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# PAROLE CLASSIFICATION AND GUIDELINES

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## A Review of the Literature

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June 1986

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Program Services Unit  
Division of Juvenile Rehabilitation

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PAROLE CLASSIFICATION AND GUIDELINES:  
A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

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June 1986

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## Preface

This paper presents both a summary and an annotated bibliography of recent literature on the classification of prison inmates.

This review is the sixth in a series produced by the Division of Juvenile Rehabilitation, Program Services Unit. All reviews issued will be periodically updated and reissued, with the intent of providing a useful resource to those involved in the treatment of juvenile offenders.

We would like to acknowledge the effort of Denise Lishner in developing this review.

### Other reviews:

The Sex Offender (October, 1984)

Social Skills Training for Juvenile Offenders (February, 1985)

The Treatment of Drug/Alcohol Abuse Among Juvenile Offenders (July, 1985)

Education as Rehabilitation for Juvenile Offenders (October, 1985)

Recidivism Among Criminal Offenders (April, 1986)

## SUMMARY OF RESEARCH LITERATURE: PAROLE CLASSIFICATION AND GUIDELINES

### I. INTRODUCTION

This review will focus on parole guidelines and parole classification models. Implications for supervision and services for youths on parole are discussed. An additional literature review specifically on classification of offenders while in custody will be completed in the near future by the Division of Juvenile Rehabilitation.

Parole is frequently based on the belief that release time should be wholly indeterminate and up to the discretion of the parole board (Gottfredson et. al., 1978). According to this model, the parole board may release the individual on "conditional release"--where the individual is released at expiration of sentence, less time served for good behavior. The individual may be returned to the institution if parole conditions are not met. In many states and systems, the responsibility of determining length of stay at an institution has been twofold, with the judge setting the maximum and minimum time and the parole agency determining actual time. A more traditional definition of parole is based on the rehabilitation model, with broad discretion to release those offenders considered to be "without unreasonable risk" (Taylor, 1979).

While some argue that the use of parole boards has reduced sentencing inequities (Dawson, 1969), others have criticized the lack of a clearly defined parole system, citing non-uniform policy reductions in time served (Gottfredson, 1979); unbridled discretion, decision disparity, and inequity in case decisions (Gottfredson et al, 1978); personal bias, arbitrariness, and differential releases (Abadinsky, 1977); and incompatibility with a just deserts model of punishment (Hirsh and Hanrahan, 1979). Recently, policy guidelines and classification systems have been developed and employed to reduce disparity and inequity and to promote a standardized system. Those jurisdictions employing classification instruments in decisions affecting type and length of sentence have used three different approaches--parole guidelines, sentencing guidelines, and risk classification instruments. The goals of these classification systems are to promote objectivity and uniformity while still allowing consideration of individual factors.

### II. PAROLE GUIDELINES AND CLASSIFICATION MODELS

Three factors have supported the development of parole guidelines: criticism of the rehabilitation model as a basis for parole decision-making and movement towards a just deserts model of punishment; the development of sophisticated statistical procedures for risk assessment; and increasing questions about disparity in decision making (Galvin and Polk, 1981). Galvin and Polk propose that parole guidelines have three principal characteristics: they should systematically relate sentence served to offense severity and other specified factors, they should provide for public protection through systematic use of risk assessment techniques in parole decision making, and they should consider offenders' progress as measured by institutional performance.

In an effort to produce more consistent judgments and more equitable decisions, the U.S. Board of Parole requested the development of parole selection guidelines in 1972. An actuarial device called the Salient Factor Score (Hoffman and Beck, 1974) was developed, validated, refined, and adopted for use by the U.S. Parole Commission. The instrument contains seven items: prior convictions, prior commitments, age at first commitment, whether the commitment offense involved auto theft, whether parole had ever been revoked or the inmate is a probation violator, history of drug dependence, and verified employment or full-time school attendance for at least six months during the last two years in the community. The informational base for the construction of the Salient Factor Score was obtained through the analysis of a random sample of 2,497 federal prisoners released in 1970. An additional random sample of 2,149 prisoners released during 1971-1972 provided the informational base for validating the device.

The Salient Factor Score is used to classify parole applicants into four risk groups: very good, good, fair and poor. This score is combined with a six-category offense scale (low, low moderate, moderate, high, very high and greatest). A risk-by-severity matrix displays the suggested range of time to be served for each matrix cell. Provision is made for clinicians to override the matrix, and applicants demonstrating good institutional adjustment may be considered for earlier release than specified by the guideline range. As a result of these federal guidelines, persons who have committed similar offenses and who have similar prior records receive similar sentences, reducing disparity and enhancing consistency of decision making.

Validation studies using federal prisoners were released in 1971 and 1975, indicating that the Salient Factor Score retained predictive power (Hoffman and Beck, 1980). When tested on an inmate sample to examine the feasibility of predicting recidivism risk and pre-release program non-completion, the scores showed very low correlations (LeClair et. al., 1980). However, use of the scores when approaching the high and low risk extremes appeared to be justified.

Another parole classification instrument commonly employed is the Wisconsin model, now being disseminated by the National Institute of Corrections (Baird, 1981; Clear and Gallagher, 1983). This is a risk and needs assessment which determines the level of supervision required (maximum, medium, minimum, and mail-in). It consists of eleven need categories with three to four severity levels. The assessment is conducted within 30 days of admission to parole. Parolees are reclassified at six-month intervals with an adapted risk scale reflecting the offender's adjustment and performance. Higher scores indicate greater need for services and supervision, while lower scores signify low base expectancy for failure and thus limited supervision requirements. Agencies can use the scores to create a supervision model, now being disseminated by the National Institute of Corrections (Baird, 1981; Clear and Gallagher, 1983). Classifications can then represent different orientations. For example, if the focus is on high-risk clients, scores would maximize supervision based on risk rather than need.

In conjunction with the risk and needs assessment, the Wisconsin model employs a client management classification system based on a semi-structured interview, which identifies four groups of intervention strategies for clients: selective intervention, casework, environmental structuring, and limit setting. Additionally, workload measures have been developed to determine the amount of time required for different types of cases.

Baird (1981) reports that increased contacts with high need/high risk parolees resulted in fewer new convictions, rules violations, absconsions, and revocations, with no ill effects for the lower need/risk group who had less supervision. Of 8,250 clients, three percent were rated low risk and later revoked, while 37 percent were rated high risk and later revoked. Workload measures revealed that monthly supervision time ranged from three hours for the maximum supervision group to .5 hours for the minimum supervision group. On the other hand, Wright et. al., (1984) conducted a validation study of the Wisconsin model with New York City probationers and found that many of the variables in the instrument failed to predict risk for this sample. They suggest that offender groups may vary or that the prediction models are unstable and do not transfer to different groups.

The Oregon Parole Matrix (Taylor, 1979) provides a matrix of ranges to be served prior to release based on offense and offender characteristics. Primary weight is given to seriousness of the current offense and criminal history, with risk of recidivism also taken into account. Felonies are placed into one of seven categories based on severity. Prior criminal history is assessed through use of a criminal history/risk assessment scale weighting prior incarcerations, convictions, age of first incarceration, probation or parole failure, and drug problems.

Critics of this model suggest that rehabilitative considerations are minimized under just deserts, there is no way to earn early release even if treatment programs are successfully completed, and there is a lack of incentive for rehabilitation or good behavior. On the other hand, explicit rules increase equity, facilitate management, make the plea bargaining process more fair, reduce disparity, and allow for flexibility (Taylor, 1979).

### III. SYSTEMS TO PREDICT RECIDIVISM, VIOLENCE, AND SUCCESS ON PAROLE

The reader is referred to an earlier review (Recidivism Among Criminal Offenders, 1985) for a more detailed discussion of the effectiveness of various systems for predicting recidivism, a common criterion measure for assessing the offender's risk on parole. Despite advances in prediction efficiency, accuracy rates are disappointing (Sawyer, 1966; Simon, 1971) and it is rare to correctly classify more than 70 percent of offenders (Kerr, 1982). Nevertheless, studies have consistently shown improvements in prediction when applying statistical methods (Holland et al, 1983; Monahan, 1981; Sawyer, 1966) or combined statistical and clinical methods (Wenk, 1979) as compared to clinical judgments alone. Statistical prediction systems were found to consistently outperform assessment made by

clinicians in predicting arrest and conviction, although clinicians performed best when forecasting violent criminal conduct resulting in incarceration (Holland et. al., 1983).

Despite these advances in prediction and classification techniques, critics point to methodological problems and limitations. For example, Toch (1978) notes that predicting the potential for violent crime is particularly problematic due to the low base rate of criminal violence. Monahan (1981) describes the advantages and disadvantages as well as the relative effectiveness of various strategies for predicting violent behavior (clinical assessments, childhood predictions, psychological tests, statistical approaches, and assessment of situational and environmental factors), and questions whether the probabilistic prediction of future behavior is sufficient grounds for determining an offender's release to parole or treatment needs. Other critics point to poorly designed research, low predictive accuracy, and the use of instruments that have not been validated (U.S. National Institute of Corrections, 1979).

Two comprehensive studies have produced findings that describe the characteristics of the parolee who is most likely to succeed. Wenk (1974) collected data on 4,146 California Youth Authority parolees. Data included factors related to case history, intelligence, academics, vocation, personality, psychiatric and psychological variables, admission offense, parole behavior, and programming within the institution. The parole success rate for the study population was 60.9 percent after 50 months. Highlights of Wenk's (1974) findings include: almost half of this population showed evidence of alcohol abuse; nearly ten percent had a history of misuse of stimulant or depressant drugs (which was associated with a dramatic drop in parole success); a history of escape indicated general instability reflected in the parole success rate; and greater parole success was associated with high school completion.

In an effort to isolate variables associated with adult parole success, a report by the National Institute of Corrections (1980) described a sample of 1490 parolees in Ohio in terms of personal characteristics and criminal history. Variables related to parole success (which are considered in the parole board decision-making process in Ohio), include nature of the committing offense (i.e., whether violence is involved), existence of a juvenile criminal history, prior probation or parole violations, and the number of prior adult felony incarcerations. Substance abuse, sex, ethnic background, and county of commitment were found to have little or no influence on the correlation with the other variables.

#### V. PAROLE SERVICES AND FUNCTIONS

The recent move toward determinate sentencing has had an impact on parole and its functions. Hussey and Lagoy (1983) reviewed determinate sentencing provisions in seven states to determine how parole has been affected. In several states, discretion for setting release time has been removed from parole boards, greatly reducing the role of parole. Bard (1982) looked at the impact of the 1976 Parole Commission and Reorganization Act on the Federal Youth Corrections Program, and cited several problems,

including: differing interpretations regarding the relative discretion to be exercised by the sentencing judge and the Parole Commission in the parole process, and abandonment of the use of rehabilitation in programs for youth offenders.

In many states, parole classifications are employed to determine the type of parole services needed (Abadinky, 1977). Increased attention is being focused on tailoring treatment programs to specific offender types (differential treatment). Treatment-centered classification systems such as the I-Level, the Wisconsin classification, and the Jesness Inventory provide a base for individualized planning (optimal settings, types and amount of treatment). For example, the California Treatment Project employed the I-Level system (Warren, 1969) and found that differential assignment to treatment of delinquents on the basis of interpersonal maturity improved outcome (Warren, 1977). Alternative classification systems have been applied as a basis for differential treatment but have not been adequately assessed for treatment effectiveness (Annis and Chan, 1983). The California Department of Corrections has made major changes in its method of supervising parolees, including frequent and comprehensive assessments of the offender's risk to the community as well as his needs, provision of appropriate and effective controls and services for the offender, differential supervision, and an emphasis on outcomes rather than activities (California Parole and Community Services Division, 1979). Based on the risks they present and their needs, offenders are assigned to one of three forms of supervision: supervision emphasizing controls, supervision emphasizing services, and minimum supervision.

The interaction of offender type by treatment program was examined within a randomized control group design involving the assignment of 100 adult offenders with alcohol and drug problems to intensive eight-week group therapy, and 50 to routine institutional care (Annis and Chan, 1983). Two types of adult offenders were identified by a clustering procedure using 11 personality variables. Although neither group treatment nor offender type had a significant main effect on three measures of recidivism at one year following release, there was evidence of a treatment by offender interaction on two of the recidivism measures.

Palmer (1984) claims that various methods of intervention are more likely to be associated with positive behavioral outcomes for some offenders (e.g., middle risk) and some conditions (e.g., smaller caseloads). He adds that middle-risk offenders are better suited to probation or parole or to minimum security settings than are high risk groups (i.e., they are at a lower maturity level, more delinquent, aggressive, and younger). Clear and Gallagher (1983) indicate that little is known about the supervision appropriateness for different types of clients. Low scoring cases have low base expectancy for failure and call for limited supervision, but standards may fail to distinguish actual differences among clients.

A nationwide survey of 55 parole boards in the United States and Canada was conducted to determine requirements for parole selection and related information (Corrections Compendium, 1982). The most common requirements

for parole are that an inmate must serve one-third of the imposed sentence or the minimum of an indeterminate sentence before being eligible for parole. In some systems, crackdowns on habitual or violent offenders and determinate sentencing provisions have affected parole. For example, in some states, time served before eligibility is dependent on whether the individual is a violent or nonviolent offender, or a first-time or repeat offender. According to the 1982 Corrections Compendium report, Florida and Washington are the only systems where there is no minimum time that an inmate must serve before parole eligibility -- inmates are eligible as soon as they are received by the corrections department.

## ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abadinsky, Howard. Probation and Parole: Theory and Practice, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1980.

Parole originated in 1876 at Elmira Reformatory, with length of time served dependent upon behavior of the prisoner within statutory limitations (i.e., indeterminate sentencing). Release on parole was available to carefully selected prisoners. This policy was adopted by 26 states by the beginning of the 20th Century. By 1930, all states had a parole law.

There are two models for administering parole services:

- a. Placement of the offender by an independent parole board.
- b. Placement by the department that also administers correctional institutions.

Conditional release and parole are the two processes by which most inmates are released. Conditional release allows an inmate to be released at the expiration of sentence, less time served for good behavior. The parole board determines how long an offender will serve in a correctional institution. The basis for indeterminate sentencing is rehabilitation.

There are wide variations in minimum and maximum terms for the same crime in different states. The criteria used for fixing minimum and maximum terms include previous criminal record, conduct in the institution, environment to which inmate plans to return, and kind of employment, education, or program secured. The factors used by California Adult Authorities include typical or aggravated offense, personal-adjustment (plus crime, time served, age, prior criminal history, drug use and institutional record). Prediction tables, including statistics on the post-release behavior of different types of offenders, are frequently used. Proponents of this method claim that traditional parole decision-making suffers from personal bias, arbitrariness, and lack of predetermined guidelines.

Parole services traditionally include both institutional and field services. Both an institutional program and a program for the inmate upon release are planned. Conditions of parole are similar in most jurisdictions (e.g., periodic reports, keep away from "undesirables," etc.), but enforcement varies. The National Advisory Commission on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals recommends parole rules be kept to an absolute minimum and tailored to fit each parolee. Recommended conditions of parole would be geared toward reform and control. Length of supervision, for example, would be governed by length of sentence and state laws, and would usually last more than two years.

The authors review three theories of parole:

- a. Grace theory - parole is a conditional privilege which can be revoked if terms are violated.

- b. Contract theory - the parolee agrees to terms in return for conditional freedom, with violation a breach of contract.
- c. Custody theory - the parolee is in legal custody of the prison or parole authorities, and constitutional rights are therefore limited and abridged.

Classification is the process for determining the needs and requirements of offenders, and assigning the offenders to programs according to those needs and requirements, and available resources. The process is usually completed by the offender's institution, a classification committee, a reception-diagnosis center, or a community team. The simplest, yet most limited, method to classify criminals is by their arrest records. Roebuck (n.d.) proposed using ten dimensions including sociological and psychological variables (demographic, offense, behavior, group support of criminal behavior, correctional processing, reference groups, self concept, attitudes, organic variables, personality structure, and criminal career). Clinard and Quinney (1967) suggested eight criminal categories based on five characteristics (criminal career, group support of criminal behavior, correspondence between criminal behavior and legitimate, societal reaction, and legal categories of crime). Abrahamsen (1969) divided offender types into two categories: momentary and chronic offenders. McGinnis and Oswald (1968) classified 14 characteristics (e.g., immaturity, poor social skills, anti-social attitudes).

Parole treatment methods have generally been aligned to relevant client characteristics, e.g., academic education, social education, vocational training, counseling, etc. Gill (1968) classified offenders into three categories of characteristics: situational problems, personal psychological problems, and anti-social tendencies. The Kennedy Youth Center (Gerard, 1975) based treatment on a classification scheme with the categories of inadequate, neurotic, unsocialized, and socialized. The Oklahoma Department of Corrections classified offenders as early, late, intermittent, or persistent (LEAA, 1973). Gibbons (1965) defined characteristics of offender types by offense. Harlow, Weber, and Wilkins (1974) stressed the importance of finding a classification system for supervision, allowing for individualization of cases and appropriate surveillance. Modes of treatment include psychoanalysis, social casework, reality therapy, behavior modification, and social group work.

The report lists several special programs, including:

- a. Community Treatment Project (CTP): This program supervises juvenile offenders in their home communities and provides intensive supervision and treatment. A small parole caseload is maintained. A research study, examining youths placed in the intensive CTP program and matched control group youths given routine supervision within standard caseloads, was conducted. The study initially demonstrated positive results for the CTP participants. A second phase included use of institutional treatment for the CTP youths in addition to intensive supervision; less success was demonstrated.

- b. Ohio's Shock Parole Program: Inmates are released from prison six months after sentencing under certain conditions (not dangerous, not a second offender, etc.). Of 600 persons studied since this law has been in effect, only one has reportedly been returned to prison.
- c. Contract Parole - Mutual Agreement Program (MAP): A three-way contractual agreement (parole officers, institutional authorities, and inmates) providing for an individually-tailored rehabilitative program is a primary feature of this program. A firm parole date is set if the prisoner completes the agreement, which includes provision of services, training resources, and performance assessment.
- d. Halfway Houses: These programs assist offenders in obtaining employment, develop community resources, and provide support during the initial release period.
- e. Special Intensive Parole Unit (SPU): The SPU was a California program between 1953-64; a study explored the variable of caseload size in the parole supervision process. Caseload size did not measurably impact outcome except for those youths in the lower-middle risk group.
- f. Work Release: This program allows an individual to serve a sentence by working in the community and returning to the institution at night. The inmate is allowed to earn a salary.
- g. Team Management in Probation and Parole: Traditionally, parole officers are given a caseload of specific offenders. In the team approach, a larger caseload is assigned to a team of specialized workers. This approach has been criticized, however, for being impersonal.
- h. California Summary Parole Program: The California Department of Corrections has studied the effectiveness of parole without supervision. The effectiveness of two different techniques for selection of cases has also been examined.

Estimates are that parole is successful in 55-65 percent of the cases. The indicators used in studies of parole vary; the President's Commission used return to prison, while Glaser used felony convictions. Some agencies focus on the type of violation or conviction. There is a need to standardize success/failure with mutually exclusive categories.

Baird, S. Christopher. "Probation and Parole Classification and the Wisconsin Model," Corrections Today, May/June, 1981.

The Wisconsin Case Classification/Staff Deployment Project began in 1975. By 1977, a basic process was designed and implemented statewide, and today components of the system have been implemented throughout the U.S. and Canada. Components of the system are as follows:

1. Risk and Needs Assessment

The Wisconsin Model includes four levels of supervision (maximum, medium, minimum and mail-in) with requirements varying from two contacts per month to mail receipt. Risk and needs assessment scales determine level of supervision for each client. The highest level indicated by the risks or needs assessment is assigned, but staff may override scales to assign a higher or lower level. (This occurs in 10-15 percent of all classifications.) All cases are assessed for service needs and recidivism risk within 30 days of admission to probation or parole. Reclassification is performed at six month intervals, based on an adapted risk and needs scale (reflecting supervision adjustment and performance). The risk scale discriminates between high, moderate, and low-risk individuals, while the needs assessment instrument is comprised of several categories (academic/vocational, employment, financial management, marital/family problems, companions, emotional stability, alcohol and drug use, mental ability, health, and sexual behavior) scored according to their severity. Interrater reliability scores for the instruments have averaged over 80 percent.

2. Client Management Classification

While the risk and needs assessment determines the level of supervision, the client management classification tool addresses the actual supervision plan. The tool was developed to aid in assessing client needs, provide an objective evaluation for the formulation of parole/probation goals, and assure that staff are assigned a wide variety of clients. The process consists of a 45 minute semistructured interview with a forced choice rating instrument. Groups of clients are assigned to one of four supervision techniques: a) selective intervention, b) casework/control, c) environmental structuring and d) limit setting. The method helps anticipate problems and provides recommendations for additional strategies.

### 3. Management Information System

The risk and need assessment instruments are integrated with other management information system forms to create a single intake packet. Data are added during reclassification and termination. The system contains data collected at admission, reevaluation, and termination. The comprehensive client profile includes demographic data, offense history and sentence information, needs and risk data and referral information, termination type, changes, new offense data, and use of community resources. Analysis falls into three areas: routine reports, evaluation of the system, and answers to special requests. Periodic reports identify trends and allow comparison of outcome data to admission information.

### 4. Computation of Workload

A frequent problem when equalizing caseloads among staff is that differences in offenders are overlooked. This system identifies differences in offenders, assesses the amount of supervision needed, and determines the total workload of each staff. Workload accounting is carried out, and staff is deployed accordingly.

The following are results of a follow-up study of the system:

1. Assignment to different levels of supervision, based on assessment of needs and risks, has significant impact on outcomes; increased contacts with high need/high risk cases resulted in fewer new convictions, rules violations, absconsions and revocations, while decreased contacts with low need/low risk clients had no adverse effects.
2. Wisconsin Risk Assessment Scale demonstrated effectiveness in predicting probation/parole success or failure. Of 8,250 clients, 3 percent were rated low risk and later revoked, and 37 percent were rated high risk and later revoked.
3. Monthly supervision time needed for maximum supervision clients was 3 hours, 1.25 hours for medium, and 0.5 hours for minimum. An agent can supervise approximately six low risk/low need clients in the time required to supervise a single high risk/high need individual.
4. Emphasis on proper implementation of the classification process, includes controls on paperwork and information flow, was essential to the success of the Wisconsin system.

Bard, Amy B. "The Parole Commission and Reorganization Act: The Impact of Parole Guidelines on the Federal Youth Corrections Program and Indeterminate Sentencing." Rutgers Law Review, 34(3):491-537, 1982.

This paper discusses the reforms set forth by the Parole Commission and Reorganization Act (PCRA) and the problems that the PCRA has precipitated in the federal parole system. It reviews recent court decisions that have interpreted the PCRA and its impact on the rehabilitative aspects of programs. Possible methods for reconciling the inconsistencies of the PCRA are explored in this paper.

In 1976, Congress amended the federal parole statute in an attempt to make the parole process more uniform and equitable. Entitled the PCRA, the act established procedural safeguards for fair parole hearings, defined the criteria to be considered by the United State Parole Commission in making these determinations, and authorized the commission to adopt guidelines governing the discretion of parole hearing examiners.

Despite these legitimate goals, the PCRA has been criticized because several of its provisions seem to reflect inconsistent policies and purposes. For example, the PCRA mandates that retribution and general deterrence be considered in making parole decisions. At the same time, the Act incorporates indeterminate sentencing provisions from the 1958 sentencing statute and the Federal Youth Corrections Act of 1950 which suggest that parole decisions be based on rehabilitation factors. The PCRA and its legislative history have also been interpreted in different ways regarding the degree of discretion to be exercised by the sentencing judge and the Parole Commission. The PCRA retains earlier provisions that allow a judge to determine the length of sentence and parole eligibility date. Courts have held that the recommendations of the sentencing judge are to be given serious consideration by the Commission in making parole decisions. The legislative history of the PCRA, however, indicates that Congress viewed parole as an extension of the court sentencing process and considered the discretion given the Parole Commission a viable means for correcting disparities in the sentencing practices of the courts.

California Parole and Community Services Division. The New Model of Parole: A Description of the Model and Guidelines for the Development of District Level Implementation Plans, Sacramento, CA.

The California Department of Corrections implemented a new model of parole for the supervision of felons and narcotic addict outpatients. The principles of the model include frequent and comprehensive assessments of the offender's needs and risk to the community, provision of effective controls and services for the offender, differential supervision, and an emphasis on outcomes rather than on activities. Based on the offender's needs and risk to the community, offenders are assigned to one of three forms of supervision: supervision emphasizing controls, supervision emphasizing services, and minimum supervision.

The management principles of the model include: (1) functional specialization by field staff, (2) availability of a full array of functions within each operational unit, (3) greater responsibility among field-level management, (4) assignment, and evaluation of field staff performance, based on workload, (5) improvement of information systems, and (6) improvement of feedback from executive staff. The model identifies the following six basic functional specialities: (1) managing cases, (2) assessing and reassessing risks and needs, (3) developing and updating action plans, (4) applying controls, (5) providing services, and (6) preparing for status changes. Various combinations of functional specialities are possible and expected. Four categories of programs are contained in the program structure: prerelease, supervision, prerelease and supervision support, and management support. Adaptations in the structure of the programs, based on available geographical resources, are encouraged.

Carroll, J. S., Wiener, R. L., and Coates, D. "Evaluation, Prognosis, and Prediction in Parole Decision-Making," Law and Society Review, 17/1, 1982, 119-228.

Discretionary legal decisions have become a recent focus of theory development and policy-oriented applied research. The authors investigated parole release decision-making in Pennsylvania from both orientations. Analysis of post-hearing questionnaires and case files from 1,035 actual parole decisions revealed that the Parole Board considers institutional behavior and predictions of future risk and rehabilitation in the decision to release on parole. Predictions of future risk seem to be based on diagnostic judgments, identifying causes of crime such as personal dispositions, drugs, alcohol, money, and environment. A one-year follow-up of 838 released parolees showed that predictions were virtually unrelated to known post-release outcomes. An actuarial prediction device was developed that is more predictive than subjective judgments. The use of decision guidelines to structure discretion is discussed, as well as utilization of this research in guideline development by Pennsylvania.

Clear, Todd R. and Gallagher, Kenneth W. "Screening Devices in Probation and Parole-Management Problems," Evaluation Review, 7(2), 1983, 217-234.

Risk screening involves the assessment of potential risk of future criminal behavior through application of a standardized, "objective" instrument that evaluates client's background and current situation. The instrument contains a series of items with point values, the sum of which constitutes a risk score. The items are correlated to risk. The risk score corresponds to a probability statement, with higher scores representing greater risk.

Assuming that more intensive casework can reduce criminal behavior, risk assessments can be crucial for those who manage community supervision agencies to determine the level of supervision needed for different offender groups. Agencies that have adopted risk-screening devices subsequently provide more attention to higher risk clients.

This article raises central management issues, and looks at the Wisconsin Model being disseminated by the National Institute of Corrections. That model use two client-assessment scales, a risks scale, and a scale that indicates need for services. An ongoing dilemma is the value of service delivery vs. surveillance (i.e., needs vs. risk).

Different agencies calculate total classification scores to create supervision classifications representing different orientations, e.g., the focus in the New York City Probation Department is on classification scores which maximize supervision based on risk rather than need.

Supervision standards perform several functions, such as guiding the amount of time that the officer spends on cases. Information is still incomplete regarding the appropriateness of certain types of supervision for different clients. It is unclear whether the benefits of greater surveillance or more adequate services for high risk/need clients will result in less offending. Lower scoring cases have a low base expectancy for failure and would seem to require less supervision. Information is not yet complete for the middle ranges. Specific classification standards may fail to identify actual differences among clients; thus, there is a need for decision-making policy reflecting the agency's mission and available resources.

The use of an objective classification system calls for the development of workload measures instead of caseload measures. There is a need for time studies which measure the amount of work required by cases (of different supervision levels). Equalization of officer workload and assessment of regional staffing requirements can then be completed.

Contact, Inc. "Parole". Corrections Compendium, 6(11):1-7, 1982.

A nationwide survey of 55 parole boards in the United States and Canada was conducted to determine requirements for parole selection and related information. Parole boards were asked to provide data on how parole board members are appointed, the number of individuals paroled in 1980 and 1981, the number of parolees returned to prison for parole violations, the minimum portion of sentence an inmate must serve before being eligible for parole, the average amount of time actually served, what type of parole decision appeal process exists in the state, and whether parolees are required to pay a fee to help defray the costs of their parole.

The most common requirements for parole are that an inmate must serve one-third of the sentence imposed or the minimum of an indeterminate sentence before being eligible for parole. In some systems, crackdowns on habitual or violent offenders, and determinate sentencing, have effected parole. Both Arkansas and South Dakota report that the time served before parole eligibility is dependent on whether the inmate is a first-time or repeat offender. In Idaho, Massachusetts, and Montana, time served before eligibility is based on whether the individual is a violent or non-violent offender. California, Colorado, Indiana, Maine, Minnesota, New Mexico, and Puerto Rico report that indeterminate or mandatory sentencing laws have changed the complexion of the parole eligibility process. Several of these

states are presently working with both an indeterminate structure (for parolees committed before the change in the law) and a new determinate structure. Florida and Washington are the only systems reporting that there is no minimum time an inmate must serve before parole eligibility-- inmates are eligible as soon as they are received by the corrections department. Twenty-one of the states that responded have a parole decision appeal process. Generally, the appeal is based on specific criteria, such as the omission of relevant information at the original parole hearing. In seven states, parolees are required to pay a fee to help defray costs of parole.

Galvin, James L. and Polk, Kenneth. "Parole Guidelines: Suggested Research Questions," Crime and Delinquency, 1981, 27(2), 213-224.

#### Summary

Three factors have supported the development of parole guidelines: criticism of the rehabilitation model as a basis for parole decision making and the accompanying movement toward a "just deserts" model of punishment, the development of sophisticated statistical procedures for risk assessment, and increasing questions about disparity in criminal justice decision making. This paper raises questions related to each of these three factors that should be addressed by the research community as guidelines are implemented. With respect to offense severity and sentence served, key considerations are the rationale for sentence lengths, the degree to which discretion is being structured, inmates perceptions of the guidelines, and the effect of guidelines on time served. In the area of risk assessment and parole prediction, the accuracy of instruments as predictors, the problem of false positives, and the possibility of unanticipated bias must be addressed. In terms of effects on the overall system, questions are raised about the extent to which discretion can be structured, the effect of program changes on correctional staffs, and the impact of such a shift on the already dwindling resources for parole.

Parole guidelines have three principal characteristics:

- (a) They systematically relate the sentence served to offense severity and other specified factors, such as prior history.
- (b) They provide for public protection through systematic use of risk assessment techniques in the parole decision making process.
- (c) They consider the offenders' progress as measured by institutional performance.

Several potential research questions are posed, including:

1. Are sentences based on a clear and defensible rationale?

2. Is parole commission discretion being structured as a function of the guidelines?
3. What are the inmates' perceptions of guidelines?
4. What is the impact on time served by inmates? Are disparities being reduced?
5. How accurate are the risk assessments as predictors?
6. Does the risk assessment procedure overpredict recidivism?
7. Does the risk assessment procedure have consequences of unanticipated bias (gender, race, and class)?
8. Can discretion in the process be structured?
9. What is the effect on correctional staff of changing the purpose of corrections?
10. Will the emphasis on equity in decision making divert resources from parole?

Gottfredson, Michael R. "Parole Guidelines and the Reduction of Sentencing Disparity," Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency, 1979, 16(2), 218-231.

In many states and federal systems, the responsibility of determining the length of institutional stay is shared by the judge and the parole agency; the judge sets maximum and minimum and the parole agency determines the actual time. The parole board reduces disparity in setting release dates. The paper examines the question of sentencing disparity in light of explicit decision guidelines.

Some argue that the parole board reduces sentencing inequities (Dawson, 1969; Citizen's Inquiry on Parole and Criminal Justice, 1976). Gottfredson (1979) found little reduction in disparity in a federal jurisdiction as result of parole board decision making. Gottfredson did find some reductions varying in magnitude according to particular offense.

The guideline system adopted by the Federal Parole Commission sets the amount of time served based on the youth's potential risk and offense severity. The date of prison release occurs within 120 days after commitment, based on a two-dimensional guideline matrix. The system's major goal is to enhance equity. Disparity will be minimized if offenders with similar criminal history and similar commitment offenses receive similar sentences.

In the classification system now in use by The Federal Parole Commission, the following elements influence the decision matrix: (1) severity of behavior ratings and (2) parole prognosis rating based on the offender's salient factor score (based on prior record).

This study examined the amount of time served relative to sentence length, using data for 4,471 adult cases. Parole Commission decisions appeared to be less disparate than judicial decisions. The fact that the Parole Commission reduced disparity does not in itself argue against its abolition, and alternative mechanisms may be preferable. Parole discretion may still be beneficial in that it allows for flexibility based on individual differences, and avoids the impracticability of statutory precision required by some determinant sentencing proposals.

Gottfredson, Stephen D. and Gottfredson, Don M. "Screening for Risk - A Comparison of Methods," Criminal Justice and Behavior, 7(3), 1980, 315-330.

This study compares, within the context of parole decision making, the predictive utility of five statistical methods commonly employed to develop correctional risk-screening devices: (a) two general linear additive models, (b) two configural models and (c) a model based on a multivariate contingency approach. Predictive instruments were developed and cross-validated using large samples of federal releasees. Even when considerable error is added to the predictor item pool, substantive conclusions do not change. Further, scores from the instruments are highly intercorrelated.

There has been continuing debate over which methods, including linear additive models, configured models, and multidimensional contingency table analysis, are most efficient for maximum predictive utility (Babst et al., 1968; Gottfredson, et al., 1974; Simon, 1971; Solomon, 1976; Wilbanks and Hindelang, 1972; Van Alstyne and Gottfredson, 1978). The linear additive model most commonly utilizes multiple regression, which calculates the weighted linear combination of variables that most accurately predict the criterion variable. Such models are a substantial improvement over intuitive clinical approaches to predictions (Gough, 1962; Meehl, 1954). Models including random regression weights (Dawes and Corrigan, 1974) and unweighted linear additive models (Wainer, 1976) improve efficiency. However, lack of power and shrinkage upon validation of linear models are two limitations of regression analyses. Configural models are nonlinear and hierarchical. Two screening methods, predictive attribute analysis and association analysis, classify individuals on the basis of specific attributes. Predictive attribute analysis classifies offenders in terms of the variables associated with the criterion variable. Multidimensional contingency table analysis is an additional method that produces an additive model with numerous advantages.

Data in this study included 4,500 released prisoners, making up construction and validation sub-samples. Failure was defined as any return to prison, any conviction for any new offense, death during criminal act, or absconding from parole supervision. Data were reduced to 29 items with predictive and practical utility, including present offense, history of criminal/delinquent involvements, social history, and institutional adjustment. No apparent distinct advantage was found for any single method. Predictive validity was modest, though better than the use of a base rate alone. The methods were stable in the face of additional known error. With the exception of association analysis, intercorrelations of the devices were quite high.

The analysis suggests that decisions as to which risk screening device to use should be based on factors other than the statistical power of the method. A combination of these methods may have promise. The selection of criterion variables for examination, however, is most critical.

Gottfredson, Don M., Wilkins, Leslie T., and Hoffman, Peter B. Guidelines for Parole and Sentencing, D.C. Heath & Company, Lexington, MA, 1978.

Lack of explicit policy has led to criticism of unbridled discretion, decision disparity, and inequity in case decisions. Articulation of decision policy, through development of explicit written standards or guidelines, can offer structured decision discretion (without removing ability for individual case consideration) to the parole process. The purpose of this study was to develop and implement, in collaboration with the U.S. Board of Parole, improved procedures for parole decision making. These guidelines were incorporated into major legislative change of federal parole procedures.

Many state systems are similar to the federal process, with only the extent of indeterminacy varying from state to state. A number of states require that the inmate serve a fixed proportion of the sentence before parole eligibility. The assumptions guiding state programs range from the belief that prison release should be fixed by statute to the belief that time served should be wholly indeterminate and up to the parole board (mandatory sentences vs. indeterminate sentencing). This study holds that discretion should be structured and visible rather than eliminated or controlled, and promotes the concept of equity to the extent that characteristics of the offender are taken into account. An explicit guidelines model, proposed by the authors, is based mainly on dimensions of the seriousness of the offense and prognosis for successful parole. The dimension of recidivism risk is equally important and is assessed by an objective, empirically derived measure of risk called the Salient Factor Score. A method used to establish a classification of offense seriousness is described. This guidelines model can provide a feasible solution to disparity in sentencing through formulation of an explicit sentencing policy identifying major factors to be considered. Guideline usage began in 1972 as part of a pilot project and was extended to all federal parole decisions in 1973. Several state parole boards have adopted similar systems for structuring discretionary power.

Parole boards set standards and make explicit policies. To aid parole decision making, the authors suggest weights be given to the various criteria in the parole selection decision. Primary factors include seriousness of crime, parole prognosis, and institutional behavior. The amount of time to be served is then based on the offense severity/risk scores. In cases where a board member chooses to make a decision outside of the expected range, factors that make the case unique must be specified.

The Salient Factor Score used in parole decision-making is based on nine items that are significantly related to parole outcome. It is an actuarial device (experience table) used in case decision making as an aid in the assessment of an applicant's parole prognosis. The instrument was based on 60 items of background data from a sample of parole files including information on present offense, prior criminal record, age, education, employment record, living arrangements, prison conduct, and post-release information. The outcome measure, used as the criterion in the instrument's validation, was no new conviction resulting in at least a 60 day sentence, no return to prison for a technical violation, and no outstanding escapes. Information was gathered and coded, and the nine salient factors were selected which predicted outcomes. Validation analysis indicated that the Salient Factor Score compared well with other devices.

In actual case decision making, a worksheet listing offense rating, Salient Factor Score, and guideline range is completed at the initial parole selection hearing. Board representatives determine and justify whether a decision within or outside the guideline range is appropriate. At an initial parole hearing, applicants may be granted parole, denied parole and scheduled for review, or denied parole and continued to expiration of term. Guideline usage is monitored and guidelines reviewed regularly for possible revision.

Efforts to develop a method for producing more consistent offense severity judgments, and thus more equitable decisions, are described in the report. The process included ranking the severity of offense behavior by hearing examiners and board members. Components of this process included improvement and refinement of prediction methods, better assessment of the seriousness of the offense, and inclusion of institutional behavior as a factor.

Griffens, Curt T. and Nance, Margit. "Issues in the Application of Parole Guidelines to Females," Female Offenders, Simon Fraser University, Criminology Research Centre, Burnaby, BC, Canada, 1980.

Existing parole decision-making guidelines have generally been based on factors that predict recidivism among male offenders. The issue of whether guidelines are also valid for female offenders is examined in this report.

Very few sets of guidelines include items that are predictive of parole success among females. Currently, only two of the items now used in the federal guidelines--number of prior incarcerations and history of drug dependency--have been clearly established to predict outcome for women parolees. Earlier work by Glaser and O'Leary (1956) highlights differences in post release violation rates of males and females for such categories as age at release, prior contact with agencies of the law, type of offense, and racial or national descent. For type of prior contacts, although the pattern of prediction is roughly the same, differences in the magnitude of violation rates for men and women are evident. In the case of the offense category, however, even the pattern of prediction is not consistent.

Such variation in violation rates for men and women within risk categories should warrant skepticism about using the same items for male and female offenders. If it is the case that existing predictive items used in parole guidelines are not appropriate or valid for female inmates, ethical and legal issues would dictate the creation of separate guidelines for females. However, the body of research currently available cannot unequivocally refute the possibility of applying current guidelines to women as a sub-population, nor state with certainty that separate guidelines for women are required.

Hussey, Frederick A. and Lagoy, Stephen P. "The Determinate Sentence and Its Impact on Parole," Criminal Law Bulletin, 19(2), 101-130, 1983

Indeterminate vs. fixed sentence is considered. Such issues as whether parole should provide an incentive to inmates to behave well, the basis for parole board decision-making, and the role of parole agents are examined. Indeterminate sentencing imposes an open-ended sentence that concludes when the Parole Commission feels the inmate is ready. Fixed sentencing imposes a fair and proportionate sentence, treating similar offenders who commit similar crimes in similar ways, with some flexibility for inmates who have served "good-time." Differences in these sentencing policies reflect the rehabilitation (treatment) vs. "just deserts" (punishment) controversy. The authors note that parole has been identified as responsible for the failure of the rehabilitative ideal. Other critics have suggested that parole is incompatible with a desert model of justice (Hirsch and Hanrahan, 1979).

Despite intentions to establish determinate sentencing plans that are rationale and fair, some codes appear to be harsh or problematic. This article reviews the determinate sentencing provisions in several states and assesses how parole has been affected. Parole generally has two components: parole release decision-making and post-release supervision. This article looks at the basic sentencing structure and the extent of changes in the parole systems in Maine, California, Illinois, Indiana, Arizona, Colorado, and New Mexico.

1. Maine: The entire sentence assigned by the judge, less good time, is served. Parole board decision making and post-release supervision have been eliminated.
2. California: A presumptive sentencing system (all offenders committing the same crime receive the same set penalty) allowing for set modifications based on mitigating factors has been established. The inmate's release is not governed by a parole board decision, yet the inmate can have the sentence reduced by three months for every eight where the inmate abided by prison rules and participated in work or other activities. After the sentence is complete, releasees are under supervision for up to three years of reintegration services.

3. Illinois: Sentences, including allowances for twelve mitigating factors, are set. Release occurs after a full term, less credit for good behavior, with a period of mandatory post-release supervision varying according to the offender's crime class and a discharge review. Good time provisions are liberal (i.e., sentences can be reduced by half). Discretion to reduce sentence is in the hands of the Department of Corrections, and has been removed from the Parole and Pardon Board.
4. Indiana: The state assigns presumptive sentences which can be altered by aggravating or mitigating circumstances. Release is governed by good time or clemency; the inmate is on parole until the fixed sentence expires--generally not more than one year.
5. Arizona: Presumptive sentencing with substantial deviations for aggravating circumstances, reoffense, or use of weapon, is featured in this state. Arizona sentences are generally the harshest in the nation. Actual time served is affected by provisions related to probation, good time, and parole (except for dangerous and repetitive offenders). Parole release involves a two-step discretionary decision-making process. Traditional parole functions remain intact with discretion still used.
6. Colorado: State statutes specify presumptive penalties for set ranges based on the offense, offender characteristics, and aggravating and mitigating circumstances. Sentence can only be reduced for good time. Role of parole has been reduced--discretionary release has generally been eliminated. Discretion now lays with prison administrator. All releasees serve one year of parole.
7. New Mexico: This state features definitive sentencing (definite terms and sentences), except for aggravating or mitigating circumstances. Sentences are harsh, but time can be reduced for "good time" (e.g., merit and enterprise involvement). Parole decision-making role has been reduced. There is a mandatory post-release supervision term as part of the sentence.

National Institute of Corrections Administration and Research. Regular Parolees - Characteristics and Parole Success - A Study, 1975 and 1976, Washington, D.C., 1980.

Information on persons released through regular parole procedures is presented in terms of personal and criminal characteristics, parole performance, and variables associated with parole success or failure. This report was funded by the National Institute of Corrections as part of a broader evaluation of the furlough program. A 20 percent sample of all regular parolees released in Ohio during 1975 and 1976 was selected for the study (a total of 1,490 individuals); this large sample was expected to

produce reliable statistics. Subjects were chosen from all institutions and from the categories of shock parole release, first hearing, continued hearing, and special review. In order to describe all parolees, information was collected on the whole population of furlough releases in addition to the survey population.

The first part of this study describes parolees in terms of personal characteristics (i.e., sex, ethnicity, county of commitment, age at admission and release, marital and employment status at arrest, and highest grade completed in school); and criminal histories (i.e., nature of commitment offense, prior felony convictions, prior imprisonment, juvenile criminal history, prior supervision violations, and history of drug and alcohol abuse). The second part of the report describes how the parolees in the study performed on parole during one year and by parole completion. The material in the first two sections is almost exclusively descriptive in nature. The third section examines variables, related to parole success and failure, which are considered in the parole board decision-making process, and which are likely to determine parole outcome. Predictive variables include: nature of committing offense (especially whether violence was involved); existence of a juvenile criminal history; prior probation or parole violations, and the number of prior adult felony incarcerations. Substance abuse, sex, ethnic background, and county of commitment were found to have little or no influence on parole outcome. Persons placed on parole at their first parole hearing have a higher success rate than those released at continued hearings; apparently, parole boards conduct accurate screening of prospective parolees.

Pallone, Nathaniel J. "Currently Discernible Trends and the Contours of Parole Policy and Practice in 1990," Journal of Offense Counseling, Services and Rehabilitation, 4(2):153-171, 1979.

Four trends in parole as a social institution and in parole supervision as a clinical process are discernible in recent research and are supported in society and the criminal justice community. These trends suggest the possible character of parole a decade from today. There will be greater access to parole for first offenders, repeat offenders whose crimes are neither violent nor directed at persons, and others whose crimes do not evoke fear among the public. There will be more frequent experiments with "inscant" and "shock" parole. Parole guidelines are likely to have a greater capacity to distinguish among offenders, especially those offenders for whom positive outcomes can reasonably be expected on the basis of actuarial predictions. Greater emphasis will be placed on supportive, stable social contexts to which the offender can return. Paraprofessional parole aides, many of whom will be ex-offenders, will emerge as the primary agents of direct service, with professionals shifting into essentially supervisory roles. The clinical function in parole supervision will shift from psychotherapy and characteristics of parolees. The therapeutic effects of surveillance of patient behavior by the therapist will be recognized. This report provides and reviews research evidence of these trends.

Schmidt, J. "The Creation of Parole Guidelines: From Rehabilitation to Retribution," Contemporary Crises, 3/4, 1979, 419-430.

In response to its critics, and to several bills pending in Congress to abolish the parole board, the United States Board of Parole reorganized itself into five regions in 1974. Additionally, the board issued a new document, which included Guidelines for Decision-Making, which was designed to clarify board policy and indicate criteria for parole. This paper examines the process through which these new guidelines were created, and analyzes the three elements which are contained therein: (1) parole prediction, (2) offense severity, and (3) amount of time to be served. The development of guidelines, through the collaboration of the U.S. Board of Parole with private criminal justice research organizations, is examined as an example of how social science has been used to preserve existing social relationships.

Taylor, Elizabeth L. "In Search of Equity: The Oregon Parole Matrix," Federal Probation, 43(1), 1979, 52-59.

There has been recent criticism of parole boards as being arbitrary, capricious, and disparate in decision-making. Specifically, critics have noted a lack of standards to guide decision-making, a lack of written reasons for decisions, and uncertainty as to the duration of prison terms. This criticism led to the movement for more clarity and certainty, and to House Bill 2013 in Oregon. Traditionally, Oregon parole boards were based on the goal of rehabilitation outside of prison--broad discretion was allowed in decision-making until 1975. However, violence, rising rate of prison commitments, increase in length of stay in state institutions, overcrowding, and misconduct eventually became serious problems.

House Bill 2013 was passed in 1977 and required the Board of Parole in Oregon to operate under a "just deserts" model, including structured and limited discretionary powers, and increased due process. The bill required the Board to establish a matrix of ranges for terms to be served prior to release on parole, based on offense and offender characteristics. Primary weight was given to the seriousness of the committing offense and the criminal history of the prisoner. The new bill called for a modified just deserts model--considering not only seriousness of the offense but also deterrence and incapacitation. It allowed leeway for the consideration of the risk of recidivism.

The matrix of ranges indicates time to be served based on the seriousness of the crime, the prisoner's criminal history, and the risk of recidivism. Felonies are categorical within seven severity ratings. Prior criminal history is assessed through the use of a criminal history/risk assessment scale weighing prior incarcerations, convictions, age of first incarceration, probation or parole failure, drug problems, and the presence of a five-year conviction-free period.

Critics have suggested that the model minimizes rehabilitative considerations under just deserts, early release cannot be earned even if treatment programs are successfully completed, and there is a lack of incentive for rehabilitation or good behavior. On the other hand, proponents note that explicit rules increase equity, facilitate management, make the plea bargaining process more fair, reduce disparity, and allow for some flexibility.

U.S. National Institute of Corrections. "Classification Instruments for Criminal Justice Decisions," Volume 2, Probation/Parole Level, The National Council on Crime and Delinquency. Washington, D.C., 1979.

Information gathered from four site visits and 23 telephone interviews, concerning instruments for determining the appropriate level of supervision for probation and parole release, and from a review of the literature is synthesized in a state-of-the-art report. The instruments are written forms containing a fixed set of weighted criteria that are combined into an overall offender summary score. The use of classification instruments for level-of-supervision decisions is relatively uncommon, but interest in such classification is growing. At least as many agencies are planning to introduce such instruments as are now using them. Agencies now using instruments report generally satisfactory experiences. After some initial resistance, staff usually accept the instrument as a screening tool. Instrument use tends to divert more cases to lower levels of supervision, a trend that should reduce costs. A few agencies also report that instruments help to expedite case screening and provide a common vocabulary that aids in the discussion of cases.

There are, however, a number of potential problems associated with instrument use. Although agencies now using them do not appear concerned, certain legal complications could arise. Few agencies have validated the instruments they are using or evaluated their effect on caseload distributions or departmental operations. Where research has been undertaken, it has often been poorly designed. Other problems may develop from the low predictive accuracy of many instruments or the subjective and haphazard way in which factors unrelated to risk are incorporated into risk predictions.

Once these problems are resolved, the judicious use of instruments should have demonstrable advantages. Decision criteria can be brought out into the open where they can be examined and better understood. Consistency in decision making can be increased, with an accompanying increase in equitable treatment. Finally, decision accuracy can be improved, as compared with the accuracy of purely subjective decisions.

U.S. National Institute of Corrections. "Classification instruments for Criminal Justice Decisions," Volume 4; Sentencing and Parole Release Sourcebook, The American Justice Institute with the National Council on Crime and Delinquency, Washington, D.C., 1979.

Information gathered from nine site visits and one telephone interview, and from a review of the literature, is synthesized in a state-of-the-art report concerning sentencing and parole release criteria. The sites visited included the District of Columbia and the following states: Arizona, California, Colorado, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, Oregon, and Pennsylvania. The telephone interview was with the Washington State Board of Prison Terms and Paroles.

Standardized screening instruments currently are used by only a small proportion of parole authorities and an even smaller proportion of courts, but they are generating increasing interest as the prospect of determinate sentencing faces a growing number of United States jurisdictions. Among those jurisdictions now employing classification instruments, three different approaches can be distinguished: parole guidelines, sentencing guidelines, and risk classification instruments. All three approaches offer a useful alternative to legislatively fixed sentencing and parole policy by introducing greater objectivity and uniformity in decision making without the inflexibility imposed by determinate sentencing laws.

The classification programs described in this report are relatively new and untested. None as yet has been subjected to rigorous evaluation. Even parole guidelines, which have been in operation the longest, have not been fully evaluated, and critics have questioned the extent to which they can meaningfully affect sentencing practices. Criminal justice practitioners, researchers, and policy makers should keep a close watch on the development and use of these various instruments in order to distinguish what works from what does not. If classification is to be established as a realistic alternative to determinate sentencing, some hard questions must be satisfactorily answered.

Wenk, Ernest A., Halatyn, Thomas V., and Harlow, Nora. An Analysis of Classification Factors for Young Adult Offenders: Volume 1, National Council on Crime and Delinquency, Davis, CA, 1974.

This project obtained data on 4,146 made California Youth Authority parolees with the goal of providing information on the offender characteristics related to parole success. Information was collected on 200 variables in 8 categories: individual case history factors, intelligence factors, academic factors, vocational factors, personality factors, psychiatric and psychological factors, admission offense and parole behavior, and initial institutional programming. The overall parole success rate for the total study population was 60.9 percent on a 50 month follow-up.

Major study findings include:

- Almost half of this population showed evidence of alcohol abuse.
- Nearly 10 percent had a history of misuse of stimulant or depressant drugs - which was associated with a dramatic drop in parole success.

- A history of escape indicated general instability which was reflected in the parole success rate.
- The frequency distribution for intelligence followed the normal curve.
- Overall academic functioning was at the seventh grade level, with greater success among those who finished high school.
- The group was generally suspicious and anxious, with the thought patterns found in psychiatrically disturbed persons.
- Offenders against persons, except for murders, were generally much better risks on parole (in regard to recidivism).

Differential treatment or matching of types of offenders with types of correctional response is receiving attention, and researchers have turned to classification to develop effective therapeutic or rehabilitation programs. This approach reflects the professional discipline of the typologist. This study looked at the wide range of variables and classification factors of utility for clinical work with offenders. The purpose was to present classification data and their relationships to parole success or failure.

Wright, Kevin N., Clear, Todd R., and Dickson, Paul. "Universal Applicability of Probation Risk - Assessment Instruments," Criminology, 22(1), 1984, 113-134.

A probation-risk assessment instrument developed by the State of Wisconsin is receiving wide use and has been recognized by the National Institute of Corrections as part of a model system. However, this has been done without validation on populations other than Wisconsin probationers and parolees. This study assesses the validity of the instrument for a population of New York City probationers. It was found that many of the variables contained in the instrument did not predict risk for the sample. Validation of risk instruments before they are fully adopted is recommended. Based on an analysis of split halves of the sample, the general weakness of statistically derived models is noted.

Statistical approaches to predicting risk have become increasingly popular among correctional officials. Statistically generated prediction actually is a probability statement regarding an offender. This allows community service agencies to rank order clients by risk to the community, permitting closer supervision. The General Accounting Office tested several recidivism models on three different populations, and found that about half were efficient at discriminating high and low risk groups for all three. Ford and Johnson (1977) validated one of the models and found it failed to adequately differentiate. The National Institute of Corrections commissioned a survey (Bohnstedt, et al., 1979) and documented a wide variety of risk screening approaches.

Due to lack of resources, administrators generally wish to concentrate resources on the most critical cases--those of high risk (Baird, et al., 1979). Wisconsin adopted a risk screening device to provide an objective indicator of the supervision required of cases (i.e., a workload based system). The system combines a number of elements into an overall model of community supervision: risk-needs assessment, management information system, programmed supervision classification, and workload accounting of caseloads. The National Institute of Corrections has undertaken a large project to implement this model nationwide; agencies have been asked to utilize an existing validated risk instrument. However, few agencies actually validate screening instruments, and many are adopting systems without critical analysis. The argument is that states cannot afford to develop their own models, and good instruments are transferrable among populations.

This validation study consisted of selecting a sample of 366 probation cases, reviewing files, and coding variables related to outcome, including items from the Wisconsin model. The validation technique was similar to that outlined by Gottfredson, et al. (1978). Three initial models were examined: 1) the original instrument with variables weighted; 2) the original instrument with variables not weighted, and 3) the original instrument with each variable changed to a dichotomy. The variables with high chi-square significance levels were put into a model in an additive fashion and stepwise multiple regression analysis was performed.

The relative strength of the relationship between each variable and the criterion variable was examined and some were found unrelated to the outcome measure. Additional variables, which were not used in the Wisconsin model, were collected. Probation officer's prognosis, living situation, and employment situation were found to be related to the outcome measure. A new instrument was constructed by selecting variables significantly related to the outcome measure. A "Salient Factor Score" was computed for each subject, using five different models. The ability of the instrument to distinguish between successful and unsuccessful probationers was marginally improved by dropping weights and reducing each variable to a dichotomy.

Why does a model that does so well in Wisconsin do so poorly for New York City probationers? The authors suggest that offender groups may be very different or that predictor methods are unstable as models and do not transfer. The authors split the sample into halves and performed additional regression analyses to determine if the weights and variables were significant for each subsample. Variables from the model were stable, even when dichotomies were used; however, models developed in one population do not necessarily transfer to other populations. Models themselves can be fairly unstable and variables in the screening device may result from statistical factors in the sample. Despite its poor performance as a predictor, the Wisconsin instrument performed reasonably well in the area of classification.

The authors suggest promoting the development of risk screening devices, yet organizations that select existing devices should validate the devices locally.