

Risk and protective factors in criminal recidivist inmates

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- In the last decades, the areas of criminal recidivism and risk assessment have been gaining prominence in the scientific community¹.
- The literature confirms we must assess the risk and protective factors to know how to intervene with those who are serving prison sentences².
- It also points to the importance of certain variables such as age³ and criminal versatility⁴.

Objectives:

- Characterize the risk and protective factors of a sample of prison inmates;
- Verify the association between the risk, current age and age at the time of the first arrest;
- Analyse the differences in the risk according to criminal versatility.

- The investigation was approved by the Ethics Committee of Fernando Pessoa University, as well as by both the General Management of Social Reintegration and Prison Services and Setúbal's prison establishment.

Results:

- Medium to high risk of recidivism among inmates (low risk - 15.1%; medium risk - 43.8% and high risk - 41.1%);
- Risk factors prominently present in the sample: previous violence, substance abuse, impulsiveness and negative attitudes;
- Absence of certain protective factors: empathy, adaptive coping, self-control and motivation for treatment can also be noted.

Conclusions:

- Although most of the participants have a high or medium risk of recidivism, their risk factors and absent protective factors are mostly dynamic, leading us to the conclusion that intervention in these cases would lower the risk;
- The negative association between age at first arrest and risk, as well as the negative association between criminal versatility and risk are supported by the previous literature;
- Age and criminal versatility are two factors that deserve to be studied in future works;
- The present investigation raises some serious questions about the rehabilitative work that can be done in prison establishments.

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Design

Exploratory
Quantitative
Comparative

Sample

Non-probability convenience sample of 73 participants ranging from **19** to **65** years old.

Data Collection

Historical, Clinical and Risk Management Scheme (HCR-20)⁵;
Structured Assessment of Protective Factors for Violence Risk (SAPROF)⁶;
A form to assess age and criminal versatility.

No association between the inmates' *current age* and *risk*

• ($r = -.18, p = .13$).

There was a **negative association** between *age at first arrest* and *risk*

• ($r = -.34, p = .00$).

There were **no statistically significant differences** between the *means* of the *criminal versatility* groups for *risk*

• [$F(2.69) = 2.92, p = .06$].

• Post-Hoc Comparison confirmed that there were no differences between groups.

There was a **negative association** between *criminal versatility* and *risk*

• ($r = -.28, p = .02$).