




How Dark are Dark Figures? Official and Self-Report Rates of Inmate-On-Inmate Victimization

Teresa Braga, Andreia De Castro-Rodrigues , Silvana Mariadly Severim Di Folca, and Rui Abrunhosa Gonçalves

Psychology Research Centre, School of Psychology, University of Minho, Braga, Portugal

ABSTRACT

Inmate-on-inmate victimization rates were examined through official and self-report data. We checked prison records of 219 male inmates from a prison in Portugal, and estimated rates of official inmate-on-inmate victimization during a 12-month period. Of these 219 inmates, 108 agreed to participate in a self-report survey on their inmate-on-inmate victimization experiences in the last 12 months. According to official records 3.2% of the inmates were victimized, contrasting with the 78.5% prevalence rate revealed in self-report data. This high dark-figure highlights the need to implement specific strategies to prevent inmate-on-inmate victimization hence assuring the prison conditions necessary to corrections efficacy.

KEYWORDS

Inmates; prisons; victimization

Introduction

Interpersonal violence, defined as any behavior intentionally committed by an individual that either threatens, attempts, or actually causes physical, sexual, financial and/or psychological or emotional harm on another individual (Wolff, Shi, & Bachman, 2008), is a predominant feature of life in prison (Bowker, 1982; Byrne & Stowell, 2007; Wolff, Blitz, Shi, Siegel, & Bachman, 2007). According to Catalano (2005), physical assault is 18 times higher among male and 27 times higher among female inmates than for their respective non-incarcerated counterparts. However, comparing inmates' victimization rates to those from the general population is problematic because inmates are not representative of the general population but over represent poverty and situations of social inequalities (Wolff et al., 2008). In this sense, Teplin, McClelland, Abram, and Weiner (2005) matched individuals on race/ethnicity, sex, age, and income, and concluded that the rates of physical assault were still more than 10 times higher inside prison than the rates for people in poorer communities.

Self-report surveys, i.e., directly asking individuals about certain experiences generally through structured questionnaires, have been widely used to examine estimates of violence inside prisons. Early in the 1990s', Wooldredge (1994) concluded that approximately 14% of the 231 inmates from a medium security prison located in the USA were victimized by personal crimes (e.g., robbery, aggravated assault), and 20% were victimized by property crimes (e.g., stolen and damage property) during the three months immediately preceding the survey. Wooldredge (1998) extended his analyses to inmates from three USA prisons

and to a six month exposure period, and the estimates of inmate victimization rose to 48% for physical assault, simple assault, robbery, theft, or property damage. More recently, Wolff et al. (2007) and Wolff and Shi (2009) offered a comprehensive analyses of self-report physical victimization among approximately 8,000 inmates from 14 prisons in a mid-Atlantic state of the USA. As for the prevalence rate, approximately 21% of the inmates reported being physically victimized by another inmate in the six month period preceding the survey. A somewhat lower prevalence rate of inmate-on-inmate physical victimization (i.e., 7%) was found by Wooldredge and Steiner (2012, 2013) in their wide-scale self-report survey in 46 prisons covering two states of the USA; these authors focused on experiences of assaults by other inmates perceived as non-provoked. As for the European context, generally high prevalence rates of self-report inmate victimization have also been revealed. O'Donnell and Edgar (1998) found self-report prevalence rates as high as 34% for theft in the previous month among adult inmates from British prisons. In Spain, rates of either physical or sexual inmate-on-inmate victimization in a six month period reached 27.5% among the male inmates surveyed with any mental illness and 10.5% among those without mental illness (Sanchez & Wolff, 2016). Hagemann (2008) undertook a comparative survey study of seven Eastern and Central European countries, examining inmate victimization, among other variables. A total of 622 inmates were surveyed, and the questionnaire included physical victimization (e.g., physical and sexual assault), theft and blackmail/extortion, as well as an often-neglected type of violence, psychological and emotional (e.g., insults, humiliations). Results showed that Latvia was the country with the highest prevalence of inmate victimization (66% in one of the two included prisons), and a prison from Sweden revealed the lowest prevalence rate (32.4%). Overall, approximately 52% of the inmates reported at least one victimization experience during incarceration.

Some of the over reviewed studies have also highlighted an additional finding supporting the notion that prisons are violent places: many of the inmates that are victimized suffer more than one experience of violence. Of the male inmates who reported being victimized by another inmate in Wolff and Shi's (2009) study, approximately one-third admitted more than one type of physical victimization experience. Hagemann (2008) also referred to multiple victimization experiences in his comparative survey study of Eastern and Central European countries. These results highlight both the presence of revictimization, i.e., being repeatedly victimized, and what literature has designated as poly-victimization, i.e., suffering from different types of victimization (Finkelhor, Ormrod, & Turner, 2007; Finkelhor, Ormrod, Turner, & Hamby, 2005), in the prison context. Research on victimization in general has shown that both revictimization and poly-victimization are linked to more negative outcomes, such as deficits in emotion regulation, trauma symptoms, low self-esteem, depression, and externalizing behaviors (e.g., Finkelhor, Ormrod, & Turner, 2009; Smokowski, Evans, & Cotter, 2014; Walsh, DiLillo, & Scalora, 2011). Although the impact of revictimization has not yet been examined with regard to prison settings (to the best of our knowledge), it seems reasonable that individuals who suffer several experiences of violence inside prisons will also have worse outcomes compared to those that suffered less or one single experience.

While rates of self-report inmate victimization are in general alarmingly high, the discrepancy among them is also undeniable. Just in the present brief review of self-report rates of inmate victimization, we identified rates ranging from 7% (Wooldredge

& Steiner, 2012, 2013) to 66% (Hagemann, 2008). The reasons underlying the discrepant rates of self-report inmate victimization across studies have been related to how specifically the questions are operationalized (e.g., victim of physical violence versus been hit, kited, or bitten), the longer or shorter time period relative to which inmates are asked to report, and the identification of the perpetrator (i.e., another inmate, staff member) (see Wolff et al., 2008 for a review). Additionally, the type of violent behaviors assessed, and the individual characteristics of the sample may also result in discrepant rates of self-report inmate victimization. Research has shown that the odds of inmate victimization seems higher among certain race groups (Wooldredge & Steiner, 2012), older inmates (Kerbs & Jolley, 2007), and inmates with mental disorders (Sanchez & Wolff, 2016). Indeed, the over reviewed self-report surveys diverged in terms of: their operationalization of inmate victimization [Wooldredge and Steiner (2012, 2013) only included victimization experiences perceived as non-provoked] discriminating the perpetrators, with some studies eventually assessing both inmate-on-inmate and staff-on-inmate victimization (e.g., Wooldredge, 1994, 1998) and others only examining the first (e.g., Wolff et al., 2007; Wolff & Shi, 2009); the time period, varying from one (O'Donnell & Edgar, 1998), three (Wooldredge, 1994), six months (e.g., Wooldredge, 1998), to total reclusion time (Hagemann, 2008); and, finally, the behaviors assessed, including for instance only physical (Wolff et al., 2007; Wolff & Shi, 2009), either physical or sexual (Sanchez & Wolff, 2016), physical, sexual, psychological, and material violence (Hagemann, 2008).

When we examine official records of prison victimization, i.e., the incidents that are detected by prison staff or reported by inmates and that result in a formal complaint, a different picture emerges: few studies have documented prison violence through official records and those that have had, have generally revealed low prevalence rates. Official statistics on inmate victimization are inexistent in many countries (Kury & Smartt, 2002), including Portugal. Portuguese prison statistics do not include data on prison violence. The Portuguese Provider Justice Report (Provedoria da Justiça, 2003 cit Gonçalves, 2011) has alluded to the problem of inmate victimization but detailed information was not provided (e.g., type of acts), and has not been systematically available. In the USA, the Census of State and Federal Adult Correctional Facilities is conducted approximately every five to seven years and inquires correctional facilities about several subjects related to inmates, facilities, and staff, including the number of inmate-inflicted physical or sexual assaults on other inmates officially reported to the facility. According to the most recent available information regarding inmate inflicted assaults, for every 1,000 inmates in federal and state prisons, 28 were physically or sexually assaulted by another inmate in the preceding year. This percentage rate of 2.8 is clearly lower to those found by self-report surveys (Stephan & Karberg, 2003).

The difference between prison victimization rates derived from self-report surveys versus official records is not surprising. Official prison data inevitably presents the same problems as complaints, arrest, and conviction records, and self-report questionnaires of inmate victimization also enclose the same limitations of self-report questionnaires of community victimization. Several community surveys have highlighted substantial proportions of victimization experiences not officially reported to the police (e.g., Van Dijk, van Kesteren, & Smit, 2008; Van Kesteren, Mayhew, & Nieuwbeerta, 2000). Convictions records may more grossly under represent victimization experiences because they

characterize a later stage of the judicial process and thus are subject to other losses, such as the non identification of the suspect or the lack of evidence. These unreported or undiscovered crimes form the dark figures of crime. It is also important to note that self-reports of victimization present specific limitations, such as the telescoping effect, i.e., a temporal displacement of an event, perceiving recent events as being more remote and/or distant events as being more recent than they actually are. In addition the low educational level of the participants can also result in biased estimated of victimization experiences (Hope, 2005; Paulhus & Vazire, 2007).

In correctional research, studies comparing inmate survey data with official data are rare (Daggett & Camp, 2009). Estimating and contrasting inmate-on-inmate victimization through different sources of data is relevant to researchers and policy makers, as this knowledge can better inform prison management policies to intervene in and prevent inmate victimization. Estimating inmate-on-inmate victimization is even more important in countries where this phenomenon has been overlooked. How can we intervene in inmate-on-inmate victimization if we are unaware of its figures? Therefore, this study aimed to analyze inmate-on-inmate victimization through prison records and a self-report survey among the same Portuguese inmate population. We included a wide range of different types of violence that occurred in a specific time period – 12 months –, using behavioral descriptions of violence (in detriment to broad categories), and we clearly identified the perpetrator as another inmate.

Method

Participants

Participants were recruited from a central prison facility in the north of Portugal for male inmates. We only considered criminally liable and convicted inmates – excluding those with a severe mental illness, and those in pre-trial custody –, serving their sentence in a closed regime and incarcerated for at least 12 months so that all participants would have the same risk period of inmate-on-inmate victimization.

We checked the prison records of a total of 219 male inmates. The majority of these were Portuguese ($n = 213$; 97.3%) with a mean age of 40.83 ($SD = 11.97$). Approximately one-third of the participants had completed the fourth ($n = 69$, 31.5%), sixth ($n = 58$, 26.5%), or the ninth grade of education ($n = 66$, 30.1%). As for penal and prison characteristics, the most common type of crime committed were crimes against property ($n = 92$, 42.0%), followed by crimes against people ($n = 69$, 31.5%), and crimes against the state ($n = 49$, 22.4%). Participants had been incarcerated, in mean, for 34.83 months ($SD = 29.70$), and more than half of the inmates had a past conviction to prison ($n = 121$; 55.3%). All the participants shared a cell.

Of the 219 inmates whose prison records were checked, 108 agreed to participate in the self-reported survey. Thus, the response rate was 49.3%. We compared the socio-demographic and penal characteristics of this subgroup of inmates to those of the 219 inmates and found no significant differences in terms of their nationality ($\chi^2(1) = 0.00$, $p = .984$), mean age ($t(325) = 1.31$, $p = .192$), main crime ($\chi^2(3) = 4.04$, $p = .259$), first-time versus recidivist convicted prisoner ($\chi^2(1) = 3.99$, $p = .060$), and cell occupancy. The inmates who participated in the self-report survey did differ in terms of having a higher education level ($\chi^2(5) = 16.20$, $p = .006$), and being incarcerated for a longer

Table 1. Socio demographics and penal characteristics of the participants.

	Official records sample (<i>N</i> = 219)		Self-report sample (<i>N</i> = 108)	
	%/ <i>M</i>	<i>n</i> / <i>SD</i>	%/ <i>M</i>	<i>n</i> / <i>SD</i>
Age (mean, in years)	40.83	11.97	39.03	11.11
Nationality				
Portuguese	97.3	213	97.2	105
Other	2.7	6	2.8	3
Education level				
Illiterate	4.1	9	5.6	6
4th grade	31.5	69	14.8	16
6th grade	26.5	58	26.9	29
9th grade	30.1	66	34.3	37
12th grade	6.4	14	13.9	15
Higher education	4.6	3	4.6	5
No. of incarcerations				
First-time	44.7	98	56.5	61
More than one	55.3	121	43.5	47
Primary crime of conviction				
Crimes against property	42.0	92	36.1	35
Crimes against people	31.5	69	27.8	27
Crimes against the state	22.4	49	33.0	32
Crimes against life in society	4.1	9	3.1	3
Reclusion length (mean, in months)	34.83	29.70	43.78	39.77

time than the larger sample of inmates ($t(325) = -2.28, p = .023$). **Table 1** presents the socio demographic and penal characteristics of both the larger sample of 219 inmates and the subgroup who agreed to participate in the self-reported survey, labeled official and self-report sample respectively.

Measures

We developed a data collection form to record information from prison files. The data collection form comprehended the variables age, level of education, nationality, past prison convictions, main crime of conviction, time of reclusion, sharing or not cell, and inmate-on-inmate victimization reports.

We used the Prison Violence Inventory (PVI; Warren et al., 2002) to assess self-reports of inmate-on-inmate victimization. The inventory included 17 questions about direct victimization experiences answered in a Yes (1) or No (0) format, namely: threaten to throw with objects, to hit, or to harm; thrown with objects; pushed, grabbed, or shoved; slapped; kicked, bitten, or choked; hit with a fist or beaten up; forced sex; threaten with a weapon; attacked with object; snatched on; spread false rumors; excluded to make you feel bad; stopped talking to make you feel bad; told lies to get you in trouble; turned other inmates against you; stolen some object; and any other action considered to be violent. These items were combined into a total score of victimization. Inmates were instructed to report only to the last 12 months of reclusion, and solely to violence involving other inmates. PVI has been used in several studies of prison violence (e.g., Komarovskaya, Loper, & Warren, 2007; Warren, Hurt, Loper, & Chauhan, 2004), and has shown criteria validity with regard to violent institutional infractions (Warren et al., 2002).

We also collected self-report data on socio demographic and criminal variables, such as age, nationality, level of education, past prison convictions, main crime of current conviction, time of reclusion, and cell occupancy.

Procedures

We requested and were granted authorization to conduct the current study from the Portuguese General Directorate of Reintegration and Prison Services, Ministry of Justice. Data collection of both official and self-report data occurred in a three month time gap. Official data was collected through inmates' individual prison records, and all the information was registered on the data collection form. Authorization to translate and use the self-report inventory, the PVI, was obtained from the author. The inventory was first translated from English to Portuguese by one of the researchers fluent in English and with a degree in Psychology, and then independently translated back to English by a bilingual researcher, with a PhD in Forensic Psychology. All discrepancies were discussed and, when necessary, solved by a third researcher, also fluent in English with a PhD in Forensic Psychology. Inmates were informed about the objectives of the study, the anonymity and confidentiality of data, and asked to voluntarily participate. Those that agreed to participate signed a consent form and answered the PVI individually in the presence of one of the researchers.

Data analysis

Data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences Software (IBM® SPSS®) version 23.0. We used descriptive analyses to characterize the participants and their inmate victimization experiences, and we used inferential analyses, namely t-tests and chi-square test (χ^2), to compare the larger sample whose prison records were examined and the subgroup of inmates who participated in the self-report survey on sociodemographic and penal variables.

Results

Official inmate-on-inmate victimization

Prison official records revealed that 3.2% ($n = 7$) of the inmates had suffered from any kind of violence perpetrated by other inmates in the last 12 months of reclusion. The most representative victimization experience was suffering from physical violence ($n = 6$, 2.7%), followed by threats ($n = 2$, 0.9%). Suffering from theft occurred to one inmate ($n = 1$, 0.5%) in the 12 month period. No other specific types of inmate victimization behaviors were present in official records. Poly-victimization, however, was present: two inmates had experienced both physical violence and threats; the mean number of victimization experiences was 1.29 ($SD = .49$) among those who had suffered from violence perpetrated by other inmates.

Self-report inmate-on-inmate victimization

The majority of the participants reported an inmate-on-inmate victimization experience in the last 12 months of reclusion ($n = 84$, 78.5%). Lying to get them in trouble ($n = 60$; 55.6%) and spreading false rumors about them ($n = 59$; 54.6%) were the most common acts experienced by inmates. Only one participant (0.9%) reported being forced to have sex by another inmate. Being attacked with an object ($n = 10$; 9.3%) was also a rare event

Table 2. Prevalence of behaviors of inmate-on-inmate victimization.

Behaviors	Prevalence (N = 108)	
	%	n
Lying to get in trouble	55.6	60
Spread rumor	54.6	59
Turned other inmates against	52.8	57
“Snitched” on	50.9	55
Pushed, grabbed, or shoved	30.8	33
Theft	30.6	33
Threaten to throw objects, hit, or harm	30.6	33
Excluded or left out	25.9	28
Stopped talking to	25.9	28
Any other violent act	23.1	25
Slapped	20.4	22
Throw objects	16.7	18
Hit with fist or beaten up	15.7	17
Kicked, bitten, or choked	13.9	15
Threatened with weapon	11.1	12
Attacked with object	9.3	10
Forced sex	0.9	1

in the 12 month period. Similarly to official data, the self-report survey revealed the presence of poly-victimization: inmates who had reported an experience, suffered, in mean, 5.93 ($SD = 3.95$) different violent acts in the last 12 months of reclusion. Table 2 presents the prevalence of each act of inmate-on-inmate victimization.

Discussion

The main goal of the present study consisted in analyzing inmate-on-inmate victimization through official prison records and self-report data. Results revealed that the overall prevalence of inmate victimization was considerably superior in the self-report data when compared to official records in the 12 month assessment period, with a percentage difference of 75.3%. This figure indicated that the majority of the victimization incidents were not detected or reported to prison staff.

Further analyses revealed that only victimization experiences of physical violence, threats and thefts, with prevalence rates of 2.7%, 0.9% and 0.5% respectively, were presented in the official records. In turn, all of the 16 acts of victimization assessed through the self-report questionnaire were reported by at least one inmate, as was the case of sexual assault. When we compare official and self-report prevalence rates of similar acts of violence, discrepancies were also present although they were somewhat lower than those highlighted for the overall victimization prevalence. Specifically, suffering from physical violence inflicted by another inmate was officially recorded for 2.7% of the participants. According to the self-report survey, 9.3% of the inmates were attacked with an object, 15.7% were punched, and 20.4% were slapped; this represents percentage differences between 6.6% and 17.7%. As for threats, 2.7% of the inmates had been threaten by another inmate according to official prison records, while 30.6% and 11.1% self-reported being threatened with violence and threatened with an object, respectively. At last, results revealed a prevalence of 0.5% for officially recorded theft, while 30.6% of the inmates who participated in the self-report survey admitted having suffered this act.

Official inmate victimization rates may be highly underestimated as it has been argued that official data grossly underrepresents the real level of victimization inside prison (Wolff et al., 2007). Kury and Smartt (2002) commented that only a small amount, possibly not more than 10%, of all crimes is recorded. Also, Byrne and Hummer (2007) noticed that official records of assault (both physical and sexual), of other forms of prison violence (with the exception of homicide) as well as of prison disorders, only capture about 10 to 20% of those that occur in prison. Thus, operational data sources and inmates' self-reports have the potential to paint a different picture of the conditions of confinement due to the competing interests of the parties collecting/providing the data (Daggett & Camp, 2009).

There can be several explanatory hypotheses for the discrepancies found between official records and self-report data. While inmates may be unlikely to report, for several reasons, prison guards are unlikely to take action (Miller, 2010). One of the main reasons refers to the fear of retaliation either by the perpetrator or by the perpetrator's associates (Miller, 2010), highly based in the peer-enforced norm of not 'snitching' (Wolff et al., 2007). This norm seems to be particularly present in Portuguese prisons, as staying out of trouble by adhering to informal values and codes, including not "snitching", was identified as a major concern for inmates (Gonçalves et al., 2015). Inmates also employ discretion when deciding to report another inmate to correctional staff for behaviors such as theft of property, verbal harassment, or assault. Less violent types of victimization may not be reported to prison officials due to the fear of being labeled a "rat" (Irwin, 2005). Predatory acts may also be dealt unofficially, especially in prisons with a strong gang presence. Therefore, instead of reporting the behavior to staff, the inmate culture may provide a mechanism for addressing the behavior outside of official avenues (Daggett & Camp, 2009). Data on gangs in Portuguese's prisons is to the best of our knowledge inexistent, what may suggest that gangs are not a major problem in this context. However, in a qualitative study (Gonçalves et al., 2015) involving in-depth interviews with inmates from a regional and a central prison in Portugal, inmates referred to the presence of groups of bullies, although limited in number, especially in the central prison. Additionally, not every inmate may want to report a victimization experience due to the consequences of a victim status, namely additional costs generally associated to official complaints often referred as secondary victimization (Dignan, 2004). Another aspect that may influence the decision to report a victimization experience is a pre-existing relationship between the victim and the perpetrator (Miller, 2010). Portuguese inmates seem to select strategies of self-control, learning to ignore provocations and even insults, avoiding exposure and minding their own business in order to adapt to incarceration and prison (Gonçalves et al., 2015). These coping strategies might also have lead to the low official report rate of inmate-on-inmate victimization in the present study.

When we consider sexual victimization, the dark figures can increase considerably compared to other types of violence. In a subculture where masculinity is supreme, such as the prison subculture, reporting being sexually victimized by a same-sex inmate is very improbable (Smith & Batiuk, 1989; Struckman-Johnson, Struckman-Johnson, Rucker, Bumby, & Donaldson, 1996). Feelings of embarrassment or shame have been identified as barriers to officially report being sexually assaulted by other inmates. Inmates may also believe that they are partially responsible for what happened to them or that no official action will be taken against the offender. In fact, the European Committee for the

Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, in their report to the Portuguese Government regarding their visit to Portuguese prisons in 2016 (Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment [CPT], 2018), highlighted a case of inter-prisoner violence reported to prison staff but in which few additional measures were taken in view to prosecuting or sanctioning the perpetrators, ending in the victimized inmate's suicide.

Whereas the official measures can under represent inmate-on-inmate victimization, self-report measures can also be biased. Self-report measures involve the recall of past events and thus, many memory biases can affect their validity. One type of memory bias that can lead to the overrepresentation of events is the forward telescoping effect, this is, the tendency to displace remote events forward in time (Hope, 2005; Paulhus & Vazire, 2007). In particular, for the present study, participants may have placed a victimization experiences in the last 12 months when it actually occurred before. The educational level of the participant, the interviewers' characteristics and the conditions of the interview may also influence self-report victimization data (Hope, 2005), for example in terms of answering without fully understanding what is being asked and in terms of social desirability. In the present sample, more than 80% of the inmates had concluded the ninth grade or less, so the potential influence of a low educational level is of particular relevance to better interpret our results. Nonetheless, inmates' assessments of imprisonment experiences and of prison conditions have been considered a reliable data source, providing additional information for prison official measures. Even though prison administrators are often skeptical of inmates' capacity of being objective when providing assessments of their imprisonment conditions, research has demonstrated that inmates' perceptions vary across different prisons, indicating these are not uniform and random complaints about prison management (Daggett & Camp, 2009).

The overall prevalence of self-report inmate victimization found in the present study was quite high, but consistent with the prevalence found by other researchers. For instance, Wolff and Shi (2009) found an overall prevalence rate of 68%. In addition, Hagemann (2008) concluded that 66% of the inmates from a prison in Latvia had been victims of inmate inflicted violence. Another similarity between our results and those found in other studies is the low self-report prevalence of sexual assault. The latest report of the National Inmate Survey (NIS) highlighted a sexual victimization prevalence rate of 4.0% and 3.2% for state and federal prisons, respectively (Beck, 2013); 0.9% of the inmates that participated in the present study admitted being sexually assaulted by another inmate. These results suggest that sexual victimization is a rare phenomenon in the prison context. However, the feelings of shame identified as barriers to officially report being sexually assaulted by other same-sex inmates (Miller, 2010) might also lead inmates to underreport this type of victimization in self-report questionnaires, despite the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses.

The most self-reported crimes suffered by inmates were lying to get them in trouble and spreading false rumors about them; and these were not found in the official records. Despite the belief that these behaviors may be benign, psychological and emotional victimization may impose severe consequences to the victim, who becomes more vulnerable to other forms of victimization or, in the worst scenario, can lead to the victim's suicide (Gonçalves, 2011). In turn, a similarity between official and self-report data was the presence of poly-victimization, a pattern of victimization that leads to worse individual

functioning than single victimization experiences (e.g., Finkelhor et al., 2009; Walsh et al., 2011). Thus, a greater awareness of these particular forms of victimization is essential to prevent their occurrence and consequences.

Inmate-on-inmate violence has been associated to several factors. Inmates' individual variables such as age and levels of aggression have been strongly related to violent prison misconduct (Lahm, 2008). Some individual-level institutional variables have also showed to effect prison violence, such as sentence length and outside visits. Inmates serving short to medium sentences seem to be more likely to commit violent acts while imprisoned (Akman, 1966, Flanagan, 1983, Jiang & Fisher-Giorlando, 2002, in Lahm, 2008). In terms of the influence of visits on inmates' violent behavior, Ellis, Grasmick, & Gilman (1974) showed that inmates who received more visits were less likely to be aggressive inside prison. Inmates who are isolated from family and friends might experience more adjustment problems to prison life (Lahm, 2008). The prison culture has often been cited as an important factor contributing to observed levels of violence and disorder within prisons (Byrne & Stowell, 2007). Problems of overcrowding and lack of prisons guards have also been linked to violent prison misconduct (Lahm, 2008). According to the CPT, these last factors clearly characterize the Portuguese prison system, with certain prisons in Portugal described by "extreme overcrowding" (CPT, 2018, pp., 24,) with "lack of prison officers" (idem, pp., 29).

The present study enclosed some limitations. The self-report survey was completely anonymous, and any identification of the inmates was not consented by the prison management. The non-identification of the inmates in the self-report survey made it impossible to match the self-report questionnaires with the prison records and directly compare the data. Additionally, all inmates were recruited from a single prison facility and may not be representative of all Portuguese inmates. Nevertheless, in Portugal, the residential area of the inmates is not necessary a criterion for their placement in prison facilities. Finally, is it important to note that the self-report questionnaire, the PVI, was developed according to the North American reality which might be different from the Portuguese context. Nevertheless, the PVI has several advantages, such as addressing a large number of specific violent behaviors, including psychologically violent acts, and not the mere categories of violence. Behavioral operationalization of victimization experiences have been showed to reach more realistic rates of victimization than general categories (Wolff et al., 2008). Future studies should explore these issues, namely with qualitative and/or mixed methods approaches, to deepen the information in terms of the attitudes and representations associated to all these violent acts, as well as to phenomenologically explore these life experiences.

We believe that our results hold important value to penal system policies and practice. The majority of behaviors suffered by inmates were not officially reported. Specific strategies to reduce high rates of victimization are greatly needed. Inmates must be comprehensively assessed in order to separate those with high risk of being victimized, potentially poly-victims, from those with high risk of violence perpetration. Considering the high discrepancy between official records and self-reports, developing strategies to improve the communication and the quality and trust of the relationships between inmates and the prison staff is essential. More monitored activities such as vocational training and work assignments can also prevent or reduce the high rates of victimization found, as these activities may enhance cooperation and team work among inmates. In Portugal, implementing these activities is of great importance given the proportion of

unoccupied inmates in Portuguese prisons, approximately 45%, according to the most recent prison statistics (DGRSP, 2017). Intervention programs targeted to socialization, assertiveness and empathy competences should also be implemented. Taking into account that we found several forms of violence, not only physical, interventions promoting the awareness of psychological violence and its consequences are highly recommended.

The limited attention given to prison violence by the general society and by correctional institutions in particular reflects the societal norms regarding acceptable conditions and behavior inside prisons (Wolff et al., 2007). Nevertheless, a prison culture that, in some way, supports the situational use of violence to maintain order, or at least neglects its occurrence, may reinforce the community “culture” that offenders may experience both before going to prison and after release from prison (Byrne & Hummer, 2007). On the other hand, improvements in the quality of the daily life of staff and inmates will ultimately affect the “moral performance” of inmates when they return to the community (Byrne & Hummer, 2007). Thus, properly addressing this issue of prison violence must be a crucial point in political agendas, even because victims and victimizers inside prison, and consequently outside, can become synonymously intertwined (Kury & Smartt, 2002).

To rehabilitate inmates in a correctional setting where violence is pervasive is an almost impossible task to achieve (Wolff et al., 2007). The fear for one’s safety can undermine and compromise the process of correctional programming because it may erode the ability to focus on ‘resocialization’, rehabilitation, and treatment aims (Kury & Smartt, 2002; Wooldredge, 2003). Therefore, prisons, the institutions that were created to reduce and control violence in the community, may actually be having the opposite effect on inmates both during imprisonment and in the “communities” to which inmates return (Byrne & Stowell, 2007). The high rates of victimization revealed in the present study, mostly absent in prison records, highlight the need of focusing on safety inside prison, necessary to foster corrections efficacy and to a successful community reintegration (Wolff et al., 2007).

Funding

This research was conducted at Psychology Research Centre [Centro de Investigação em Psicologia] (UID/PSI/01662/2013), University of Minho, and supported by the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology [Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia] and the Portuguese Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education [Ministério da Ciência, Tecnologia e Ensino Superior] through national funds and co-financed by FEDER through COMPETE2020 under the PT2020 Partnership Agreement (POCI-01-0145-FEDER-007653). The study was also supported by Grant SFRH/BPD/108602/2015 from the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology awarded to the second author.

ORCID

Andreia De Castro-Rodrigues  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-0992-8572>

References

Beck, A. J. (2013). *Sexual victimization in prisons and jails reported by inmates 2011–12* (No. NCJ 241399). Washington, DC: Department of Justice. U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics.

- Bowker, L. H. (1982). Victimizers and victims in american correctional institutions. In (Eds.), *The pains of imprisonment* (pp. 63–76). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.
- Byrne, J. M., & Hummer, D. (2007). Myths and realities of prison violence: A review of the evidence. *Victims & Offenders*, 2(1), 77–90. doi:10.1080/15564880601087241
- Byrne, J. M., & Stowell, J. (2007). Examining the link between institutional and community violence: Toward a new cultural paradigm. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 12(5), 552–563. doi:10.1016/j.avb.2007.02.007
- Catalano, S. (2005). *Criminal victimization, 2004* (No. NCJ 210674). Washington, DC: Department of Justice. U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics.
- Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. (2018). *Report to the Portuguese government on the visit to Portugal carried out by the European committee for the prevention of torture and inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (CPT) from 27 September to 7 October 2016*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing.
- Daggett, D. M., & Camp, S. D. (2009). Do official misconduct data tell the same story as the individuals who live in prison? *Criminal Justice Review*, 34(3), 428–449. doi:10.1177/0734016808329291
- DGRSP (2017). Existing inmates, according to penal situation, in training and in activity, by type of prison. Retrieved from <https://dgrsp.justica.gov.pt/Estat%C3%ADsticas-e-indicadores/Prisionais/2017>
- Dignan, J. (2004). *Understanding victims and restorative justice*. Berkshire: McGraw-Hill Education.
- Ellis, D., Grasmick, H. G., & Gilman, B. (1974). Violence in prisons: a sociological analysis. *Sociology*, 80, 16–43. doi:10.1086/225760.
- Finkelhor, D., Ormrod, R. K., & Turner, H. A. (2007). Poly-victimization: A neglected component in child victimization trauma. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 31, 7–26. doi:10.1016/j.chiabu.2006.06.008
- Finkelhor, D., Ormrod, R. K., & Turner, H. A. (2009). Lifetime assessment of poly-victimization in a national sample of children and youth. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 33, 403–411. doi:10.1016/j.chiabu.2008.09.012
- Finkelhor, D., Ormrod, R. K., Turner, H. A., & Hamby, S. L. (2005). Measuring poly-victimization using the JVQ. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 29(11), 1297–1312. doi:10.1016/j.chiabu.2005.06.005
- Gonçalves, L., Gonçalves, R. A., Martins, C., Braga, T., Ferreira, C., & Lindegaard, M. R. (2015). Prisoners coping strategies in Portugal. In C. Reeves (Ed.), *Experiencing imprisonment: Research on the experience of living and working in carceral institutions* (pp. 119–136). New York: Routledge.
- Gonçalves, R. A. (2011). Vitimação na prisão. In A. I. Sani (Ed.), *Temas de vitimologia. Realidades emergentes na vitimação e novas respostas sociais* (pp. 213–239). Coimbra: Almedina.
- Hagemann, O. (2008). Conditions of imprisonment – victimization and conflicts in European prisons. *Journal of Ethnicity in Criminal Justice*, 6(4), 281–302. doi:10.1080/15377930802530312
- Hope, T. (2005). What do crime statistics tell us? In C. Hale, K. Hayward, A. Wahidin, & E. Wincup (Eds.), *Criminology*, pp. 30–60. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Irwin, J. (2005). *The warehouse prison: Disposal of the new dangerous class*. Los Angeles: Roxbury.
- Kerbs, J. J., & Jolley, J. M. (2007). Inmate-on-inmate victimization among older male prisoners. *Crime & Delinquency*, 53(2), 187–218. doi:10.1177/0011128706294119
- Komarovskaya, I., Loper, A. B., & Warren, J. (2007). The role of impulsivity in antisocial and violent behavior and personality disorders among incarcerated women. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 34(11), 1499–1515. doi:10.1177/0093854807306354
- Kury, H., & Smartt, U. (2002). Prisoner-on-prisoner violence: Victimization of young offenders in prison. Some German findings. *Criminal Justice*, 2(4), 411–437. doi:10.1177/17488958020020040301
- Lahm, K. F. (2008). Inmate-on-inmate assault: A multilevel examination of prison violence. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 35(1), 120–137. doi:10.1177/0093854807308730
- Miller, K. (2010). The darkest figure of crime: Perceptions of reasons for male inmates to not report sexual assault. *Justice Quarterly*, 27(5), 692–712. doi:10.1080/07418820903292284
- O'Donnell, I., & Edgar, K. (1998). Routine victimization in prison. *The Howard Journal of Criminal Justice*, 37, 266–279. doi:10.1111/1468-2311.00097

- Paulhus, D. L., & Vazire, S. (2007). The self-report method. In R. W. Robins, R. C. Fraley, & R. F. Krueger (Eds.), *Handbook of research methods in personality psychology* (pp. 224–239). New York: Guilford.
- Sanchez, F. C., & Wolff, N. (2016). Self-report rates of physical and sexual violence among Spanish inmates by mental illness and gender. *The Journal of Forensic Psychiatry & Psychology*, 27(3), 443–458. doi:10.1080/14789949.2016.1145721
- Smith, N. E., & Batiuk, M. E. (1989). Sexual victimization and social interaction. *The Prison Journal*, 69, 29–38. doi:10.1177/003288558906900206
- Smokowski, P. R., Evans, C. B. R., & Cotter, K. L. (2014). The differential impacts of episodic, chronic, and cumulative physical bullying and cyberbullying: The effects of victimization on the school experiences, social support, and mental health of rural adolescents. *Violence and Victims*, 29(6), 1029–1045. doi:10.1891/0886-6708.VV-D-13-00076
- Stephan, J. J., & Karberg, J. C. (2003). *Census of state and federal correctional facilities, 2000*. US Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics.
- Struckman-Johnson, C., Struckman-Johnson, D., Rucker, L., Bumby, K., & Donaldson, S. (1996). Sexual coercion reported by men and women in prison. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 33(1), 67–76. doi:10.1080/00224499609551816
- Teplin, L. A., McClelland, G. M., Abram, K. M., & Weiner, D. A. (2005). Crime victimization in adults with severe mental illness: Comparison with the National crime victimization survey. *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 62, 911–921. doi:10.1001/archpsyc.62.8.911
- Van Dijk, J. J. M., van Kesteren, J. N., & Smit, P. (2008). *Criminal victimization in international perspective, key findings from the 2004–2005 ICVS and EU ICS*. The Hague: Boom Legal Publishers.
- Van Kesteren, J. N., Mayhew, P., & Nieuwebeerta, P. (2000). *Criminal victimization in seventeen industrialized countries: Key-findings from the 2000 International crime victims survey*. The Hague: Ministry of Justice, WODC.
- Walsh, K., DiLillo, D., & Scalora, M. J. (2011). The cumulative impact of sexual revictimization on emotion regulation difficulties: An examination of female inmates. *Violence against Women*, 17(8), 1103–1118. doi:10.1177/1077801211414165
- Warren, J. I., Hurt, S., Loper, A. B., Bale, R., Friend, R., & Chauhan, P. (2002). Psychiatric symptoms, history of victimization, and violent behavior among incarcerated female felons: An American perspective. *International Journal of Law and Psychiatry*, 25, 129–149. doi:10.1016/S0160-2527(01)00104-2
- Warren, J. I., Hurt, S., Loper, A. B., & Chauhan, P. (2004). Exploring prison adjustment among female inmates issues of measurement and prediction. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 31(5), 624–645. doi:10.1177/0093854804267096
- Wolff, N., Blitz, C., Shi, J., Siegel, J., & Bachman, R. (2007). Physical violence inside prison: Rates of victimization. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 34(5), 588–599. doi:10.1177/0093854806296830
- Wolff, N., & Shi, J. (2009). Type, sources, and patterns of physical victimization. *The Prison Journal*, 89, 172–191. doi:10.1177/0032885509334754
- Wolff, N., Shi, J., & Bachman, R. (2008). Measuring victimization inside prisons. Questioning the questions. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 26(10), 1343–1362. doi:10.1177/0886260508314301
- Wooldredge, J. (2003). Keeping pace with evolving prison populations for effective management. *Criminology and Public Policy*, 2, 253–258. doi:10.1111/j.1745-9133.2003.tb00123.x
- Wooldredge, J., & Steiner, B. (2012). Race group differences in prison victimization experiences. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 40, 358–369. doi:10.1016/j.jcrimjus.2012.06.011
- Wooldredge, J., & Steiner, B. (2013). Violent victimization among state prison inmates. *Violence and Victims*, 28(3), 531–551. doi:10.1891/0886-6708.11-00141
- Wooldredge, J. D. (1994). Inmate crime and victimization in a southwestern correctional facility. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 22, 367–381. doi:10.1016/0047-2352(94)90083-3
- Wooldredge, J. D. (1998). Inmate lifestyles and opportunities for victimization. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 35, 480–502. doi:10.1177/0022427898035004006