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INITIAL FOLLOW-UP STUDY OF SHOCK GRADUATES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As part of our ongoing effort to monitor the Shock Incarceration Program, this report examines the return rate of Shock graduates who have been on parole for at least one year in contrast to the return rate of a comparison group of inmates who were released to the community at the same time.

This initial report, in a planned series, examined the return rates of the 86 Shock graduates released in March and April 1988 as contrasted to a comparison group of 151 similar offenders released in these two months. There was **no statistically significant difference between the return rates of these two groups** although the Shock graduates served considerably shorter periods of incarceration. The Shock graduates served an average of less than eight months in prison as compared to nearly 15 months for the comparison group. These findings are illustrated by the graphics on the following page.

While this initial analysis is based upon the limited number of Shock graduates who have been in the community for a year or more, the findings appear to be consistent with the conclusions presented in the 1989 report to the Legislature on Shock Incarceration. The report stated that "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."

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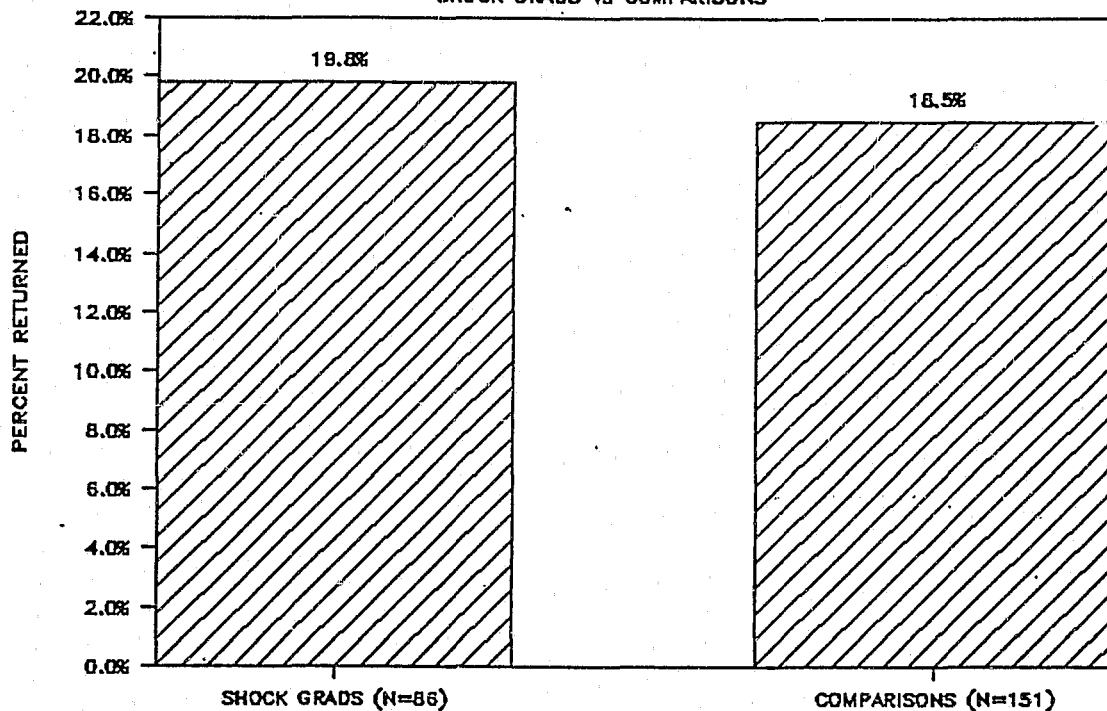
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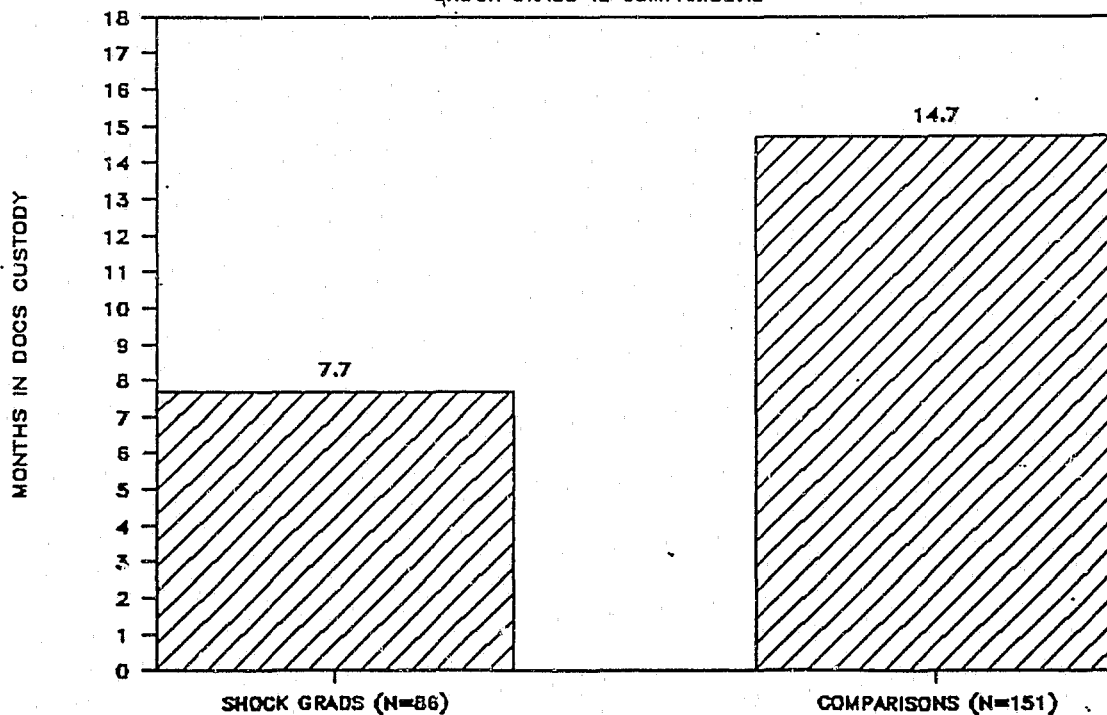
RETURN RATES

SHOCK GRADS vs COMPARISONS



MONTHS IN PRISON

SHOCK GRADS vs COMPARISONS



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 will be 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 New York State Department of Correctional Services (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.

Once an inmate successfully completes their imprisonment in Shock Incarceration, they are eligible for release to intensive parole supervision.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVE. The 1989 report to the Legislature on Shock Incarceration indicated that despite being incarcerated for shorter periods of time, Shock graduates were expected to do as well under community supervision as similar groups 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 is required for a valid analysis based on return rates. For this reason, a cut-off for release from Department custody of April 30, 1988 was set to insure a follow-up period of at least 12 months as of April 30, 1989.

As such, the Shock graduates released in March 1988 were tracked for 13 months as of April 30, 1989, and the April graduates for 12 months.

In those two months, a total of 86 inmates graduated from the Monterey Shock Incarceration Correctional Facility (SICF) and were released to intensive parole supervision caseloads throughout the State.

In order to complete an assessment of the return rates for these Shock graduates, one key issue which needed to be resolved was the selection of an adequate comparison group.

COMPARISON GROUP. The comparison group developed for this analysis was comprised of inmates who were released from DOCS prisons in March and April 1988, who did not go through the Shock Program, and who would have been legally eligible for the program.

Furthermore, the comparison group consisted of inmates who had completed their minimum sentences and were released as a result of a parole board hearing. Like the Shock inmates, they too were inmates convicted of non-violent, Shock-eligible offenses, whose age at admission was less than 24 years old (the age limit when these first three platoons were selected for participation), whose time to parole eligibility at admission was between 6 and 36 months, whose most serious prior sentence was not prison incarceration for a non-youthful offender crime, and whose security classification at admission was not at the maximum level.

Since women were not considered eligible at the time these first three platoons were selected, they were not included in the comparison group.

According to Table 1, of inmates released in March 1988, 23 graduated from Monterey SICF. Of inmates released in April 1988, 63 graduated from Monterey SICF. When the selection criteria were applied to the March and April non-Shock releases, we produced comparison groups of 83 and 68 inmates, respectively.

TABLE 1
SUMMARY TABLE OF MARCH-APRIL 1988 RELEASES
SHOCK GRADUATES AND COMPARISON GROUPS

	<u>MARCH 1988</u>	<u>APRIL 1988</u>
Shock Releases	23	63
Comparison Group	83	68

Table 2 presents the return rates for the Shock graduates and the Shock similar comparison group using the standard tracking process for calculating rates of return to DOCS custody.

TABLE 2
RETURNS FOR SHOCK GRADUATES AND COMPARISON GROUPS
THROUGH APRIL 30, 1989

	<u>MARCH 1988</u>	<u>APRIL 1988</u>	<u>COMBINED</u>
SHOCK GRADUATES	23	63	86
Percent Returns	13.0%	22.2%	19.8%
New Crime	2	4	6
Parole Violation	<u>1</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u>
Total Returns	3	14	17
COMPARISONS	83	68	151
Percent Returns	13.3%	25.0%	18.5%
New Crime	8	9	17
Parole Violation	<u>3</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>11</u>
Total Returns	11	17	28

An alternate way of presenting these findings was by the calculation of expected returns among the Shock graduates based upon the actual returns from the comparison group. The results presented in Table 3 show that there was little difference in the actual and expected number of Shock graduates being returned to DOCS custody. This method of analyzing the data was presented because it is better able to handle problems when the size of the graduating group varies from the size of the comparison group.

TABLE 3
EXPECTED RETURNS FOR SHOCK GRADUATES BASED UPON RETURNS
FROM THE COMPARISON GROUPS

	<u>MARCH 1988</u>	<u>APRIL 1988</u>	<u>COMBINED</u>
PERCENT RETURNS			
Comparison Groups	13.3%	25.0%	
Shock Graduates	<u>x 23</u>	<u>x 63</u>	
Expected Shock Returns	3.06	+ 15.75	= 18.81
Actual Shock Returns	3.00	+ 14.00	= 17.00

No Significant Difference in Return Rates. Tables 2 and 3 show that the return rates for the March and April 1988 Shock graduates and the comparison groups were very similar. In fact, there was no statistically significant difference between the return rates of these two groups when calculated by either of these two methods.

Shorter Length of Incarceration for Shock Graduates. Table 4 shows that on average the comparison groups served twice as much time in prison as did the three platoons of Shock graduates. This was also true for those who returned to DOCS custody. These findings are consistent with the 1989 report to the Legislature on Shock which indicated that despite being incarcerated for shorter periods of time, Shock graduates were expected to do as well under community supervision as similar groups of inmates who had served at least their minimum sentence.

**TABLE 4
LENGTH OF DOCS INCARCERATION
FOR GRADUATES AND COMPARISON GROUPS**

	<u>SHOCK GRADUATES</u>	<u>COMPARISON GROUPS</u>
Number of Inmates	86	151
Average Months in Prison	7.7	14.7
	<u>SHOCK RETURNS</u>	<u>COMPARISON RETURNS</u>
Number of Inmates	17	28
Average Months in Prison	7.7	15.3

CONCLUSION. The implications of these findings are important when considering the findings in the 1989 report to the Legislature that because Shock graduates spend less time incarcerated, the cost of housing them in a Shock facility was substantially less than the cost of housing them up until the expiration of their minimum sentence in either a camp or a medium security prison.

While this initial analysis is based upon the limited number of Shock graduates who have been in the community for a year or more, the findings appear to be consistent with the conclusions presented in the 1989 report to the Legislature on Shock Incarceration. The report stated that "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."

This issue of the return rate of Shock graduates as compared to similar offenders who serve longer periods will be monitored on an ongoing basis. The results of this continuing research will be presented in a planned series of follow-up reports.