Interpersonal inmate violence in French prisons: results of the Tartare survey

A. Miras - G. Encrenaz – B. Contrand – S. Pujos
C. Galera – G. Michel - E. Lagarde

Inserm U 897 – Equipe PPCT - Bordeaux (France)
BACKGROUND
In France, the prison population is increasing steadily (number / 100,000 inhabitants):

- 91.8 in 2005
- 104.1 in 2008
- France is 16th /27 in Europe.
- (Slovenia = 65.6 ; Leetonia = 291)

The number of prison beds is 55,000 for about 62,252 prisoners (2009) in 193 centers (24,341 prison staff).
Background (2)

- Average density is 125 % with peaks over 200 % (n=6) and 340 % in New Caledonia.

- The percentage of inmates awaiting trial is 25.6 % in 2010 (34.9 in 2005).
According to prisoners and staff, prison is:

- a violent place for 85%
- a dangerous place for 59% of staff and 67% of prisoners

Between 2000 and 2008:

- Reported incidents increased (+155%)
- Assault against staff increased (+20%)
Different types of violences

- Physical (self or hetero)
- Psychological
- Racket
- Sexual assault
- Robbery, vandalism
OBJECTIVES
Objectives

- 1/ To identify individual and environmental factors associated with violence in prison

- 2/ To compile results to propose innovative prevention strategies
POPULATION AND METHODS
Population and Methods

Population

• All male inmates in jail (awaiting trial or misdemeanants) (Bordeaux, France)

• About 800 inmates are incarcerated in this jail and the occupation rate is almost 200 %
Population and Methods

Data Collection

- Inmates were face-to-face interviewed by a trained psychologist or a medical doctor

- Interviews were carried out in the parlours

- They lasted between one and two hours

- From May to October 2009
1. **Socio-demographic variables**

   age, matrimonial status, educational level, housing ownership and country of birth

2. **Imprisonment and imprisonment conditions**

   Sentence, charges for the imprisonment, living conditions in the prison and in the cell: noise, smell, brightness, privacy, hygiene, friends in the prison, work and other activities

3. **Suicidal behaviours**

   Suicidal ideation

   Suicide attempts

   Lifetime and during imprisonment
Population and Methods

Questionnaire (2)

- **4. Impulsivness**
  the Barratt Impulsivness Scale

- **5. Psychopathology**
  Hyperactivity and attention deficit
  Anxiety and depression
  Antisocial personality

- **6. Mental health** services utilization during imprisonment

- **7. Violence act** (victim or perpetrator)
  Frequency and types of sustained and perpetrated violences

The Adult Behavior Checklist (ABCL)
Inmates proposals

- **Separate** Inmates (disabled, long sentence …) 33 %
- More walk and activities 27 %
- More sport 20 %
- Reduce the inmate number per cell 19 %
- More work 17 %
RESULTS
Results (1)

- **N = 375 prisoners**
  - Sentenced prisoners: 195 (52 %)
  - Awaiting trial: 180 (48 %)

- **Age:** average 36 years [18-78]
Results

- **Victim of Violence**: 
  During last 12 months 
  \[ n = 164 \rightarrow 45\% \]

- **Perpetrator of violence**: 
  During last 12 months 
  \[ n = 50 \rightarrow 14\% \]
Results

12 months

Victim of violences

- Psychological violence: 73%
- Physical violence: 51%
- Racket: 23%
- Sexual assault: 5%
- Vandalism: 5%

Perpetrator of violences

- Psychological violence: 74%
- Physical violence: 38%
- Racket: 10%
- Sexual assault: 0.0%
- Vandalism: 20%

Inserm U 897 – Equipe PPCT - Bordeaux (France)
Factors associated with physical violence (sustained or perpetrated)

Perpetrated violences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>OR</th>
<th>95 CI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age [18-25]</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>[1.9 – 10.7]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug abuser</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>[1.7 – 8.9]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentence &gt; 2 y</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>[1.1 – 8.4]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indoor sport</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>[1.1 – 6.3]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reported tolerated temperature</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>[1.0 – 5.9]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School activities</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>[1.0 – 6.0]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Factors associated with physical violence (sustained or perpetrated)

### Sustained Violence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>OR</th>
<th>95% CI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Suicide attempt</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>[2.1 – 11.1]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated or divorced</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>[1.2 – 7.3]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxious / depressed</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>[1.3 – 5.4]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perpetrators</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>[1.0 – 5.3]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleep disorders</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>[1.1 – 3.7]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indoor sport</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>[1.0 – 3.2]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than two friends</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>[0.2 – 0.9]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Factors not associated with physical violences

- Charge
- Leaving not alone in the cell
- Number of children
- Education
- Physical characteristics (weight, height, muscles …)
- Antisocial personality
- Hyperactivity,
- Living conditions (parlors, hygiene, lack of privacy, noise …)

Inserm U 897 – Equipe PPCT - Bordeaux (France)
DISCUSSION
Discussion

- Interview conducted in only one type of prison with:
  - Inmates awaiting for trial (all kind of charges)
  - Inmates sentenced to less than one year
  - Prisoners serving long sentences but in their last year

- Good consistency between the prisoner’s reports and the prison administration data (ground for incarceration, length of imprisonment, disciplinary penalties, …)

- Being charged of sexual assault is not associated with perpetrated or sustained violence, due to preventative measures to separate them from other inmates.
Discussion

- Inmates with depressive and anxiety disorders, sleep disorders, with history of suicide attempts, separated or divorced and those who are engaged in violent behaviors, are more likely to be a violence victim and deserve attention.

- Youngest inmate (under 25), drug users and those sentenced to more than two years, should be particularly watched, as potential perpetrator.

- Social support (friends within the prison) is protective.