

Effective Interventions for Women Offenders: A Review of Literature

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ABSTRACT

Majority of the women offenders are more likely to commit another offence within three years of release as they lack proper interventions. The purpose of this literature review is to identify specific effective interventions for female offenders. The review examined four effective intervention practises such as 'in-prison programs', 'holistic aid and transition support', 'family focused interventions' and 'coaching/ monitoring'. A systematic search was conducted using inclusion exclusion criteria as the method to refine results for literature. Some of the female offenders had experienced an abuse, rape, or trauma during their childhood. High levels of family support reduced reoffending for females, where as higher levels increased the likelihood of recidivism for males. The overall result indicates that effective interventions have contributed to a reduction of recidivism among females. This literature review can also provide insights to warrant future research on women offenders and interventions focusing on large population group, different countries and targeted behaviour.

Keywords: *Women, Intervention, Prison, Jail, Effectiveness, Community, Programs, Recidivism, Reoffending*

Women are rapidly developing community within the prison framework. They are developing at a reliably quicker rate than men, across the global wards; with such patterns obvious and very examined in Australia (ABS, 2014), the UK (Corston, 2007) and the US (Glaze and Maruschak, 2008) since the 1980s. National Australian Data (ABS 2014) demonstrate that the percentage of women in prison has expanded by 55% throughout the last decade. Taylor (2015) alludes to the US Bureau of Justice Statistics finding that 40% to 57% of female prisoners were sexually or physically manhandled before the age of 18 compared with 7% to 16% of male guilty parties. Rates of psychological instability are likewise higher among female offenders. While 55% of male prisoners have a self-detailed psychological sickness, 73% of female detainees report having a dysfunctional behaviour (James and Glaze, 2006). High rates of substance mishandle are additionally a critical factor in gendered pathways to crime. Despite the fact that rates of alcohol consumption are higher for males, female detainees are more probably to use drugs frequently, and have utilized drugs at the season of the offense (Greenfield and Snell, 1999). Belknap (2015) reports that grant on

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women offenders have developed in comparable extents as that of men. As there are very few studies conducted in this field and as stated in the statistics above, the number of crimes committed by women are rapidly increasing, this review may help to identify and analyse specific effective interventions for female prisoners. This review may provide some insight about specific interventions and their future effectiveness in women offenders.

The purpose of this review is to

1. Understand various effective practise and intervention services to women offenders.
2. To identify which programs can be beneficial in reducing recidivism or reoffending in women offenders.

Since there have been very few studies on the effective interventions for female offenders, it is essential to bring clarity to this field of the investigation. It will also help to promote and educate the research audience to identify the gap in this field, helping the Law and Justice to develop committees, policies and programs that emphasise on the welfare, care and assistance.

METHODOLOGY

Search results

A systematic search was conducted and concluded on March 2018. The search supports studies and reports conducted in criminal justice abstracts, pro-quest criminal justice, PsychInfo, criminology, sociology, criminal justice, psychiatry, psychology and the Press CINCH and social services abstracts. The primary mode of data collection was acquired by using the elementary method of refining the results using keywords and terminology by Academic search complete and sage journal.

- Prison and its synonyms (jail*, imprison*, incarcerate*)
- Women (*ladies)
- Effectiveness
- Community (*society)
- Interventions (*programs, *administration)
- Recidivism (*re-offending)
- Transition
- Personal development
- CALD (culturally and linguistically diverse)
- Community service

The obtained search results were narrowed using inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Inclusion criteria

A total of 35 academic journals were obtained. The results included papers from the year 2000 to 2016 from different countries across the world. All the papers were published in English language. The materials used are largely from The United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and the United States. The literature review essentially focuses on empirical papers, only. Also, dissertations were not included as they do not meet peer review criteria and yet are empirical papers. Five criteria were used to filter the final set of empirical papers that will be used in this literature review. Four criteria are listed below.

1. The literature review will focus on peer reviewed empirical studies only.
2. Longitudinal studies were considered.
3. Specific interventions were included where the study focuses on women population.
4. Mixed gender studies, which give attention to women offenders, were also considered.

Exclusion criteria

1. Drug and alcohol programs, sex offender programs, and programs for women under 17 years of age were excluded.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

General principles for effective intervention

Much has been composed about what works and what doesn't in connection to decreasing recidivism of guilty parties who are placed in jail or on community-based remedies orders. There have been various extensive literature reviews and meta-examination (e.g. Lipsey and Cullen 2007; Washington State 2007) which have endeavored to composite the accessible research and demonstrate general standards of good practice in work with guilty parties. The greater part of this work has been attempted with male participants or with blended participants including male and female. Moreover, less work has been conducted on what works with female guilty parties. Given the absence of the research, which has been embraced with female guilty parties, this research gives a beginning stage to consider about the standards of good practice with women offenders. This review accordingly traces the exploration about what works to the degree of standards and practices apply particularly to women. Additionally, note that the general term 'intervention' is utilized as a part of this review to depict programs, supervision, treatments and various practices intended to assist offenders to change and lessen recidivism.

The result follows a pattern of four effective interventions for female offenders; in prison programs, holistic aid and transition support, family focused interventions and tutoring/mentoring taking into account two studies for each theme.

In Prison Programs

An unmistakable comprehension of the effect of various prison based remedial interventions for female offenders are presently limited. However, two 'Rapid Evidence Assessments' (REA) (Stewart and Gobeil, 2015; Lart, et al 2008) and a meta-examination (Tripodi et al., 2011) explored a research on this concern.

Both REAs were authorised by the government of UK to analyse the inconsistency in the database about the function with female offenders. REAs are by and large completed in a short time period ordinarily with a restricted scope of information bases. This isn't a noteworthy limitation with this point on the grounds that there is little research distributed in peer-reviewed journals.

Between 1991 – 2006 Lart et al. (2008) distinguished three meta-analyses and 16 primary studies in their review of research with 13 of these were engaged on jail based or after-mind programs with restricted systematic result information whereas, other programs account limited detail in the way of what the program actually presented. The examinations were conducted to a great extent in the US, with small sample size, with non-randomized treatment assignment evident.

Additionally, based on this information, researchers make mindful claims, showing that the findings are suggestive than prescriptive. They contend that focusing on sexually impartial factors, for example, antisocial conduct and antisocial peer groups are beneficial in the deduction of female offenders such as in training, with cognitive abilities programs for AOD contended to be more encouraging than a restorative or therapeutic group approach.

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The researchers demonstrate that based on the evidence explored, any more extended term effect of programs (which are 2 years and more) can't be remarked upon. Researchers also examined that understanding, reacting to, and assessing these reactions, to victimisation is the major gap in learning.

In work, which particularly looked to expand on that of Lart et al., (2008) Stewart and Gobeil (2015) sourced and examined study distributed during the year 2008 – 2014. Additionally, they found an advanced 17 remarkable examinations alongside one meta-investigation (Tripodi et al. 2011) and consider this to be an evidence of developing interest and a group, which is intensively, developed learning around the extent. However, some of the similar limitations were identified. Only a few studies were produced; the restricted extension/area of these investigations (for the most part the US); and a less accurate way to deal with the study being apparent.

Stewart and Gobeil (2015) presumed that most AOD-centered, in-prison intercessions positively affect members prominently those utilizing a holistic therapeutic community model, in spite of the fact that this is as opposed to what was found by Lart et al. (2008). Moreover, members in those programs which joined in-custody and follow up community based segments demonstrated a most minimal recidivism. This appears to give some uphold to Lart et al's conditional recommendation that an emphasis on progress and coherence of services was powerful; this additionally fits with a gender-responsive method. The utilization of elective case administration models was believed to be of some esteem.

Holistic Aid and Transition Support

There is an aid provided for all holistic interventions as it were intercessions, which address various issues, regardless of whether this is through administrations from numerous offices or non-specific administrations from a solitary provider. Additionally, Women's centers UK assists holistic aids to women in the society. They have positive evaluations regarding reactions from women however thorough assessment has demonstrated troublesome because of various methods of administrations as the services frequently incorporate non-guilty parties (Northern Ireland Office 2009).

Burgess, Malloch and McIvor (2011) analysed Women in Focus, a Scottish task that offered help, engagement with different offices, fundamental abilities, group work, employment assistance and other useful aids to women. Results for 60 women were considered for women on group based requests and the researchers contend that 'women in center may have added to a decrease in break rates in 3 of 4 neighbourhood experts' (p6). Nevertheless, they recognize imperfection in the assessment.

An investigation in Kentucky (McDonald and Arlinghaus 2014) administered intensive holistic aids to women both in and after jail. They examine the study on serious case administration and recommend that the outcomes have a tendency to be blended; case administration with rehabilitation shows more positive results than case administration with surveillance centered. Their examination of 108 women distinctively offered serious case administration focused at various numbers of the women's needs discovered that the individuals who had escalated case administration both in and after jail improved the situation of re-offending and wellbeing aspects. They had large amounts of rupture of parole nevertheless, a typical issue with intensive schedules as the guilty parties may experience difficulty in meeting the prerequisites.

Family Focused Interventions

The affirmation in connection with the significance of families and family bolster among women offenders is contradictory to some degree.

Stalans and Lurigio (2015) in a US review analyse the effect of intimate connections and child rearing on women probationers' consistence. A total sample of 257 ladies who had encountered abusive behaviour at home or tyke mishandle was examined. It was analysed that ladies with nonconforming partners and insecure living arrangement missed more probation arrangements and treatment appointments and had a higher shot of another arrest for substance mishandle or minor crimes in a 3 year follow-up period. Additionally, women parenting children had fewer missed probation arrangements. The investigation additionally found that missed probation arrangements expanded the danger of recidivism.

Cobbina et al (2012) examined a study with 570 offenders; including 169 females paroled from the US prison found that family bond serves as a defensive factor against recidivism. The researchers suggest that this is reliable and consistent with earlier studies showing that females regularly have solid familial connection and are ordinarily hesitant to expedite disgrace their family subsequently, they are more receptive to casual, familial social controls. This is accordant with Barrick et al (2014) who contend in their review of women after jail that in-jail family contact and post-discharge family bolster are defensive variables for women.

Coaching /Mentoring

The nature and reason for mentoring or coaching in criminal equity are portrayed in various routes by various researchers. Bergseth and Bereron (2008), for instance, propose that while aftercare programs center around reconnaissance and services with an objective of reducing recidivism, coaching programs concentrate more on role modelling, bolster and the general prosperity of offenders.

Jolliffe and Farrington (2007) embraced 'a rapid evidence assessment of tutoring on re-affronting'. They analysed 18 studies, which included both coaching and control or comparison groups. The study found that the assessment on effect on re-offending was restricted yet that general tutoring abbreviated re-offending by 4 to 11% (despite the fact that they found that the more rigorous investigations found no significant difference). Additionally, they also found that when longer projects were not effective, coaching was more fruitful if the guide and mentee met at any rate once every week and for extensive periods. The most effective projects included four to eight hours for every week contact amongst guide and mentee. The projects were additionally more fruitful if they were one of the various intercessions; for example, conduct modification, educational or employment training; a finding in line with various other researches which propose holistic interventions aid the best (Andrews and Bonta, 2010). Moreover, Jolliffe and Farrington (2007) consummate that while tutoring demonstrates some guarantee there is a requirement for more careful research to decide its influence.

A Victorian report (Trotter 2012) inspected tutoring offered by four associations - two of the associations offering the coaching were low-spending associations depending to a great extent on volunteers and two were bigger non-government associations. Two of the associations offer administrations solely to female guilty parties, the third to young women and men and the fourth offers coaching to men. In every one of the 48 participants associated

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with the appointments was interviewed (29 women and 19 men). The offender's reactions to the appointment programs were extremely positive and the evaluators found that the planned schedules were normally conveyed in a way steady with the core practice abilities. They offered comprehensive contact to high-risk guilty parties, concentrated on qualities, tended to address an extensive variety of necessities and created objectives and methods to address them.

CONCLUSION

Assistance and aid to women should be in a holistic manner. Particularly, they should address the numerous issues which most female guilty parties confront. This implies evaluations and interventions ought not be single issue-centered. Specifically, adequate treatment of any one issue is probably to include treatment of various other issues. Women with a housing issue for instance may not advance unless issues identifying with drug utilize. Administrations that work cooperatively with offenders to distinguish issues appear to work best. Jail based management should be connected to community-based administrations especially at the season of change and there is some proof that healthy transition aids are effective. Family engaged interventions might be especially useful for women who specifically benefits and center around quality associations with non-criminal relatives and with kids. Coaching projects can be helpful if they are delivered accurately and women benefit adequate contact from coaches.

However, this review of literature has certain limitations. Constraining the data collection to particular research question excludes some information, which may have been helpful. There is also a likewise confinement with respect to the volume of literature especially web based reports which make it basically incomprehensible for a single researcher to obtain all the relevant material.

It is recognized that numerous women in jail and on corrections orders have encountered trauma in their life. However, interventions that concentrate on trauma will have scope of research in future. Financial instability and debt appear to be a severe issue for some women however, there are no studies address this issue and hence to be likely that interventions would be beneficial in this area. Additionally, the studies on 'women offenders and disability' are restricted and hence it was unable to establish particular interventions to focus issues for this community.

Table 1 – Studies reviewed

Study number	Author and Year	Sample	Methodology	Findings	Conclusion	Country of research
1.	Stewart and Gobeil, 2015	Women over 18 years	Electronic databases and web sites Adopted Maryland Scientific Methods Scale.	The program and intervention was effective in women.	Women were less likely to reoffend after the effective intervention	Canada
2.	Lart, et al 2008	16 primary studies	Pro forma data application form	Residential treatment provided to the female offenders after imprisonment	Most of the women were less likely to reoffend after the effective intervention	U.S.A, U.K, Canada

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Study number	Author and Year	Sample	Methodology	Findings	Conclusion	Country of research
				improved the effect of prison based treatment.		
3.	Tripodi et al., 2011)	Women prisoners in US.	Adopted two model system -risk reduction model -enhancement model	Imprisoned women who were incorporated in substance abuse intervention program tend to reoffend less likely than those who did not engage in the intervention.	Interventions were more fruitful with female inmates	U.S.A
4.	Burgess, Malloch and McIvor (2011)	Women over 18 years	Case study	The program and intervention was effective within short period.	Women who engage in intervention programs were more likely to experience improvement in their life style.	U.K
5.	McDonald and Arlinghaus 2014	108 women offenders in northern Kentucky area	Program documents, State of Kentucky's Department of corrections database. (Quantitative approach)	Intensive case intervention help to reduce reoffending, new convictions and participation by offenders in intervention before and after parole.	Indicate a mixed outcome for quality lifestyle among female offenders.	U.S.A
6.	Stalans and Lurigio (2015)	Women prisoners in Australia.	Case study	Symptoms of trauma have high association with criminal offence in woman. Sexual abuse history marks a critical aspect for re-offense.	Interventions were fruitful only to a certain extent	Australia
7.	Cobbina et al (2012)	570 offenders 169 females; 401 males	Random sampling LSI-R (Level of Service Inventory-Revised)	Confirming both direct and conditional pattern of social bonds on reoffending.	Family bond act as a protective factor in female to reduce recidivism where as it is contradictory for males.	U.S.A
8.	Jolliffe and Farrington (2007)	Women offenders above 18 years	18 longitudinal studies	Among 18 studies, 7 show that mentoring aids a significant positive improvement in recidivism.	Mentoring was found effective when only accompanied by other interventions.	U.K

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Study number	Author and Year	Sample	Methodology	Findings	Conclusion	Country of research
9.	(Trotter 2010)	48 participants 29 women and 19 men	Interview	Mentoring aids a significant positive improvement in recidivism.	Interventions were fruitful for majority of participants.	U.K

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Conflict of Interest

The authors carefully declare this paper to bear not a conflict of interests

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