Comparison of Open and Closed Group Treatment of Sexual Offenders

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***Abstract*—** Sexual offending is associated with a range of acute and long-term negative effects, including physical harm, increased mental illness, and poor socioeconomic outcomes for individual victims, and increased fear within communities. To prevent future sexual offending and reduce these adverse outcomes, specific treatment is regularly provided to sexual offenders. Though there is considerable evidence to suggest that on the whole these treatment programs are effective, there is little research exploring what specific treatment elements increase treatment effectiveness. This presentation explores the relationship between two types of sexual offender group treatment modalities, open and closed group treatment, and a range of outcomes. A study exploring the relationship between group type and sexual, violent and general recidivism outcomes will be described, as well as the relationship between group type and psychometric outcomes. This study considers the effects of treatment location (prison versus community treatment) and reoffending risk level on these relationships. The study has a sample of N = 571 sexual offenders. Of this sample, N = 322 commenced open group treatment and N = 249 commenced closed group treatment. N = 500 participants completed group treatment, with the remaining non-completers withdrawing or being removed from treatment. Approximately half (N = 281) of the sample was treated in a community setting, with the remaining half (N = 290) being treated in a prison setting. The implications of the findings for this research will be discussed as part of the presentation.

***Keywords*—** Group treatment, open treatment, closed treatment, sexual offender treatment

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