

## Summary

### **Prison staff satisfaction 2011 A study on staff and prison characteristics**

In May 2011 the prison system of the Dutch Custodial Institutions Agency (Ministry of Security and Justice) conducted a Prison Staff Satisfaction Survey (PSSS). The measurement instrument used for the PSSS is the InternetSpiegel questionnaire. Staff satisfaction was also measured in 2004 and 2007, at the time with a PSSS called BASAM-DJI. The aim of the PSSS in the Dutch prison system is to assess employees' opinion on their working conditions and which problems these conditions may cause. The focus is on learning and improving but explicitly not on judging or sanctioning managers and line staff when negative results occur. The basic Internet-Spiegel questionnaire, which is used by several organisations in the Dutch public sector, contains subjects concerning job content, work stress, the relationship with colleagues and leadership. Additional questions have been formulated by the Custodial Institutions Agency about staff safety and aggression and violence committed by inmates or colleagues (as perceived by staff members). Also additional questions have been added measuring the treatment orientation of staff.

The custodial institutions and their housing units received reports with their results of the PSSS to make comparisons, benchmarks and plans for improvement. In order to create a better understanding of the development of staff satisfaction, this study provides a comparison between the different survey years (2004, 2007, and 2011). Furthermore, this report shows differences concerning several context characteristics of employees and specific aspects of the institutions.

The response rate of the PSSS in 2011 was 62%. In 2004 and 2007 the response was respectively 53% and 63%. The samples are representative for the population. If the measurement of the survey subjects was similar over the three years, a comparison is made in this report. This comparison was possible for ten subjects. Moreover, statistical tests are conducted concerning different context characteristics of staff members and specific aspects of institutions. Each aspect (such as age of staff or detention regime of the housing unit) is divided into different categories. The mean of each category is compared to the mean of all responding staff members in the survey, by using the statistical technique of *Multivariate Analysis of Variance*.

Analyses show that staff satisfaction has increased between 2004, 2007 and 2011 concerning job content, the relationship with colleagues, safety, and leadership (a rise between 0.10 and 0.30 on a five point Likert scale). The most notable improvement regards the topic of the amount of work (an increase of 0.92 between 2007 and 2011). Staff members indicate to be more satisfied about the amount of work compared to the two preceding survey years. It is concluded that the working conditions are increasingly appreciated by Dutch prison staff. Furthermore, it is notable that the treatment orientation of staff changed over the years. Staff members express to be more (an increase of 0.47 between 2007 and 2011) helpful and supportive to inmates (measured by a scale called supportive orientation). There is a significant decrease (0.16 between 2007 and 2011) of the extent to which staff say they focus on rule orientation. Therefore, the treatment style of staff appears to have made a shift in recent years; respect, support, and help seem to be preferred instead of rules and structure.

The PSSS-results differ on the basis of staff characteristics. Staff members between 20 and 39 years old are relatively negative about their working conditions. Staff members older than 50 are more positive. Besides, older staff are more positive about the integrity and safety in the prison. The level of education also makes a difference in the results. With exception of the measurement scale on work stress, higher educated staff are relatively positive about their working conditions. They indicate to experience more entrusting leadership from their direct manager and claim to work more according to the method of *motivational interviewing* in their contacts with inmates. Lower educated staff oppose higher educated staff members in this respect: they experience more directive leadership and rely more on structure and rules in their contacts with inmates. The differences found between higher and lower educated staff, are also present between staff members in a higher salary classification (scale 8 or higher) and in a lower salary classification (scale 1 up to 4 and 5 up to 7). Staff members with higher wages often evaluate the working conditions more positively. Staff members in scale 1 up to 4 experience more directive leadership compared to staff in scale 8 or higher. Finally, it turns out that staff members who have between 0-5 years or more than 20 years of work experience, assess their working conditions as more positively. Staff members with 6-20 years of work experience, evaluate their work more negatively.

Except for differences between groups of staff members – categorized by their personal characteristics – analyses have been conducted on the PSSS-results regarding geographical characteristics. Staff members in the Western region of The Netherlands are least satisfied about their working conditions in comparison to the other regions. Staff members in the Southern region do not often deviate from the mean of all responding staff members in the prison system. In this region staff members are less satisfied with the amount of work stress and its consequences. However, they are positive about job content and leadership. Conversely, staff members in the North-Eastern region are more satisfied about their working conditions. This group deviates positively from the mean regarding most subjects. The contrast between staff members working inside and outside the *Randstad* (the urban agglomeration in the Western part of The Netherlands) is even more distinctive. Outside the *Randstad* staff members are more satisfied about working conditions and experience stronger leadership. In their contact with inmates, staff members outside the *Randstad* indicate to be more involved with inmates and make more effort to motivate them to re-integrate and participate in activities. Nevertheless, the differences between *Randstad* and non-*Randstad* staff members are small. Differences in staff satisfaction stem from variations in architectural models of prisons. Staff members working in a panopticon or cruciform building are less satisfied about their working conditions. Staff members working in a pavilion or patio building are more satisfied about their working conditions. Furthermore, analyses have been conducted on the detention regimes. In a remand jail, an addict unit and a maximum security unit, staff members are more negative about their working conditions. Staff in an extra care unit, woman unit or open unit are more positive about most topics.

In living units where there is less staff available per inmate, the working conditions are experienced as more negative. Living units with more staff per inmate available, are more satisfied about the working conditions. However, on living units for intensive support, staff members express to be more negative about the relation with inmates. This group also experiences a lot of violence committed by inmates.

Analyses conducted on the cell capacity of living units show that staff members on smaller units are more satisfied about their working conditions. Staff members on more extensive units (more than 50 cells) are less satisfied. The PSSS-results do

not show an unequivocal pattern regarding gender, a full-time or part-time job, one or more inmates per cell and the percentage of cells in use.