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This Issue in Brief **ACQUISITIONS**

Corrections Goes Public (and Private) in California.—Authors Dale K. Sechrest and David Shichor report on a preliminary study of two types of community correctional facilities in California: facilities operated by private for-profit corporations and facilities operated by municipal governments for profit. The authors compare the cost effectiveness and quality of service of these two types of organizations.

Mandatory Minimums and the Betrayal of Sentencing Reform: A Legislative Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.—According to author Henry Scott Wallace, mandatory minimums are "worse than useless." In an article reprinted from the *Federal Bar News & Journal*, he puts mandatory minimums in historical perspective, explains how they fall short of alleviating sentencing disparity, and offers some suggestions for correcting what he describes as a Jekyll-and-Hyde approach to sentencing reform.

Juvenile Detention Programming.—Author David W. Roush focuses on programming as a critical part of successful juvenile detention. He defines juvenile detention and programming; explains why programs are necessary; and discusses objectives of programs, what makes good programs, and necessary program components. Obstacles to successful programming are also addressed.

Legal and Policy Issues From the Supreme Court's Decision on Smoking in Prisons.—In *Helling v. McKinney*, the Supreme Court held that inmates may have a constitutional right to be free from unreasonable risks to future health problems from exposure to environmental tobacco smoke. Authors Michael S. Vaughn and Rolando V. del Carmen discuss the legal and policy issues raised in *McKinney*, focusing on correctional facilities in which smoking or no-smoking policies have been a concern. They also discuss litigation in the lower courts before *McKinney* and how this case might shape future lower court decisions.

Community Corrections and the Fourth Amendment.—The increased use of community corrections programs has affected the special conditions of probation and parole imposed on offenders. Author Stephen J. Rackmill focuses on one such condition—that proba-

tioners submit to searches at the direction of their probation officers. Explaining the importance of the Supreme Court's decision in *Griffin v. Wisconsin*, the author assesses the case law before and after *Griffin* regarding searches and points out that policy regarding searches is still inconsistent.

A Study of Attitudinal Change Among Boot Camp Participants.—Authors Velmer S. Burton, Jr., James W. Marquart, Steven J. Cuvelier, Leanne Fital Alarid, and Robert J. Hunter report on whether participation in the CRIPP (Courts Regimented Intensive Probation Program) boot camp program in Harris County, Texas, influenced young felony offenders' attitudes. The authors measured attitudinal change in

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Success/Failure of Group Home Treatment Programs for Juveniles

BY BAHRAM HAGHIGHI AND ALMA LOPEZ*

SIGNIFICANT CHANGES have occurred in the juvenile justice system in the last several decades. Due to recent emphasis on rehabilitation, reform, and, above all, concern for the welfare of young offenders, the juvenile justice system has employed a wide variety of options in treating young offenders (Cole, 1989). Optimism about rehabilitation and dissatisfaction with the traditional "lockup" in detention homes has caused many to consider residential treatment and the rehabilitation of juveniles in a family-type center rather than conventional incarceration (Dattilio, 1982; Pabon, 1985; Martin, 1987); The popular trend, therefore, has been deinstitutionalization of young offenders (Martin, 1987; Dussault, Knudten, & Bowker, 1979). Due to this dominant philosophy, group home treatment programs, one of oldest options in treating young offenders (McCartt & Mangogna, 1976), gained a special momentum during the 1960's and 1970's (Weber, 1981). The availability of Federal dollars, the rising concern of numerous child-caring institutions, and, above all, the dissatisfaction with detaining juveniles have caused group homes to proliferate as a viable alternative and supplement to juvenile institutions (Weber, 1981).

Unlike many alternatives for juveniles, group homes have been recognized for providing a family-type atmosphere where the youth and house parents (counselors and case workers) often establish the same warm and intense ties that one would hope to find in healthy families (Duffee, 1989; Gilliland-Mallo & Judd, 1986). Stewart and associates (1986), by tracing 906 juvenile offenders in a 3-year period, recorded that such family-type atmosphere has a significant impact on the recidivism rate of juvenile offenders. Group home treatment programs, as they found, are particularly effective when first-time offenders are referred to such programs. Similarly, Gaier and Sarnacki (1976) suggested that group home treatment is an effective approach in interrupting delinquent behavior, since it is designed to alter the delinquent's environment and provide a meaningful family-type setting. According to Murray and Dox (1979), institutions have a greater "suppression" rate on subsequent arrests than do group home treatment programs.

Group home treatment programs are also recognized for their cost efficiency in providing a workable alternative for unruly and delinquent children. At the time that most local governments are pressed with budgetary concerns, group home treatment programs are viewed as a promising alternative. One recent investigation by the Department of Justice regarded group home treatment programs as a viable option in saving the juvenile justice system from budgetary problems (Soler, 1987). The investigation further revealed that group home treatment programs have been appealing to juvenile court judges due to both their effectiveness in treating young offenders and their cost efficiency.

Despite these developments, recently group home treatment programs have come under criticism. A steady increase in the rate of serious offenses committed by juveniles has encouraged many to conclude that the group home phenomenon has failed to live up to its intent. Some believe that group home treatment programs, the same as other alternatives in the juvenile justice system, have failed to produce a significant difference in overall rate of delinquency (Elliott, 1980). As a result, the recent "get tough" approach has inspired many states to rethink their liberal stance, thus replacing the group home treatment approach with the traditional incarceration option (Diegmüller, 1987). What appears to have emerged from the dissatisfaction with group home treatment programs is the combination of punishment with the dominated rehabilitation philosophy. Some states, such as Washington, Colorado, and Delaware, have already "adopted legislation that focuses more on punishing the juvenile delinquent" (Diegmüller, 1987, p. 22).

In this article, therefore, the success/failure of group home programs in treating and reforming juvenile delinquents is reexamined. Special attention is given to identifying the underlying factors leading to the success/failure of such programs. By comparing the juveniles' backgrounds and their dispositions as to type of treatment, suggestions are made to maximize the success of such treatment facilities, consequently reducing the rate of recidivism by those treated in group home treatment settings.

The Treatment

The group home treatment program in this study was established in the mid-1970's by a local juvenile probation officer due to his dissatisfaction with the

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local juvenile court's referral of the majority of unruly and delinquent children to state facilities. The program began by housing a few unruly, disturbed, and runaway children in the 1970's and later accepted juveniles with various problems and backgrounds in the 1980's. The program started with a few hundred dollars donated by local businesses and grew to have an operational budget of over \$350,000 in the late 1980's. Despite the rapid growth in a short period, the program solely functions on donations and charitable contributions by citizens and local businesses without relying on local or state funds.

The treatment program rests on providing a therapeutic community, elevating children's self-esteem, reducing stress, and providing group orientation. The program offers community service projects (helping senior citizens, beautifying the community, etc.), assists in obtaining employment, organizes athletic activities, and helps residents with educational and vocational programs. Overall, the program centers on building a positive mind and respect for others. In particular, being in a position to provide service to others enables the juvenile to be a help rather than a hindrance.

Methodology

During a 2-year period (January 1, 1988-December 1990), a total of 410 juveniles were referred to a group home treatment program in a midwestern state. Juveniles were referred by the local juvenile court, juvenile probation department, or alternative schooling for juveniles, or they were directly placed in the group home program by parents or school officials. The intake reflected 304 referrals from the juvenile court, with the rest placed at the center by other sources. The average stay for residents was 5 weeks, ranging from a 1-week stay up to 12 months. The program is a 52-bed center which usually is fully used by the juvenile court due to recent overcrowding in the state detention facilities. Of the total 304 referrals by the juvenile court to the facility, 152 residents were randomly selected for this analysis.

While most group home treatment programs exercise some degree of discretion in selecting nonviolent and nonaggressive children, this particular program has accepted all types of referrals regardless of their delinquent activity, prior incarceration, or the type of offense they have committed (with the exception of murder). In fact, a majority of residents were referred to the group home treatment program subsequent to unsatisfactory results from probation, detention, and other alternatives in the juvenile justice system.

Despite disagreement among experts as to how a program should be evaluated and what factors should be included in assessing the success/failure of a pro-

gram, a great majority of researchers believe that such spectrum must include the goals the program intends to accomplish. In that respect, the end result or the interruption in delinquent behavior has been recommended as a valid indicator in measuring the success/failure of a program. One group home director defined his success by "children being able to return to normal lives in the community . . . to adopt a normal life-style where they can be responsible, where they can have a family, where they can keep jobs, and act in their own best interest" (Finckenauer, 1984, p. 218).

Since the goal is to reform delinquent juveniles and the purpose is to deter children's involvement in future delinquency, juvenile treatment programs are repeatedly examined based on their effectiveness in keeping young offenders from repetition of delinquent acts. In that sense, recidivism and reappearance in the juvenile justice system is commonly ranked as a "failure" of rehabilitative efforts, while the absence of such return is classified as "success" of the treatment program.

In this study two factors were chosen in determining the "success/failure" dichotomy. First, the residents were routinely evaluated by program staff (probation officers, counselors, or case workers), reflecting the youngsters' performance during the treatment program and predicting their performance in the future. The juveniles were categorized as either "improved," meaning gaining continuance in the treatment program or preparation to be referred to their families, or "failed/no change," reflecting the ineffectiveness of the treatment program in changing their delinquent personality. The latter category was commonly an indication that the child attempted to escape, engaged in fighting with other children, disobeyed the house rules, or engaged in a delinquent act. The "failed/no change" commonly resulted in referral of the child to a more appropriate agency. In our analysis, "improved" juveniles were defined as "success" while the latter categories were grouped as "failure." Secondly, reappearance of the individual in the juvenile justice system (after release from the group home treatment program) was an indicator in reassessing the prior evaluation.

Results

Of the 152 reviewed cases, 95 (62.5 percent) successfully completed the group home treatment program. This group was evaluated as "improved" by program staff and did not reappear in the juvenile court system until the age of 18. The remaining 57 (37.5 percent) of the cases failed the program, reflecting that they were either referred to another agency or had committed a delinquency subsequent to release from the group

home treatment program. The sample included 31 girls and 121 boys, reflecting 94 whites and 58 blacks.

The analysis of the data revealed that the success/failure of the group home program depends highly on when the juveniles were referred to such treatment program. As shown in table 1, prior treatment of the juveniles was a significant factor in successfully completing the group home program. The treatment was highly successful when delinquent children were referred to such program in the early stages of delinquency (73 to 80 percent). More specifically, the group home was successful in interrupting delinquency behavior in four out of five cases when the child was placed in the group home treatment program following the first, second, or third offense. Conversely, the group home program was least effective when such option was considered after the commission of the fourth delinquent act. In fact, as the number of prior dispositions increased, so did the inefficiency of the group home treatment program in helping juvenile offenders.

The analysis of reviewed cases revealed that the group home treatment program was effective in helping juveniles, thus reducing the rate of offenses committed by youngsters. But, as presented in table 1, accomplishing such a goal was associated with when such an option was considered by the juvenile court in dispositioning the subjects to the group home program. This finding, however, is inconclusive without considering the type of prior dispositions. The analysis of the sample cases revealed such an option is not prioritized by the juvenile justice judges. In the sample study, only 23 percent of the children were placed in the group home following the first offense. In fact, group homes, despite their efficiency, were considered as a dispositional option when other alternatives, such as probation and detention, had failed to help the juveniles.

As shown in table 2, the success/failure of the group home program equally relied on the type of prior disposition. Of the juvenile cases, those placed on probation prior to referral to the group home program had a proportionately higher rate of success compared to those who experienced incarceration in detention facilities

(64.6 percent as compared to 39.5 percent). This finding concurs with the previous investigations in which detention facilities have been found to be effective in shaping delinquent personality rather than in controlling such behavior.

Further, due to the intent of the group home program to provide a family-type atmosphere, it was presumed that such setting would produce a higher rate of success among juveniles from single parent families. The analysis of the data, however, failed to support such expectation. As portrayed in table 3, both groups of juveniles (single parent and both parent family structures) equally gained from the group home treatment program. Similarly, race did not appear to be a predicting factor in assessing the success/failure of such program. Although whites were referred to the group home setting in a higher proportion than blacks, both groups produced comparable rates of success/failure from such setting.

While family structure and the race of the referred juveniles appeared to have no impact on the overall success/failure rate of the group home program, the sex of the juveniles tended to be a predicting factor. Overall, girls completed the group home program with a higher rate of success than boys (71 percent to 60.3 percent). The fact that girls succeeded with a higher proportion than boys in such program was more a matter of their disposition rather than differential acceptance of the program. Analysis of the data showed that girls were frequently referred to the group home program in earlier stages than boys. In fact, over 80 percent of the girls were referred to the group homes following the first, second, or third offense. Relating this finding to table 4, it appears that the disposition decision rather than the juvenile's sex was a predicting factor in the success/failure of such program.

Conclusion

Treatment of juveniles in the community and rehabilitation of young offenders in a group home setting has become a hotly debated subject. The recent get-tough-on-crime policy, coupled with the national concern regarding the drug problem, has motivated many decisionmakers to reevaluate the juvenile justice proc-

TABLE 1. SUCCESS/FAILURE OF GROUP HOME TREATMENT PROGRAM IN RELATION TO THE NUMBER OF PRIOR REFERRALS

Placement After	Total	%	Success	%	Failure	%
First Offense	35	100	27	77.1	8	22.9
Second Offense	40	100	32	80.0	8	20.0
Third Offense	30	100	22	73.3	8	26.7
Fourth Offense	25	100	9	36.0	16	64.0
Fifth Offense	9	100	3	33.3	6	66.7
Sixth or more	13	100	2	15.4	11	84.6
Total	152		95	62.5	57	37.5

TABLE 2. SUCCESS/FAILURE OF GROUP HOME TREATMENT PROGRAM
IN RELATION TO PRIOR DISPOSITION OF JUVENILES

Disposition	Total	%	Success	%	Failure	%
Probation	79	100	51	64.6	28	35.4
Detention	38	100	15	39.5	23	60.5
Total	117*		66		51	

$X = 6.56$ $df = 1$ $p < .01$

*Thirty-five juveniles were placed in group home treatment programs following their first delinquent act.

TABLE 3. SUCCESS/FAILURE OF GROUP HOME TREATMENT PROGRAM IN
RELATION TO DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS

Demographic	Total	%	Success	%	Failure	%
<i>Living with</i>						
Single Parent	45	100	27	60.0	18	40.0
Both Parents	107	100	68	63.6	39	36.4
Total	152		95		57	

$X = 0.17$ $df = 1$ $p > .05$

Race	Total	%	Success	%	Failure	%
White	94	100	58	61.7	36	38.3
Black	58	100	37	63.8	21	36.2
Total	152		95		57	

$X = .06$ $df = 1$ $p > .05$

Sex	Total	%	Success	%	Failure	%
Girls	31	100	22	71.0	9	29.0
Boys	121	100	73	60.3	48	39.7
Total	152		95		57	

$X = 1.04$ $df = 1$ $p > .05$

TABLE 4. REFERRAL OF DELINQUENT BOY/GIRL TO GROUP HOME TREATMENT PROGRAM
FOLLOWING A DELINQUENT ACT

Referral After	Total	%	Boys	%	Girls	%
First Offense	35	100	24	68.6	11	31.4
Second Offense	40	100	33	82.5	7	17.5
Third Offense	30	100	23	76.7	7	23.3
Fourth Offense	25	100	19	76.0	6	24.0
Fifth Offense	9	100	9	100.0	0	0.0
Sixth and More	13	100	13	100.0	0	0.0
Total	152		121		31	

ess. During the last few years, a number of states have moved toward more stringent and punitive measures to deal with young offenders (Duffee, 1989). Motivated by the increasing number of serious offenses committed by juveniles and the ineffectiveness of community treatment programs in reducing the rate of recidivism, proponents of stiffer sentencing have proposed departure from the rehabilitative efforts and reimplementation of punitive measures. In such debates, group home treatment programs have been attacked frequently for their leniency and their inability to punish and change young offenders.

Some believe that the entire juvenile justice system is becoming tougher (Feld, 1984). A few states have already revised their juvenile justice system, reflecting more concern for retribution and deterrence than for rehabilitation and reform (DiegmueLLer, 1987). In Washington, for instance, the entire juvenile code has been revised to include detention and determinate sentencing. By dropping the family court's jurisdiction over status offenders, the Washington legislatures have explicitly noted that the aim of the new legislation is more the protection of citizens and community through tougher sentencing than the welfare of juvenile offenders (McGarrell, 1986). Other states have followed the same path. California, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, and New Mexico have adopted legislation which focuses more on retribution and deterrence than concern for juveniles (DiegmueLLer, 1987). It is believed that the remaining states will adopt more punitive measures in dealing with young offenders before the turn of this decade.

Many believe that this recent development will undermine the entire rehabilitative effort. Recent concern for punishment will ultimately jeopardize the existence of community treatment programs and in particular group home program facilities. Proponents of stiffer punishment, however, believe that nothing will be lost. A high recidivism rate, in their view, is an indication that group home programs, the same as other alternatives, have failed to live up to their intent.

The present investigation, however, showed a different outlook. The analysis of sample cases revealed that the productivity or success of group homes could be maximized if certain factors are taken into consideration. First, it was found that group home programs would be highly effective in the rehabilitation and reform of young offenders if such an option is considered in the early stages of delinquent behavior. Precisely, group home programs are most effective (77 to 80 percent) if juveniles are dispositioned to such treatment programs immediately following the first or second delinquency act. Conversely, group home treatment programs were least effective (33 to 15

percent) when group home facilities were considered after five or six delinquent acts.

Secondly, the get tough approach to young offenders may not reduce the number of repeated offenses committed by this group. The present investigation recorded that group home programs are the least effective when the child has served a period of time in state detention facilities prior to his/her referral to group home programs. In comparison, those previously placed on probation had a higher rate of success in group home programs. This finding leads one to believe that the reimplementation of determinate sentencing and the application of punitive measures by confining juveniles to detention facilities may result in a higher rate of recidivism and ultimately the elevation of offenses committed by juveniles. While on face value, the get tough approach may appear promising, it may cause unexpected results. In the long run, such an approach will cause a dramatic increase in the population of adult felons, since the juvenile justice system will have failed to serve its clientele properly.

Finally, to depart from a productive alternative which has proven to be effective in reforming young offenders while reducing the cost of the juvenile justice system is premature. Particularly, in light of the recent war on drugs and the substantial cuts in juvenile justice system budgets in favor of efforts to combat drug kingpins, it does not seem logical to revoke an alternative which has proven to be cost effective. Group home treatment programs could become productive if they are used accurately. To maximize their success and reduce the rate of repeated offenses by juveniles, this option must be made a priority rather than considered an option after dissatisfaction with other alternatives in the juvenile justice system.

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