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INTRODUCTION

- Records show that 600,000 people are incarcerated every year in the United States (Rowell-Cunsolo et al., 2020).
- Some research has indicated that within the first three years after being released from prison, up to 67.5% of inmates recidivate (Cullen et al., 2011).
- Factors attributed to higher recidivism rates may include familial criminal behavior, peer involvement in criminal behavior, and insufficient strategies for coping.
- Lowering recidivism rates will help successfully reintegrate more ex-prisoners into society and reduce the financial burden on taxpayers (Mulder et al., 2011).
- Research has shown that inmates who have strong social support systems are less likely to recidivate.
- These support systems also lead to better employment and mental health prospects (Kjellstrand et al., 2022).
- Additionally, external social support such as visitation can reduce the likelihood of and even delay recidivism (Bales & Mears, 2008).

RELIGIOSITY & SOCIETAL SUPPORT

- A study conducted by Haviv and colleagues (2019) has indicated that religious support can play a key role in the prevention of recidivism.
- Furthermore, studies show that religious communities can also aid in societal integration (Flores & Cossyleon, 2016).
- Additionally, religious support systems can assist in reducing specific behaviors such as substance abuse which many ex-inmates suffer from (Staton et al., 2003).
- Several interventions have been implemented over the years in an attempt to reduce recidivism.
- Such support mechanisms include ongoing education in prison and reentry programs post incarceration (Bozick et al., 2018).
- Formerly incarcerated individuals reported a lack of adequate social and financial means to connect with external religious institutions (Jacobs, 2009).
- Studies show that religious outreach programs tailored to meet individual ex-inmates' needs are more effective at improving outcomes upon reentry (Flores & Cossyleon, 2016).

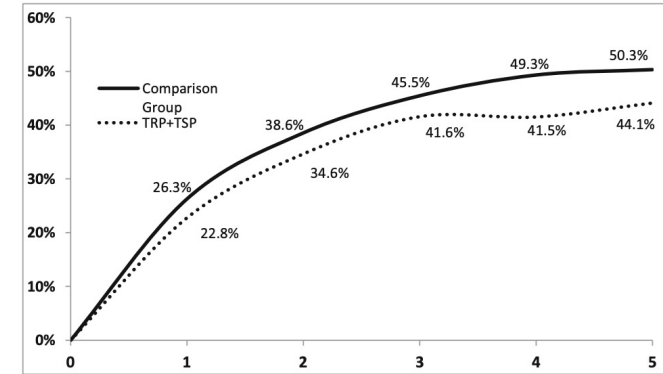


Fig. 3 Rates of rearrest following release among prisoners who participated in both the Torah study program and the Torah rehabilitation program compared to their matched sample of non-participants. See also table 7

(Haviv et al., 2020)

DISCUSSION

- Current studies have indicated that when religious support is combined with social support, former inmates are less likely to recidivate.
- However, methodological issues exist in several of the current literature studies, thus hindering the overall validity.
- A dire need for further research is necessary to clearly determine whether religiosity post-incarceration should be considered as a protective factor.

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