

Summary

Psychometric quality of and the links between the detainee survey and the BASAM-DJI

Preliminary study in relation to the prison system benchmark study

The object of this sub-study was to look at the psychometric quality of the questionnaires used by the prison system to measure the well-being of staff and detainees. The validity, reliability, representativeness and sample size of the BASAM-DJI (Basic questionnaire Amsterdam, including the Aggression and Violence Monitor) and the Dutch detainee survey for the questionnaires administered in 2007 can be said to be satisfactory. The study also sought to ascertain whether it is possible to link the data sets for the instruments for well-being, by means of a department code allocated for this purpose. Given the criteria applicable for inclusion, a coupling of approximately 80% of the responding detainees with 90% of the prison officers from the survey data is good.

As it proved possible to link the data from both measurement instruments at department level, it was also possible to ascertain whether there is any connection between the well-being of detainees and staff. In order to arrive at the presumed correlations between the well-being of detainees and staff at a penal institution, a literature scan was performed. In addition to this, experts were consulted, in order to arrive at a set of presumed correlations. The presumed correlations were explored by means of a multilevel analysis.

The well-being of staff and detainees was found to be connected in a number of important areas. In the first series of analyses, the object was to ascertain which detainee characteristics and behaviour influence the well-being of staff. For example, staff are less satisfied about interaction with detainees when the latter group includes more Antilleans. Staff are more satisfied about this interaction when detainees are in detention for a longer time. Moreover, the experience of this interaction is largely shared by detainees and staff; when staff rate interaction with detainees highly, detainees are more often satisfied about their interaction with staff. When detainees are less satisfied about interaction, staff indicate that their quantitative workload is a more frequent problem. The presence of drugs has a negative impact on how staff experience work pressure. The sense of safety among detainees correlates with the aggression that staff experience. Where there is a higher sense of safety amongst detainees, staff indicate that there are fewer problems in terms of aggression. However, where detainees appreciate interaction with fellow detainees more, staff experience more aggression.

A second series of analyses was used to explore which staff characteristics and behaviour influence the well-being of detainees. Where staff hold the same positions for an extended period of time and/or when the requirements and responsibilities arising for them are largely clear, detainees indicate that they are less satisfied about the clarity of rules. Where staff are satisfied about offer-

ing structure to detainees, the latter actually experience more clarity about their rights and the rules applicable for them. Within the analyses performed as part of this study, the way in which staff interact with detainees was found to influence a large number of areas of detainee well-being. Where members of staff say that they adopt a more helpful approach to detainees, the latter are more positive about their social reintegration, expectations for the future, autonomy, hygiene in the institution, how they spend their days, the daily programme, their contacts with the outside world and their general view of the institution. Where staff indicate that they are experiencing high levels of work pressure, detainees are actually less satisfied about how they spend their days, the daily programme and contacts with the outside world. Moreover, the leadership style adopted by the department head correlated with the perceived social reintegration and expectations that detainees have for the future. Where members of staff indicate that they experience stimulating management, detainees are more positive about their opportunities after detention. Corrective leadership, however, makes exactly the opposite contribution to this situation. Finally, a connection was found between violence towards staff and the sense of autonomy that detainees have. Where staff experience more physical violence from detainees on average, detainees say that they are less satisfied about their autonomy.

It was not possible to study all of the theoretical correlations from the literature and expert information, because this was not measured in the present questionnaires. Study recommendations were formulated on how the questionnaires could be improved from a technical and substantive point of view. The composition of some scales could be improved, answer categories could be optimised and the range of themes measured could be broadened. With regard to the latter point, it is recommended that questions on the detention conditions of detainees and staff working conditions should focus more on the specific situation of a penal institution.

Finally, it was established that the psychometric quality, the linking possibilities and the significant correlations encountered, form a solid basis for further study. The Research and Documentation Centre will provide a more detailed analysis of whether factors can be identified that are connected with the performance achieved by a penal institution, in the *Benchmark for the Prison System* study [*Benchmark Gevangeniswezen*].