# Scott County Jail Programs Research Study

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## Abstract

The Scott County Jail (SCJ) Programs research project began in September, 2009 with the goal of identifying effective programs designed to benefit inmates and reduce rates of recidivism. 320 SCJ male inmates held and released from general population were involved in the study. Each inmate was interviewed using The Inmate Interview Guide developed by the program staff consisting of Level of Service Inventory-Revised-Screening Version (LSI-R-SV) and other variables tied to recidivism. Recidivism is defined as the length of time to re-arrest. Results from the inmate interview suggest that programs related to improving interpersonal relationships, addressing drug/alcohol abuse, completing education (GED) and changing criminal thinking are significantly related to reduced recidivism. Inmates' involvement in all types of jail programs were significantly correlated to each other suggesting that inmates who participate in one program are more likely to participate in others at high levels indicating the effectiveness of programs in general.

Of the 320 participants 80% (256) participated in programs.

Of the 320 participants 101 were in jail for the first time, while 39 had not been arrested for three years or more years.
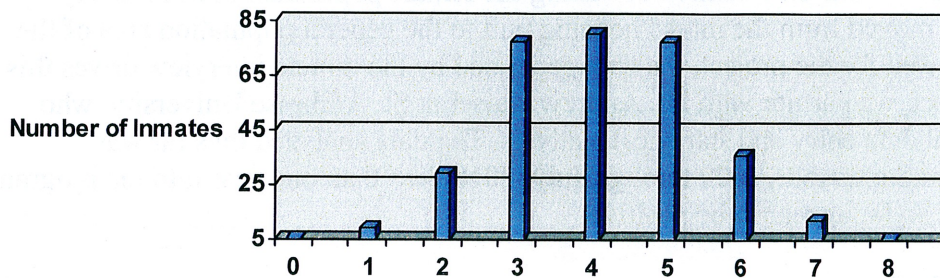
## Length of time to re-arrest
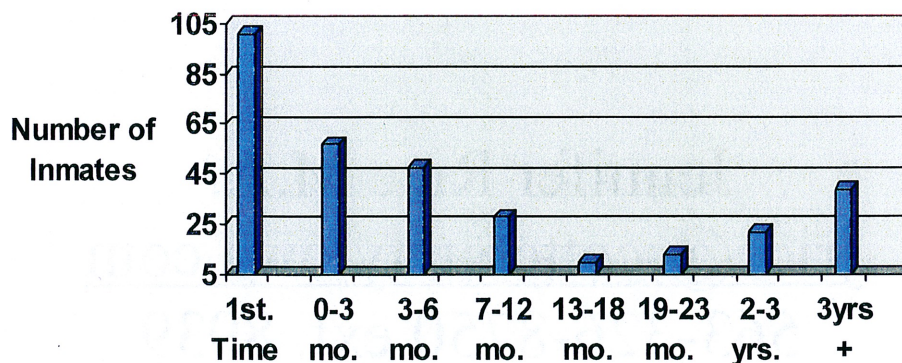


Length of time to Re-arrest

Research has indicated that working with inmates who score in the medium range on the LSI-R-SV benefit most from programming. 233 out 320 (73%) inmates in the study fit into this category.

**Total LSI-R-SV scores**

Number of Inmates

| | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |

(Bar chart with y-axis labeled 5, 25, 45, 65, 85 and x-axis labeled 0 through 8)

**Current LSI-R-SV scores**

# Variables significantly related to reduction of Recidivism

The following are results of the factor analysis identifying variables that have a significant correlation to recidivism defined as longer length of time to re-arrest.

- Fewer years of Education: SCJ inmates who have less than 11 years of education are likely to be rearrested sooner.
- Less time worked at a job: SCJ inmates who have less time on a job are likely to be rearrested sooner.
- History of institutional placement: SCJ inmates that have been placed in correctional institutions are likely to be rearrested sooner.
- Prior adult convictions: SCJ inmates that have prior convictions are likely to be rearrested sooner.
- Physical/Sexual Abuse: SCJ inmates that have reported experiencing childhood abuse are likely to be rearrested sooner.
- Quality of Family Relationships: Quality of family relationships is related to length of time to re-arrest.
- Gang Activity. SCJ inmates that report involvement in gang activity are likely to be rearrested sooner.

For a more detailed look at research findings please refer to the text of the research study.

# Scott County Jail Programs Research Study

## Introduction

The Scott County Jail Programs research project began in September, 2009 with the goal of identifying effective programs designed to benefit inmates and reduce rates of recidivism. We are currently studying male inmates in the general population (largest inmate pop.) only with the intention of adding the female population in 2011.Every inmate that is moved from the intake housing unit to the general population area of the jail is interviewed for the project, the data generated by the inmate interview drives this research project, we partner with Dr. Andrew Kaiser at St. Ambrose University, who does the actual data entry and statistical analysis. The data analyzed thus far was generated from September, 2009 through July, 2010; less than one year into the program yet the results so far appear to be positive.

## Research Methods

The inmate interview was developed by program staff and is a combination of inmate information from OMS (jail documents), face to face self-report and Level of Service Inventory- Revised-Screening Version (LSI-R-SV) to identify inmate program needs. The LSI-R is a widely used and researched assessment tool developed for Correction Professionals to assess offender criminogenic risk and need. The LSI-R reflects risk factors: Criminal History, Criminal Attitudes, Criminal Associates and Anti-Social Personality patterns; it also reflects the domains of Employment, Family and Substance Abuse (all key factors in breaking the cycle of recidivism). We have added or expanded additional variables such as Education, Abuse, Family History, Mental Health, Juvenile Placements and Gang involvement to give us a complete picture of inmate history and current characteristics. Every male inmate moved to general population is interviewed for this study.

## Review of Literature

Research literature indicates using Evidenced Based Practices (EBP) as the most effective approach to inmate programming, with Cognitive Behavioral Theory programs being the most researched and effective with the corrections population. We currently employ Cognitive Behavior Theory in all of our professional staff led (program coordinators Jennifer Rice M.A and Paul Elias PhD) psycho-educational programs. Our specialized Cognitive Restructuring Program developed by the American Community Corrections Institute is an EBP program utilizing Cognitive, Reality and Values Therapy to produce a synergistic approach to correcting distorted thinking. We currently use EBP programs designed specifically to understand and address each criminogenic need identified by the LSI-R-SV, and to teach skills required for inmates to change their behavior. In addition to staff led programs, the programs department supervises sixty volunteers, who on the average provide approximately thirty programs per week for inmates that include; Faith-based programs (Bible studies, church and praise services), AA/NA, Celebrate Recovery, Rape Sexual Assault Survivors Group, GED and literacy classes. By offering both the professional led psycho-educational and supervising the volunteer programs we believe inmates get a balance of professional and community support in an effort to address the issue of recidivism.

Research Results to Date
We have recently reviewed research data from September, 2009 through July, 2010. Dr. Kaiser (St. Ambrose University) has done a detailed statistical analysis using Factor Analysis with each variable from the inmate interview to show correlations with reduced recidivism. Recidivism is defined as the length of time to re-arrest. The following will show descriptive data as well as results from the factor analysis.

Figure 1 displays the total LSI-R-SV scores for Scott County Jail general population inmates. The LSI-R-SV identifies eight separate variables that are used to determine criminogenic risk and need. A score of 0-1-2 indicates a minimum risk offender in terms of program needs, a score of 3-4-5 indicates a moderate risk and 6-7-8 identifies the maximum risk for offender recidivism. Research indicates that inmates within the medium score respond best to programs. As indicated by figure 1 the largest percentage of Scott County Jail inmate is in the medium range.
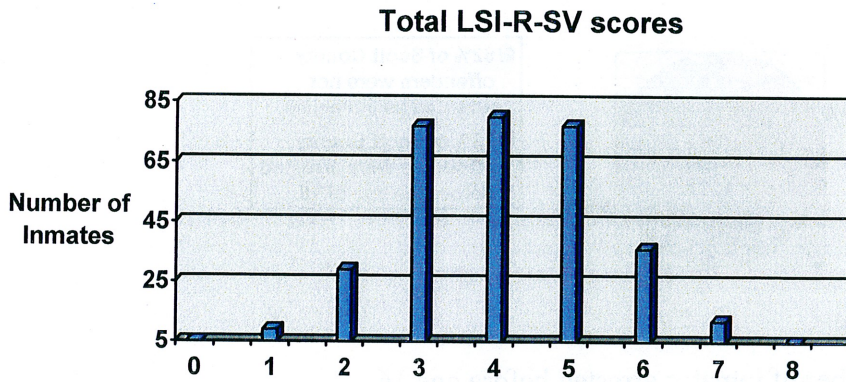
**Total LSI-R-SV scores**

Figure 1: Current LSI-R-SV scores

# LSI-R-SV Variables

Figures 2 – 7: show the breakdown of LSI-R-SV variables outlining indicators of programs and criminogenic needs.
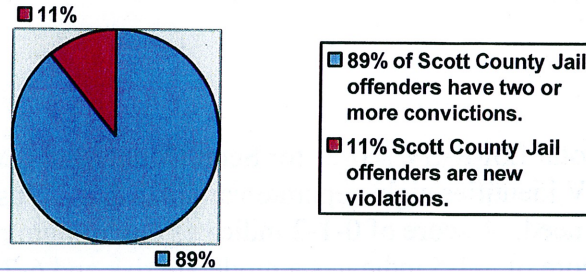


■ 11%

■ 89%

| ■ 89% of Scott County Jail offenders have two or more convictions. |
| ■ 11% Scott County Jail offenders are new violations. |

Figure 2: Criminal History 89% have two or more adult convictions



■ 38%

■ 62%

| ■ 62% of Scott County offenders were not arrested as Juveniles. |
| ■ 38% of Scott County offenders were arrested before the age of 16. |
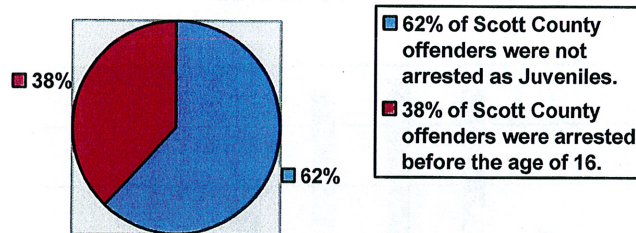
Figure 3:   38% number of inmates arrested before age 16

**48%**       **52%**

- ▣ 48% of SCJ offenders reported criminal friendships.
- ▣ 52% of SCJ offenders reported no criminal friendships.
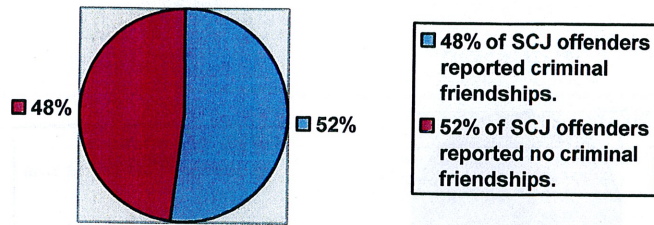
Figure 4: Companions: 48% of inmates report having some criminal friends.



**39%**

**48%**

- ▣ 39% SCJ offenders report problems
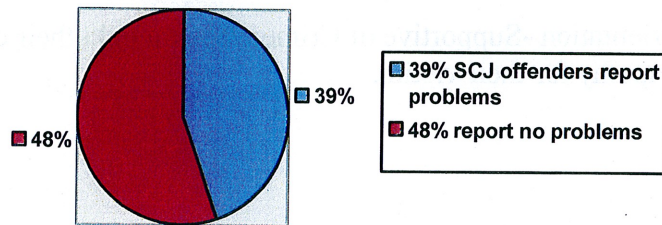- ▣ 48% report no problems

Figure 5: Alcohol/Drug Abuse: 39% of inmates report problems with substance abuse interfering with work or school.



**14%**

**86%**

- ▣ 86% SCJ offenders reported emotional and or personal problems.
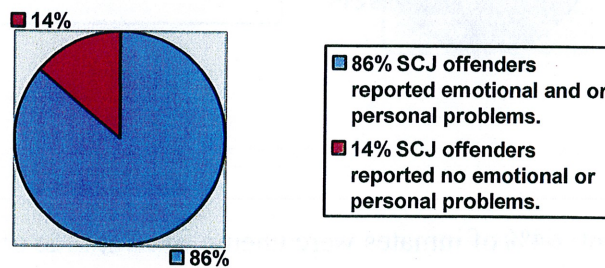- ▣ 14% SCJ offenders reported no emotional or personal problems.

Figure 6: Emotional/Personal problems: 86% reported one or more Problems with Intellectual functioning, Excessive fear, Depression, Anger and or Aggression, Poor impulse control, Poor interpersonal skills, Hallucination/delusion, or Disregard for others.
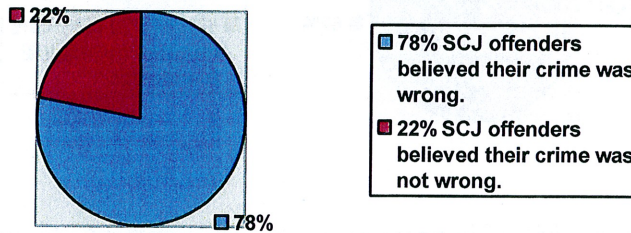
**78% SCJ offenders believed their crime was wrong.**

**22% SCJ offenders believed their crime was not wrong.**

Figure 7: Attitudes/Orientation -Supportive of Crime: 78% thought their crime was wrong and/or had sympathy for their victim.



**64% SCJ offenders were unemployed at time of arrest.**

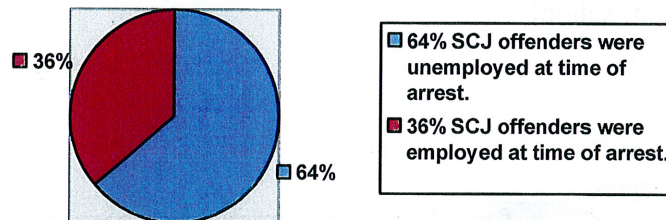**36% SCJ offenders were employed at time of arrest.**

Figure 8: Employment: 64% of inmates were unemployed at time of arrest.

# Program Participation

Scott County Jail Programs consists of both staff directed programs (led by program coordinators Jennifer Rice M.A. and Paul Elias PhD) as well as volunteer led programs supervised by the programs department. The following is a breakdown of the number of programs attended by Scott County Inmates.
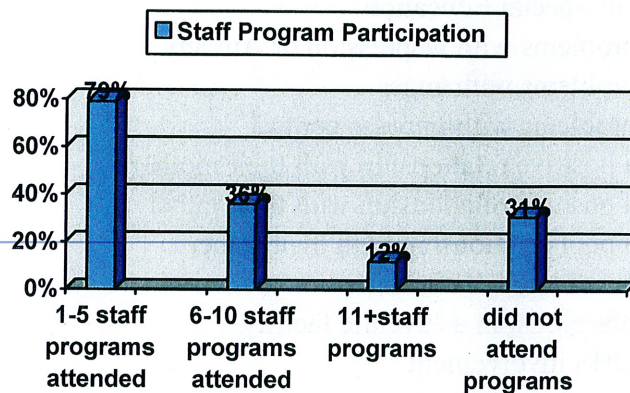
**Staff Program Participation**

| Category | Percentage |
|---|---|
| 1-5 staff programs attended | 79% |
| 6-10 staff programs attended | 36% |
| 11+ staff programs | 13% |
| did not attend programs | 34% |

Figure 9: indicates % of inmates' attendance at scheduled staff programs

**Volunteer Programs**

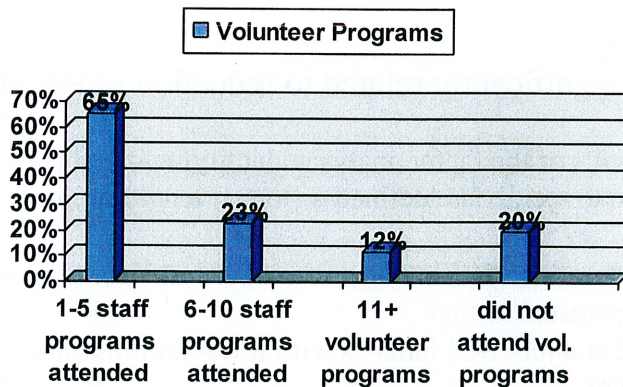| Category | Percentage |
|---|---|
| 1-5 staff programs attended | 65% |
| 6-10 staff programs attended | 23% |
| 11+ volunteer programs | 12% |
| did not attend vol. programs | 20% |

Figure 10: indicates % of inmates' attendance at volunteer led programs

# Descriptive Data:

The following is descriptive data closely related to recidivism factors generated by the inmate interviews.
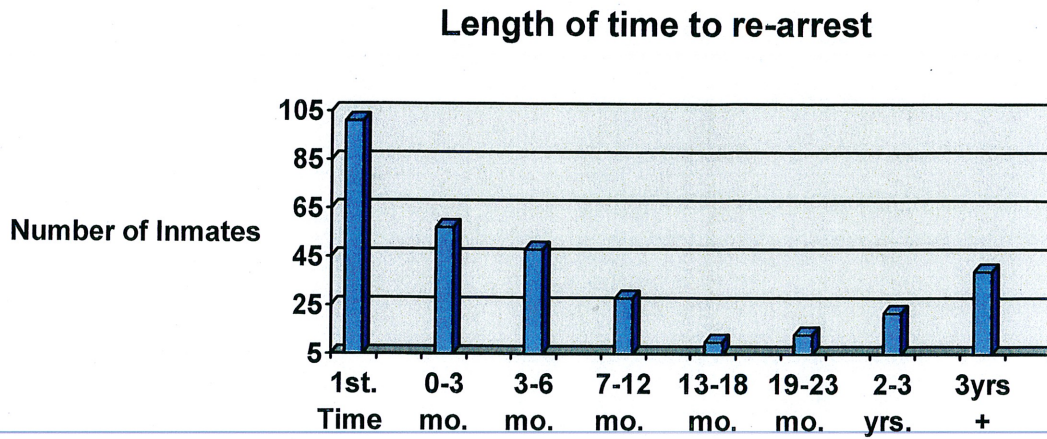
- 56% completed 11th grade or less (did not graduate)
- 45% involved in Special Education
- 44% reported problems with Depression or Anxiety
- 53% reported problems with anger
- 56% reported problems with impulse control
- 84% reported a positive relationship with their mother
- 51% reported a positive relationship with their father
- 28% reported a poor relationship with their father
- 21% reported never knew their father
- 34% reported placement in a Juvenile facility
- 28% reported DHS involvement
- 28% reported gang involvement
- 38% reported Mental Health treatment
- 19% reported Physical Abuse
- 7% reported Sexual Abuse

# Variables significantly related to reduction of Recidivism

The following are results of the factor analysis identifying variables that have a significant correlation to recidivism defined as longer length of time to re-arrest.

- Fewer years of Education: SCJ inmates who have less than 11 years of education are likely to be rearrested sooner.
- Less time worked at a job: SCJ inmates with fewer months on a job are likely to be rearrested sooner.
- History of institutional placement: SCJ inmates that have been placed in correctional institutions are likely to be rearrested sooner.
- Prior adult convictions: SCJ inmates that have prior convictions are likely to be rearrested sooner.
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Figure 11:   Identifies the recidivism measure length of time to re-arrest

**Length of time to re-arrest**

Number of Inmates

| | 1st. Time | 0-3 mo. | 3-6 mo. | 7-12 mo. | 13-18 mo. | 19-23 mo. | 2-3 yrs. | 3yrs + |

## Discussion of Results

Results from the inmate interview data provided by Dr. Kaiser suggest that programs related to improving interpersonal relationships, addressing drug/alcohol abuse, completing education (GED) and changing criminal thinking are significantly related to reduced recidivism. Inmates' (particularly those with substance abuse problems) involvement to all types of jail programs were significantly correlated to each other suggesting that inmates who participate in one program are more likely to participate in others at high levels indicating the effectiveness programs in general.

It is clear that education and employment issues are prevalent; offering literacy programs, GED assessment, classes and testing have proven worth while as have employment skills types of programs. The utilization of EBP (particularly Cognitive Behavior Theory) programs in changing criminal thinking, drug/alcohol abuse and interpersonal relationship are also related to the reduction of recidivism.

Research has indicated that working with inmates who score in the middle level on the LSI-R-SV benefit most from programming. 73% of inmates in the study fit into this category. Although LSI-R-SV variables; Criminal History and Juvenile Arrest are constant (meaning the score can not change) each of the remaining six variables (criminogenic needs) can and are being addressed by the programs department.

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