

Patterns of alcohol and drug use among federal offenders as assessed by the Computerized Lifestyle Screening Instrument (R-11, 1991)

This research report represents the first in a series which will examine substance abuse and criminal behaviour using data from the Computerized Lifestyle Screening Instrument (CLSI). This report presents descriptive information derived from the various components of the instrument and explores the development of a typology for the purpose of screening and prioritizing offenders for treatment. The data for this report are based on a sample of 503 offenders who completed the CLSI in the Atlantic and Prairie regions of the Correctional Service of Canada.

The results of this comprehensive study and the data generated indicated the utility of CLSI was promising and worth exploring further. Analyses of the data suggest that the self-reported information provided on alcohol and drug problems can be used reliably to measure levels of substance abuse problems among reception inmates. The reported frequency of alcohol and drug use and the link with criminal behaviour was found to be similar to the self-reports obtained previously for a U.S. sample of inmates. The estimate of the number of offenders who require assistance for substance abuse problems is also consistent with previous attempts to measure the prevalence of substance abuse problems in our inmate population. In addition, the reception inmates who completed the CLSI assessment battery were very positive in their evaluation of the system.

The CLSI proved to be comprehensive in scope with respect to the number of variables measured. Future research will need to focus on some of the data relating to substance abuse and crime and, in particular, make further attempts to link this type of assessment information to the overall substance abuse screening process.

This report lays some groundwork for structuring the front-end screening procedure and presents a model for developing such a screening system. The figures generated from the data of this study suggest that the CLSI is a very appropriate tool on which to base the development of such a front-end screening system.