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**COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF INSTITUTION
DIVISION OF YOUTH SERVICES**

**RECIDIVISM ANALYSIS OF JUVENILES
DISCHARGED IN FY 1990-91**

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RECIDIVISM ANALYSIS OF JUVENILES DISCHARGED IN FY 1990-91

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Based on a recommendation from the Colorado Legislative Audit Committee, representatives of four state agencies (the Division of Criminal Justice, the Department of Social Services Child Welfare Division, the Judicial Department and the Division of Youth Services), developed a standard definition of recidivism which would allow comparison of recidivism information across programs that serve delinquent youths. Recidivism is defined as an adjudication or conviction for a new felony or misdemeanor offense. This definition was applied in the present study of 482 youths discharged from the Department of Institutions, Division of Youth Services in FY 1990-91. Information was collected on new adjudications or convictions received prior to discharge from DOI, and within one year following discharge. Following is a summary of the major findings:

Findings related to new adjudications/convictions prior to discharge:

- Of the 465 youths for whom disposition information was known, 230 (49%) had no new filings, 26 (6%) had a new filing in which the case was dismissed or the verdict was 'not guilty', and 209 (45%) received a new adjudication or conviction prior to discharge from DOI. (New filings were identified in the Judicial database for an additional 13 youths, but dispositions of these cases were unknown. These youths were excluded from further analyses.)
- Youths who received a new adjudication or conviction prior to discharge tended to be male, younger at age of first adjudication, minority ethnic status, committed on a property charge, and have one or more adjudications prior to commitment.

- While knowledge of variables which were found to be statistically related to recidivism prior to discharge produced better than chance classification of recidivists versus non-recidivists, accuracy of classification using these variables in discriminant function analysis was only 59 percent (compared with 50% expected by chance).

Findings related to new adjudications/convictions within one year following discharge:

- Of the 434 males for whom disposition was known, 275 (63%) had no new filings, 20 (5%) had a new filing in which the case was dismissed or the verdict was 'not guilty', 31 (7%) were under adult court authority at the time of discharge from DOI, and 108 (25%) were discharged but received a new adjudication or conviction within one year.
- Young age at first adjudication, minority ethnic status, and adjudications prior to commitment were associated with recidivism within one year of discharge from DOI. However, when this information and information on length of stay in secure, community residential, or total residential settings was analyzed using discriminant function analyses, it was possible to accurately classify only 57 percent of the youths in the study, (again only slightly better than chance).
- While information on recidivism is reported by placement (i.e., where youths spent the majority of their residential time), recidivism comparisons across programs is not appropriate since profiles of clients served differ for the various agencies.
- While the differences in rates of recidivism by job/school status at discharge was not statistically significant, the low number of youths (26%) working or in school at the point of discharge from DOI is of concern.

INTRODUCTION

In Fiscal Year 1990-91, 482 youths were discharged from the Department of Institutions (DOI). Of these, 447 (93%) were males and 35 (7%) were females. A study was done to analyze performance related to recidivism at two distinct time periods for this discharge cohort. The study is divided into two Sections based on these time periods: *Section 1*: New adjudications/convictions received during their commitment to DOI (i.e., prior to discharge), and *Section 2*: New adjudications/convictions received within one year following discharge from DOI. Section 1 provides information on the number of youths in the total cohort (i.e., males and females) who received additional adjudications prior to discharge, and Section 2 provides recidivism information on the 447 males discharged up to one year following discharge. Females are eliminated from the follow-up study due to name changes resulting from marriage which hampers the ability to obtain follow-up information, and because the number of females committed to DOI is small.

Specific demographic, criminal, and prior placement characteristics, as well as placement in various DOI state-operated and contracted programs are examined in terms of the presence or absence of additional adjudications or convictions for a new misdemeanor or felony offense prior to discharge and within one year following discharge from DOI. This measure of recidivism results from efforts by representatives of four agencies (the Division of Criminal Justice, the Judicial Department, the Department of Social Services Child Welfare Division, and the Division of Youth Services) to respond to recommendations of the Colorado Legislative Audit Committee. The committee emphasized the need for a standard definition of recidivism to assist in program evaluation and comparison of program effectiveness across agencies.

Data on filings and dispositions were obtained from the Judicial Department, and information on entry into the adult correctional system prior to discharge or within one year following discharge was obtained from the Department of Corrections and the

Division of Criminal Justice. This information was merged with data which exists in the DYS automated client data base. While the data maintained by DOC and DCJ is statewide, filing information from DCJ available through their computer system represents approximately 90 to 95 percent of the total filings in the state. While some filing information may be missing, the availability of information from DOC, DCJ and DYS on new convictions and commitments should minimize the amount of missing data related to recidivism.

PROFILE OF THE 1990-91 DISCHARGE COHORT

Of the 482 youths discharged in FY 1990-91, 140 (50%) were anglo, 74 (15%) were African American, 138 (29%) were Hispanic and 30 (6%) were of other ethnic backgrounds. The average age of the youths was 15.9 years at commitment, and 18 years at discharge. Seventy percent of the youths had at least one adjudication prior to the adjudication that resulted in commitment to DOI. While the majority of youths (68%) were committed on property offenses (e.g., theft, burglary, etc.), 62 youths (13%) were committed on felony offenses against persons. The remaining 19 percent of youths were committed on other types of offenses (e.g., use/distribution of controlled substances, obstruction, harassment, misdemeanor assault, etc.).

In the next two sections, the date of the filing was used to classify an adjudication/conviction 'prior to discharge' versus an adjudication/conviction 'post' discharge.

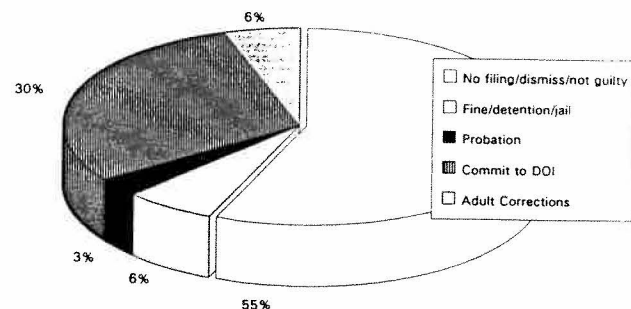
SECTION 1. ADDITIONAL ADJUDICATIONS PRIOR TO DISCHARGE

Table 1 shows the new adjudication status (prior to discharge) for the 1990-91 discharge cohort. It is important to note that youths on parole status are still in DOI custody. Additional adjudications obtained during parole are included in new adjudications received 'prior to discharge', but are excluded in the one-year follow-up

(next section) unless the youth is under adult court authority at the time of discharge from DOI. (All youths who are under adult court authority at the time of discharge are treated separately in the one-year follow analyses in Section 2 since they are less able to re-offend due to their custody status.)

TABLE 1
MOST SERIOUS DISPOSITION OF YOUTHS ADJUDICATED
PRIOR TO DISCHARGE FROM DOI

Disposition	N	%
No new filings identified	230	49.5%
New filing/case dismissed or not-guilty verdict	26	5.6%
Fine with or without a jail or detention sentence	26	5.6%
Probation	16	3.4%
Commitment to DOI	136	29.2%
Adult Community Corrections	2	0.4%
Department of Corrections	25	5.4%
Disch. Under Adult Court Authority/Placement Unknown	4	0.9%
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Subtotal	465	100.0%



Note: New filings were identified in the Judicial Department database for an additional 17 youths (3% of the total discharge cohort), but information on disposition was missing in the automated file. These youths were not recommitted to DOI and did not appear in the Department of Corrections or Division of Criminal Justice data files. They are excluded from further analyses in this section.

While still in the custody of DOI, 209 (45%) youths received one or more additional adjudications prior to discharge. Some youths were adjudicated more than once. In the above table, youths are counted under the most serious disposition received prior to discharge. Youths who had a new adjudication **and** a new conviction resulting in a commitment to DOI **and** a sentence to adult corrections prior to discharge are counted under an adult corrections category.

Two-hundred and thirty youths (49%) received no additional adjudications prior to discharge. An additional 26 youths (6%) had a new filing but charges were dismissed or the youth received a not-guilty verdict, and no further filings were identified.

a. New Adjudication Prior to Discharge by Gender

Table 2 shows breakdowns of adjudication status during commitment (i.e. additional adjudication versus no additional adjudication prior to discharge) by gender for this discharge cohort.

TABLE 2
NEW ADJUDICATION BREAKDOWN BY GENDER
(Prior to Discharge from DOI)

	No Adjudication		Adjudication		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Males	229	53%	202	47%	431	93%
Females	27	79%	7	21%	34	7%
TOTAL	256	55%	209	45%	465	100%

(Chi-Square=8.8, p =0.003)

Males were significantly more likely to receive an additional adjudication prior to discharge than females. Forty-seven percent of males discharged in FY 1990-91 had been readjudicated compared with only 21 percent of females.

b. New Adjudication Prior to Discharge by Ethnicity

Table 3 shows the ethnic breakdown of youths who received one or more additional adjudications prior to discharge and those who received no additional adjudications.

TABLE 3
NEW ADJUDICATION BREAKDOWN BY ETHNICITY
(Prior to Discharge from DOI)

	No Adjudication		Adjudication		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Anglo	148	64%	84	36%	232	50%
African American	36	51%	34	49%	70	15%
Hispanic	62	46%	73	54%	135	29%
Native American	4	44%	5	56%	9	2%
Other	6	32%	13	68%	19	4%
TOTAL	256	55%	209	44%	465	100%

(Chi-square=16.7, p=0.002)

A significantly higher proportion of minority youths than anglo youths received an additional adjudication prior to discharge. Only 36 percent of anglo youths were adjudicated again compared with 49 percent of African American youths, 54 percent of

Hispanic youths, 56 percent of American Indian youths, and 68 percent of youths from other ethnic backgrounds. (The 19 youths classified as 'Other' in the DYS database indicate a mixed ethnic heritage.) Minority youths are over represented at the point of commitment (50 percent of this discharge cohort are minority). The data indicate that within this committed population, over representation again occurs in additional adjudications received prior to discharge.

c. New Adjudication Prior to Discharge by Number of Prior Adjudications

Table 4 compares new adjudication breakdowns by adjudication status prior to commitment.

**TABLE 4
NEW ADJUDICATION BREAKDOWN BY PRIOR
ADJUDICATION STATUS
(Prior to Discharge from DOI)**

Number of Prior Adjudications	No Adjudication		Adjudication		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
None	87	62%	53	38%	140	30%
One or More	169	52%	156	48%	325	70%
TOTAL	256	55%	209	44%	465	100%

(Chi-square=4.1, p=0.04)

Youths with one or more adjudications prior to commitment were more likely to receive another adjudication or conviction during commitment.

d. New Adjudication Prior to Discharge by Age at First Adjudication

Average age at first adjudication for the youths who received an additional adjudication or conviction prior to discharge was compared with the average age at first adjudication for youths who were discharged without receiving another adjudication or conviction. Youths who were readjudicated or convicted prior to discharge were younger at first adjudication on the average (average age = 14.3 mos.) than youths who received no additional adjudications or convictions (average age = 14.8 mos.). These differences were statistically significant ($t=3.07$; $p=0.002$).

e. New Adjudication Prior to Discharge by Type of Commitment Offense

Table 5 shows new adjudication breakdowns prior to discharge by type of original commitment offense. The 'Person Felony' category consists of felony offenses against persons (e.g., murder, felony assault, robbery, etc.), the 'Person Misdemeanor' category consists of misdemeanor offenses against persons (e.g., misdemeanor assault, misdemeanor sexual assault, etc.), the 'Property Felony' category consists of felony property offenses (e.g., burglary, felony aggravated motor vehicle theft, felony theft, etc.). The 'Property Misdemeanor' category consists of misdemeanor property crimes (misdemeanor theft, misdemeanor trespass, etc.). The 'Other' category contains a variety of commitment offenses including controlled substance offenses, escapes, disorderly conduct, etc.

TABLE 5
NEW ADJUDICATION BREAKDOWN BY TYPE OF
COMMITMENT OFFENSE
(Prior to Discharge)

	No Adjudication		Adjudication		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Person Felony	46	69%	21	31%	67	14%
Person Misdemeanor	19	51%	18	49%	37	8%
Property Felony	121	50%	122	50%	243	52%
Property Misdemeanor	40	54%	34	46%	74	16%
Other	30	68%	14	32%	44	10%
TOTAL	256	55%	209	45%	465	100%

(Chi-square=11.0, p=0.026)

A significantly higher proportion of youths committed on property crimes received a new adjudication prior to discharge than youths committed on other types of offenses.

f. New Adjudication Prior to Discharge by DYS Management Region

The Division of Youth Services is divided into five management regions. The Denver region is comprised solely of Denver county. Eleven counties make up the Central region the most populous of which are Jefferson, Arapahoe and Boulder. The Northeast region also contains eleven counties including Adams, Weld and Larimer counties. The Southern and Western regions cover larger areas than other three regions though many of the counties are rural. The largest counties in terms of population are Pueblo and El Paso in the Southern region, and Mesa county in the Western region.

Table 6 shows new adjudication breakdowns prior to discharge by region.

TABLE 6
NEW ADJUDICATION BREAKDOWN BY DYS
MANAGEMENT REGION
(Prior to Discharge)

<i>Region</i>	No Adjudication		Adjudication		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Southern	52	58%	38	42%	90	19%
Western	43	83%	9	17%	52	11%
Denver	59	44%	74	56%	133	29%
Central	49	49%	51	51%	100	22%
Northeast	53	59%	37	41%	90	19%
TOTAL	256	55%	209	45%	465	100%

(Chi-square=24.5, p<0.001)

Youths from the Denver and Central regions were more likely to receive another adjudication prior to discharge. Youths from the Western region were least likely to receive another adjudication. Numerous factors can account for these differences including socio-economic differences and job/school opportunities.

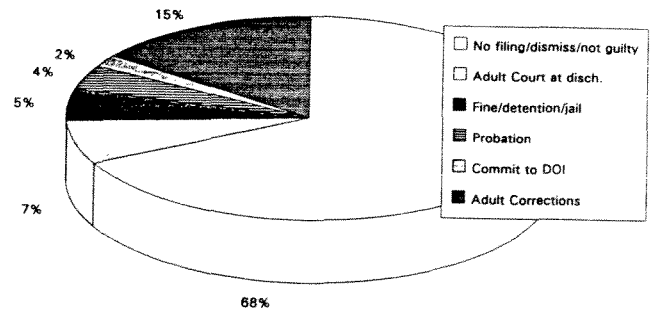
SECTION 2. RECIDIVISM WITHIN ONE YEAR OF DISCHARGE FROM DOI

Recidivism is defined as an adjudication or conviction for a new felony or misdemeanor offense. As indicated in the preceding section, some youths are already under adult jurisdiction at the point of discharge for an offense that occurred prior to discharge from DOI. Upon discharge, these youths are either incarcerated in an adult correctional facility, placed in adult community corrections, or placed under court supervision (i.e., probation). In this study, these youths are grouped separately from youths who are discharged from DOI (independent of further court involvement) and who receive a new adjudication or conviction within one year following discharge.

Table 7 shows the outcome breakdowns for the 447 males followed for one year.

TABLE 7
MOST SERIOUS DISPOSITION OF YOUTHS FOLLOWED
FOR ONE YEAR AFTER DISCHARGE FROM DOI

<i>Outcome</i>	N	%
No new filings identified	275	63%
New filing/case dismissed or not-guilty verdict	20	5%
Under adult court authority at time of discharge from DOI	31	7%
Fine with or without a jail or detention sentence	21	5%
Probation	18	4%
Commitment to DOI	7	2%
Adult Community Corrections	3	1%
Department of Corrections	<u>59</u>	<u>14%</u>
Subtotal	434	100%



Note: New filings were identified in the Judicial Department database for an additional 13 youths (3% of the total male discharge

cohort), but information on disposition was missing in the automated file. These youths were not committed to DOI following discharge and did not appear in the Department of Corrections or Division of Criminal Justice data files. They are excluded from further analyses in this section.

Of the 434 males discharged in FY 1990-91, for whom disposition information was known, 275 (63%) were not under adult court authority and had no additional adjudications or convictions for a felony or misdemeanor offense within one year following discharge from DOI. An additional 20 youths (5%) had a filing in which the case was dismissed or the verdict was 'not guilty'. Thirty-one youths (7%) were under adult court authority for a conviction which occurred prior to discharge. (Disposition information was not available in the Judicial Department database on 13 of the original 447 males discharged, and these youths are excluded from further analyses.)

a. One-year Recidivism Outcome by Ethnicity

Table 8 shows one-year recidivism breakdowns by ethnicity.

TABLE 8
RECIDIVISM BREAKDOWN BY ETHNICITY
(One-Year Follow-up)

	No New Adjud. or Conviction		Under Adult Court Authority at Disch.		New Adjud. or Conviction		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Anglo	159	74%	10	5%	45	21%	214	49%
African American	43	65%	4	6%	19	29%	66	15%
Hispanic	76	61%	14	11%	35	28%	125	29%
Native American	7	87%	0	0%	1	13%	8	2%
Other	10	48%	3	14%	8	38%	21	5%
TOTAL	295	68%	31	7%	108	25%	434	100%

(Chi-Square=8.6, p =0.01 when minority categories are collapsed)

Consistent with findings reported in the previous section, minority youths were more likely than anglo youths to be under adult court authority at discharge or receive an additional adjudication or conviction within one year following discharge.

b. One-year Recidivism Outcome by Number of Prior Adjudications

Recidivism outcomes were evaluated by the number of adjudications the youth had received prior to commitment to DOI. Table 9 shows this breakdown.

TABLE 9
RECIDIVISM BREAKDOWN BY
NUMBER OF PRIOR ADJUDICATIONS
(One-Year Follow-up)

	No New Adjud. or Conviction		Under Adult Court Authority at Disch.		New Adjud. or Conviction		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
None	98	79%	7	6%	19	15%	124	29%
One	87	64%	8	6%	40	30%	135	31%
Two	76	67%	10	9%	27	24%	113	26%
Three or More	34	55%	6	10%	22	36%	62	14%
TOTAL	295	68%	31	7%	108	25%	434	100%

(Chi-Square=14.4, p =0.03)

Twenty-nine percent of the males in this study had no prior adjudications prior to commitment. Youths with one or more prior adjudications prior to commitment were significantly more likely to recidivate than youths with no prior adjudications. The proportion of youths in the 'Non-recidivism' group drops substantially for youths with

three or more prior adjudications (55% compared with 79% for youths with no prior adjudications).

c. One-year Recidivism Outcome by Age at First Adjudication

As expected, young age at first adjudication was associated with recidivism. The average age of youths in the 'Non-recidivist' group was 14.4 mos. compared with 14.7 mos. for youths in the 'Recidivist' group (t=2.2; p=0.03).

d. One-year Recidivism Outcome by Type of Original Commitment Offense

Table 10 shows the breakdown of recidivism by type of original commitment offense.

TABLE 10
RECIDIVISM BREAKDOWN BY
TYPE OF COMMITMENT OFFENSE
(One-Year Follow-up)

	No New Adjud. or Conviction		Under Adult Court Authority at Disch.		New Adjud. or Conviction		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Person Felony	45	73%	5	8%	12	19%	62	14%
Person Misdemeanor	28	78%	2	6%	6	17%	36	8%
Property Felony	148	63%	18	8%	69	29%	235	54%
Property Misdemeanor	48	76%	3	5%	12	19%	63	15%
Other	26	68%	3	8%	9	24%	38	9%
TOTAL	295	68%	31	7%	108	25%	434	100%

Differences in the above recidivism rates by type of commitment offense were not statistically significant.

e. One-year Recidivism Outcome by DYS Placement (Most Time Spent)

Once committed, youths are placed in varying facilities and levels of security depending upon the seriousness of the commitment offense, the risk of re-offending as measured by the DYS Commitment Classification Instrument, and the geographic location of the family's residence. Youths often serve their sentence in more than one DYS program, and the youth may move from one security level to another. Lower risk youths may be placed directly in a community residential setting while more serious youths are targeted for community placements as they transition from more secure facilities. Youths receive varying treatments and interact with a variety of staff at each placement. The movement of youths through various programs makes it difficult to evaluate program effectiveness relative to recidivism. In addition, the characteristics of youths served are not comparable across programs due to level of security needed, location of the program in the state, and acceptance/rejection criteria established by privately operated programs, offense patterns of clients served, and individual needs of clients served.

While the above factors impede the ability to compare programs for purposes of selecting the 'best' programs, information on the outcomes of youths served by these programs can help managers and staff understand the outcomes of the youths they serve, and can serve as baseline information as new services, policies, etc. are implemented in these programs. Therefore, recidivism outcomes are presented in Table 11 by the program in which the youth spent the *majority* of his residential time. (Placements containing only a few youths during this period were eliminated from these analyses. For example, the TLC cottage at Mount View School had closed during this time but a small number of youths in this discharge cohort had spent most of their time at this facility.)

TABLE 11
RECIDIVISM BREAKDOWN BY
PLACEMENT (MOST TIME SPENT)
(One-Year Follow-up)

	No New Adjud. or Conviction		Under Adult Court Authority at Disch.		New Adjud. or Conviction		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Lookout Mountain YSC	86	62%	13	9%	40	29%	139	33%
Lathrop Park YSC	29	73%	3	7%	8	20%	40	9%
Grand Mesa YSC	8	80%	1	10%	1	10%	10	2%
Closed Adolescent Treatment Center*	11	79%	1	7%	2	14%	14	3%
Mountview Orientation *	18	69%	1	4%	7	27%	26	6%
High Plains	21	68%	3	10%	7	23%	26	6%
Colorado Boys Ranch	13	81%	3	19%	0	0%	16	4%
Community Residential Program	98	69%	6	4%	38	6%	142	33%
TOTAL	284	68%	31	7%	103	25%	418	100%

It is important to emphasize that the rates of recidivism or non-recidivism cannot be compared among programs since placement of youths in programs is not based on random assignment. Lookout Mountain Youth Services must serve youth who do not meet the admission criteria established by private providers. Such criteria often stipulate

rejection of youths with mental health problems or history of sexual assaults. In addition, youths who fail in other programs are often placed in LMYSC upon recommitment.

f. One-year Recidivism Outcome by DYS Management Region

Table 12 shows one-year recidivism outcomes for the five DYS management regions.

TABLE 12
RECIDIVISM BREAKDOWN BY
DYS MANAGEMENT REGION
(One-Year Follow-up)

<i>Region</i>	No New Adjud. or Conviction		Under Adult Court Authority at Disch.		New Adjud. or Conviction		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Southern	54	63%	6	7%	26	30%	86	20%
Western	37	79%	1	2%	9	19%	47	11%
Denver	74	61%	14	12%	33	27%	121	14%
Central	64	70%	5	5%	23	25%	92	21%
Northeast	66	75%	5	6%	17	19%	88	20%
TOTAL	295	68%	31	7%	108	25%	434	100%

Differences in the recidivism rates by region observed in the above table do not reach statistical significance.

g. One-year Recidivism Outcome by Job/School Status at Discharge

Of the 403 males who were not under adult court jurisdiction at discharge, 103 26% were either in school or employed at the time of discharge. Table 13 shows the recidivism breakdown by job/school status for this subsample of the discharge cohort.

TABLE 13
RECIDIVISM BREAKDOWN BY
JOB/SCHOOL STATUS AT DISCHARGE
(One-Year Follow-up)

Job/School Status	No New Adjud. or Conviction		New Adjud. or Conviction		TOTALS	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
No Job/School	213	71%	87	29%	300	74%
Job and/or School Placement	82	80%	21	20%	103	26%
TOTAL	295	73%	108	27%	403	100%

(Chi-Square=2.9, p =0.09)

While in this sample a higher percent of youths with no job or school placement at discharge had a new adjudication or conviction within one year of discharge, the results do not reach statistical significance and could have been obtained by chance. The low proportion of youths who were working or in school at the time of discharge from DOI is of concern. Since most youths are placed on parole prior to discharge, and since acceptance on parole is dependent upon adequate transition plans including job/school placements, it is likely that many youths are placed in jobs or schools but are not retaining these placements. The figures indicate a need to find ways of fostering education and/or employment of DYS youths in the community.

h. Discriminant Function Analysis

Discriminant function analysis was done to determine whether the variables studied here can be used to accurately discriminate between youths who receive an additional adjudication prior to discharge and those who do not, and between those who are adjudicated or convicted within one year following discharge and those who are not. The results indicated that:

1) increased numbers of prior adjudications, minority ethnic status and young age at first adjudication were the variables most useful in identifying youths who received a new adjudication prior to discharge from DOI. However, inclusion of the variables studied in this report correctly classified only 59% in terms of outcomes prior to discharge (new adjudication versus no new adjudication prior to discharge).

2) the variables studied in this report, in addition to length of stay in secure and community programs, classified only 57 percent of the youths correctly in terms of new adjudications or convictions within one year following discharge. Chance assignment would be expected to classify 50% of the youths correctly having knowledge of the rates of recidivism.

In essence, while relationships exist between some of the demographic and criminal history variables studied, information is clearly lacking on variables which might be more significant in understanding and predicting future criminal behavior. One data element which is lacking from this analysis is information on drug/alcohol use. The Division of Youth Services recently began entering this information into the client database based on assessment at the time of commitment. However, the data was not on the system for the youths discharged in FY 1990-91. It is likely that information on treatment received by the youth and significant individuals in youths' lives during and following commitment would contribute to accurate classification of outcomes. Often the most salient factors impacting an individual's life are the most difficult to identify and measure.

IV. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Information was obtained from the Colorado Judicial Department, the Division of Criminal Justice, and the Department of Corrections, and merged with the Division of Youth Services client data base for youths discharged in FY 1990-91. A definition of recidivism agreed upon by representatives of agencies identified in the 1990 legislative audit report was utilized. Recidivism is defined as an adjudication or conviction for a new misdemeanor or felony offense. Analyses were done to produce information on the rate of recidivism prior to discharge from the Department of Institutions, and within one year following discharge.

Results indicate that there were no new filings prior to discharge for 49 percent of the youths discharged in FY 1990-91, and there were filings in which the case was dismissed or the verdict was 'not guilty' for an additional six percent of the youths. There were new adjudications or convictions for 45 percent of the youths discharged for whom filing disposition was known (disposition information was missing in the Judicial automated database for 17 youths). Variables associated with new adjudications/convictions prior to discharge are young age at first adjudication, one or more adjudications prior to commitment, property crimes (commitment offense) and minority ethnic status.

Seven percent of the youths discharged were under adult court authority at the time of discharge. An additional 25 percent of the youths discharged received another adjudication or conviction within one year following discharge. There was no evidence of a new filing for 63 percent of the youths discharged within one year, and there were new filings in which the case was dismissed or the verdict was 'not guilty' for five percent of youths discharged. Using the definition of recidivism noted above which requires an adjudication or conviction, 68 percent of youths fell in the 'Non-recidivism' group, 7

percent were under adult court authority at discharge, and 25 percent were classified as 'Recidivists within one year of discharge'.

Results of discriminant function analyses indicate that while knowledge of the variables related to recidivism (age at first adjudication, prior adjudications, ethnicity, etc.) identified in the report can increase classification of recidivists versus non-recidivists beyond chance expectations (50%), the accuracy of classification using this information is only slightly better than chance. These findings suggest that there are other important factors not identified in this study which might contribute to an understanding of outcomes related to recidivism. Information on drug/alcohol use which will be available on future discharge cohorts, family and community involvement with the youth, socio-economic factors, and treatment received during commitment may be some of the relevant factors which would enhance classification results. The challenge for researchers is to develop methods for accurately capturing this information within existing resources.

