720, 5.2%)

Firearm Violations: Carrying a dangerous weapon; illegally discharging a firearm; possession of a firearm without a license or permit (N=169; 1.2%)

Miscellaneous: Includes misdemeanors with low rates of occurrence not easily classified in the above categories (N=227; 1.6%)

Temporal Patterns of Arrest in a Cohort of Adults Receiving Mental Health Services: The Massachusetts Mental Health / Criminal Justice Cohort Study

Trajectory Models: What Are They?

• Derive from the "growth curve" methodology

• Technically, "Zero-Inflated Poisson" models

• Statistically — An iterative process which attempts to derive a solution consisting of a set of groups whose members have temporal activity patterns in common

The solution represents the optimal mathematical fit of the model to the data

• Operationally, somewhat akin to cluster analysis in creating a set of groups, membership in which can be modeled

Examining Temporal Patterns of Arrest: Trajectory Analysis

• 2,744 (% of arrestees) were arrested once; 1,112 (% of arrests) 2 or more times

• For those with multiple arrests (i.e., 2 or more, 1,112) we attempted to identify temporal patterns over the observation period

• Examined 1,112 arrest patterns individuals who had 2 + arrests; obtained a solution in which five trajectories (and thus five groups of individuals reflecting them) proved to be the mathematically optimal model



"We've broken your list into eighty-four subgroups. Our work here is done." APHA.





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The Five Trajectories: A Thumbnail Sketch Mix of Offenses



Trajectory Group 2

(39.9%) Stable across the time period; average one arrest every 2 years





¹ Firearms not included; mean less than 0

Implications

• Arrestees receiving mental health services display varying patterns of offending over time

• These patterns likely reflect different system management problems

• Simple demographic and diagnostic data do not predict group membership well

• To make these useful to service system planners, more data that would predict individuals' likely trajectories is needed • Also critical is an understanding of how service use patterns are associated with these trajectories



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