

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

The Program Areas section on the BJA Center for Program Evaluation and Performance Measurement Website has recently been updated.

New Program Area: Community Prosecution

A new program area on Community Prosecution has been added to the website. This new section focuses on a strategies used by prosecutors to address crime in a neighborhood through decentralized, proactive problem-solving within a community. The new Community Prosecution program area is available at: <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/evaluation/program-adjudication/comm-prosecution-index.htm>

Updated Program Area: Community-Based Crime Prevention

The Community-Based Crime Prevention section has undergone an extensive update. The updated Community-Based Crime Prevention area is available at: <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/evaluation/program-crime-prevention/cbcp-index.htm>

RECIDIVISM

The Center for Court Innovation has released an outcome evaluation of the Harlem Parole Reentry Court. The goal of the Reentry Court, established in 2001, is to stabilize returning parolees in the first six months following their release from prison by providing intensive judicial oversight, supervision, and services. These services are designed to help parolees find jobs, secure housing, remain drug-free, and assume familial and personal responsibilities. This study employed a quasi-experimental design, comparing 317 reentry court participants to 637 similar parolees under traditional supervision. The study participants were tracked for three years post-release and recidivism was measured as rearrests, convictions, and revocations. Reentry Court participants were significantly less likely than parolees under traditional supervision to be reconvicted at one, two, and three-year post release. An examination of revocations revealed that reentry court participants were significantly more likely than parolees under traditional supervision to have their parole revoked and be returned to prison. The author suggests that the higher revocation rates among reentry court participants may be due to a supervision effect; that is, greater levels of supervision likely resulted in larger numbers of parole revocations. The entire report is available at: http://www.courtinnovation.org/uploads/documents/Reentry_Evaluation.pdf

In recent years, some have criticized traditional dynamic risk/needs assessments, such as the LSI-R, for failing to adequately address the risk factors most relevant to women. In response to these criticisms, Van Voorhis, Wright, Salisbury, and Bauman developed and tested several gender-responsive supplements that were administered in conjunction with

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>.

traditional dynamic risk/needs assessments. Their goal was to determine whether the inclusion of gender specific factors make a statistically significant contribution to the traditional dynamic risk/needs assessment models. These supplements were tested with eight probation, prison, and pre-release from prison samples. A total of 1,626 were included in the study. The results of their study revealed several important findings. First, the traditional dynamic risk assessments predict offense-related outcomes well for women in seven of the eight samples. Second, in six of the eight samples, some items on the gender responsive supplements achieved statistically significant contributions. Promising results were found for the following gender-specific factors: among probationers - parental stress, family support, self-efficacy, educational assets, housing safety, anger/hostility, and current mental health factors; among prisoners - child abuse, anger/hostility, relationship dysfunction, family support, and current mental health factors; among pre-release - adult victimization, anger/hostility, educational assets, and family support. While the authors note that much more research is needed, they believe that this study lends support to the idea of gender specific assessment and classification. The full article, *Women's' Risk Factors and Their Contributions to Existing Risk/Needs Assessment: The Current State of a Gender-Responsive Supplement*, can be found at: <http://cjb.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/37/3/261>

MENTALLY ILL OFFENDERS

The Council of State Governments Justice Center and the Police Executive Research Forum recently released a report entitled, *Improving Responses to People with Mental Illness: Tailoring Law Enforcement Initiatives to Individual Jurisdictions*. This Bureau of Justice Assistance funded report is intended to be a resource for jurisdictions developing responses to mentally ill offenders. In recent years, law enforcement agencies have begun partnering with mental health agencies and other community groups to develop and improve responses to mentally ill offenders. These responses are designed to promote crises de-escalation and favor treatment of the individual over incarceration. This approach is called Special Police Responses (SPRs) and it is based on two different models: the Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) and the Co-Responder model. The CIT model was designed to improve safety by enhancing an officer's ability to de-escalate a situation, while the Co-Responder model grew out of the recognition that many of the offenders encountered on the streets were in need of mental health services. The report is divided into two sections. The first outlines the seven step program design process that is used to best address a jurisdiction's resources and needs. The second, provides two overview charts—one about the problems that affect program design and the other about jurisdiction characteristics that can impact initiative plans. The complete report is available at: http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/pdf/CSG_LE_Tailoring.pdf

TIP OF THE MONTH

Understanding Different Types of Statistics

Research reports and journals articles often include two types of statistics – descriptive and inferential. **Descriptive** statistics provide a simple summary or description of data. In other words, they describe what is going on in the data, how the data were collected, and/or present the data in a meaningful way. One might summarize the ages of participants, for example, 25% of the participants were within the 31-40 age range.

Inferential statistics differ from descriptive statistics in that they provide more than simple descriptions. Inferential statistics are used to infer, or generalize, something about a larger population based on the sample. For example, having studied a sample of students involved in a study of reading proficiency, the researcher makes a statement that participation in the reading program improves students' grades. This is an inferential statement.

For more information about descriptive and inferential statistics, please see:

<http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/analysis.php>

<http://statistics.laerd.com/spss-articles/descriptive-inferential-statistics>