

1989 SB 107
PRESLEY

Nutrition and Institutional Rule Violations Schoenthaler

A CONTROLLED TRIAL OF THE EFFECT OF VITAMIN-MINERAL SUPPLEMENTATION ON THE INCIDENCE OF SERIOUS INSTITUTIONAL RULE VIOLATIONS

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Abstract

The effect of vitamin-mineral supplementation on serious institutional rule violations was studied in a triple-blind, randomized, controlled trial among 402 male prisoners aged 18 to 25 years in California. A 15 week pre-intervention period was compared with a 15 week experimental period in which 1 group received placebos and 2 groups received different strengths of vitamin-mineral supplements based on 100% and 300% of the USRDA. An ANCOVA indicated that change in serious rule violations among the 3 groups was statistically significant, ($F = 3.73$, $p = .025$). Using Tukey's method of multiple comparisons, only the difference between the placebo and 100% formula was statistically significant. Mean rule violations per subject rose slightly, (ie., 20%), among the placebo group and fell slightly, (ie., 16%), among the 300% group. In contrast, mean rule violations fell 38% among subjects who received the 100% formula, (95% confidence interval, 11 to 65%). The study suggests that the behavior of a substantial minority of offenders may be rapidly improved by combining nutritional intervention with existing therapies in controlled settings.

