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NEW YORK STATE
MARIO M. CUOMO, GOVERNOR

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES
Thomas A. Coughlin III
Commissioner

**SHOCK INCARCERATION PROGRAM
FOLLOW-UP STUDY
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OFFICE OF INMATE MOVEMENT
AND INFORMATION
Chester H. Clark, Assistant Commissioner

Prepared by:
David W. Aziz, Ph.D.
Paul H. Korotkin
Donald G. Macdonald

NCJRS

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ACQUISITIONS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study reports on Shock graduates and comparison groups of first releases from the Department of Correctional Services (DOCS) custody who entered parole supervision between March 1988 and December 1989. These individuals were tracked for returns to DOCS custody through calendar year 1990. This follow-up report is the fourth in a series of studies on the Shock incarceration program in New York State.

Consistent with our overall evaluation plan developed in 1988, this report introduces a new comparison group to the series. They are inmates who voluntarily entered the Shock program, but who failed to complete the program for a variety of reasons ranging from volunteering out to being removed for disciplinary reasons.

Within the first 12 months of their release, 15.2 percent of the Shock graduates returned to DOCS custody. For "pre-Shock" releases, 19.1 percent returned within 12 months, while the "considered for Shock" group returned at a rate of 23.4 percent and 24.6 percent of the "removed from Shock" group returned within the first year.

Using an 18 month exposure of risk to return criteria, 29.9 percent of the Shock graduates returned to DOCS compared to 34.2 percent of the "pre-Shock" group, 38.3 percent of the "considered for Shock" group and 39.8 percent of the "removed from Shock group".

When applying a 24 month period of exposure in the community criteria, the Shock graduates returned to DOCS custody in 44.1 percent of the cases, "pre-Shock" releases returned 44.8 percent of the time, the "considered for Shock" group showed a 47.5 percent return rate, and the "removed from Shock" group returned to DOCS 58.8 percent of the time.

A consistent theme emerging from the analysis of the return rates of Shock graduates is that despite being incarcerated for shorter periods of time these graduates appear to be returning at a lower or similar rate to comparable groups of inmates.

This shorter incarceration period has resulted in a savings to DOCS which was estimated at just under \$150 million as of January 31, 1991.

FOLLOW-UP STUDY OF SHOCK GRADUATES

BACKGROUND. The Division of Program Planning, Research and Evaluation of DOCS has been examining the return rates of inmates released from custody for many years. As part of the Department follow-up of inmates who participated in a variety of treatment programs, this report examines the return rates of Shock graduates who have been released to Parole for at least one year. This measure of recidivism has been used to evaluate the success of a number of DOCS programs such as ASAT and Network and is being used to evaluate the Shock Incarceration Program.

Program Description. New York State's Shock Incarceration Program was established by enabling Legislation in July 1987. The Legislative initiative allowed the New York State DOCS to create a special six-month rigorous, multi-treatment Program for select young offenders. The program emphasizes discipline, substance abuse education and treatment, with group and individual counseling, as well as academic education, all within a military structure. The Legislature placed restrictions on the age, offense type, time to parole eligibility and prior prison sentences of inmates who would be eligible for this program. The program is voluntary and inmates who participate can reduce their minimum period of incarceration by as much as 30 months. When inmates successfully complete their imprisonment in Shock Incarceration, they are eligible for release to intensive parole supervision.

Program Objective. As stated in the 1991 Report to the Legislature, the goals of New York State's Shock Program were twofold. The first goal was to reduce the demand for bedspace. The second goal was to treat and release specially selected state prisoners earlier than their court mandated minimum periods of incarceration without compromising the community protection rights of the citizenry.

This report continues the Department's examination of the ability of the program to meet the second of these two goals.

In both May and September of 1989 and in August of 1990, the Department issued follow-up studies of Shock Incarceration graduates. These reports indicated that despite being incarcerated for shorter periods of time, Shock graduates did not return more frequently to DOCS custody when compared to a similar group of inmates who served at least their minimum sentence.

Follow-Up Procedure. It is the Department's standard policy that a minimum follow-up period of 12 months be required for a valid analysis based on return rates.

This study reports on the return to custody status for Shock graduates released between March 1988 and December 1989 as of December 1990. This insures that there have been at least 12 months of follow-up for each graduate.

During the period March 1988 through December 1989, there were 1,286 Shock graduates.

COMPARISON GROUPS. In order to assess the return rates for these Shock graduates, a key issue was the selection of appropriate comparison groups.

In developing the overall research plan in 1988 for this ongoing series of follow-up studies it was our intention to find comparison groups consisting of 1) inmates whose legal and demographic characteristics would have made them eligible for the program even though they did not attend as well as 2) inmates who were admitted into the program and failed to complete it. In a sense, we wanted to focus on the effect that this unique incarceration and parole experience has had on Shock graduates in comparison to inmates who appeared to be similar upon their reception to DOCS custody, yet who did not complete Shock. Thus, it was important to limit, as much as possible, the amount of variation between these groups to only their prison and parole experience.

Pre-Shock Comparison Group. In the first two follow-up reports, only one comparison group was available. It consisted of inmates who were incarcerated prior to the existence of the Shock Program and whose characteristics would have made them legally eligible for program participation. The inmates in the pre-Shock comparison group were selected by ensuring their comparability to the Shock graduates. As stated earlier, the period of this study included inmates who had been released between March 1988 and December 1989. During that period, the eligibility for Shock admission criteria was altered to include inmates who had not yet reached 26 years of age. This change in criteria affected the inmates released between December 1988 and December 1989 and is reflected in the comparison groups used in this study. Women first graduated from the Shock program in June 1989. Therefore, release cohorts for the comparison group from June through December 1989 also included women. (Although the upper age limit for Shock eligibility increased to include inmates who had not yet reached age 30, Shock graduates meeting this criteria did not get released until January 1990 and were not a factor in this particular report.)

Additionally, the inmates in the "pre-Shock" comparison group had all completed their minimum sentences and were released from DOCS custody as a result of a parole board hearing or were conditionally released during the study period.

Like the Shock graduates, the inmates in the "pre-Shock" comparison group were convicted of non-violent, Shock eligible crimes, who at the time of their admission were required to serve between 6 and 36 months before parole eligibility, whose most serious prior sentence did not include prison incarceration for a non-youthful offender crime, and who were not classified at admission as maximum security inmates.

Eligible Inmates "Considered" for Shock But Not Sent. The next logical comparison group consisted of legally eligible inmates who were sentenced to DOCS custody after July 13, 1987 (the start date for Shock eligibility), who were screened for Shock participation, and who did not enter the Shock Program. This comparison group was introduced in the August 1990 Follow-up report when a sufficient number of these cases became available for follow-up purposes.

Shock Removals. This follow-up report introduces a new comparison group, composed of inmates who entered the Shock program, did not complete the six months and were subsequently released to parole supervision from non-Shock facilities. We are calling this group "removed from Shock." We are now able to add this comparison group because an adequate number of these inmates have been released for follow-up purposes.

For this report there were 1,252 inmates in the "pre-Shock" group; 1,200 in the group "considered" for Shock; and 264 in the "removed from Shock" group. All inmates in these four groups were released between March 1988 and December 1989.

Return Rates Controlled For Time at Risk. To control for length of exposure to the streets, Table 1 shows the return rates for inmates with 12 months exposure, 18 months of exposure and 24 months of exposure. The 12 month exposure analysis reviews the experience of all the inmates in the study, however, only returns to DOCS that occurred within the first 12 months after release are considered. The 18 month exposure analysis examines inmates released between March 1988 and June 1989 who were returned to DOCS within 18 months of their release. The 24 month exposure analysis focuses on inmates released between March 1988 and December 1988 who were returned to DOCS within 24 months of their release.

Table 1 shows that among the inmates in the 12 month exposure group, Shock graduates were the least likely to return to custody, while the Shock removals were the most likely to return. A chi-square analysis of the differences between the return rates of Shock graduates and the three comparison groups was statistically significant to the .10 level in all cases.

An examination of the 18 month exposure group shows that Shock graduates were also the least likely to return to custody while inmates removed from Shock were the most likely to return. A chi-square analysis of the differences between the return rates of Shock graduates and the three comparison groups was not determined to be statistically significant to the .10 level and could have occurred by chance alone.

An examination of the 24 month exposure group shows that Shock graduates were again the least likely to return to custody while inmates removed from Shock were still the most likely to return. A chi-square analysis of the differences between the return rates of Shock graduates and the three comparison groups was not determined to be statistically significant to the .10 level and could have occurred by chance alone.

The analysis of return to custody data indicates that Shock graduates are coming back to DOCS custody less frequently than inmates in any of the three comparison groups. This was also true when the returns were disaggregated into parole violators and commitments for new crimes. Additionally, at all three exposure periods the inmates "removed" from Shock returned to DOCS most frequently. Yet, the differences between Shock graduates and the comparison groups only reached significance in the 12 month analysis.

It is important to note that return rates are based upon the number of study group members returned to DOCS' custody within the study period, either as new commitments or parole violators. Parolees may be discharged from Parole supervision at different times throughout the follow-up period. Shock parolees have the potential to spend more time under supervision before discharge as a result of their earlier release, and therefore their time at risk for return as a parole violator will be greater than that of comparison group parolees. However, all study group members are at risk to return as new commitments throughout the entire follow-up period, although the return may occur following their discharge from parole supervision.

LENGTH OF INCARCERATION. Table 2 shows that, on average, the inmates in all three comparison groups served significantly more time under DOCS custody than did the Shock graduates. On the low end the inmates "considered" for Shock spent four more months incarcerated than their Shock counterparts while on the high side the "pre-Shock" inmates spent 12 more months in prison. Information on length of incarceration is important because any differences between the return rates for these comparison groups and Shock graduates must be viewed in the context that positive results for Shock graduates can be achieved even though they have been incarcerated for shorter periods of time.

CONCLUSION- A consistent theme emerging from this fourth examination of the return to custody rates for Shock graduates, shows that despite being incarcerated for shorter periods of time, the Shock graduates appear to be returning at a rate similar to a carefully selected, comparable groups of inmates.

The implications of these findings are important when considering that because Shock graduates spend less time incarcerated, the cost of housing them in a Shock facility is substantially less than the cost of housing them until the expiration of their minimum sentence in either a Camp or Medium security prison. As of January 31, 1991, the estimated cost savings and cost avoidance for the Department has been estimated to be \$149,025,979.

The findings of this analysis appear to be consistent with the goals of Shock and the conclusions presented in last year's report to the Legislature, which stated:

The Shock Incarceration Program has been able to achieve its Legislative mandate of treating and releasing specially selected state prisoners earlier than their court determined minimum period of incarceration, without compromising the community protection rights of the citizenry.

FUTURE RESEARCH. Since the evaluation of the Shock program is an ongoing process there are some future components that will be introduced in order to further understand the program's effectiveness. In future reports there will be at least three enhancements made to the analysis. The first refinement addresses the need to analyze the return to custody data for more specific portions of the comparison groups. For example it will be possible to disaggregate the "considered" group into those

who refused Shock as well as those who were denied access to the program. It will also be possible to disaggregate the Shock "removals" into those who leave voluntarily, those who leave for disciplinary reasons, and those who are removed for unsatisfactory program adjustment.

As stated earlier in this paper, Shock releases have the potential to spend more time under parole supervision than the inmates in the comparison groups because of their shorter period of incarceration in DOCS custody. The second enhancement involves working with the Division of Parole to establish the length of time releasees actually spent at risk of being returned to DOCS custody as a technical violator. This information will then be used as an additional control for our future follow-ups.

The third expansion involves the examination of the length of stay upon DOCS reincarceration for inmates in the study to provide a more accurate assessment of our cost savings and cost avoidance calculations. This planned modification is mentioned here because the study groups will be the basis for the calculations and because we have linked the issues of returns to custody, length of incarceration and cost savings to the Department.

TABLE 1

RETURN RATES FOR SHOCK GRADUATES AND THE COMPARISON GROUPS
CONTROLLING FOR TIME OF EXPOSURE TO PAROLE SUPERVISION

	MARCH 1988 - DECEMBER 1988				JANUARY 1989 - JUNE 1989				JULY 1989 - DECEMBER 1989				TOTALS			
	SHOCK GRADS	PRE SHOCK	CONSIDERED	REMOVED	SHOCK GRADS	PRE SHOCK	CONSIDERED	REMOVED	SHOCK GRADS	PRE SHOCK	CONSIDERED	REMOVED	SHOCK GRADS	PRE SHOCK	CONSIDERED	REMOVED
	12 MONTH EXPOSURE				12 MONTH EXPOSURE				12 MONTH EXPOSURE				12 MONTH EXPOSURE			
NUMBER OF CASES	433	632	223	34	359	344	350	84	494	277	618	148	1286	1253	1200	264
ALL RETURNS PERCENT	77 17.0%	128 19.9%	44 19.7%	5 14.7%	55 15.3%	64 18.6%	87 24.2%	20 23.8%	63 12.8%	49 17.7%	150 24.3%	40 27.4%	195 15.2%	239 19.1%	281 23.4%	85 24.6%
NEW CRIMES PERCENT	30 6.9%	44 7.0%	22 9.9%	3 8.8%	24 6.7%	29 8.4%	31 8.6%	11 13.1%	35 7.1%	25 9.0%	67 10.8%	18 12.3%	89 6.9%	98 7.8%	120 10.0%	32 12.1%
RPV'S PERCENT	47 10.8%	82 13.0%	22 9.9%	2 5.9%	31 8.6%	35 10.2%	56 15.6%	9 10.7%	28 5.7%	24 8.7%	83 13.4%	22 15.1%	106 8.2%	141 11.3%	181 13.4%	33 12.5%
	18 MONTH EXPOSURE				18 MONTH EXPOSURE								18 MONTH EXPOSURE			
NUMBER OF CASES	433	632	223	34	359	344	359	84	This group of releases has not yet had 18 months exposure to Parole Supervision as of December 31, 1990				792	978	582	118
ALL RETURNS PERCENT	142 32.8%	218 34.5%	85 38.1%	17 50.0%	95 26.5%	116 33.7%	138 38.4%	30 35.7%					237 29.9%	334 34.2%	223 38.3%	47 39.8%
NEW CRIMES PERCENT	55 12.7%	83 13.1%	38 17.0%	8 23.5%	43 12.0%	56 16.3%	50 13.9%	15 17.9%					98 12.4%	139 14.2%	88 15.1%	23 19.5%
RPV'S PERCENT	87 20.1%	135 21.4%	47 21.1%	9 28.5%	52 14.5%	80 17.4%	88 24.5%	15 17.9%					139 17.6%	195 20.0%	135 23.2%	24 20.3%
	24 MONTH EXPOSURE												24 MONTH EXPOSURE			
NUMBER OF CASES	433	632	223	34	This group of releases has not yet had 24 months exposure to Parole Supervision as of December 31, 1990				This group of releases has not yet had 24 months exposure to Parole Supervision as of December 31, 1990				433	632	223	34
ALL RETURNS PERCENT	178 41.1%	283 44.8%	108 47.5%	20 58.8%									178 41.1%	283 44.8%	108 47.5%	20 58.8%
NEW CRIMES PERCENT	70 16.2%	112 17.7%	48 21.5%	9 26.5%									70 16.2%	112 17.7%	48 21.5%	9 26.5%
RPV'S PERCENT	108 24.9%	171 27.1%	58 26.0%	11 32.4%									108 24.9%	171 27.1%	58 26.0%	11 32.4%

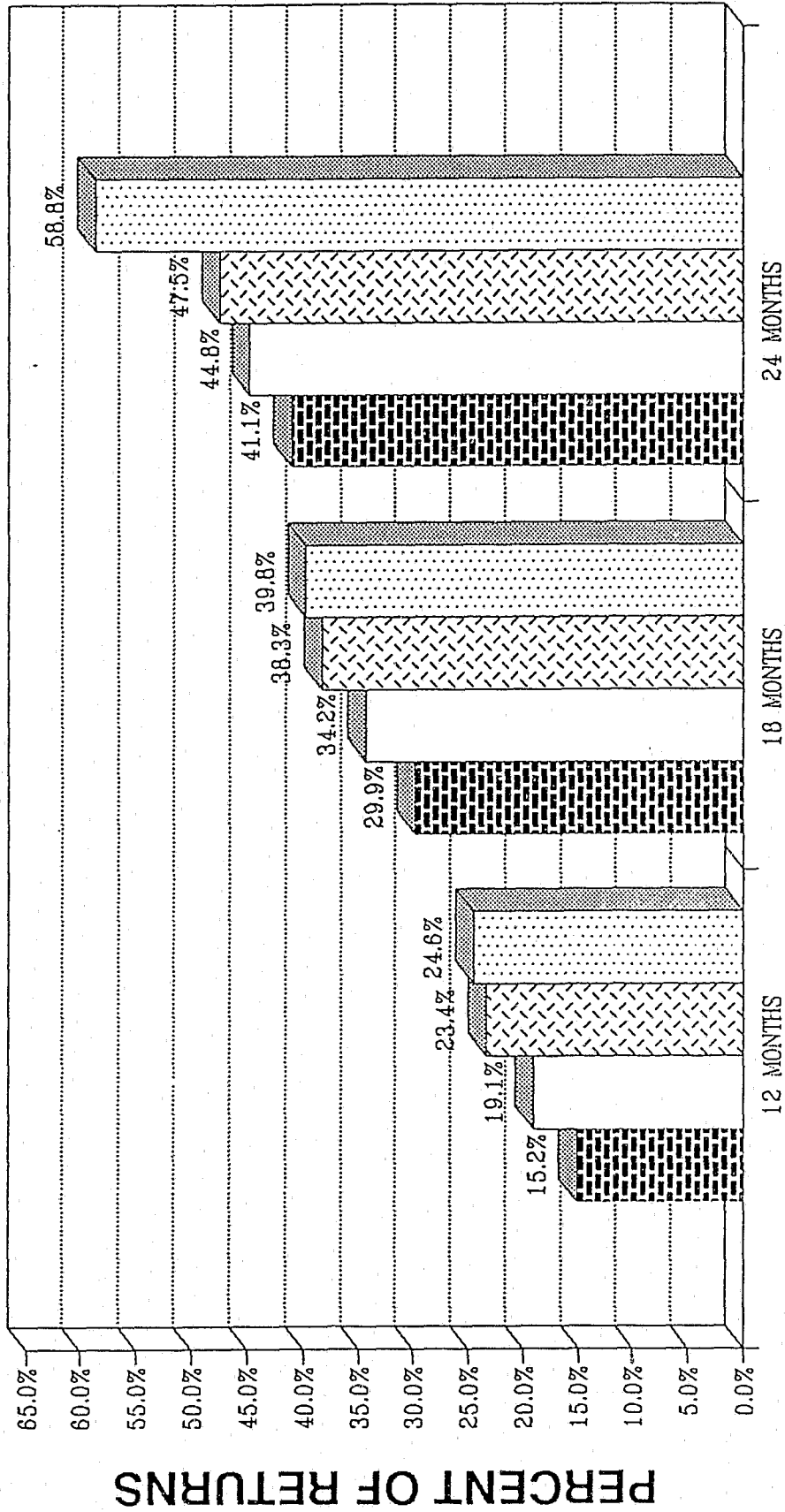
TABLE 2

MONTHS INCARCERATED IN DOCS FACILITIES FROM RECEPTION TO RELEASE

SHOCK	NUMBER	1,286
	AVERAGE MOS.	8.2
PRE-SHOCK	NUMBER	1,253
	AVERAGE MOS.	20.3
CONSIDERED	NUMBER	1,200
	AVERAGE MOS.	12.4
REMOVALS	NUMBER	264
	AVERAGE MOS.	14.4

RETURN RATES FOR SHOCK GRADUATES AND COMPARISON GROUPS: MAR 1988 TO DEC 1990

RELEASES AND RETURNS OCCURRING BETWEEN MARCH 1988 AND DECEMBER 1990

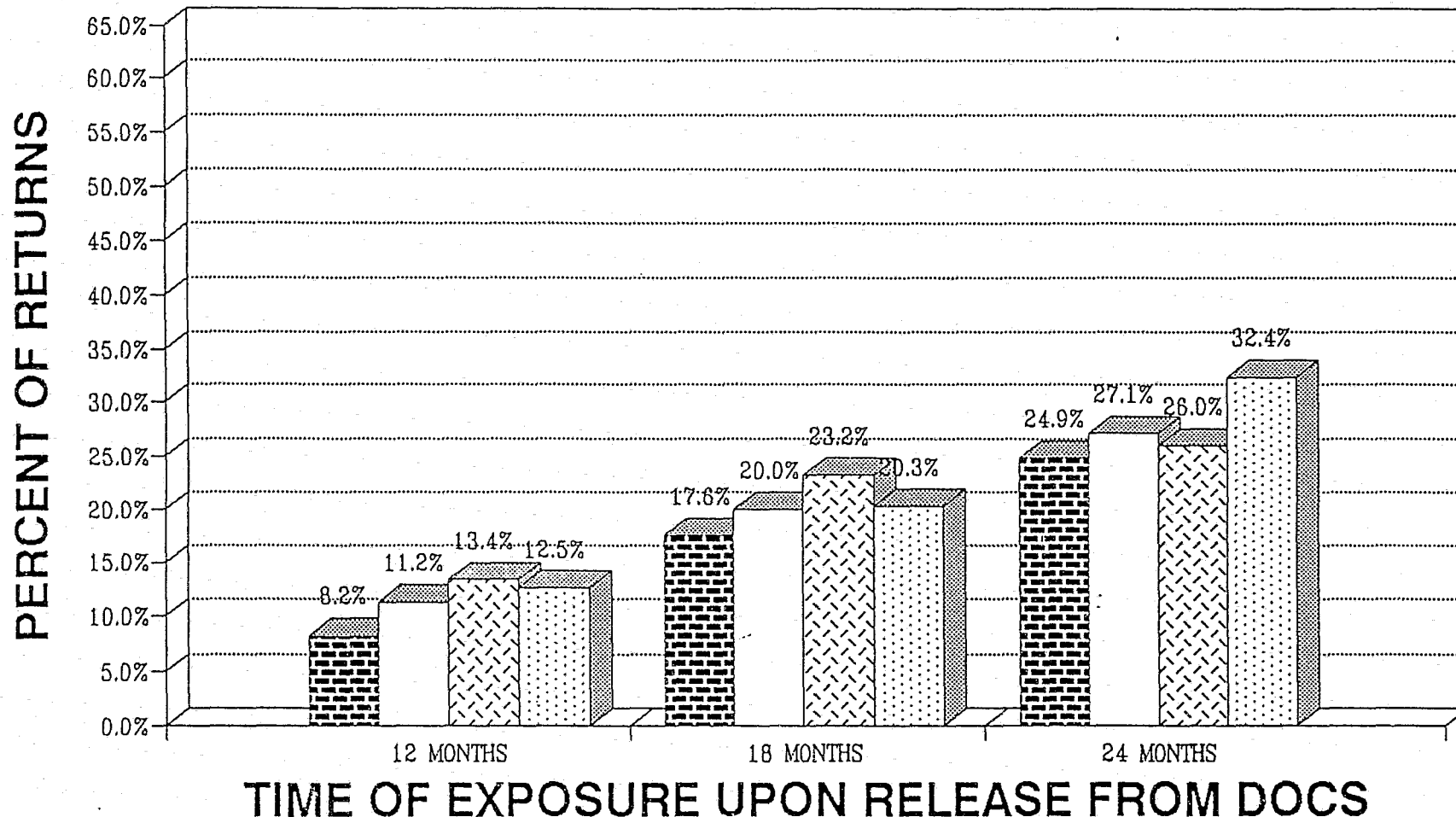


TIME OF EXPOSURE UPON RELEASE FROM DOCS

GRADUATES
 PRESHOCK
 REMOVED

RETURN RATES FOR SHOCK GRADUATES AND COMPARISON GROUPS: MAR 1988 TO DEC 1990

RELEASES AND RETURNS OCCURRING BETWEEN MARCH 1988 AND DECEMBER 1990

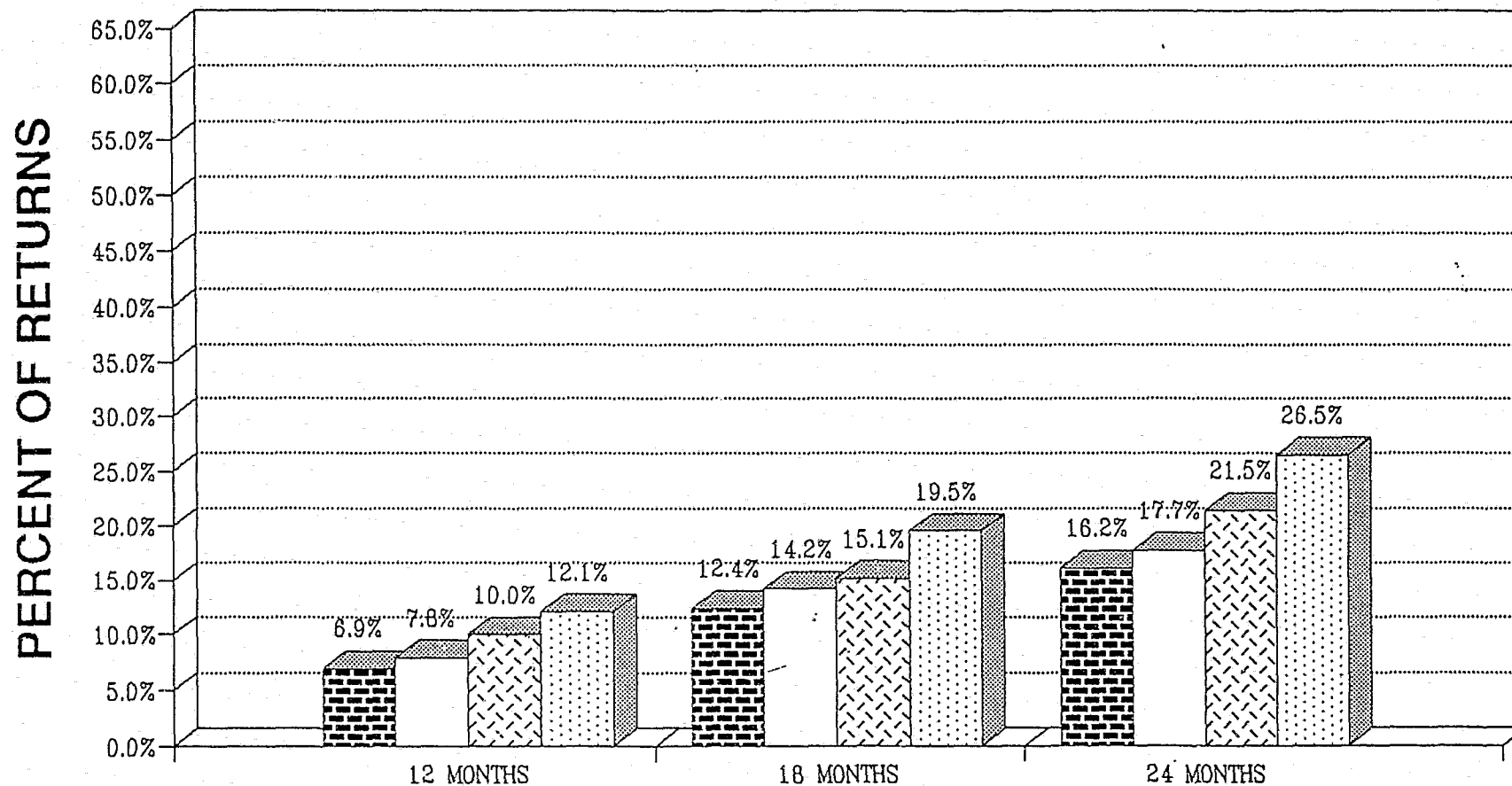


RPV'S ONLY

GRADUATES
 PRESHOCK
 CONSIDERED
 REMOVED

RETURN RATES FOR SHOCK GRADUATES AND COMPARISON GROUPS: MAR 1988 TO DEC 1990

RELEASES AND RETURNS OCCURRING BETWEEN MARCH 1988 AND DECEMBER 1990



TIME OF EXPOSURE UPON RELEASE FROM DOCS

NEW CRIMES ONLY

