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# Supervision Strategies and Approaches for Female Parolees: Examining the Link Between Unmet Needs and Parolee Outcome

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*A number of parolees are returning to the community with programming needs that may not have been addressed during their incarceration; these unmet needs may subsequently affect their successful reintegration into the community. Although there is an increasing female parole population, there has been a paucity of research concerning female parolees. The current study examines the types of needs identified at intake from a sample of 546 female parolees. The results revealed the following. First, if a parolee was employed, had stable living arrangements, and was assessed as needing and receiving some type of drug and/or alcohol program intervention, she was less likely to fail on parole. Second, many of these women were underassessed for having needs for drug and alcohol treatment as well as employment, housing, and other assistance. This underassessment may be because of an increasing emphasis on parole supervision (i.e., custody) rather than treatment in parole agencies.*

**Keywords:** *female parolees; treatment; recidivism; parole; supervision*

Approximately 750,000 offenders were under parole supervision during 2003, with females composing about 13% of that total. Since 1995, the female parole population has been steadily increasing during the past decade, when it represented 10% of the overall parole population (Glaze & Palla, 2004). In 2002, the states of California, Texas, Pennsylvania, and New York

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supervised the largest number of parolees (Glaze, 2003). Many parolees, including females, are returning to the community with substantial needs that may subsequently affect their successful reintegration.

Female parolees, in particular, have a host of concerns and needs on their release from prison. First and foremost, finding secure and affordable housing is a cause of great distress for female parolees. Many women leave prison without any idea of where they will live or how they will pay for housing. Second, a significant number of female offenders were the primary caregivers of dependent children at the time of their arrest and incarceration. The eventual reuniting of female offenders with their children is an important step but one of many that they face to successfully reintegrate back into society. This reunification process can be both stressful and time consuming for women. Other significant needs for female parolees include having access to drug treatment, education, and job programs and mental and/or medical services. What is clear is that female parolees are faced with significant barriers to their successful reintegration into society. In addition to establishing a home, reuniting with their children, and accessing necessary programs and services, female parolees must also find a way to fulfill the conditions of their community supervision. At the same time, they must become financially independent and meet all of the expenses necessitated by their new life.

Despite the increasing female parole population and recent attention to the needs of female offenders, there has been a paucity of research concerning female parolees. Research on the female parolee population is important to gain insight into the needs of this population and the availability of gender-responsive approaches for addressing these needs. The current study examines a sample of female parolees from a western state, explores the types of needs identified at intake, and examines whether or not these same needs were addressed during the course of their community supervision. The main objective of the research is to determine if certain unmet needs are related to failure for females while under parole supervision.

## *WOMEN IN TRANSITION*

### *Housing*

A substantial number of women departing prisons need to locate safe and affordable housing in the community. This is especially evident because

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many women report being homeless during periods leading up to their incarceration (Richie, 2001). Some women at first may have to reside with an already overburdened family member or with a former or current partner. O'Brien's (2001a) qualitative study on female parolees from two Midwestern states found that offenders who were released from state facilities had difficulties establishing stable housing. Respondents had moved multiple times, each time depending on the temporary support of others until they could financially afford to establish their own housing. In interviews with female parolees, Richie (2001) found that the search for and maintenance of safe and affordable housing was a constant worry. Although there is a tremendous housing need for women leaving prison, very few programs exist to address this troublesome concern. This scenario is even more problematic given that many women cannot resume relationships with their children nor assume responsibility for them until stable housing is established (Kruttschnitt & Gartner, 2003).

### *Family Reunification*

One of the most significant concerns of women offenders is the care of and responsibility for their children. Some scholars have described imprisonment for women as having "collateral consequences or costs" (Dodge & Pogrebin, 2001; Kruttschnitt & Gartner, 2003) for them and their children. Incarcerated women have a considerable amount of anxiety while they are separated from their children during their incarceration, and this unease persists even after they leave prison (Kruttschnitt & Gartner, 2003). Women under correctional supervision compared to women in the general population are more likely to never have been married (Greenfeld & Snell, 1999). Almost two thirds of women in state prisons reported having at least one child under the age of 18 years (Mumola, 2000). Incarcerated women experience many barriers to maintaining relationships with their children. The children of imprisoned women have difficulty visiting their parent. Though 78% of female state inmates report having weekly contact with their children, only 24% of female state inmates report that this contact was through personal visits. A total of 54% of mothers incarcerated in state facilities never had a personal visit with their children during the time they were imprisoned (Mumola, 2000).

The children of incarcerated women also often experience emotional hardships associated with having a parent involved in the criminal justice system (Richie, 2001). The children of female state prisoners typically reside with a grandparent (52.9%), the other parent (28.0%), or some other relative (25.7%) during their mothers' incarceration (Mumola, 2000). Richie (2001)

found that many of the women she interviewed had lost at least one child to a child welfare agency. Regardless of whether or not children are reunited with their mothers once they are released from prison, the stress and anxiety of dealing with this issue can negatively affect the performance of female parolees while under community supervision. In fact, one study of female recidivists found that reestablishing relationships with their families was “the most difficult part of the reintegration process” (Harm & Phillips, 2001, p. 10).

Female parolees also attempt to reconnect with other family members. O’Brien (2001a) found that women in transition from prison felt it was important to repair and strengthen their relationships with their own mothers. According to O’Brien (2001a),

Ten of the 18 study participants described their relationships with their mothers as historically problematic, and sometimes abusive. Working out the difficulties in their relationships with their mothers contributed to the women’s sense of growth following incarceration, even if their mother was no longer living. For some women, regaining the ability to parent their children also depended on their mending their relationships. (p. 291)

Progress in establishing or reestablishing healthy relationships with family members is considered to be an important step in the successful transition for women from prison to the free world.

### *Education and Job Programs*

Research shows that the typical female offender is poorly educated and is likely to have limited job skills. In fact, female offenders compared with male offenders are significantly more likely to be unemployed at the time of their arrest (Greenfeld & Snell, 1999). Females are also more likely than males (30% vs. 8%) to be receiving welfare assistance at the time of their arrest (Greenfeld & Snell, 1999). Unfortunately very little programming is provided to women in prison to address these deficiencies. The absence of such programming results in thousands of women each year reentering our communities with unmet education and employment needs. Becoming financially self-sufficient is a critical need for female offenders. Without needed education and job skills programming, female parolees are at an increased risk of recidivating while under community supervision.

There is a tremendous variation in the types of programs provided to incarcerated women around the United States. In California, for example, vocational programs such as computer training, cosmetology, data processing, electronics, upholstery, auto body repair, welding, small engine repair, refrigeration and air conditioning, and mill and cabinet work are available to

female prisoners (California Department of Corrections, n.d.). In other states, however, the variety of programs is limited. In Oklahoma, vocational offerings are limited to janitorial services, horticultural services, and computer training (Brewster & Sharp, 2002). In many states, prisons ill prepare women for their reentry into the wider society and competitive job market. Tighter state budgets have forced many state prison systems to reduce the amount and variety of educational and vocational programs available to prison inmates, including those provided to females. Obtaining quality educational programming and marketable job skills while either incarcerated or once in the community is important for female offenders so that they are able to earn enough income to become self-sufficient and provide for their families. Female parolees must face an additional hurdle. Even if they are provided with needed job skills, they often face the stigma that all offenders face, which further impedes their ability to obtain meaningful employment (Eaton, 1993; O'Brien, 2001b).

### *Substance Abuse and Treatment*

The problem of drugs for women offenders has been well documented in the literature (Bush-Baskette, 2000; Inciardi, Lockwood, & Pottieger, 1993; Mahan, 1996; Maher & Curtis, 1995; Pettitway, 1997; Richie, 1996; Sterk, 1999). The pathway to the legal system for the typical female drug offender is a tragic one. In addition to her addiction problems, she has typically grown up in a family surrounded by chaos and conflict, experienced physical and sexual abuse, and even sought refuge on the streets turning to prostitution and drug use and other petty forms of crime. The war-on-drugs policies during the past several decades have had a dramatic effect on women, with the percent change in felony convictions for drug offenses for women (37%) being higher compared to the percent change for men (25%). Overall drug offenses increased by 27% between 1990 and 1996. The tremendous increase in the female incarcerated population is in large part because of U.S. drug control policies. Since 1990, the incarceration rate for females has increased 88%. Offending patterns for females have been changing, with violent and property offenses decreasing while drug and public-order offenses have been increasing (Greenfeld & Snell, 1999).

Data on state prisoners suggest that drug use may have more of a significant effect on females than on males. A greater percentage of women compared to men are likely to test positive for drugs such as cocaine and opiates at the time of their arrest (Vito & Tewksbury, 2000). For every indicator of drug use, incarcerated women reported a higher level of use than did incarcerated men (Greenfeld & Snell, 1999). This pattern holds as well for reported drug

use at the time of the offense. Compared to 32% of males, 40% of females indicated that they had used a drug at the time of their offense (Greenfeld & Snell, 1999). Despite the fact that an increasing number of offenders in state prisons are convicted of drug-related crimes and have addictions to illegal drugs, not enough treatment options are available to address the needs of these addicted offenders. Self-report data indicate that only 20% of addicted women and 14% of addicted men have received some type of treatment since their imprisonment (Greenfeld & Snell, 1999).

Differences in terms of drug use between men and women are evident for probationers and parolees as well. In their study on drug testing among probationers and parolees, Vito and Tewksbury (2000) found that females had more serious substance abuse problems and that these problems continued throughout their community supervision. At certain times during their supervision they were more likely to test positive for drugs than were their male counterparts. On further analysis, Vito and Tewksbury found that women experienced additional problems related to finding employment and adequate child care and turning to prostitution as a way to acquire certain types of drugs. The authors note the importance of delivering drug treatment programs that recognize these differences. Gender-responsive drug treatment programs are needed to address the motivations and reasons behind women's use of drugs. For example, one distinction widely recognized in the literature indicates that female offenders often turn to drugs as a way to self-medicate themselves to cope with the trauma of prior abuse (Chesney-Lind, 2000; Morash & Schram, 2002).

### *RECIDIVISM AND FEMALES UNDER COMMUNITY SUPERVISION*

Until recently, very little attention has been paid to prisoner reentry in this country. Petersilia (2001) notes, "We know very little about correlates of success and failure in the process of reintegration" (p. 360). Recidivism studies of females on community supervision are even more limited. Pearl's (1998) study found the use of social services in the community by female parolees was associated with lower recidivism. More specifically, Pearl found that the more community services were accessed by women, the longer the time was until their first recidivistic arraignment. Holtfreter, Reisig, and Morash (2004) examined the effect that state capital (i.e., state-sponsored programs and services) has on recidivism for female probationers and parolees. Their findings suggest that poor women were more likely than their counterparts to fail while on community supervision. They concluded that "community corrections officers should work with disadvantaged clients to secure available

state capital to address women's immediate, short-term economic needs, as well as hold them accountable for problematic behavior" (p. 202). Flavin (2004) suggests that in addition to social capital, families play a critical role in the reintegration of offenders into the community. In fact, the reintegration process, according to Flavin, ought to focus on the family as opposed to the individual person. Families can provide additional resources and are "very effective in providing support and interrupting negative sequences" (p. 211). This has particular significance to women who are on parole and who are attempting to reunify with their mothers and children.

The limited research on the female parolee population supports the notion that having access to a wide array of treatment programs and services is important during the reentry process. Given the crime control environment in which parole agencies are operating and the curtailment of budgets, it becomes increasingly important for researchers and policy makers to understand if some of these needs are more critical than others as they relate to reoffending or failure during the reentry process. The present study explores this issue and contributes to the current knowledge of the reentry process for female parolees. More specifically, we consider the relationship among no need, unmet need, and met need in several program areas and in parole outcomes. The success of women while on community supervision and desistance from further involvement with the legal system benefits themselves, their children, and the wider society.

## *METHOD*

### *Sample*

The data were obtained from the parole files of a western state. To allow for reasonable margins in analyses, a sufficiently large random sample from the general statewide parole population was needed. Because of time constraints, the need to have an outcome measure, and recent changes in parole policies (e.g., workload change, forthcoming policies on gangs), the preferred population for the study was parolees who had just completed their terms of parole or who had been terminated on parole within the period of November 1997 to February 1998. Pursuant to a request from parole division headquarters, all completed dead case files were retained by the parole units during the period of October 1997 through December 1997. Normally these files would have been destroyed 120 days after parole termination.

Four groups of parolees were of special interest to the general study: the general population, the sex offender population, the gang population, and the

female population.<sup>1</sup> Because the latter three groups represented relatively small proportions of the general population, a large sample was required to produce a sufficient number (at least 500) of analyzable cases in each subgroup. Even the general population was to be subanalyzed in keeping with the purpose of assessing whether there were subpopulations with differential predictabilities. Thus the case files were stratified into all four categories, and the three categories were disproportionately sampled.<sup>2</sup> The final random sample drew cases from all 121 parole units in the state, consisting of 4,047 parole files. This article reports on the 546 female parolees in the sample.

### *The Data Collection Instrument and Coding Process*

The data collection instrument was developed from various sources. First, variables were incorporated from a preliminary departmental study that correlated inmate information with return to prison. Second, items from McShane and Williams' (1998) review of research on classification variables and instruments used throughout the United States and Canada during the past 20 years were used. Third, items suggested through interviews with parole agents and parole administrators were included. Last, the project staff at parole headquarters suggested possible items.

All items were initially incorporated into a data collection instrument, and approaches to their measurement were refined during a period of 6 months. Of the original set of 500 items, a majority were eliminated for one or more of the following reasons: They were not applicable to the state's parole practices, there was a general lack of information, the information was deemed unreliable by parole supervisors, and/or the information in the closed case files used for the study was either unavailable or lacked enough detail for proper interpretation. These deleted variables were from those identified by parole agents or administrators or from those suggested by interview intensive classification procedures such as the Canadian Level of Supervision Index. All variables normally found in prison and parole databases were incorporated. This also included a substantial number of personal characteristics and case history events derived from the parolees' case files.

A final reduction of variables from the preliminary instrument took place in a training session for coders. As part of the training, coders (knowledgeable senior parole agents and supervisors) were asked to examine all items in closed case files for potential unavailability and difficulty in interpretation. Several closed case files were examined, and all items on the instrument were reviewed. This process led to the discarding of several more variables, including two of the variables deemed significant in the preliminary study. Those two variables, previous parole violations and inmate classification at

release from prison, were subsequently recaptured from a separate search of automated databases. A few more variables, such as an alternative measure of gang membership and special conditions of parole, were also added from those sources. The final instrument was created in a dynamic process that involved parole agents, project staff, research staff, and parole administrators.<sup>3</sup>

Two versions of the final instrument were constructed: a paper instrument and a computer program. The paper version was used for approximately the first month of coding and in those instances where the coders were not at the coding sites. The computerized version was used during the last 2 months of coding.

Coders were all senior parole agents or supervisors with years of experience in reading parolee files. Each coder underwent 1 week of training on the data collection instrument and received a detailed codebook. Once the coders had begun work, instructions were given that all interpretational problems should be discussed among the group, and after a collective solution was achieved, the coding interpretation would be documented in the codebooks. A final task in the week of training was the completion of a coding reliability form. The form contained seven items that, on the basis of previous discussion, were deemed most likely to cause interpretational problems. A total of 11 people (eight coders, one alternate coder, and two project members who also did the coding) completed the reliability form. Results were that 3 of the 77 possible codes were divergent, for an overall reliability coefficient of .96. In addition, at the end of the 3 months of coding, all coders were debriefed and coding was discussed. Any divergences were either incorporated into the definitions of the variables or, where possible, were recoded to meet the original coding requirements.

Of particular relevance to the current study, in terms of assessing need, there were two methods to determine parolees' needs. First, the closed case files indicated that the supervising parole agent identified a need. Second, in the absence of a so-called paper-identified need, the coder could identify a need based on the documents in the case file. The coders worked with each other, discussed questionable assessments, and made collective decisions regarding how to code the parolees' needs.

### *Variables*

The criterion variable, success on parole, was measured as either *fail* (reincarcerated as a result of a new crime or technical violation) or *succeed* (no documented new crimes or technical violations that resulted in reincarceration) for a period of 12 months following release. There are various defi-

nitions of recidivism; in this vein, the literature has recognized the associated problems with these definitions. The authors acknowledge that measuring failure in terms of reincarceration is a conservative approach. The main purpose of conducting the initial study, however, was because of the state legislature's focus on reducing occupied bed space in prison. Thus the original study measured parole outcome using this definition, and the authors of the current study have implemented the same outcome measure. We also note that the definitions of *success* and *failure* used in the current study match those used by the Bureau of Justice Statistics' two national studies on recidivism of released prisoners (Beck & Shipley, 1997; Langan & Levin, 2002).

The independent variables for this study fall into two general categories. The first category of variables was selected based on suggestions from previous research and experienced parole agents as factors that are related to parole outcome. These variables include racial/ethnic background, marital status, age at release, commitment offense, and number of prior arrests. The second category of variables was selected as indicators of parolees' needs on release. There were initially five variables in this group. The first two variables, parolee's living arrangements are unstable and parolee frequently unemployed during the 12-month period, were coded as *yes* or *no*.

The remaining variables were computed to summarize the general types of interventions: drug and alcohol, mental and physical health, and employment, housing, and other assistance (see Appendix A). For each intervention group, an unmet need variable was computed. This was done using the following coding process. If the parolee was assessed as having a need at release, it was coded 2; if the parolee was not assessed as having a need, it was coded 0. Next, if the parolee received this intervention, it was coded 1. If she did not receive this need, it was coded 0. For each individual intervention, a new variable was created and designated as either no need, met need, or unmet need. This new variable was calculated by subtracting the received variable from the need variable. If the parolee did not need the intervention, it was coded 0 (i.e., no need for that specific intervention). If the parolee did receive the intervention, it was coded 1 (i.e., a met need for that specific intervention). If the parolee was assessed as having a need but did not receive the intervention, the variable was coded 2 (i.e., an unmet need for that specific intervention).

Next, the summary variables were computed by adding the specific interventions (no need, met need, unmet need). For instance, the summary variable, drug and alcohol interventions, was computed by adding each intervention associated with this group (i.e., Narcotics Anonymous, Alcoholics Anonymous, Antabuse, methadone, parole outpatient clinic, residential drug treatment, outpatient drug treatment, residential alcohol treatment, and out-

patient alcohol treatment). For the summary variables, a 0 denotes that the parolee was not assessed as needing these interventions, a 1 denotes that the parolee did receive the needed interventions, and a 2 denotes that she did not receive these needed interventions.

Two major changes were implemented after calculating the intervention variables. First, the mental and physical interventions group was omitted because of the small number of parolees being assessed as needing this type of programming.<sup>4</sup> Second, the data collection instrument listed antinarcotic testing as an intervention. It is our contention, however, that antinarcotic testing is more of an attempt of the community supervision agency to monitor and control drug use rather than treat or address the addiction problem. Thus this item was not included in the summary variable, drug and alcohol interventions. Rather this item was designated as a separate variable with the same coding as the summary variables (i.e., no need, met need, unmet need).

## RESULTS

In reference to parole outcome, approximately two thirds of the women (65.2%) failed after the first year of release (see Table 1). Table 1 also provides a summary of those variables that have been suggested as being related to parole outcome (i.e., racial/ethnic background, marital status, age at release, commitment offense, and number of prior arrests). These variables have been recoded for subsequent analyses. More than 50% of the women were non-White, and slightly more than 40% were White. More than three fourths of the women were not married (76.2%) and were 30 years or older at release (78.0%). A total of 70.0% were incarcerated for a drug offense, and more than half had between 4 and 14 prior arrests (58.4%).

Table 1 also includes results on the parolees' living arrangements and employment during their release and whether their needs were met in the areas of antinarcotic testing, drugs and alcohol, and employment. Approximately 35% reported unstable living arrangements, and almost two thirds of the women were frequently unemployed during the first year after their release. In reference to drug and/or alcohol treatment needs, 38% ( $n = 206$ ) of female parolees were assessed as having a need in this area. Of those female parolees identified as needing some type of drug and/or alcohol treatment, only 48% ( $n = 98$ ) received some type of treatment to address their need by the end of the follow-up period. Interestingly, 80% ( $n = 439$ ) of the female parolees were reported to require antinarcotic testing, and of those women, 90% were tested at least once during the 12-month follow-up period.

**TABLE 1: Summary Background Information**

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Parole Outcome</i>	
	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Succeed (coded 0)	182	33.3
Failure (coded 1)	356	65.2
Missing	8	1.5
Race		
Non-White (coded 0)	296	54.2
White (coded 1)	227	41.6
Missing	23	4.2
Marital status		
Not married (coded 0)	416	76.2
Married (coded 1)	91	16.7
Missing	39	7.1
Age at release		
Younger than 30 (coded 0)	110	20.1
30 and older (coded 1)	426	78.0
Missing	10	1.8
Commitment offense		
Non drug (coded 0)	164	30.0
Drug (coded 1)	382	70.0
Prior arrests		
0 to 3 (coded 0)	109	20.0
4 to 14 (coded 1)	319	58.4
More than 14 (coded 2)	118	21.6
Parolee's living arrangements		
Stable (coded 0)	326	59.7
Unstable (coded 1)	195	35.7
Missing	25	4.6
Parolee frequently unemployed during first year		
No (coded 0)	142	26.0
Yes (coded 1)	350	64.1
Missing	54	9.9
Antinarcotic testing		
No need (coded 0)	107	19.6
Met need (coded 1)	395	72.3
Unmet need (coded 2)	44	8.1
Drug and alcohol needs		
No need (coded 0)	340	62.3
Met need (coded 1)	98	17.9
Unmet need (coded 2)	108	19.8
Employment needs		
No need (coded 0)	392	71.8
Met need (coded 1)	65	11.9
Unmet need (coded 2)	89	16.3

This is likely representative of the fact that many women were given drug testing as part of their conditions by the parole board and because community corrections agencies tend to be risk averse and devote much of their energies and resources to the control and surveillance aspect of their mission. Drug testing represents one of the ways in which correctional staff can monitor and enforce conditions for drug-related offenders and those with a history of addiction problems. These descriptive results also suggest that 42% of the female parolees assessed as needing drug testing were not assessed as needing any type of drug treatment.

Overall, 28% ( $n = 154$ ) of female parolees were assessed as having at least one employment, housing, or other assistance need. Of those female parolees identified as having a need, only 42% ( $n = 65$ ) had at least one of their needs addressed prior to their release from parole supervision. Again the assessment for services in this area seems to represent an underassessment of needs that are often commonplace among the female offender population. As described earlier, each of the need areas represents an aggregate of several individual measures involving drug and alcohol treatment, employment and housing assistance, and other needs.

A binary logistic model was used in the current study to examine the effects of both background characteristics and unmet programming needs on parole outcome.<sup>5</sup> Prior to developing the logistic model, diagnostic procedures were performed to test for collinearity. Logistic regression procedures do not permit the calculation of tolerance statistics and variance inflation factors (Famega, 2003). One suggested approach to detect collinearity is to run the same model in linear regression (Menard, 1995). The collinearity diagnostics revealed tolerance statistics ranging from 0.85 to 0.96, all within acceptable limits. The variance inflation factors, the reciprocal of tolerance, revealed ranges from 1.05 to 1.18. These are also within acceptable limits (Chatterjee & Price, 1991; Stine, 1995).

The results from the binary logistic regression are presented in Table 2. The overall model was significant ( $\chi^2 = 158.65$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and explained approximately 45% of the variation in parole outcome (failure = 1, success = 0). Of the background variables, only one had a significant effect on parole outcome: number of prior arrests. Women with fewer prior arrests (i.e., 0-3 prior arrests) were more likely to succeed on parole compared to women with more than 14 prior arrests ( $B = -1.421$ ,  $p < .001$ ). There were three programming strategies that had significant influences on parole outcome. Those women with unstable living arrangements were more likely to fail on parole compared to those women with stable living arrangements ( $B = 2.393$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

**TABLE 2: Logistic Regression Analysis**

<i>Variable</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Wald</i>	<i>Exp (B)</i>
Married	0.449	.359	1.561	1.567
White	-0.209	.276	0.574	0.811
Age of release (older than 30)	-0.085	.354	0.058	0.810
Drug offense	-0.004	.302	0.000	0.990
Prior arrests				
0 to 3	-1.421	.450	9.966	0.241**
4 to 14	-0.487	.382	1.625	0.614
More than 14	—	—	—	—
Unstable living arrangements	2.393	.418	32.796	10.947**
Unemployment	1.253	.287	19.076	3.500**
Antinarcotic testing				
No need	-0.931	.613	2.306	0.394
Need met	0.251	.556	0.204	1.285
Need unmet	—	—	—	—
Drugs or alcohol needs				
No need	-0.993	.457	4.718	0.370*
Need met	-0.312	.558	0.313	0.732
Need unmet	—	—	—	—
Employment needs				
No need	-0.152	.401	0.144	0.859
Need met	-0.491	.546	0.808	0.612
Need unmet	—	—	—	—
Constant	1.058	.895	1.397	2.881
Nagelkerke $R^2$	.448			
$\chi^2$ for the model	158.65**			

Note:  $n = 413$ .

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .001$ .

In terms of odds ratio, those women with unstable housing during their parole supervision increased their odds of failure by almost 995%.<sup>6</sup> Women who were frequently unemployed during the 12-month study period were more likely to fail while on parole supervision ( $B = 1.253$ ,  $p < .001$ ). In terms of odds ratio, women who experienced frequent unemployment during their supervision increased their odds of failure by 250%. Among the unmet needs variables, women who were assessed as not needing some type of drug and/or alcohol program intervention were more likely to succeed on parole compared to those women whose needs were unmet ( $B = -0.993$ ,  $p < .05$ ). In terms of odds ratio, women who had unmet drug or alcohol needs increased their odds of failure by 63%. Of the four significant independent measures, unstable housing had the largest effect ( $Wald = 32.796$ ), followed by frequent unemployment ( $Wald = 19.076$ ), fewer prior arrests ( $Wald = 9.966$ ), and unmet drug or alcohol needs ( $Wald = 4.718$ ).

*DISCUSSION*

There is a growing number of women who are being incarcerated, and as a result, an increasing number of women are being placed on parole. Given this increasing population, however, there is a paucity of research on these women. This study attempted to provide additional insight regarding women on parole. The current research focused on various factors considered by scholars to be related to parole outcome.

The important contribution of the current study was twofold. First, the study allowed us to examine how program or service needs were assessed by parole officers and whether or not the identified needs were addressed prior to the end of 12-month follow-up period. For example, women were assessed concerning drug treatment needs by parole agents at the beginning of their supervision. Women could be assessed as having more than one drug treatment need. As the research indicates, many women who are incarcerated have addiction problems and face possible relapse once released into the community on parole. Based on the findings from the assessment made by parole officers, a lower than expected number of women ( $n = 206$ , 38%) were assessed as having at least one drug treatment need. Also of considerable concern is the fact that approximately half of those identified as having a substance abuse need ( $n = 108$ , 52%) did not receive any type of treatment prior to the end of the 12-month follow-up period.

On the other hand, a sizable number of female parolees ( $n = 439$ , 80%) were reported to require antinarcotic testing. Given the low assessment of drug needs compared to what is known about female offenders in the literature and the high rate of women being assessed as needing drug testing and also being tested, it is likely that the orientation of this particular parole agency is similar to many others that place a priority and an emphasis on the crime control and surveillance parts of their mission as opposed to the treatment and advocacy parts.

Underassessment also appeared to be a problem with identifying needs for employment, housing, and other assistance. Again the literature on female offenders suggests that they tend to be underemployed or unemployed at the time of their arrests and that many lack the necessary job skills to obtain employment that allows them to be self-sufficient and to provide for their families. Among the various employment, housing, and other assistance interventions, only 28% ( $n = 154$ ) of female parolees were assessed as having at least one need in these areas. Of those female parolees identified as having a need, 58% ( $n = 89$ ) did not have any of their needs addressed in one or any of these areas prior to the end of the 12-month supervision period.

The results from the descriptive analysis on program interventions and the creation of the no need, unmet need, and met need variables provides insight into the likely orientation of the parole agency from which the data were collected. Given the consistent underassessment of women across all programmatic areas compared to the available literature on what is known about female offenders, it is apparent that this agency subscribes to an orientation that places more priority on the control, surveillance, and enforcement aspects of its mission compared to the treatment and advocacy aspects. This is consistent with the shift from the rehabilitation model to the crime control model that began in the 1970s and also with the emergence of intermediate sanctions that developed in response to prison overcrowding and whose main focus has been to ensure community safety and low recidivism through control tactics, surveillance, and close enforcement of conditions. Parole supervision has shifted away from its historic roots that blended both rehabilitation and surveillance to supervision that involves mostly monitoring and control (Petersilia, 2003). One ethnographic study of parole practices in California found that a significant amount of resources, both monetary and staff energies, were targeting the improvement of risk prediction capabilities and surveillance technology that would allow fewer staff-to-parolee individual interactions, culminating in a "drive toward optimal danger management" (Lynch, 1998, p. 851).

Second, the study considered the extent to which unmet program needs compared to no needs or met needs influenced the failure to complete parole supervision for female offenders during the 12-month supervision period. The results suggest that women who were consistently unemployed during the 12-month study period were more likely to fail while on parole during the study period. Having unstable living arrangements for female parolees appears to have a substantial effect on their reentry success. Female parolees who experienced unstable living arrangements were also significantly more likely to fail on parole. In fact, their odds of failure increased by 995% if they experienced unstable housing during the follow-up period. This finding is of particular interest not only because it represents the strongest predictor of parole outcome but also because so few women were assessed as needing housing assistance (17 needing housing or shelter and 6 needing a halfway house placement). Finally, female parolees who were identified as having a need for substance abuse treatment but who went unaddressed compared to those who had no need were significantly more likely to be successful during the follow-up period. Surprisingly, there were no significant differences found between those female parolees who had their drug and/or alcohol treatment needs met and those female parolees who did not have their drug and/or alcohol treatment needs met.

Although these findings provide an additional understanding of the assessment process for female parolees and those factors related to their failure on parole, there are some limitations related to the nature of the data used. First, the data only reflect whether these women were assessed for some need and whether or not the need was addressed through some type of treatment or service. These data do not, however, necessarily reflect whether or not the treatment or services provided to address the needs of female parolees were effective or were gender-responsive programming. This might explain why there were no significant differences found between the need met and the need unmet groups for the drugs or alcohol needs and employment needs variables. Future research should focus on this issue of gender-responsive programming in community corrections and the extent to which it is related to parole outcomes. Second, these data do not contain information concerning the children of female parolees; therefore, the study was unable to consider what effect, if any, reunification with dependent children might have on parole outcome.

Our unwillingness to put more of an emphasis on parole supervision has been a costly mistake from the standpoint of many. At the beginning of reentry, offenders exhibit a "strong desire to succeed" (Petersilia, 2001, p. 361). The parole system of today appears ill equipped to respond to this strong desire on the part of parolees. Parole agencies around the country have had their budgets cut, have increased caseloads, and have limited rehabilitation programs and services for those under community supervision.

The limited resources of parole agencies are spent on addressing community safety concerns and focusing on controlling the behavior and movement of offenders rather than on parole services. For example, California has few services available to address the multitude of needs of its many parolees. According to Petersilia (2003), limited shelter beds exist for the estimated 10,000 homeless parolees, only four mental health clinics exist to treat 18,000 people in need of care, and 750 beds in drug treatment programs exist for 85,000 drug and alcohol addicts. Conditions for California parolees often include drug testing but rarely involve placement in substance abuse treatment programs (Petersilia, 2003). The changing nature of the corrections system, including parole, has placed a considerable amount of strain on the reentry process for ex-offenders. Many offenders have had limited exposure and opportunities to participate in programs while incarcerated, and this situation changes very little once they return to the community on parole supervision. The importance of the reentry process cannot be overstated because of the likely consequences for the offenders themselves, their families, and the communities in which they reside (Petersilia, 2003).

The current study focused on the relationship among parole outcome and the agency orientation, the assessment process, and the extent to which key areas of treatment or services were addressed during community supervision. Female offenders have numerous programmatic and treatment needs that may or may not be associated with their criminality. The current findings were able to highlight several of these needs that, if not addressed, were associated with those women who were reincarcerated because of committing either technical violations or new crimes while under parole supervision. Further research is needed to examine the assessment process and whether there are other critical areas that should be prioritized by community corrections agencies in other jurisdictions to enhance the successful reentry of women on parole supervision.

#### Appendix A Program Interventions

<i>Type of Program Intervention</i>	<i>Parolee Need at Release</i>	<i>Parolee Received at Release</i>
<b>Drugs and alcohol</b>		
Narcotics Anonymous	89	41
Alcoholics Anonymous	16	13
Antabuse	0	0
Methadone	9	8
Parole outpatient clinic	48	43
Residential drug treatment	82	35
Outpatient drug treatment	77	36
Residential alcohol treatment	2	1
Outpatient alcohol treatment	8	5
<b>Mental and physical health</b>		
State hospital	1	1
Psychiatric return	0	0
Marriage counseling	0	0
Family counseling	2	2
Domestic violence counseling	1	0
Other counseling	10	10
Psychiatric or medication	15	14
VA hospital	0	0
Clinic health services	6	7
AIDS services	4	5
Disability services	2	5
<b>Employment, housing, and other Assistance</b>		
Employment Development Department	83	34
Social Security Insurance	25	26
Job placement	27	8
Financial aid	5	4

*(continued)*

<i>Type of Program Intervention</i>	<i>Parolee Need at Release</i>	<i>Parolee Received at Release</i>
Vocational training	39	7
Update skills	5	3
GED	2	1
Housing or shelter	17	15
Halfway housing placement	6	6
Meals	0	0
Transportation	7	7

Note: Women could be assessed as having more than one need.

Appendix B  
Multinomial Logit Model

	<i>No Offense (1) Versus New Crime (0)</i>		<i>Technical Violation (1) Versus New Crime (0)</i>	
	B	Exp(B)	B	Exp(B)
Married	-0.529	0.589	-0.370	0.691
White	0.280	1.323	0.291	1.338
Age of release (older than 30)	0.221	1.247	0.662	1.938
Drug offense	0.095	1.099	0.364	1.439
Prior arrests				
0 to 3	1.409	4.090**	-0.047	0.954
4 to 14	0.500	1.649	0.033	1.033
More than 14	—	—	—	—
Unstable living arrangements	2.067	7.905***	-1.141	0.319***
Unemployed	-1.323	0.266***	-0.337	0.714
Antinarcoctic testing				
No need	1.067	2.907	0.442	1.556
Need met	-0.471	0.625	-0.834	0.434
Need unmet	—	—	—	—
Drugs or alcohol needs				
No need	0.968	2.632*	-0.063	0.938
Need met	0.086	1.090	-1.119	0.327*
Need unmet	—	—	—	—
Employment needs				
No need	0.261	1.298	0.744	2.105
Need met	0.512	1.669	0.272	1.312

(continued)

	<i>No Offense (1) Versus New Crime (0)</i>		<i>Technical Violation (1) Versus New Crime (0)</i>	
	B	Exp(B)	B	Exp(B)
Need unmet	—	—	—	—
Log-likelihood	533.705			
$\chi^2$	201.884			
Pseudo $R^2$	0.443			

Note:  $n = 413$ .

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

## NOTES

1. The purpose of the original study was to validate a group of predictors for parolee success and to develop a classification instrument based on those predictors.

2. To accomplish the sample, a disproportionate, stratified (systematic), random sample from each of the parole units was drawn. The numbers of cases per unit are as follows: 20 cases from the general population, 5 cases from the sex offender population, 10 cases from the gang member population, and 5 cases from the female population. Because some parole units did not have enough closed cases to meet the subsample size criteria, the average number of cases per unit was less than 40.

3. The final instrument contained more than 350 variables representing the following general areas: personal characteristics of the parolee, needs and risk scores from existing instruments, commitment offense information, prior offense and commitment information, drug history, mental health and medication history, victim information, parole processing data, items representing the inmate's progress during the parole term, dates of all events, event processing decisions, reassessment data, parole agent contacts, conditions of parole, gang data and assessment, violation (if any) information, family criminal or drug history, employability, financial support information, residence data, and treatment intervention information.

4. Although the current study could not consider the effect of unmet mental and medical treatment needs on parole outcomes, these programmatic needs are widely recognized in the literature on female offenders as being important to this population. Previous research suggests that women in state and federal prison facilities are much more likely to be identified as having a mental illness compared to men and are more likely to receive some form of treatment or services for mental illnesses (Ditton, 1999). Women also require gender-responsive medical care that provides prenatal care and gynecological services (Greenfeld & Snell, 1999). The inattention to basic medical needs and preventive services can result in the development of more serious health care problems, and when women are released on parole, these problems and the responsibility for addressing these medical needs are simply displaced to the community arena (Acoca, 1998).

5. Originally the authors intended to use multinomial logistic regression to incorporate the three possible parole supervision outcomes (i.e., new crime, technical violation, no offense or violation). However when the multinomial logistic regression model was conducted, only two independent variables were significant predictors of whether a parolee committed a new crime or technical violation. These significant predictors were unstable living arrangements and whether a parolee's drugs or alcohol needs were met (see Appendix B). As a result, the authors used the binary logistic regression (i.e., fail or succeed outcome variable) as the most appropriate form of analysis for the current study.

6. The odds ratio was calculated by taking  $1.00 - \text{Exp}(B) \times 100$ .

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