

*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

##### **Center for Program Evaluation and Performance Measurement Website Updates:**

A new program area focusing on **Prescription Drug Monitoring Programs (PDMP)** has been added to the web site.

<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/evaluation/program-substance-abuse/pdmp-index.htm>

Information on **Evidence-based Programs and Practices** is now available on the website. This includes information on general resources and specific evidence-based programs and practices. <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA/evaluation/evidence-based.htm>

##### **NIJ Annual Conference:**

The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) annual conference will be held in Arlington, VA June 15-17, 2009. Panels this year focus on topics including: what works in offender supervision, innovations in specialized courts, and what works in probation and parole. You can view the complete conference agenda by clicking on the following link:

[http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/events/nij\\_conference/2009/agenda.htm](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/events/nij_conference/2009/agenda.htm)

#### SEX OFFENDER MANAGEMENT

Barbaree, Langton, Blanchard and Cantor examined whether sex offenders' age at release from custody affects their likelihood of reoffending. They contend that currently available instruments used in the assessment of sex offenders do not adequately adjust risk estimates based on the age of the offender. They argue that the empirically-based risk assessment scale presented in this study would allow evaluators to incorporate reductions in risk by including aging in their final risk score and that the results of this study provide evidence that age has an important effect on recidivism risk in sex offenders. "Aging Versus Stable Enduring Traits as Explanatory Constructs in Sex Offender Recidivism: Partitioning Actuarial Prediction Into Conceptually Meaningful Components" was published in the January 2009 issue of *Criminal Justice and Behavior*. It is available at:

<http://cjb.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/36/5/443>

#### SUBSTANCE ABUSE

##### **CORRECTIONS**

In this quasi-experimental study, Zhang, Roberts, and McCollister, followed a group of inmates who participated in a prison-based therapeutic community in a California state

prison, with a comparison group of matched inmates with substance abuse problems. While many studies followed offenders for one to two years after their release, this study followed participants and the comparison group for more than 5 years after their initial prison release. Unlike other studies of therapeutic communities, this study found no difference in new arrests and returns to prison between therapeutic community participants and the comparison participants after 5 years. More than 60% of both groups returned to prison within 2 years following their initial release. After 5 years, about 73% of both groups had returned to prison. “*Therapeutic Community in a California Prison Treatment Outcomes After 5 Years*” was published in the January 2009 issue of *Crime and Delinquency*. The full report is available at: <http://cad.sagepub.com/cgi/rapidpdf/001128708327035v1>

## DRUG COURTS

The Center for Court Innovation has released an evaluation of a misdemeanor treatment court. Eligible drug court defendants were drug-addicted, faced misdemeanor charges, and had at least three prior non-violent misdemeanor convictions. This study examined the re-arrest of participants and a comparison groups at one, two and three years after release. Program participants were less likely to be arrested and more likely to remain arrest free for longer than members of the comparison group. Three years after release, 79% of drug court participants and 89% of the comparison group were re-arrested. The full report “The Drug Court Model and Chronic Misdemeanants: Impact Evaluation of the Queens Misdemeanor Treatment Court” is available at: [http://courinnovation.org/\\_uploads/documents/Queens\\_Impact\\_Evaluation.pdf](http://courinnovation.org/_uploads/documents/Queens_Impact_Evaluation.pdf)

## COMMUNITY-BASED CRIME PREVENTION

This technical report produced by RAND assesses the differences in the priorities of business improvement districts (BIDs) in Los Angeles and their effects on reported violent crime and youth violence. The report examines whether residing in neighborhoods exposed to BIDs reduces a youth’s risk to neighborhood violence and improves the overall social environment of one’s neighborhood compared to living in similarly situated neighborhoods not exposed to BIDs. The results suggest that the BIDs had only marginal effects on the rate of violence overall. However, the introduction of BIDs had a significant effect of on reducing the rate of robberies in their areas. The overall effect of BIDs on robbery, as well as robberies and homicides aggregated together, is consistent with the efforts that many of these BIDs expend on improving the physical appearance of their areas to make them more attractive to commercial business and less attractive to potential offenders (e.g., painting over graffiti, increased street lighting, closed-circuit television (CCTV)). “*Neighborhood Effects on Crime and Youth Violence: The Role of Business Improvement Districts in Los Angeles*” was published in 2009. The full report is available at: [http://www.rand.org/pubs/technical\\_reports/TR622/](http://www.rand.org/pubs/technical_reports/TR622/)

## TIP OF THE MONTH

Many programs are multilevel programs, meaning that they have multiple levels of administration, funding, and implementation. These types of programs present challenges for evaluators because each level has distinct stakeholders with varying information needs. It is important to balance the needs of the various stakeholders when conducting an evaluation of a multilevel program. To learn more about this topic see “*Evaluating Multilevel Programs*” by King and Cooks in the Winter 2008 issue of *New Directions for Evaluation*. It is available at: <http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/journal/121575494/issue>