

Evaluation News is produced by BJA's Center for Program Evaluation and Performance Measurement at the Justice Research and Statistics Association.

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***Evaluation News* provides information on the BJA Center for Program Evaluation and Performance Measurement, promotes the exchange of information on evaluation and performance measurement, and publicizes criminal justice research and evaluation reports for use by state and local criminal justice agencies.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

New Project Name

In an effort to more accurately reflect current and future project activities, the project name has been changed to the BJA Center for Program Evaluation and Performance Measurement. Check out the website for evaluation and performance measurement resources.

SEX OFFENDER MANAGEMENT

Chajewski and Mercado utilized GIS mapping analyses to examine the potential impact of sex offender residency restrictions in town, county, and city-wide jurisdictions that did not have residency restrictions at the time of this analysis. Their goal was to assess the impact of instituting buffer zones around schools on the availability of housing for sex offenders. They also sought to examine how far sex offenders lived from schools as compared to randomly selected community members and whether there are differences across sex offender subtypes in regard to these distances. Their findings suggest that residency restrictions negatively impact an offenders' ability to find suitable housing, particularly in more urban areas with the larger buffer zone of 2,500 feet. When comparing sex offenders to randomly selected community members, they found that sex offenders in the urban area lived closer to schools, than sex offenders living in the rural area. The examination of offender subtype only revealed one difference. Sex offenders having child victims living in the urban area lived significantly further from schools than those offenders with non-child victims. "An Evaluation of Sex Offender Residency Restriction Functioning in Town, County, and City-Wide Jurisdictions" was published in the March 2009, issue of Criminal Justice Policy Review. It is available at:

<http://cjp.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/20/1/44>

INFORMATION SHARING

Boba, Weisbur, and Meeker examined regional data sharing for regional problem solving, drawing on the process evaluation findings of the East Valley, California - Community Mapping, Planning, and Analysis for Safety Strategies (COMPASS). The findings confirm prior research of regional data-sharing difficulties, such as technological and database expertise and participation. Their study points to more fundamental limitations of data-sharing development for regional problem solving. Problems in many communities are simply local phenomena that may not be aided by a regional approach. While the authors agreed that regional data sharing is important, they felt that it may be better tai-

lored toward sharing data for short-term tactical purposes (e.g., pattern analysis) or for simply identifying problems, the first step in the problem-solving process, regionally. The study, “*The Limits of Regional Data Sharing and Regional Problem Solving: Observations from the East Valley, CA COMPASS Initiative*” was published in the March 2009, issue of *Police Quarterly*. It is available at:

<http://pqx.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/12/1/22>

SUBSTANCE ABUSE/DRUG COURTS

DeMatteo et al. utilized cluster analysis to examine adult drug offenders participating in three misdemeanor drug courts in Delaware. This study found that more than one third of clients showed little evidence of having a drug use problem on entry into the drug courts, which raises important questions about how to interpret the documented success of drug courts. The results of this study have implications for how drug courts assess and treat clients. Careful screening on entry to the drug court can identify clients who have less severe drug use problems. The Addiction Severity Index (ASI) reliably identified the “optimal performers” more than 60% of the time. The authors suggest that combining the ASI with other assessment approaches would likely result in an increased ability to identify low-needs clients. They also argue that an approach that adjusts the intensity of treatment based on clients’ performance in the drug court program might be useful in light of the ASI’s rates of false positive and false negatives. These assessment and treatment approaches will help to ensure that drug court clients receive appropriately tailored interventions. This study, “*Outcome Trajectories in Drug Court: Do All Participants Have Serious Drug Problems?*” was published in April 2009 issue of *Criminal Justice and Behavior*. It is available at:

<http://cjb.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/36/4/354>

TIP OF THE MONTH

Is your program ready for evaluation?

Not all programs are ready to be evaluated. If they are unable to provide data or otherwise fully participate in the evaluation, the program is not ready to be evaluated. To determine if your program is ready to be evaluated, you should consider conducting an “evaluability assessment.” Some of the questions that this assessment should address are: Is there a formal program design or model? Is the program model or design sound? Can the program participate in the evaluation? If the answer to any of these questions is no, the program is not ready to be evaluated and therefore an evaluation is not a good investment. For more information on evaluability assessment see:

<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/evaluation/guide/per.htm>