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This project is supported by Grant No. 2009-DB-BX-K031 awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance. The Bureau of Justice Assistance is a component of the Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and the Office for Victims of Crime. Points of view or opinions in this document are those of the author and do not represent the official position or policies of the United States Department of Justice. Privacy Statement and Disclaimer:
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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

Drug Courts

The Center for Court Innovation recently published an evaluation of Brooklyn's Screening and Treatment Enhancement Project (STEP), a centralized drug screening and referral initiative. STEP was implemented in 2003 and it was intended to expand access to court-mandated treatment. The author utilized a mixed-methods research design to assess the impact of the enhanced screening pilot by comparing drug court referrals and participation data for defendants arrested during the first four years of the pilot (2003-2006) with those arrested in the two years prior to implementation (2001-2002). Some of the questions that the author sought to answer included: Has the system been successful at accurately identifying and referring eligible defendants to drug court under the expanded screening and eligibility protocol?; To what extent has the STEP increased access to court ordered treatment for eligible defendants?; How has STEP affected wait time from referral to placement for drug court eligible defendants? The results indicate that STEP has increased the identification, referral, and participation of eligible defendants. The examination of wait time found that STEP did not increase the median wait time between arrest and drug court intake. However, the median wait time between drug court intake to participation did increase over the length of the study. The full report, *Expanding Access to Drug Courts: An Evaluation of Brooklyn's Centralized Drug Screening and Referral Initiative*, is available at:

http://www.courtinnovation.org/uploads/documents/Expanding_Access.pdf

Recidivism

Lowenkamp et al. conducted a study of Intensive Supervision Programs (ISPs) to determine whether program philosophy and treatment integrity were associated with reductions in recidivism amongst offenders in ISPs. ISPs are a form of intermediate sanctions that seek to provide an alternative to prison while maintaining a high degree of control and surveillance. The authors hypothesized that ISPs that have a human services philosophy would be more effective than those that focus on deterrence and that ISPs that adhere to the principals of effective intervention would be more effective than those that do not adhere to these principals. To test these hypotheses the authors utilized a matched sample of 11,020 offenders drawn from fifty-eight intensive supervision programs and jail diversion programs. The treatment and control groups were matched on risk, sentence type, gender and county of supervision. Recidivism was defined as any arrest for the jail diversion cases and any incarceration for the prison diversion cases. Pro-

Useful resources for criminal justice program evaluation and performance measurement are available at the BJA Center for Program Evaluation and Performance Measurement web site:

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

gram effectiveness was an aggregate, program level variable that was determined by comparing differences in recidivism between the treatment and control groups for each program. The results of this study indicate both program philosophy and treatment integrity vary independently of one another and that both are related to a program's ability to produce meaningful impacts on recidivism. ISPs that operated using a human service philosophy and adhered to the principals of effective intervention were found to be more effective at reducing recidivism. The full report, *Intensive Supervision Programs: Does Program Philosophy and Principals of Effective Intervention Matter?* Is available at: <http://www.ncjrs.gov/App/publications/Abstract.aspx?id=253790>

Other Reports

The PEW Charitable Trusts recently released a report that examines the impact of incarceration on economic mobility. Specifically, it examined the effects of incarceration in terms of lasting barriers to economic progress for formerly incarcerated individuals, their families, and their children. The analyses revealed that incarceration is concentrated among young, uneducated, racial and ethnic minorities, especially African Americans and that it negatively affects former inmates' economic prospects. Serving time was found to have reduced hourly wages for men by approximately 11 percent and annual earnings by 40 percent. Additionally, only two percent of formerly incarcerated men who started in the bottom fifth of the earnings distribution made it to the top fifth 20 years later, compared to 15 percent of men that had never been incarcerated. Some negative impacts of incarceration were found to go beyond the incarcerated individual and impact the individual's family and children. The report also identifies several steps that can be taken by the states to support upward mobility among formerly incarcerated individuals. The states can invest in programs that reconnect the former inmates with the labor market, remove barriers to reintegration, and invest in research-based policies and programs designed to reduce recidivism. The full report: *Collateral Costs: Incarceration's Effect on Economic Mobility*, is available at:

http://www.pewcenteronthestates.org/uploadedFiles/Collateral_Costs.pdf?n=8653

Tip of the Month

What is meta-analysis and how do you assess the quality of a meta-analysis?

Meta-Analysis is the statistical analysis of a large collection of analysis results for the purpose of integrating the findings. They are designed to provide methodological rigor to a literature review similar to that required of experimental research. As meta-analysis becomes more common, it is important to be able to assess the quality of these analyses. When assessing a meta-analysis one should consider their internal and external validity. Some of the factors that influence the internal validity are the validity of the primary research and the number of reports included in the meta-analysis. The reports that the meta-analysis is based upon need to be valid and there should be enough reports to provide sufficient power for the analyses being performed. The most important factor that influences external validity is the representativeness of the sample of studies. You should assess the exhaustiveness of the literature search by examining the key words and methods the authors' used in their literature search. For more information about meta-analysis see:

<http://www.stat-help.com/meta.pdf>

<http://mason.gmu.edu/~dwilsonb/ma.html>