



LCO Results Update

THE LONGITUDINAL STUDY OF MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES AND CONSUMER OUTCOMES IN A CHANGING SYSTEM

May, 2000

Number 10

TO: Department Leadership
ADAMHS/CMH Boards
Interested Others

FROM: Dee Roth

RE: Police Involvement and Crime Victimization

In the most recent wave of data collection, we added questions about the interaction of the LCO consumers with the criminal justice system and their victimization by crime. This topic was considered important because of increasing interest in the involvement of individuals with mental illness in the criminal justice system and concern about the relationship between mental illness and victimization. Additionally, we were able to compare the original LCO cohort (first 508 certified prior to 1991) with a new cohort of consumers (first certified in 1996) to determine if these groups differed in their involvement with the criminal justice system or victimization.

We found that over half of the sample reported having been a victim of a crime at some point in their lives, and consumers in the new cohort were especially likely to report victimization. On the other hand, the rates of arrests and jailings were similar for both cohorts. We are concerned about the high levels of victimization found by the LCO study, especially among consumers in the new cohort.

If you have any questions about these results, please contact Dee Roth. E-mail: rothd@mh.state.oh.us. Phone: (614) 466-8651. For more information about the research, see OPER's Web site: www.mh.state.oh.us/oper/oper.index.html.

LCO Overview

LCO is a longitudinal study of services, needs, and outcomes of adult consumers with SMD. The study includes 5 waves of measurement, spanning a period of 8 years. In the fifth wave of data collection, the participants included 269 consumers from the original longitudinal cohort (the old cohort, average age = 50.1) and 101 individuals who were newly 508 certified in 1996 (the new cohort, average age = 42.4). Data were collected through consumer interviews and case manager surveys. The study took place in four board areas: Trumbull County, Montgomery County, the 4-County area (Williams, Fulton, Defiance, and Henry Counties), and the Adams-Lawrence-Scioto area. Results on the following pages have been analyzed by board, gender, race, age, and diagnosis. Relevant significant differences in these areas have been noted.

Police Involvement and Crime Victimization

In the most recent wave of data collection, consumers in the LCO sample were asked about their involvement with the criminal justice system and their victimization by crime. Our research has shown that most consumers have been the victim of a crime and that many become involved with the criminal justice system each year.

Police Involvement, Arrests, and Jailings

The consumers' reports of their involvement with the criminal justice system in the past year are reported in Table 1. A total of 54 respondents (14.6% of the LCO sample) reported that they had been involved with the police, arrested, or jailed in the past year. A total of 24 respondents (6.5% of the LCO sample) indicated that they had either been arrested or jailed in the past year.

Table 1. Criminal Justice System Involvement -- In the past year, have you:

	Been involved with the police?	Been arrested?	Been in Jail?
Total	51 (14.0%)	22 (6.0%)	21 (5.8%)
Old cohort	33 (12.5%)	14 (5.3%)	13 (4.9%)
New Cohort	18 (18.0%)	8 (8.0%)	8 (8.0%)

Note. Table contains number of "Yes" responses and percent of valid responses.

Victimization by Crime

Consumers were also asked about their victimization by crime. Unlike the questions concerning involvement with the criminal justice system, the questions about victimization covered victimization at any point in the consumers' lifetime and were not limited to occurrences in the past year. As Table 2 shows, a considerable percentage of the LCO respondents reported being victimized by threats, assaults, and forced sexual activity. Of all consumers in the LCO study, 52.3% (n = 193) reported victimization in at least one of these categories and 44.2% of consumers (n = 163) said that they had been a victim of a physical or sexual assault.

Table 2. Lifetime Victimization By Crime – Has anyone ever:

	Threatened you with physical harm?	Physically attacked you?	Pressured or forced you into unwanted sexual activity?
Total	144 (39.7%)	134 (36.9%)	93 (25.5%)
Old cohort	98 (37.4%)	88 (33.5%)	63 (23.9%)
New Cohort	46 (45.5%)	46 (46.0%)	30 (29.7%)

Note. Table contains number of "Yes" responses and percent of valid responses.

Interaction Between Perpetration and Victimization

Consumers who reported being arrested or jailed were compared with other consumers to determine whether involvement or alleged involvement in criminal activity was related to victimization. Those consumers who reported having been arrested or jailed were more likely to report victimization ($\Pi^2 [1,362] = 9.471, p < .005$). This relationship was even more pronounced when victimization was limited to physical or sexual assaults ($\Pi^2 [1,363] = 12.406, p < .001$). Of those consumers arrested or jailed, 79.2% (n = 19) reported victimization by physical or sexual assault. Thus, those consumers involved with the criminal justice system as perpetrators or alleged perpetrators are also highly likely to have been victimized at some point.

Differences by Demographic variables

Respondents who were recently 508 certified (the new cohort) were more likely to report having been victimized by a physical assault than respondents who were 508 certified in the past (the old cohort) ($\Pi^2[1,363] = 4.892, p < .05$). Additionally, respondents in younger age groups (18 to 29.99 and 30 to 44.99) were more likely to report having been threatened with physical harm ($\Pi^2[1,353] = 8.124, p < .05$) and physically attacked ($\Pi^2[1,353] = 15.864, p < .005$) than older respondents. Women were more likely than men to report having been pressured or forced into sexual relations ($\Pi^2[1,365] = 27.612, p < .001$). Also, respondents in Montgomery County were more likely to report having been physically attacked than those from the other board areas, ($\Pi^2[1,363] = 8.448, p = .038$).

There was no difference between the cohorts or genders in their involvement with the criminal justice system. However, respondents reporting involvement with the police in the past year were younger than those who did not report such involvement (Mean age of 42 vs. 49, $t[353] = -3.494, p < .005$) and those respondents reporting that they had been jailed in the past year were younger than those who were not jailed (Mean age of 41 vs. 48, $t[353] = -2.593, p < .05$). As with victimization, involvement with the criminal justice system as a perpetrator or alleged perpetrator is a bigger issue for younger consumers.

Discussion

We found that over six percent of consumers had been arrested or jailed in the past year and that over half reported victimization by crime at some point in their lifetime. These results are comparable to those reported by others (Saunders, et al., 1989; Harry and Steadman, 1988). The arrest rates we have found may reflect the fact that individuals with mental illnesses have a greater chance of being arrested than other individuals committing similar offenses (Teplin, 1984). The high rates of victimization we found may reflect the growing evidence that victimization produces an increased risk of mental health problems and that psychiatric disorders may place individuals at a greater risk of victimization (Hiday, et al., 1999). The results imply that more should be done to help consumers stay safe and avoid situations that put them at risk of victimization, particularly in the case of younger individuals. In addition, greater efforts at educating the law enforcement community about mental illness should be made.

References

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