DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
ARA POUTAMA AOTEAROA

Beating the odds: Desistance pathways for psychopathic offenders based on long term follow-up studies in New Zealand

Nick J Wilson, PhD
National Advisor, Psychological Research
Department of Corrections
New Zealand

Who are we?

Brief NZ Background

- Pop. 4,418,435
- One police force/prison system, high crime clearance rates, and one computer system to rule all since 1975!
- Maori, indigenous people are 14.6% of general population
- BUT Maori 50.7 % of prison pop (n = 4,318) with 74% rated high risk offenders (70%+ risk reimprisonment over 5 years)
- NZ imprisonment rate is 199 per 100,00 (Norway only 71!) we are a dark society!

Facts (cont)

- 20 prisons holding 8,510 sentenced offenders
  - 94% male,
  - 40% for violent offences,
  - 22% sexual
  - 18% dishonesty
  - 11% drug
- Approximately 50% of those released or paroled do not return to prison within four years
- 42,424 offenders on Community Probation sentences and orders, 2,308 on parole.
- Crime rate falling, but low tolerance for offending by community (and Government!)

NZ PCL:SV Research (2000)

- Designed to validate PCL assessment as part of risk prediction for New Zealand offenders?

- At prompting of National Parole Board

- Used PCL:SV due to accumulating evidence of ability of PCL:SV to predict violence (Skeem & Mulvey, 2001; Webster, Douglas, Eaves, & Hart, 1997)

- Did not want to get into issues of diagnosis SV was a better 'fit' for NZ Justice system information sources.

30/11/2011

Method

- Research study June 1999-June 2000
- 200 offenders sentenced 7 plus yrs selected from database of 722 released by Parole Board 1985-1995.
- Trained researchers score PCL:SV's from comprehensive file information up until date release
- High interrater reliability r= .89
- Replicated validation two factor structure (Hart et al.,1995).
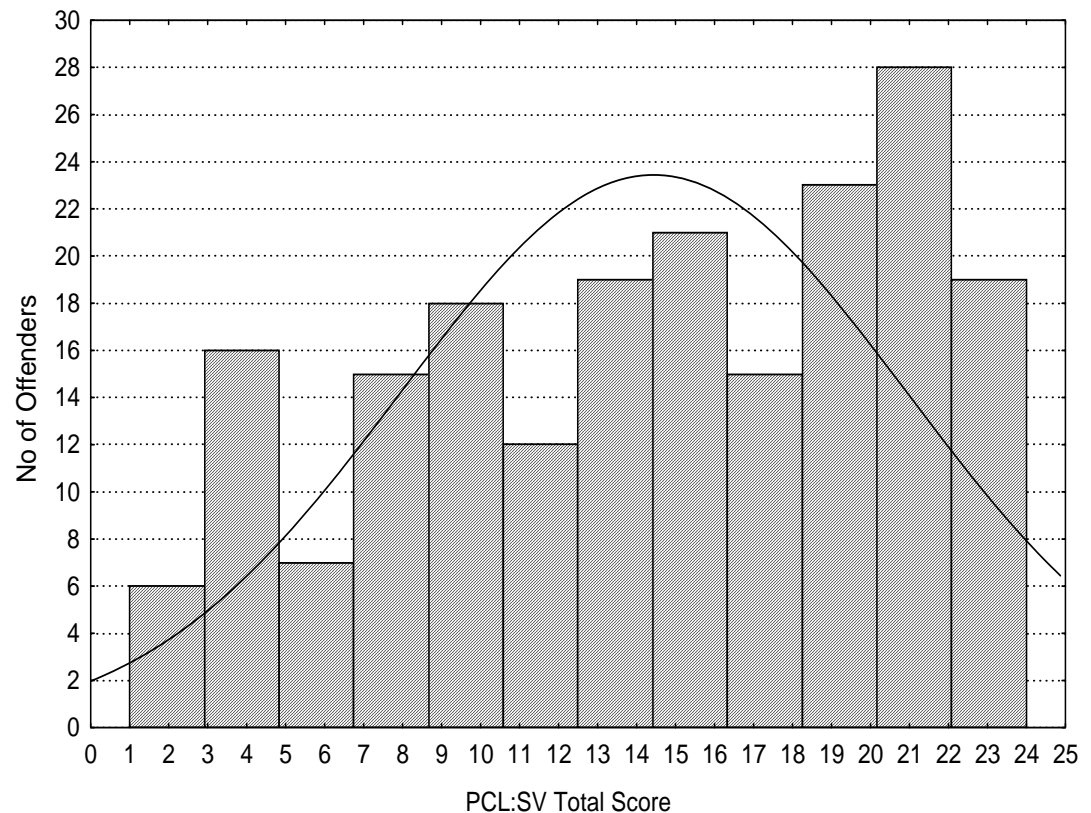
Results: Descriptive

- Mean age of 46, range 32-81
- 48% Maori, 45% European, 7% Other
- Index offences 86.5% violence:
    - 33% of these for murder,
    - 27% rapists
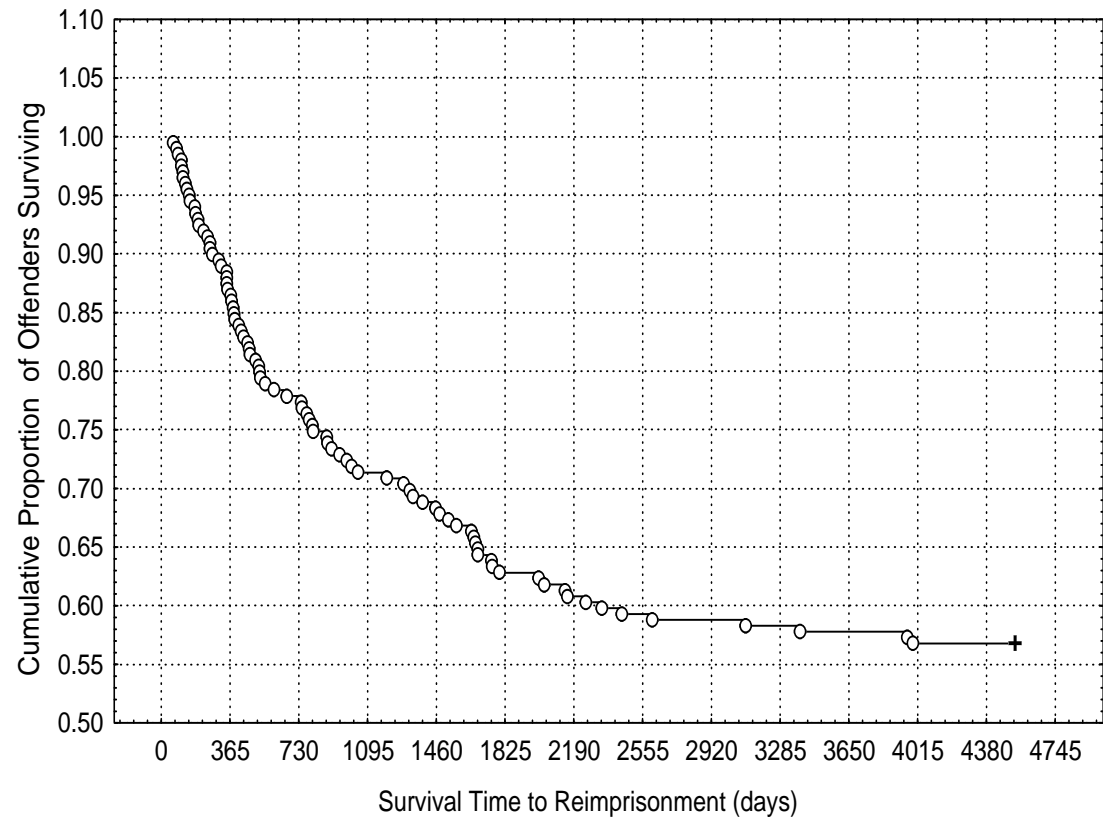   - 24% robbery and serious injury assault
    - 4.5% CSO

Distribution of PCL:SV Scores

- Skewed towards high scores

- 34% scored ≥ 18

- Total $M = 14.44$

- Factor 1 mean slightly lower than Factor 2 as per validation sample

Reimprisonment: Survival Analysis

- 38% reimprisoned over five years post release
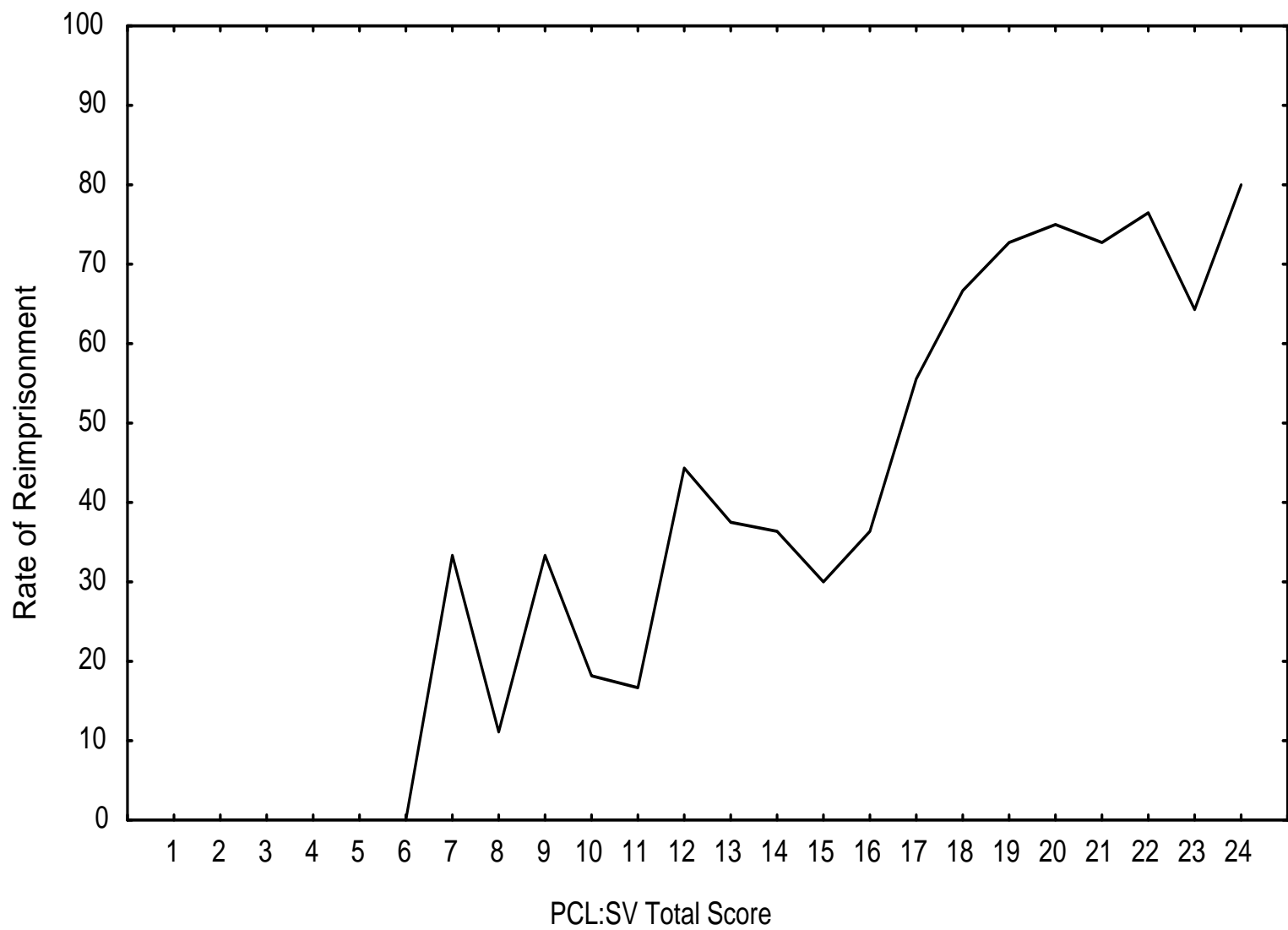- PCL:SV good at predicting reimprison
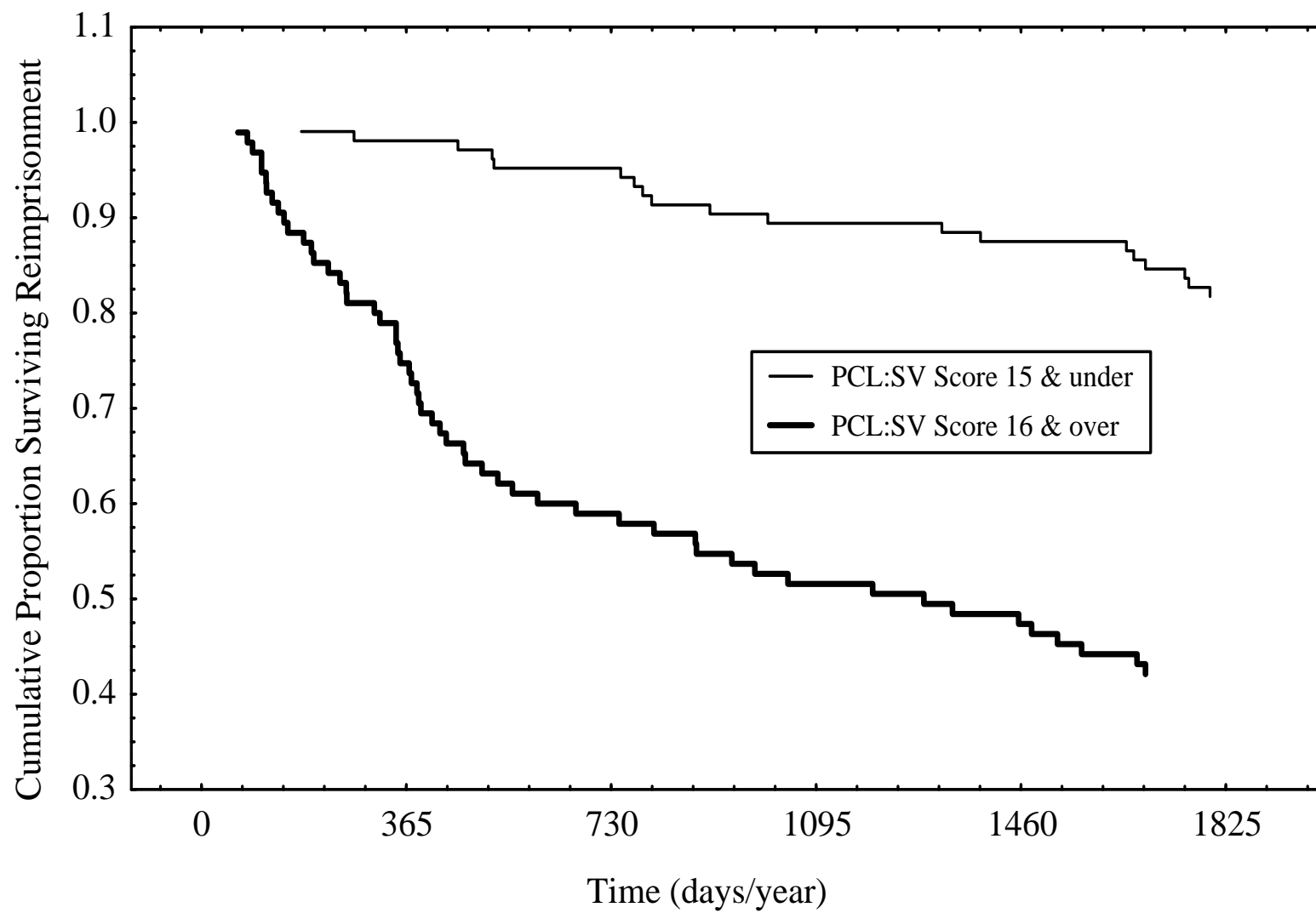
Descriptive Statistics Reimprison v/s Non-imprison

Imprisoned
(n=76)

Measure	Mean	S.D.	Range
PCL:SV Total	18.42	4.45	7-24
PCL Factor 1	8.80	2.63	1-12
PCL Factor 2	9.44	2.61	1-12
RoC*Rol	.76	.22	.12-1.0
RAI	58.42	19.11	17.6-97.2

Not Imprison
(n= 123)

Mean	S.D.	Range
12.11	6.44	1-24
6.11	3.53	0-12
5.97	3.66	0-12
.53	.22	.02-1.0
50.75	20.16	13.2-91.8

ROC Analysis

Model	Area under the ROC curve
RAI score	0.63
PCL:SV total score	0.80
RoC*RoI	0.81
PCL Model (has additional risk variables, age at first offending and severity of index offence)	0.83
PCL:SV/RoC*RoI	0.86

Reimprisonment Grp Reoffend

Offence Type Categories	N (*n*=76)	% Reimprisoned
Non violent offending	16	21
Violent Offending (Common Assault; Male Assault Female; Assault Child; Threatening to Kill; Offensive Weapons)	15	19.7
Serious Violent Offending (Robbery; Aggravated Robbery/ Assault; Rape; Kidnapping, Child Sexual Offences; Use of Weapons to Assault)	35	46
Predatory Sexual Offending (Preventive Detention)	7	9.2
Attempted Murder; Murder (One attempted murder; Two Murders)	3	3.9
Total Violent Offending Reoffending	**60**	**79**

Factor 1 score and time to violence (r = -.41)
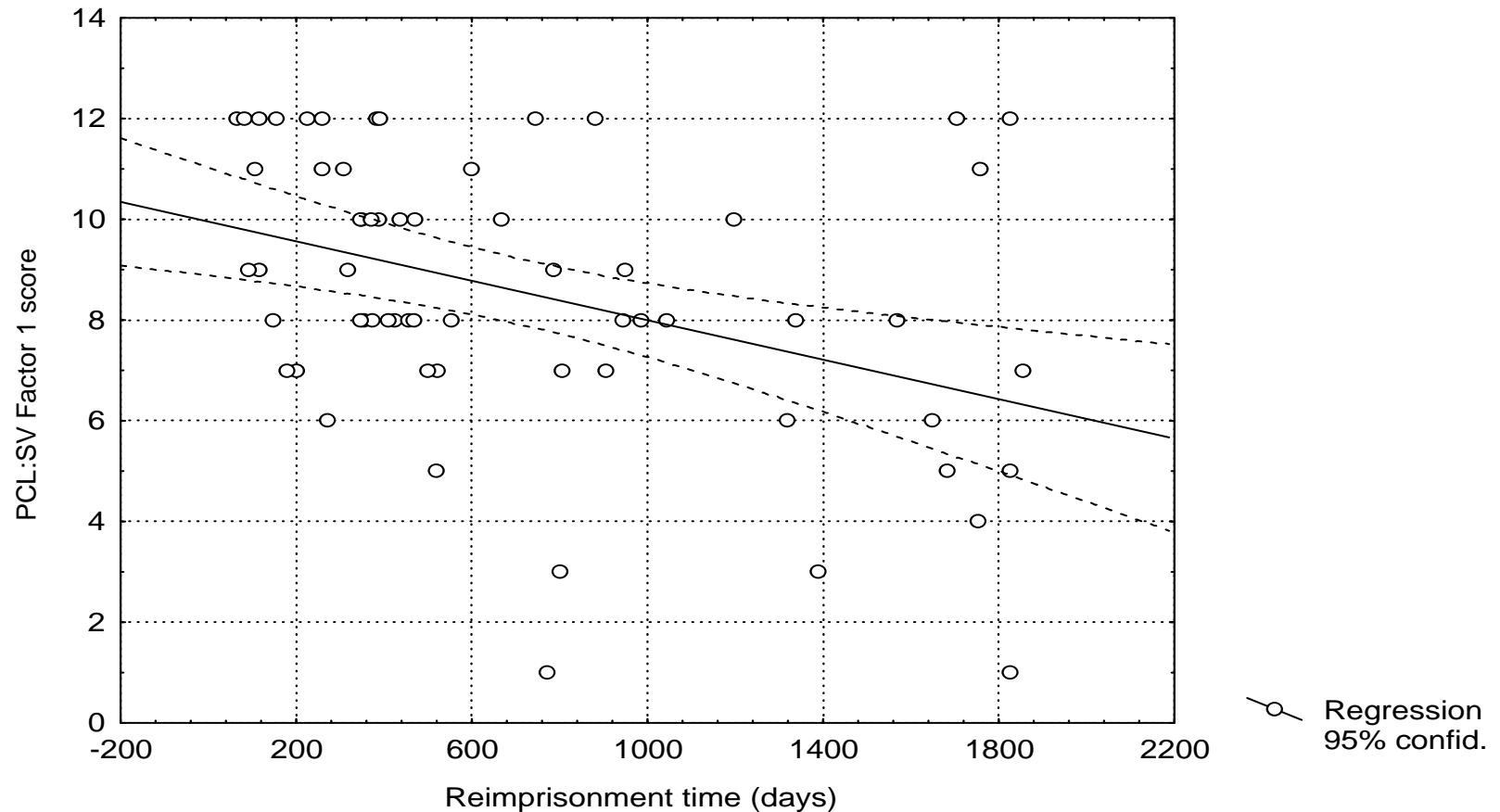
Investigation into 'False Positive' Sample

- Need for naturalistic research to establish features of good outcomes and to also to ID false positive error (Dolan & Coid, 1993)

- The same rigor required to examine resilience as risk in psychopathy research (Hare, 1996)

- Such research into high risk psychopathic offenders recognized as difficult!

- Non-imprisonment chosen as desistance is best viewed as a change a decrease in the frequency, variety, or seriousness of offending (Farrington 2007)

- Exploratory due to small sample size
  (n =32) but valuable in absence of similar research

Previous research

- Leibrich (1993), case study approach with NZ sample 50 offenders, male/female, mean age 28.7, low rate prev violence. Shame named as biggest change factor, 54% unemployed, 50% with at least one health problem
- Zamble & Quinsey (1997) compared recidivist (n= 311) to non-recidivist (n = 30) samples
- On measures of criminal history recidivists had a larger
  - number of previous convictions, violent criminal acts and
  - early onset offenders
  - had a higher speed of recidivism than non-recidivists

Significant Personal Differences between Recidivists and Non-recidivists (Zamble & Quinsey, 1997)

Personal Factors	Recidivist	Non-Recid
Age	29.5	42.3*
Highest grade at school	9.5	10.3**
Residential stability (months)	27.2	62.6*
Employment stability (months)	26.4	63.6*
Longest stable intimate relationship (months)	37.2	87.8*
Ever had substance abuse problem	80%	41.7%*
Had considered suicide	25.5%	40.3%**

Research (cont)

- 35% non-recid group had thoughts of crime
- 75% said they thought about –ve conseq of crime (41% fear of prison, 34% conseq to self & family)
- Violent offenders biggest issue interpersonal conflict- only coping use of avoidance/A&D
- Zamble & Quinsey believed maturation (conventional lifestyle) resulted in increased social competency demonstrated in use of prosocial strategies, less anger, anxiety, and depression

Examination of NZ 'false positive' sample

- Intensive follow up found that five offenders did not meet non-imprisonment criteria
  - Two deceased
  - One in witness protection
  - Two on remand for long period
- This changed false positive error rate down to 25% using 16 cut-off,
- Actual false positive sample now 27

Were they high risk?

- While the false positive sample were not reimprisoned, vast majority were reconvicted (91%) on average 1116 days (3 yrs):
  - Dishonesty, violence, and drug possession. Driving while intoxicated was the most common reoffending
- 70% of the viable false positive sample ($n = 14$) agreed to interview
- Several members of the interview group revealed undetected offending
- Those interviewed assessed by LSI-R after 5-10 years as still with high risk and criminogenic need

Risk variables

- Interviewees indicated their ongoing dynamic risk related to:
  - poor education/employment outcomes
  - difficulties with finances
  - living in unsatisfactory accommodation,
  - and they did not tend to engage in structured leisure activities.

Risk Factors cont

- Not to be currently employed (64%)
- Most continued to have procriminal thoughts that they did not act upon
  - e.g., "I regularly time security vans"
  - These thoughts inhibited by awareness of -ve conseq, usually loss of partner and children and possessions

What lowered risk?

- General strategy of avoidance
  - 57% of interview group chose geographic isolation
  - 78% isolation from antisocial peers
  - Avoidance also their standard approach to problem solving
- Social support: 64% endorsed increased prosocial support usually from prosocial partners
- Increased control over substance abuse
- One indicated Christian faith
- MCMI-III results found no significant difficulties with mental health issues
- STAXI-2: No significant anger problems

Factors that reduced risk

- Increased awareness of negative consequences:
    - Prosocial partners; reduced substance abuse, lengthy imprisonment feared
- No signif difficulties with mental health or anger related problems
- Isolation from antisocial influences (family and gang, often they had to move significant distances)
- Reduced physical ability, combination of age and high risk lifestyle

Implications

- Comparison with Zamble & Quinsey's (1997) findings
  - Differences;
    - Less employment, more past substance abuse, no suicide/mental health issues, more past offending, more physical health issues
    - Similarities; older, more stability of relationships & residence, lower overall risk scores, similar high use of avoidance, no significant anger problems, continued thoughts of crime and awareness of negative consequences of reoffending

Other studies of desistance in psychopathic offenders?

- Swedish study of four such offenders (Haggard, Gumpert & Grann, 2001)
  - Used isolation both social and geographic to manage risk
  - Orientation to prosocial partners
  - Half continued to offend but were not caught

Long term follow-up

- When the false positive sample first examined (Feb 2000) all were out between 5 to 10 yrs.
- The 27 offenders were again followed up in Feb 2011, now 16-25 years post release
- Able to access records of any further offending, current location, probation reports, mortality.

Demographic and risk picture

- Current age- $M = 53.59$ ($SD = 8.6$), range 42-75;
- Ethnicity- 59% European, 37% Maori, 4% PI;
- PCL:SV Total scr $M = 19.44$ $SD = 2.9$ range 16-24;
- 14 released 1985-90; 13 released 1990-95.

What had happened to them?

- Surprisingly no more had died yet high mortality rates in psychopathic offenders from high risk activities?
- 67% had committed new offences but low frequency and seriousness and 33% had no offending at all
- 26% (n = 7) had incurred a new imprisonment
- 5 from the group released in 1995; 2 from 1985 grp
- Imp periods were short, 3 months to 2 years 3 months; M = 1 year 7 days
- Index offences: 3rd Excess Blood Alcohol x2; Cultivate cannabis (x2), Driving while disqualified, Domestic Assault, and Breach of Community Sentence

Survival of false positive group *n* = 27
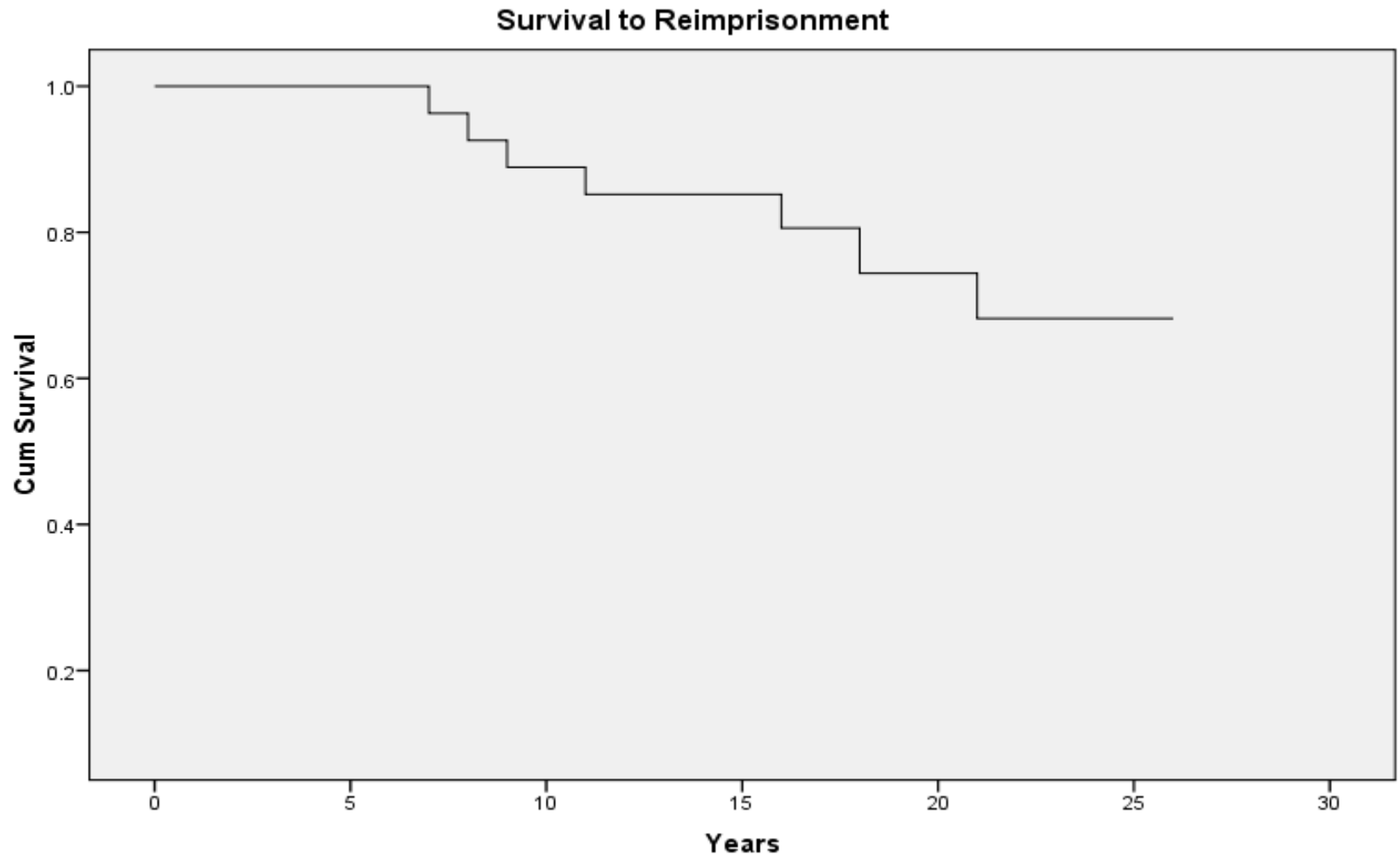
Lessons?

- Most of the false positive group were found to be <u>stable desisters</u> (over 16-25 years) with offence histories free of frequent and/or serious offending
- Three from the group would meet the criteria for being <u>unstable desisters</u> due to frequent albeit less serious reoffending
  - These all were originally released for rape offences;
  - Younger than others, lack of stability in relationships, residence;
  - Antisocial association continued
  - New offences relating to poor anger management and substance abuse.

Treating Violent Psychopathic Offenders: Lessons from an Experimental Treatment Initiative In New Zealand

Nick J Wilson, PhD

&

Armon Tamatea

Psychological Research

Community Probation & Psychological Services, New Zealand

Contact: **nick.wilson@corrections.govt.nz**

Pilot Treatment Initiative

- Following on from the lessons/hope of the false positive study
- Based on review of the literature & treatment efforts at the Saskatoon RFC and & DSPD units
- Social information-processing model
- One pilot experimental programme delivered Waikeria Prison in medium-high security unit
- Called High Risk Personality Programme (HRPP)
- Therapy Jan 07-Nov 07; Follow-up until May 08.
- Delivered by three experienced Clinical Psychologists (one Maori, one Pacific Island) & a Cultural Consultant, plus backup/supervision from presenter and Consultant Forensic Psychiatrist.

Waikeria Prison (N = 1,031)

High security block Waikeria Prison (Built 1912)

Programme

- ID group and individual barriers to change (assess past failures etc)
- Highly structured with rules, goals, and activities clear, explicit
  - Counter to expected manipulation, understanding of personality style
- Working alliance – collaborative on goals
- Education- intervention concepts, expectations
- Development of narrative formulation, related to offending and life worth living-phased overtime
- Use of tikanga in parallel to overcome resistance/ responsivity issues
- Use of the VRS to structure content and participant understanding of evaluation and change

HRPP Programme Structure

- Assessment (2 weeks)
- Phase 1: Life Reflection and Responsivity
- Phase 2: Identification and Understanding-Violence
- Phase 3a: Reintegration and Action
- Phase 3b: Follow-up support (6 months)

HRPP Programme Delivery

- 3 x 2.5 hour group sessions per week
- 1 hour individual session per week
- 2 hours cultural component (group)
- Total direct contact hours (week) = 10.5
- Total group hours (year) ~ 315
- Total individual hours (year) ~ 40
- Total MSP/cultural therapy hours (year) ~ 80
- 430 hours per participant

HRPP Entry Criteria and Assessment

- RoC*RoI $\geq$ 0.7 (70% plus)
- History of violence
  - Convictions
  - Institutional behaviour
- PCL-R-II $\geq$ 27
- MCMI-III
- TRRG-SV
- VRS
- Cultural assessments
- Suitability / Motivated to attend

Participants

- 12 'segregated' volunteer prisoners (11 completed).

- Separated - diff uniform/hard time

- Demographics:
  - Mean age 29 yrs (range 19-49)
  - All with index offences for serious violence
  - Long-term sentences for majority
  - 3 participants subject to indeterminate sentences (two murder one preventive detention)

Participants (cont)

- 11 out of 12 Maori
- Mn RoC*RoI = 0.74 (range 0.42-.89)
- Mn PCL-R = 32.1 (range 28.4- 36.0)
- All either in gangs or had been, often at a high/leadership level (four different gangs)
- Extensive active prison violent misconduct histories
- Most had to transfer prisons to attend
  - TRRG:SV indicated higher motivation for those transferring!

PCL-R Scores

	Mn	Min	Max	SD
Factor 1	12.08	10	14	1.24
Facet 1	5.25	4	7	0.87
Facet 2	6.83	5	8	0.72
Factor 2	17.88	14	20	1.66
Facet 3	8.92	6	10	1.16
Facet 4	8.83	6	10	1.11
PCL total	32.13	28.4	36	2.22

MCMI-III Severe PD- Pre

Paranoid	Borderline	Schizotypal
78	85	74
64	90	71
95	66	70
64	69	69
63	10	65
63	62	20
80	77	94
69	84	62
64	60	40
70	68	88
86	80	70
74	87	82

MCMI-III Severe PD- Post

Paranoid	Borderline	Schizotypal
12	19	62
0	39	0
74	63	65
53	25	5
X	X	X
0	40	60
70	63	**80**
70	60	65
30	26	6
78	49	**79**
73	57	72
24	70	60

VRS Pre and Post

VRS Scores	Mn	Min	Max	SD
Static	13.33	11.00	16.00	1.78
VRS Dyn- Pre	46.00	38.00	53.00	5.12
VRS Tot- Pre	60.26	52.00	68.00	5.48
VRS Dyn- Post	38.73	31.50	45.50	5.41
VRS Tot- Post	52.71	42.50	60.50	5.97

VRS Dynamic 20 Item Scrs

VRS Mean Item Scores

VRS Dynamic Items

legend
— Pre VRS scores
— Post VRS scores

X-axis labels: Violent Lifestyle, Criminal Personality, Criminal Attitudes, Work Ethic, Criminal Peers, Interpersonal Aggression, Emotional Control, Viol During Institution, Weapons Use, Insight into Violence, Mental Disorder, Substance Abuse, Stability of Relationships, Community Support, Release to HRS, Violence Cycle, Impulsivity, Cognitive Distortions, Compliance Supervision

VRS Dynamic Score Changes
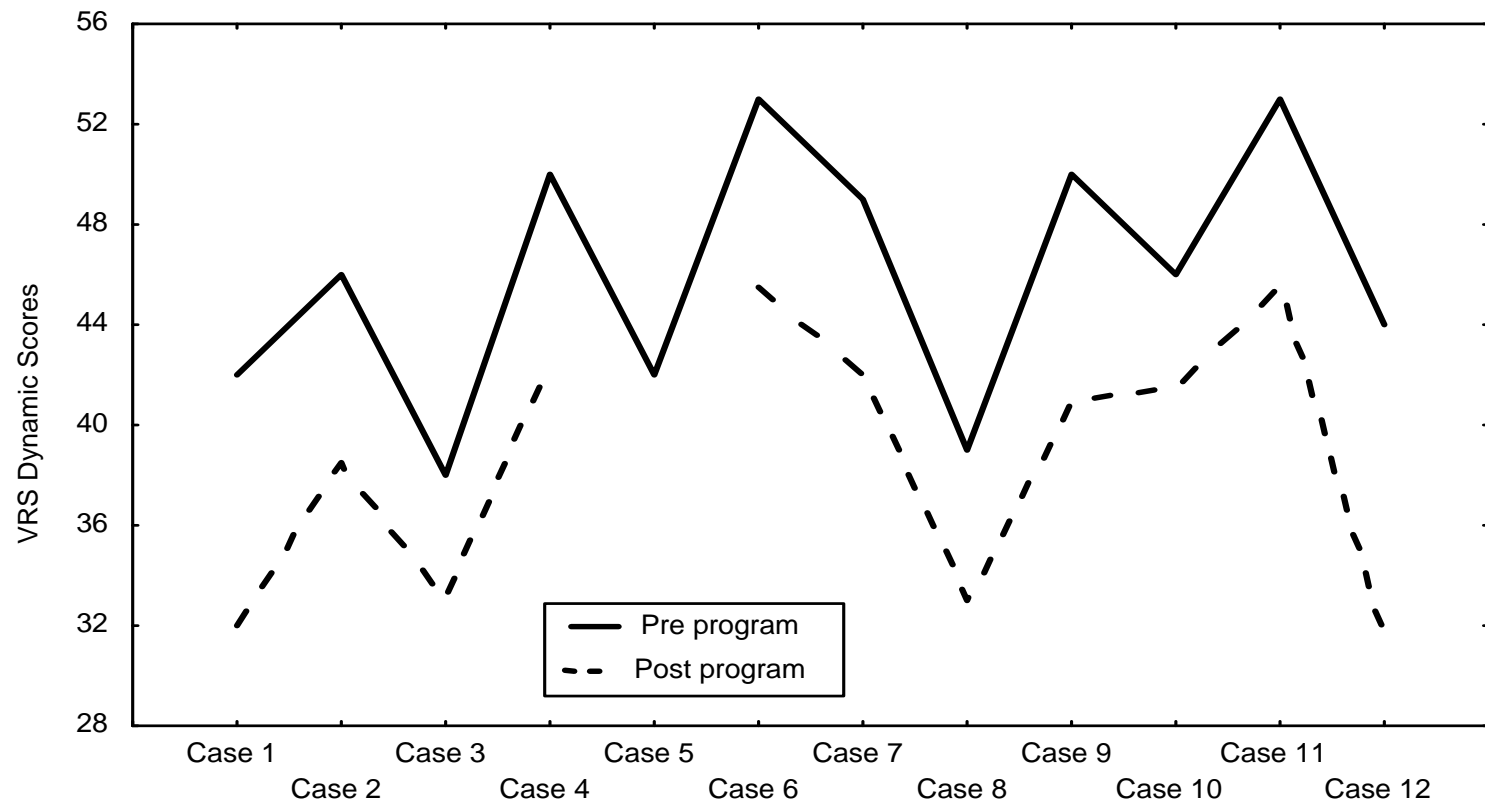
Behaviour Observations

- No violent misconducts incurred while in therapy (indications of fighting not officially reported)
- Staff reported positive changes in behaviour
- Improved coping with highly aversive environment (high lockdown, searches, limits on exercise, quality of life
- Individual sessions crucial
  - Dealing with responsivity barriers
  - Personal goals
  - Intel on what was happening out of group!

Post Treatment-Maintenance Phase

- Low intensity-focus on observation/analysis of behaviour change in a different environ (6 mths)

- Post treatment participants placed either back in original units or accepted alternative units

- Some follow up sessions (6 months)

Six Month Follow-up

- No violent misconducts for any of the completing participants during 6 months follow-up

- Challenge in return to violent environ/gangs

- Staff reports from new placements units of signif improved behaviour

- 80% reduced security rating, half to min security

- Four engaged in further intensive therapy options.

- All have/desire continued contact psychologists

- But early days!

Four year follow-up

|	Index Offence	1-year	2-years	3-years	4-years	Desist
1	GBH-Knife	Released	Reimprisoned Serious viol-6yrs	Violent misconducts	Violent misconducts	Persister
2	Murder	No issues	Minor misconduct	Viol misconduct	No issues	Desister
3	Agg Rob, PD	No issues	Prosocial leader	Prosocial leader	Work release	Desister
4	Wounds, GBH, torture/kidnap	No issues	Released	Domestic viol, breach, stalking	Dom viol (x3) reimprisoned	Persister
5	Rape, GBH	Minor issues	Viol misconducts	Released, minor offences	Disorder offences, 2 mth reimpriso	Unstable
6	Agg Robb,injure	Released Reimp theft	Minor issues seek trt re-released	Assaults (x3), EBA, reimprison	Released, Reimp serious assault	Persister
7	Agg Rob, kidnap	Minor issues Released	Released, reimprisoned 1yr	Model prisoner Released	v/minor offend, family	Desister
8	Agg Rob, assault	No issues	Released, good behav noted	Reimprisoned assault police	Released, threat off	Unstable
9	Injure intent	Minor issues	Released	Minor offences	Minor offence	Desister
10	Wounds, Robbery	No issues	Release-recall	Released	No issues	Desister
11	Agg Rob, assault	Released-reimprison theft	Serious prison issues	Released, convict domestic viol HD	Reimprisoned repeat breach, EBA	Persister

HRPP Success?

- Some change in -ve attitude by clinicians to trt
- HRPP successful in addressing PD in general is relation to safety, containment and engagement and increasing emotion and impulse control
- Variable success in addressing specific PD pathology relating to patterns of maladaptive self and interpersonal schema (Livesley, 2011)
- Undone by unstable environments, maladaptive schema, gang membership, poorer release plans (or social competency?) (Dickson et al., 2011).

HRPP Desistance classification

- **Desisters**. 46% (n = 5)- Free of frequent and/or serious offending across time.

- **Unstable**. 18% (n = 2)- Cannot be reasonably considered either persistent or desisters, often 'zig-zag' (Laub & Sampson, 2003).

- **Persisters**. 36% (n = 4)- Strong indications across time of persistent serious offending.

Serin & Lloyd (2009) Model of Desistance
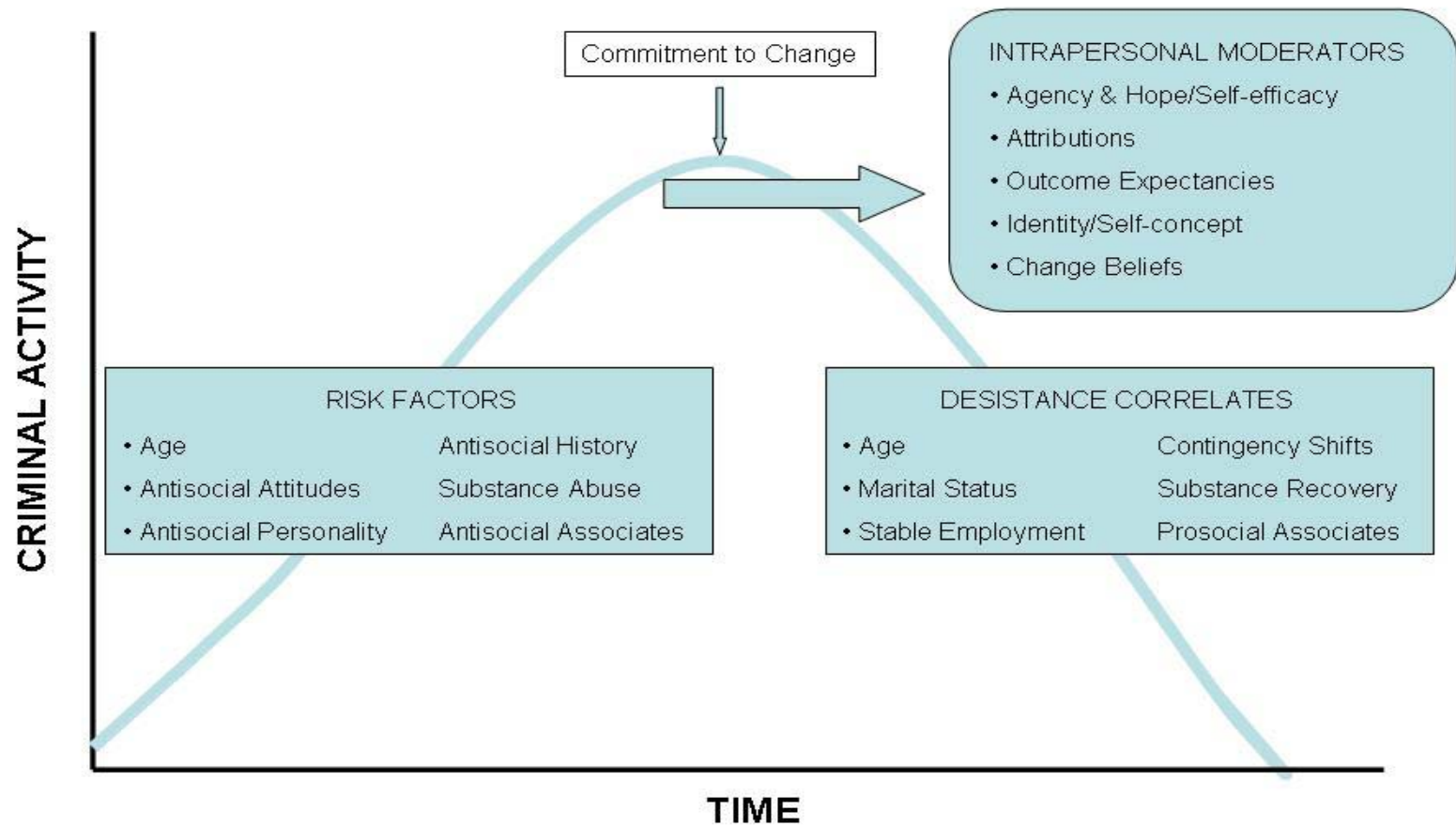
Lessons from the two studies

- Need to retain hope and support
- Social competency and substance abuse key issues
- Interpersonal relationship skills
- Prosocial identity developed
- Change needed to community management by probation staff (DRAOR) and parole board flexibility/understanding to retain in community

Contact details:

nick.wilson@corrections.govt.nz