

# CYBERNETIC MODEL OF CORRECTIONAL TREATMENT

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In the past thirty years, treatment in correctional facilities has been severely criticized. Many studies, including meta-analyses, have emphasized the low efficacy of correctional treatment (and every kind of treatment) is related to the three main questions. The first is a clear definition of the features that have to be the object of treatment; the second is the question of methods or programs which are used in the course of treatment; while the third, is the question of the monitoring of the treatment process. Adequate monitoring of the treatment process is possible only in the event that the treatment programming and the evaluation of its effects are undertaken individually, in short intervals or, in other words, at several transition time points from the initial to the final treatment point. The feedback about the effects of treatment is analysed by a personal computer at each transition time point.

According to the results obtained, modification in group and individualized treatment programming takes place successively at each transition time point. The proposed model consists of three levels; the first level performs a comparison of results between the transition time points; the second level, using hierarchical cluster analysis, forms larger groups of inmates convenient for group programming, and the third level, using hierarchical cluster analysis again, forms small target groups of inmates convenient for individualized programming.

Thanks to their great speed of data processing and immense possibilities of data storage, personal computers allow quick decision making about the continuation of treatment at each transition time point. Combining group and individualized programming, provisional treatment programs are modified to satisfy the needs of inmates throughout the treatment process.

**Key words:** correctional treatment, monitoring of treatment

## INTRODUCTION

The meta-analyses of correctional treatment efficacy done by Whitehead and Lab (1989), Andrews et al. (1990), and Lipsey (1992) rank among the most important meta-analyses. The results of these analyses are not quite congruent. Whitehead and Lab offer a mainly negative appraisal of correctional treatment efficacy while Andrews et al. and Lipsey are more optimistic in their appraisals, but all three analyses are similar concerning institutional correctional treatment: they agree that it is performed more poorly than community-based treatment.

Andrews et al. found that inadequate treatment programs produce markedly negative outcomes in the correctional facilities and that the effects of programs that are qualified as appropriate are

considerably reduced in these settings. In accordance with the authors' opinion, the negative influences of the prison environment diminish the efficacy of correctional treatment, so that a continuation of treatment after release is necessary. All three meta-analyses showed that concrete and clearly conceptualized correctional treatment programs give better outcomes than unclear and overly general programs. The meta-analyses carried out by Andrews et al. and Lipsey showed that better results are manifested by behavioural programs and programs aiming at the acquisition of skills (behaviour therapy, cognitive behaviour

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