

Presentation title:

Why Scandinavian prisons and German forensic addiction centers are superior

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The title of the presentation refers to a report, which Doran Larson published in the American Magazine "The Atlantic" in 2013. Larson compared the American and the Scandinavian prison system. The differences between these systems are comparable to the differences between regular German prisons and German forensic treatment centers for offenders with addiction problems (sect. 64 of the penal code). A project will be presented, which involved an unselected sample of 300 patients from 16 treatment centers. In 18 prisons, an equally numbered and carefully matched sample of prisoners with a history of excessive substance use was acquired. After discharge into the community, patients and prisoners were followed up for over four years on the average. There was a remarkably high difference of the rates of reoffending in the two samples (survival analysis). I will discuss the reasons of the rather strong treatment effect against the background of Larson's observations and theses.