


Research Update on Drug Courts

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Standards of Proof

- 1. Evidence-based practice** EBP
 - Under experimental control
- 2. Best practice** BP
 - Differentiates successful programs
- 3. Participant / staff perceptions**
 - Systematically collected & standardized
- ~~**4. Anecdote; case study; opinion**~~

Meta-Analyses

Citation	Institution	Number of Drug Courts	Crime Reduced on Avg. by . . .
Wilson et al. (2006)	Campbell Collaborative	55	14%
Latimer et al. (2006)	Canada Dept. of Justice	66	14%
Shaffer (2006)	University of Nevada	76	9%
Lowenkamp et al. (2005)	University of Cincinnati	22	8%
Aos et al. (2006)	Washington State Inst. for Public Policy	57	8%

Cost Analyses

Citation	No. Drug Courts	Avg. Benefit Per \$1 Invested	Avg. Cost Saving Per Client
Loman (2004)	1 (St. Louis)	\$2.80 to \$6.32	\$2,615 to \$7,707
Finigan et al. (2006)	1 (Portland, OR)	\$2.63	\$6,744 to \$12,218
Carey et al. (2006)	9 (California)	\$3.50	\$11,000
Barnoski & Aos (2003)	5 (Washington St.)	\$1.74	\$2,888
Aos et al. (2006)	National Data	N/A	\$4,767
Bhati et al. (2008)	National Data	\$2.21	N/A

Target Population

- 1. Poor Prognoses (“High Risk”)**
 - ≤ 25 years of age
 - Prior felony convictions
 - Prior treatment failures
 - Antisocial Personality Disorder (APD)
 - Non-drug offenses fueled by addiction (incl. violence)
- 2. Seriously Impaired (“High Needs”)**
 - Compulsively addicted to drugs or alcohol
 - Functional impairments (e.g., lack of job skills, illiteracy)
 - Major psychiatric disorders (dual-diagnosis programs)

Fidelity to Model

If the following practices are removed or watered down, the effects degrade:

- EBP **Bi-weekly judicial status hearings** (Carey et al., 2008; Marlowe et al., 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006a, 2006b, 2007, 2008)
- BP **Team presence at staffings** (Carey et al., 2008; Shaffer, 2006)
 - Treatment
 - Prosecution
 - Defense counsel
 - Law enforcement
- BP **Twice-weekly, random drug testing** (Carey et al., 2008)

** For high-risk or high-needs offenders*

Fidelity to Model

If the following practices are removed or watered down, the effects degrade:

- **Evidence-based treatments** (Lutze & van Wormer, 2007; Shaffer, 2006; Taxman & Bouffard, 2002, 2003)
 - Moral Reconation Therapy (MRT) (Heck, 2008; Kirchner & Goodman, 2007)
 - MATRIX Model (Marinelli-Casey et al., 2008; Rawson et al., 2004)
 - Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST) (Henggeler et al., 2006)
 - Culturally proficient services (Vito & Tewksbury, 1998)

EBP's

BP **Planned duration of 12 to 18 months** (Shaffer, 2006)

** For high-risk or high-needs offenders*


Fidelity to Model

If the following practices are removed or watered down, the effects degrade:

- BP** **Primary case-management entity** (Carey et al., 2008; Shaffer, 2006)
- EBP** **Graduated sanctions** (Carey et al., 2008, 2009; Harrell & Roman, 2001; Hawken & Kleiman, 2009)
- ?** **Thinning rewards** (Marlowe et al., 2008)
- BP** **Written guidelines** (Carey et al., 2008)
- BP** **Team training & networking** (Carey et al., 2008; Shaffer, 2006)


** For high-risk or high-needs offenders*

Strategies for Failure

- **Target the wrong people**
 - 1st-time offenders ← "It's safer"
 - Low risk and low needs ← "It's a form of prevention"
 -  ← "They're more deserving"


Strategies for Failure

- **Water down the intervention**
 - Drop essential elements ← "It's not scalable"
 - Accept imitations ← "We're just like a drug court"



Strategies for Failure

- **Stepped Care**
 - Start with less and ratchet up if you need to
 - ← "It's more economical"
 - ← "It's less burdensome on clients"



Recipe for Success

- Send drug courts the high-value cases
- Fidelity to the *10 Key Components* until proven otherwise
- On-going judicial authority
- Inter-agency team approach
- Branching model
 - Get it right the first time

