

Steve Lurie's letter to the Globe & Mail, Nov 4, 2011, in response to There is no crime epidemic"

Jeffrey Simpson is correct in asserting that the federal government's "tough on crime strategy" will not work for people who live with mental illness and are involved with the justice system. A number of US states have found it is better and cheaper to invest in treatment and rehabilitation. A recent study of adult inmates in Ontario provincial jails shows that 40% have mental health problems, 60 % were victims of abuse, and 28% were victims of sexual abuse. The situation would be similar or worse in federal correctional facilities. The abuse likely occurred when they were young. We need more early intervention and prevention programs, as well as trauma based counselling for victims of abuse. We should be focusing on prevention and treatment rather than incarceration.