ASSESSING THE NEEDS OF FORENSIC PSYCHIATRIC INPATIENTS USING THE CANFOR

Introduction:
Criminogenic needs dominate the research surrounding forensic psychiatric patients, despite the importance of also assessing non-criminogenic needs (Keulen-de Vos & Schepers, 2016). Nevertheless, some measures, including the CANFOR-S (Thomas et al., 2003), assess forensic patients’ criminogenic and non-criminogenic needs. Research suggests higher-security patients have more CANFOR needs than lower-security patients (Adams et al., 2018; Long et al., 2008). However, the CANFOR has been minimally researched in Canada, making it difficult to draw firm conclusions.

Research Objectives:
• Assess Canadian forensic patients’ needs using the CANFOR-S.
• Examine the relationship between security level and needs.

Methods:
Research assistants coded the CANFOR-S, a measure with good reliability and validity (Thomas et al., 2008), using file information from a one-month period for 68 Canadian forensic psychiatric inpatients.

Results:
On average, patients had 3.37/25 needs (SD = 2.16, range = 0–9). Most common needs included: physical health (n = 31, 46%); psychotic symptoms (n = 30; 44%); and company/friendship (n = 24; 35%). Although needs increased as security level increased from low (M = 2.58, SD = 2.39) to medium (M = 3.09, SD = 2.09) to high (M = 3.85, SD = 2.06), this finding was not statistically significant (F(2, 65) = 1.854, p = 0.165).

Conclusions:
Patients had few needs compared to other studies (Adams et al., 2018). Moreover, there was no significant difference between security level and number of needs, likely because of the small sample. Nevertheless, patients’ most common needs were non-criminogenic, highlighting the necessity of assessing forensic patients’ non-criminogenic needs.