

Who Ends Up in Administrative Segregation?: A Meta-Analytic Review

Ryan M. Labrecque, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor, Portland State University

Presented at the NIJ Topical Working Group on the Use of AS in United States
on October 22, 2015 in Washington, DC



Portland State
UNIVERSITY

Administrative Segregation (AS)

- The use of AS involves the *housing of an inmate in conditions by substantial isolation from other inmates* (ABA, 2011).
- There is a critical need to better understand who ends up in AS.
- This study represents the first known meta-analytic review of the research on the predictors of AS.
- The results have important **policy implications** for the management of correctional institutions, as well as **practical applications** within the context of offender treatment.

Eligibility Criteria

- In order to be eligible for inclusion, studies were required to:
 - Be conducted on prisoners in custodial settings
 - Compare characteristics of inmates in AS settings to those in GP settings
 - Contain sufficient data to calculate an effect size (i.e., Pearson r or phi coefficient)

Group Comparisons

- **Inmate characteristics**

- Age, race, mental disorder, gang, risk level

- **Criminal history**

- Juvenile justice involvement, record of violence

- **Institutional behavior**

- Prior segregation, misconduct history, initial security rating

- **Criminogenic needs**

- Antisocial attitudes, antisocial associates, community functioning, education, employment, family/marital, personal/emotional, substance abuse, motivation for treatment

Effect Size Calculation and Interpretation

- Hedge's g was selected to estimate the magnitude of the effect size (ES).
- Studies could contribute more than one ES per category as long as each one represented an estimate for a unique sample of offenders.
- Random effects model results are reported.
- I^2 is used to evaluate the heterogeneity of the ES estimates.

Description of Studies

- Total # of studies included = 16
- Total # of effect size estimates = 131

- 88% of studies occurred in North America
- 75% of studies were produced after 2000
- 63% of studies were peer reviewed journal articles
- 25% of studies separated results by gender

Meta-Analysis of AS vs. GP Inmates by Characteristic

Characteristic	<i>ES</i>	95% <i>CI</i>	<i>I</i> ²	<i>n</i>	<i>k</i>
Age	-.36	[-.42, -.30]	75.30	91,610	10
Ethnic minority	.19	[-.07, .46]	96.89	88,019	8
Mental disorder	.35	[.19, .51]	93.20	33,468	10
Gang	.47	[.14, .79]	96.73	29,983	7
High-risk	.43	[.34, .51]	89.31	50,899	11
Violent criminal history	.42	[.34, .49]	86.37	102,942	14
Juvenile justice involvement	.49	[.42, .56]	64.99	13,846	7
Initial security level	.48	[.26, .70]	62.81	7,609	3
Prior segregation	.62	[.36, .87]	98.43	32,923	10
Prior misconduct	2.10	[1.24, 2.97]	96.95	63,898	2

Note. *ES* = mean weighted effect size (Hedge's *g*); 95% *CI* = 95% confidence interval of *ES*; *I*² = percentage of variability across effect sizes; *n* = total sample size; *k* = number of effect sizes.

Meta-Analysis of AS vs. GP Inmates by Characteristic

Characteristic	<i>ES</i>	95% <i>CI</i>	<i>I</i> ²	<i>n</i>	<i>k</i>
Antisocial attitudes	.37	[.29, .45]	76.17	14,212	7
Antisocial associates	.28	[.15, .40]	90.37	13,993	7
Community functioning/leisure	.21	[.12, .30]	43.07	3,927	3
Education/HS diploma	.38	[.25, .50]	63.16	21,246	5
Employment	.20	[.10, .30]	92.34	31,733	8
Family/marital	.13	[.06, .19]	0.00	4,076	3
Personal/emotional	.29	[.23, .35]	0.00	4,032	3
Substance abuse	.29	[.17, .41]	95.91	35,279	11
Motivation for treatment	.58	[.10, 1.07]	73.32	2,199	2

Note. *ES* = mean weighted effect size (Hedge's *g*); 95% *CI* = 95% confidence interval of *ES*; *I*² = percentage of variability across effect sizes; *n* = total sample size; *k* = number of effect sizes.

Conclusion

- Who ends up in administrative segregation?
 - “Worst of the worst” inmates
 - “Nuisance” inmates
 - **“Difficult to manage” inmates**
- There is little empirical evidence to suggest that AS is effective in improving subsequent inmate institutional behavior (see Labrecque, 2015; Morris, 2015).
- What are the alternatives to AS?

Implications

- One way to improve inmate behavior and reduce the use of AS is to apply the RNR framework to the management of inmates:
 - **Identifying at-risk inmates (RISK)**
 - **Treatment targets (NEEDS)**
 - Attitudes/cognitions
 - Personal/emotional
 - Substance abuse
 - Negative peer influences
 - Motivation for treatment
 - **Potential moderators (RESPONSIVITY)**
 - Variability in findings

Contact Information

Ryan M. Labrecque, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor

Criminology and Criminal Justice Department

Portland State University

Phone: 503-725-5164

E-mail: rml@pdx.edu

Web: www.ryanmlabrecque.com