

Field test of the Community Risk/Needs Management Scale: A study of offenders on caseload (R-06, 1989)

The report provides a comprehensive review of the development of the Community Risk/ Needs Management Scale and presents an overview of the first wave of caseload data collected during the field test. It furnishes a descriptive profile of the needs of offenders under supervision, examines some of the validation data gathered on the instrument and assesses the need for any adjustments or refinements of the instrument.

The Community Risk/Needs Management Scale was applied on a pilot basis at 12 separate community field-test sites across Canada. Supervising case managers assessed a total of 453 federally sentenced male offenders. The cases studied were either on day parole, full parole or mandatory supervision. The behaviour of those offenders who were assessed was subsequently monitored for a six-month follow-up period.

The results of the Community Risk/Needs Management Scale field test validated previous findings regarding the predictive value of offender risk/needs assessment. Offenders were easily differentiated by case managers as to the nature and level of needs presented, and these assessments of "case needs" were consistently related with conditional release outcomes at the six-month follow-up.

Overall, the field test of the Community Risk/ Needs Management Scale strongly supported the potential usefulness of an objective risk/ needs assessment process in establishing guidelines or standards for varying levels of supervision on conditional release. It would seem that the Community Risk/Needs Management Scale can be used effectively to focus supervising resources by capitalizing on the professional judgment of case management staff regarding case needs. Moreover, it can also provide a useful means of monitoring changes in the offender's behaviour, attitudes and circumstances which are clearly related to release outcome.