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Title	Factors that support successful transition to community among women leaving prison in British Columbia: a prospective cohort study
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Reviewer 1	Tara Marie Watson
Institution	Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, Toronto, Ont.
General comments (author response in bold)	<p>1. This paper reports on factors associated with "successful" post-prison transitions to the community among women, an important yet understudied topic and population in carceral research and health-related studies. While I think there are merits to the study design and interpretation of the findings, I would suggest some rewriting to make the description of the study and results clearer and present with greater relevance.</p> <p>2. Introduction: I'm not sure that the Introduction adequately meets the criteria in the appropriate checklist; it's very brief and not so cohesive to this reviewer (who has familiarity with the correctional systems in Canada). While the first line cites an (old) reference to say that the number of women sentenced to two years or more (i.e., federally incarcerated women) has almost doubled since the mid-1990s, the following sentences seem to give a mixed (?) description of federally and provincially incarcerated women - it's unclear to me. Given that the population in this study are women who have spent time in provincial correctional centres in BC, I think the introduction needs to more clearly set up for the reader: the difference between federal and provincial, and where you're referencing federal and/or provincial data; and, potentially, the unique setting that BC has to offer. For instance, there's a sentence in the Methods that references less than two years as the sentencing period for provincial custody that could be moved up. <b>We have revised our Introduction to include more recent statistics and have clearly differentiated between provincial and federal population. As suggested we have moved the sentence in the Methods about the length of sentencing in the provincial custody to the Introduction.</b></p> <p>3. What about more current context? Women still represent a fast-growing population in prisons, especially Indigenous women. I would consider drawing more attention to this in the Introduction, perhaps referencing the most recent report from the Office of the Correctional Investigator. It might be worth bringing some of the material in the Discussion up to the Introduction. At present, the Introduction lacks a solid study rationale; more can be said about the need to study post-prison community transitions and associated health service implications in particular. <b>We have included in the introduction as suggested, federal statistics from the Office of the Correctional Investigator with specific reference to Indigenous Women.</b></p> <p>4. Is there a year for citation 5? <b>The reference for which the reviewer requests a publication year (formerly citation 5) has been replaced with a more recent citation.</b></p> <p>5. Methods: I think a statement about where ethics approval(s) was granted for this study should be included. <b>We have added a sentence at the end of the section on recruitment indicating that approval to proceed was granted by the University of British Columbia Clinical Research Ethics Board.</b></p> <p>6. All data collection itself took place between 2008 and 2010? Also, if there were no other eligibility criteria to participate other than being discharged from a centre in the last year, perhaps this should be clearly stated. <b>The reviewer is correct in that recruitment took place between 2008-10 as stated in the Setting section. We have clarified under the Participants section that the only criterion for eligibility was discharge from a provincial correctional centre in BC within the previous year.</b></p> <p>7. The couple of sentences about PAR do not say very much about the approach. Crucially, given the objectives of PAR, I think the selection and involvement of the peer researchers needs at least a concise discussion, particularly in relation to any skills- or capacity-building for these peers. Were they also involved in any data analysis and/or discussions regarding the relevance of the results? <b>To the section on participatory action research in the first paragraph of the methods, we have added the sentence "In the current study women who were former inmates participated in the design of the study, the development of our survey tools, undertook the baseline and follow-up interviews, assisted in data analysis and participated in interpreting study findings" to clarify the engagement of the peer researchers and reflect the skill-building activities that they undertook.</b></p> <p>8. Results and Interpretation: I understand why the researchers chose to rely on self-reported recidivism, though there are obvious limitations. What kinds of post-release "criminal activity" did the women report? Was that specific information collected? I feel that adding this would not only better characterize the sample and validate how you measured recidivism, but may also help ground the findings. <b>In the Analysis section, we have included a sentence to indicate the types of criminal activity that women were reporting on.</b></p> <p>9. Overall, I find the final section to read more like a laundry list, lacking cohesiveness - although I certainly agree with the importance of some of the recommendations embedded in the discussion. I would recommend rewriting with a clearer organization, and moving some of the material to the Introduction to, again, better contextualize the study. The way it reads, the health-related implications and significance of the findings do not strongly stand out. <b>We have moved some of the content of the Interpretation to the Introduction. We have written the Interpretation Section to consolidate the findings related to health at the beginning of the section.</b></p> <p>10. Wording suggestion: Use "Indigenous" instead of "Aboriginal", and perhaps also "cannabis" instead of "marijuana", to reflect more current language. <b>We have replaced the "Aboriginal" with "Indigenous" and "marijuana" with "cannabis."</b></p>
Reviewer 2	Rahim Moineddin
Institution	Department of Family and Community Medicine, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ont.
General comments (author response)	<p>1. Page 5 lines 18 and 19: This sentence doesn't make sense 'Four hundred women completed a baseline interview and 207 completed additional interviews during the subsequent year, contributing 395 interviews in total. If 400 completed baseline interview and 207 completed additional interviews why 395 interviews in total.'</p>

<p>response in bold)</p>	<p>In the first paragraph of the results section, we have changed the last sentence to read <b>"These 207 women together contributed 395 interviews."</b> We only included in our study women who had completed at least one follow-up interview.</p> <p>2. Page 7 analysis section. Authors wrote: To identify associations between achievement of the health and social goals identified in the ACCW forums in the year following release and the probability of committing a criminal act in the three months prior to each interview, we undertook a repeated measures analysis using a logistic mixed-effects model with each participant's unique study number as a random nesting effect. This approach is not appropriate. Women were interviewed at baseline, 3, 6, 9, and 12 months. If a woman commits a crime after one interview then she will not be at the risk of committing crime anymore if she is arrested. Also logistic regression doesn't accommodate death and loss of follow up. Authors should use time to event method for analyzing their data.</p> <p>There are a few considerations, which do make logistic regression one of several competing ways of analyzing these data. Women were self-reporting crimes for only the previous 3 months and this is what was analyzed (not re-incarceration), so that committing a crime does not by definition remove a woman from the dataset. Similarly, women who were re-incarcerated typically had very short incarcerations making them at risk again at later time points. Women could answer the questionnaire at all of the time points and have committed a crime in the previous 3 months at all time points. A traditional time-to-event analysis only allows for analysis of time to the first event. Multiple event analysis methods do exist, but they do not allow for heterogeneity in the follow-up (e.g. not answering the questionnaire at month 3, but answering at month 12). In other words, we have heterogeneous interval-censoring, which is generally difficult to estimate in an unbiased way, and not yet fully developed for multiple event type models. Given the extremely complex nature of this dataset we chose to do a simplified analysis. We are aware that this may make parameter estimates inaccurate, and is an inefficient style of analysis, however, the results of this study can be used to inform the design of future studies such that they can focus on potentially important covariates, and can be analyzed in more sophisticated ways.</p>
<p><b>Reviewer 3</b></p>	<p>Max Trubnikov</p>
<p>Institution</p>	<p>Centre for Communicable Diseases and Infection Control, Public Health Agency of Canada, Ottawa, Ont.</p>
<p>General comments (author response in bold)</p>	<p>1. p.3, Line 9, needs full stop after "offences." This sentence has been deleted in the revisions.</p> <p>2. p.3, line 47 "dentition oral" may be better replaced by "dental/oral"? Change made.</p> <p>3. p.4, line 30, In the description of choosing "recidivism" over "re-incarceration" (or in some other place in the paper), it would have been helpful for readers considering taking a similar approach to understand the implication of authors' choice of the outcome measure if authors provided their perspective on how it may have affected the analyses (e.g. a higher sensitivity outcome due to its "equalizing" effect over recent recruits and more experienced offenders?) We have added a sentence in our limitations section to indicate that while our choice of self-reported criminal activity may have raised the sensitivity of the study to detect this outcome, it is not equivalent to re-incarceration and thus limits the comparability of our results to other studies.</p> <p>4. p4, lines 44-46 Would be helpful to have a description of what was the threshold for removing/retaining variables This has been added to the manuscript.</p> <p>5. p5, lines 12-13 it's questionable whether there really is such a thing as a drug of choice. Market's availability and affordability at a particular time are major decision factors. Therefore, I suggest using "reported use of marijuana or cocaine" instead. We have made this change.</p> <p>6. P5, line 20 In multivariate analyses, isn't it always the case that variables remained in the model are "independent". If you agree with that understanding, "independent" can be dropped without affecting the overall idea. <b>We agree and have dropped the word "independent"</b></p> <p>7. P5, line 22 would be helpful if what was meant here by "nutritional and spiritual health" were more explicitly defined On page 5 in the first paragraph, we have added two sentences to indicate how women defined spiritual and nutritional health.</p> <p>8. p.5, line 57 to make a distinction from what was reported elsewhere, I suggest to start the phrase, "In our study, this was particularly important..." <b>We note the reviewer's comment but feel that the words "In our study, health status and post incarceration access to health services proved more important than either employment status or relationships" already make a distinction from what was reported elsewhere.</b></p> <p>9. p.6, line 3 preposition "to" is missing in "...to return [...] their community..." Change made.</p> <p>10. p.6, line 5 for clarity, I suggest replacing "Canadian" with non-Aboriginal or non-Indigenous. <b>In the sentence "Fifty two percent of our sample was comprised of Indigenous women in stark contrast to 4% of the Canadian population" - we meant that 4% of the Canadian population is Indigenous; we were not comparing to a non-Indigenous population.</b></p> <p>11. p.6, lines 8-9 "not clear what "having a child at home" means. Is it about taking care of a child or about having the child in homecare. Similarly, "sense of inadequacy and loss" needs to be described bit more. We have eliminated the paragraph that this sentence was in in order to conform to the word count requirements.</p> <p>12. p.6, line 37 suggest replacing "was not unexpected" with "was expected". <b>We have replaced "was not unexpected" with "anticipated" to simplify the phrase.</b></p> <p>13. P8, Table 2 title needs clarification that the measures come from univariate analyses <b>We have added "Univariate Analysis" to the title.</b></p>

14. P8, table 2 The ways general nutritional and spiritual health were ascertained need to be better clarified Self-reported measure? any particular objective thresholds used in differentiating between 1-5?

**We have clarified how women viewed nutritional and spiritual health under point 7 above. We have also added our survey tools as supplementary material and the reader will be able to see that these items were self-reported on a scale of 1-5 with the labels "poor", "fair", "good", "very good", "excellent".**

15. P10, and p11 figure 2 and table 3 titles needs clarification that the measures come from multivariate analyses and if they were adjusted for any particular variables

**We have added "univariate analysis" to the title in Table 2 and "multivariate" analysis to Table 3."**