

# Perpetrators of family harm already serving correctional sentences:

## Risk profiles and episode characteristics

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### Background

- Family harm, defined as any form of abuse against a family member, is a prevalent issue across New Zealand, accounting for over 40 percent of frontline police officers' time (Family Violence Clearinghouse, 2017).
- Family harm often does not result in criminal sanctions, but some perpetrators are already in the community for other offending.
- New Zealand data from a **multi-agency response pilot** provide an opportunity to compare episodes for those currently managed by corrections and those who are not.
- We know that a history of family harm and the use of physical violence are risk factors for family harm perpetration in general (Millstead & Clogan, 2016).
- But, we know less about how risk profiles compare for perpetrators of family harm under correctional supervision and those who are not (Johnson, 2008; Olson, & Stalans, 2001; Ruiz-Hernández et al., 2015).

### Method

- Data for family harm episodes reported in two regions in November 2018,  $N = 502$ .
  - 158 corrections clients (CC)
  - 344 other perpetrators (OP)
- Compared risk profiles and episode characteristics of CC and OP with chi-squared and Mann-Whitney  $U^1$  tests.



Episodes of family harm are **no more violent** for perpetrators already under **correctional supervision** than for those who are not.

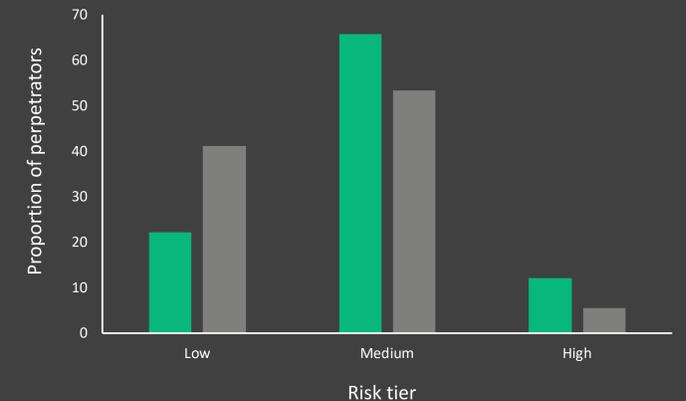
Yet corrections clients are **more often classified as high risk.**

### References

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- Ruiz-Hernández, J. A., García-Jiménez, J. J., Llor-Estebana, B., & Godoy-Fernández, C. (2015). Risk factors for intimate partner violence in prison inmates. *The European Journal of Psychology Applied to Legal Context*, 7, 41-49.

<sup>1</sup> Count data violated t-test assumptions.

### Results



- Proportion of perpetrators in higher risk tiers **CC > OP** ( $\chi^2(2) = 20, p < .001$ ).
- Number of episode risk factors recorded **CC > OP** ( $U = -2.179, p = .029$ ).
- Proportion of episodes with physical violence **CC  $\approx$  OP** ( $\chi^2(1) = 1.017, p = .313$ ).  
Also no significant difference in the proportions of all other forms of harm.
- Range of episode harmful behaviours **CC  $\approx$  OP** ( $U = -.569, p = .569$ ).
- Number of previous episodes **CC > OP** ( $U = -6.424, p < .001$ ).

### Discussion

- Further research to find whether the severity and frequency of future episodes **CC  $\neq$  OP**.

**CC > OP**



Better screening for family harm perpetration histories in **CC** who have not recently been involved in a police call for service.

**CC  $\leq$  OP**



Further investigation of why **CC** are classified as higher risk than **OP**. Evaluation and improvement of our current risk assessment strategies.