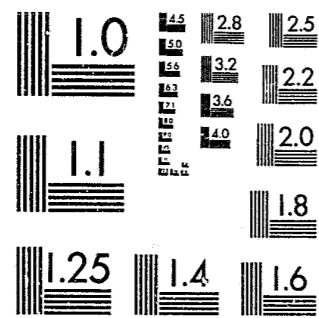


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THE FLORIDA STATEWIDE TREATMENT ALTERNATIVES

TO STREET CRIME (TASC) NETWORK

PHASE TWO FINAL REPORT:

PROGRAM IMPACT EVALUATION

DECEMBER 1981

BUREAU OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE ASSISTANCE  
RESEARCH, EVALUATION AND ANALYSIS SECTION

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Index of Tables and Figures.....	iii
Acknowledgements.....	iv
Executive Summary.....	v
Introduction.....	1
Impact Assessment.....	3
Jail Administration.....	3
Prosecutors.....	4
Public Defenders.....	5
Judiciary.....	6
Probation.....	7
Treatment.....	8
TASC Recidivism Analysis.....	10
Sample and Design.....	10
Comparison of Sample Groups.....	12
Client Treatment Outcomes.....	15
Recidivism Comparison.....	16
Performance and Recidivism.....	18
Multiple Regression Analysis.....	25
TASC Participant Analysis.....	28
Discussion.....	32

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ACQUISITIONS

	Page
Cost-Benefit Analysis.....	37
Long-Term Projection.....	40
Discussion.....	42
Conclusions and Recommendations.....	43
Impact Assessment.....	43
TASC and Recidivism.....	43
TASC and Cost-Effectiveness.....	44
Recommendations.....	44
References.....	48
Appendix A: A Brief Explanation of Multiple Regression.....	49
Appendix B: Sources for Cost-Benefit Analysis.....	51

INDEX OF TABLES AND FIGURES

<u>Table</u>	<u>Page</u>
1 Comparison of TASC Participants and TASC Eligible Nonparticipants.....	13
2 Comparison of TASC Participants and Nonparticipants on Total Subsequent Arrests.....	17
3 Rearrests by Category of TASC Participation.....	19
4 Total Subsequent Arrests by Type of Termination Controlling for Prior Arrest Record.....	23
5 Mean Rearrest Values for Termination Type Controlling for Prior Arrest Record.....	26
6 Ordinary Least Squares Regression of Total Subsequent Arrests on Relevant Independent Variables.....	28
7 Subsequent Arrests for TASC Participants by TASC Referral Arrest Type Controlling for Prior Arrest Record.....	29
8 Subsequent Arrests by Treatment Type.....	32

<u>Figures</u>	<u>Page</u>
1 Annualized Processing Costs.....	39
2 NonTASC versus TASC Processing Cost Comparisons.....	41

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Introduction

The Phase II Treatment Alternatives to Street Crime (TASC) evaluation is concerned with the impact of TASC programs in the State of Florida. The evaluation concentrates on the impact of TASC on the criminal justice system and treatment agencies, client success rates in TASC programs, client recidivism rates, and the cost-effectiveness of TASC.

The Treatment Alternatives to Street Crime program was created in 1972 to address several issues in the treatment and processing of substance-abusing criminal offenders. It was the intent of TASC Programs to break the cycle of criminal activity which develops to support drug/alcohol abuse by diverting substance-abusing offenders out of the criminal justice system into voluntary treatment programs. The program was designed to reduce criminal behavior that was related to the offender's substance abuse, thereby reducing not only the volume of criminal behavior, but also the burden of processing substance-abusing offenders through the justice system.

TASC began in Florida in December 1972, when the City of Miami-Dade County received a Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) grant award to implement the Miami-Dade TASC project. By 1978, TASC projects had been funded in Orange, Hillsborough, Duval, and Escambia counties as well. In 1978 the State of Florida received an LEAA grant to implement the Florida Statewide TASC Incentive Program. This grant established eleven new TASC projects serving 35 counties, and a Central Coordinating Office which provides a link between the existing TASC projects and the new Incentive projects. The Coordinating Office provides

central management and administration of the Statewide TASC Network.

The Florida Statewide TASC Network is comprised of 17 projects. Six are funded by state and local revenue from the Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services (DHRS). The eleven new Incentive projects and coordinating offices are funded by the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) and state and local funds through the Bureau of Criminal Justice Assistance (BCJA). The TASC Network provides services in a total of 41 counties.

#### Findings

##### Impact Assessment

- . TASC received favorable evaluations from all levels of the criminal justice system and treatment systems.
- . The major impacts of TASC on the criminal justice system appeared to be increased information about clients and the provision of sentencing options for court personnel.
- . TASC referrals made up 50 percent to 75 percent of the treatment populations in many of the treatment programs examined by the evaluators.

##### TASC and Recidivism

- . TASC participation does have an impact on how many times a person is likely to be rearrested after TASC referral. TASC participants are less likely than eligible nonparticipants to have been rearrested more than one time.

- . TASC clients graduated as "successes" had the lowest rearrest rate of any of the comparison groups.
- . Prior legal record was found to be the best predictor of rearrest, regardless of TASC participation or type of termination.
- . TASC clients whose major offense at TASC referral was drug-related showed the lowest rearrest rate of any client type.
- . TASC clients treated on an out-patient basis were found to be rearrested less often than those treated in residential programs.

##### TASC and Cost-Effectiveness

- . TASC will be a less expensive processing only option when it is used in a pretrial diversionary manner.
- . TASC does offer a cost-effective alternative to criminal justice processing in the long run due to the tendency for TASC clients to reenter the criminal justice system at lower rates than comparable nonparticipants.

#### Recommendations

1. TASC screening and admission goals should be scrutinized to determine whether they accurately reflect the proportion of criminal offenders who have substance-abuse problems that motivate their criminal activity;

2. Implementation of urinalysis at the screening interview. It would represent an increased front-end expenditure. However, its potential for helping to identify appropriate TASC admissions should off-set its initial costs;
3. The use of pretrial diversion from the criminal justice system should be increased. Such action would help to alleviate jail overcrowding and reduce the backlog of cases within the criminal court system. Further, pretrial diversion would also help to defray the cost of judicial processing, the end-point for most TASC cases at present. This would require greater cooperation and communication among TASC staff, public defenders, and prosecutors to insure informed decision making;
4. The screening process for admission to TASC programs should be made more rigid to insure that substance-dependent offenders, the "true" TASC targets, are being admitted into the program. this would help to eliminate the abuse of TASC as simply an alternative to incarceration by offenders who are not truly substance-dependent. Some suggested steps are:
  - a) The revamping of the screeners' presentation of TASC to potential volunteers in a manner that emphasizes the impact of a drug-free lifestyle, rather than TASC's potential as an alternative to incarceration;
  - b) The implementation of an initial urinalysis at TASC screening for all volunteers in an attempt to ascertain whether the volunteer is truly drug-dependent, rather than a casual drug user seeking an alternative to incarceration;
  - c) Since prior arrest history has been found to be the best single predictor of recidivism, more thorough

scrutiny of the volunteers' arrest histories might help to screen out offenders with substantial arrest histories;

- d) In the same vein, screening of TASC potential admissions with regard to the types of prior and current offenses may help to insure that certain types of offenders (e.g., personal/violent offenders) that have proven to be least affected by TASC will be screened out initially. This would leave more room in the programs for clients with offenses that have been shown to benefit most from TASC participation.
5. Steps should be taken to increase referrals and admissions of appropriate substance-abusing offenders of minority status. At a minimum, jurisdictions should begin collecting data on all persons screened who reject TASC to determine why they reject.
6. The screening process and client evaluation should be combined with the presentence investigation. This would increase the amount of information available to all parties concerned with the client's case and speed the processing of the client through the system. In order to meet confidentiality requirements, such action would have to be approved by the client.
7. Increased utilization of out-patient treatment programs. Out-patient programs have been shown to be less expensive than residential treatment. In addition, TASC clients treated on an out-patient basis exhibited a better performance record in terms of rearrest than the TASC clients treated on a residential basis.
8. A standardized reporting system of client progress to the representatives of the criminal justice system should be developed.

All of these recommendations point back to the necessity for more rigorous screening procedures. Increased expenditure at the front-end of the process, coupled with competent judgement on the part of TASC personnel and justice system personnel, should lead to both reduced cost and recidivism.

## INTRODUCTION

The Phase II TASC evaluation is concerned with the impact of TASC Programs in the State of Florida. Phase I examined the operation of the TASC Programs in the state. Phase II concentrates on the issues of client success rates in TASC Programs, client recidivism rates, and the perceptions of criminal justice personnel and treatment personnel about the operation and effectiveness of TASC in the state. Further, this study will be concerned with the cost of TASC processing as it relates to TASC's effect on clients.

The Treatment Alternatives to Street Crime (TASC) Program was created in 1972 to address several issues in the treatment and processing of drug-abusing criminal offenders. Primary among these issues was the concern with the "addiction-arrest-release-readdiction-rearrest cycle typical of most opiate abusers" (LEAA, 1978). This rather narrow focus on opiate abusers has since been broadened to include drug abusers of most types, and in some instances, alcohol abusers. It was the intent of TASC Programs to break this cycle of criminal activity to support substance abuse by diverting substance-abusing offenders out of the criminal justice system into voluntary treatment programs. These programs should then enable offenders to break their dependency on drugs, which in turn should diminish their criminal activity necessary to support their "habits".

A second important issue is the impact of TASC on the operation of the criminal justice system and the drug treatment system. In the criminal justice system, it was believed that diverting substance-abusing offenders to treatment would



help to "decrease tensions in jails resulting from individuals suffering withdrawal syndrome". In addition, the case load at various points in the criminal justice system (e.g., prosecution, defense, and courts) would be diminished by diverting these types of offenders out of the system at the earliest possible point.

A third important issue related to the implementation of TASC Programs concerned assisting "addicts in becoming self-sufficient and law-abiding citizens" (LEAA, 1978). This issue is closely related to the concern with breaking the cycle described above. This third issue serves to point out the interrelatedness of the goals of the TASC Program. Overall, the Program was designed to reduce criminal behavior that was based on the offender's substance-abuse, thereby reducing not only the volume of criminal behavior, but also the burden of processing these types of offenders through the justice system.

The organization of the present study is fairly straightforward. First, the perceptions of justice system personnel and treatment personnel will be examined to determine how effectively they think TASC fulfills its goals, and how it has impacted on their roles in processing drug-abusing offenders. Second, the actual outcome of TASC involvement on client recidivism, compared to a group of eligible nonparticipants, will be examined to determine whether TASC has any effect on future criminal activity. Finally, utilizing the effectiveness of TASC participation on recidivism, the cost of TASC processing of criminal offenders will be compared to that of simply processing such offenders through the criminal justice system.

## IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The impact assessment section of the TASC evaluation is designed to examine the impacts of TASC on both the criminal justice system and treatment agencies. In order to assess the impacts and relationships between TASC and both the criminal justice system and treatment agencies, interviews were conducted with representatives of each system in six TASC project sites: Dade, Duval, Escambia, Hillsborough, Orange and Pinellas counties. These sites were chosen because these TASC projects have been operational for a longer period of time than the TASC Incentive programs. This will allow a more thorough understanding of the successes and problems encountered in coordinating TASC programs with both the criminal justice system and treatment agencies.

In order to assess the impacts of TASC on the criminal justice system, interviews were conducted with representatives of jail administration, prosecutor's office, public defender's office, judiciary and probation/parole officers in the counties listed above. These interviews were primarily completed over the phone with representatives from each segment of the criminal justice system who were familiar with the TASC program within their jurisdiction.

In order to assess the impacts of TASC on the treatment agencies, interviews were conducted with supervisors and counselors from the agencies associated with the TASC projects involved in the impact assessment. The impact assessment involved interviews with personnel from both out-patient and residential treatment modalities in all the programs that were contacted.

Jail Administration

The majority (87%) of the jail personnel interviewed evaluated TASC favorably. They felt, however, that the impact of TASC on the jail population had been minor. Fifty-three percent of the jail personnel felt there had been no change in either total population or its composition as a result of TASC. Forty-seven percent stated that there was a small decrease in jail population since the inception of TASC, but that for every bed emptied by TASC there is a new person arrested to fill it.

In three of the six sites contacted there were active in-jail TASC programs. In those sites, TASC clients who participated in the in-jail treatment programs were placed into drug/alcohol cells separated from the general population. The jail personnel interviewed felt that tension was reduced by separating TASC clients from the general population. Furthermore, inmates in the TASC cells tended to be less hostile, more productive, and exhibit fewer behavioral problems than their counterparts.

In general, jail personnel felt that TASC screening of new arrests was effective. TASC operated smoothly within the jail facilities, according to those interviewed, and provided an additional placement alternative to jail personnel. The relationship between TASC staff and jail personnel was viewed as "good." This was due primarily to the confidence in TASC staff members and the rapport that has developed between TASC staff and jail personnel.

Prosecutors

The majority (75%) of prosecutors interviewed felt that the major impact of TASC on prosecution in Florida was the availability of a new alternative to incarceration. In addition, TASC offered them sentencing options for drug-abusing offenders. Eighty percent of the prosecutors interviewed evaluated TASC favorably and appreciated the information TASC provided. The support and monitoring of clients leading up to trial was also viewed as a valuable service. It was felt that client evaluations could be linked directly to the pre-sentence investigations (PSI) and greatly increase the information available to the prosecutor. This could be used as an aid in determining the best course of action to take in handling individual cases.

TASC was viewed as a "good disposition" for both felony (53%) and misdemeanor (73%) cases. However, the decision to use TASC was made on a case-by-case basis, depending on the charges and the characteristics of the offender.

The prosecutors interviewed felt that TASC had little or no impact on the speed with which a decision was made concerning the offender. Further, they felt that the decision process for TASC clients was the same as for other offenders. It is also important to note that the majority (85%) of prosecutors felt that TASC in no way denied the offender "equal protection under the law."

### Public Defenders

Public defenders represent one of the most accurate indicators of TASC's success within the criminal justice system. This is because they tend to evaluate TASC in terms of whether TASC can reduce the severity of the defendant's judicial disposition. The majority (76.9%) of the public defenders interviewed stated that TASC was a "good disposition" in felony cases. Many felt that their felony clients would have received a more severe disposition if TASC were not available, and that TASC had helped those clients' cases. For misdemeanor cases, however, TASC was generally viewed as too structured and severe a disposition. Only in those cases where a misdemeanant faced the possibility of serving time would the public defender argue for a TASC stipulation. In summary, TASC was a useful mechanism for the public defender in those cases where the defendant would face a more severe disposition without TASC.

TASC also increased the amount of client information available to the public defender. By providing additional information regarding the defendant's social history, substance abuse problems, and treatment prognosis, TASC helped the public defender structure the case in a manner that best represents the defendant.

### Judiciary

The majority (89%) of the judges interviewed evaluated TASC favorably. The judges stated that the major impact of TASC on the judiciary was the availability of important and

valuable sentencing options. Most judges believed that the monitoring and diagnosis/evaluation services provided by TASC were useful.

The judges felt that TASC was effective when used in conjunction with probation or in lieu of traditional sentencing. This was because they felt that TASC provides rehabilitation opportunities to offenders. Seventy-one percent of the judges interviewed felt comfortable in accepting TASC recommendations for release. This was primarily due to confidence in TASC staff and their judgement concerning clients.

Although the presentence investigation (PSI) report was the primary source of information for the court, the majority (75%) of the judges interviewed stated that TASC provided additional useful information to the court. This information aided the judiciary in making informed decisions concerning offenders. The judges as a whole were very positive about TASC. They felt that it was meeting the needs of the judiciary by providing information about drug-abusing offenders and monitoring them once they become TASC clients.

### Probation

The major impact of TASC on probation in Florida has been to expand and supplement traditional probation services. All of the probation office staff interviewed stated that they felt caseloads were excessive, and many indicated that they appreciated the outside support services provided by TASC. TASC has generally been viewed as a link between probation and community-based treatment. TASC has expanded traditional probation services by providing treatment diagnosis,

urine monitoring, and tracking of selected substance-abusing probationers. Although TASC did track the client's treatment progress, most probation office staff considered this service duplicative and stated that they would rather track client progress themselves.

TASC has also served to supplement traditional probation services by increasing the amount of client information available to probation staff. Supporting information supplied by TASC has provided probation staff with additional insight regarding the special problems and needs of substance-abusing probationers. TASC has also provided testimony at probation revocation hearings and presentence investigations involving substance abusing probationers. This has been a common source of friction between TASC and probation, as TASC may recommend a different outcome than the probation officer.

The relationship between TASC and probation has not been as efficient as it could be because of a breakdown of rapport and mutual support. Probation office staff generally felt that TASC was not providing its share of feedback on client progress, and that overall communication between the two programs was poor.

#### Treatment

The relationship between TASC and the treatment agencies has been "good." TASC and treatment staff, on the average, met daily to discuss client progress and problems as they developed. In addition, the treatment agencies provided TASC with periodic urinalysis reports, written progress reports,

and immediate notification of client failure. TASC used these reports to determine whether the client was meeting program requirements.

Seventy-five percent of the treatment staff interviewed stated that the pressure placed upon TASC clients by the criminal justice system provided the incentive and motivation to attend treatment sessions. All of the treatment staff interviewed felt that the TASC client referrals were appropriate for treatment. They felt that TASC was in no way functioning as a "dumping ground" for marijuana users. The majority of clients referred were multiple drug abusers. In addition, TASC has begun to refer alcohol abusers and was increasing TASC activity in that area.

TASC clients make up 50 percent to 75 percent of the treatment population of those agencies contacted. As a whole, the TASC referrals have not impacted on the type or mix of clients being treated by the agencies. Some concern was expressed concerning the need for a greater number of minority referrals.

The successful relationship between TASC and the treatment agencies was due primarily to the rapport between TASC and treatment staff. The treatment personnel interviewed possessed a clear understanding of the TASC concept and were supportive of the TASC programs.



## TASC AND RECIDIVISM

This section of the evaluation is designed to test the assumption that the recidivism rate for those clients successfully graduating from TASC programs will be lower than that of those who do not graduate (i.e., both "neutral" and "unsuccessful" terminations), and those who do not participate in the program. In the present study, recidivism is operationalized as any subsequent arrest by law enforcement agencies after the date of admission to TASC treatment (for participants) or TASC screening and referral (for nonparticipants). Such a measure of subsequent criminal involvement is at best approximate, since not all criminal behavior is detected by law enforcement agencies. Nevertheless, the use of official arrest records will allow the gauging of a client's criminal involvement during and after TASC participation; and for nonparticipants, after the date of screening and referral.

### Sample and Design

In order to address the question of recidivism, records were drawn from four TASC project sites: Duval, Escambia, Hillsborough, and Orange counties. These programs were chosen because, of the original TASC programs, they most closely conformed to the TASC model in philosophy and services provided. In each county a stratified random sample was drawn from the total TASC clientele prior to July 1, 1979. This date and these counties were chosen to allow an 18 month tracking period in which the subjects might have recidivated. The sampling procedure utilized ensures that the proportion of clients in each of the treatment outcome groups (outlined below) is equivalent to the proportion of those groups in the

overall population. For example, if 25 percent of the clients discharged in the total population were successful terminations, then 25 percent of the clients included in the sample of TASC clients should be successful terminations.

In addition to the clients who participated in TASC programs, a random sample of TASC eligible nonparticipants in those counties was also drawn for comparison purposes. This group is not proportional to the actual population due to the fact that records of such individuals were not kept on a systematic basis in all of the project sites. It is assumed that the proportion of such persons used in the final sample is not grossly disproportionate to that found in the actual population. The statistical techniques to be employed in the later analyses will correct for this situation to a great extent.

For analytic purposes the TASC participants were divided into three categories to be compared with each other and the TASC eligible nonparticipants. The resulting four groups are:

- 1) TASC successes---those individuals who successfully complete TASC requirements and are discharged from the program;
- 2) TASC neutrals---those individuals who are discharged from the program prior to completion of TASC requirements, but whose discharge was not the result of client failure (e.g., clients incarcerated as a result of a previous charge);
- 3) TASC failures---those individuals who fail to complete TASC requirements and are discharged unsuccessfully from the program; and

- 4) TASC eligible nonparticipants---those individuals screened and determined to be eligible, referred to intake, but who for some reason chose not to participate.

The proportions represented by each of these groups in the total sample are presented in Table 1.

From the project records, data on sociodemographic characteristics of the clients and nonparticipants, screening dates, treatment admission and termination dates, type of treatment, and type of termination were collected. Utilizing this information, computerized criminal history data were obtained from the Florida Crime Information Center (FCIC) of the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE). These records contained data on the charge and disposition of the arrest for which the client was referred to TASC, similar data on prior and subsequent arrests, and occupational data for each individual included in the sample. The mean and median values for each of the four categories on important variables are presented in Table 1.

#### Comparison of Sample Groups

Since the comparison group of TASC nonparticipants (no-shows) was not randomly selected from the total population of such cases, it will be instructive to compare them to the TASC participants sample. To the extent that there are great discrepancies between the two groups on important variables, the conclusions that are made about the effects of TASC participation will be weakened. A comparison of the two groups on important sociodemographic and legal factors is presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1: Comparison of TASC Participants and TASC Eligible Nonparticipants

	TASC Participants	TASC Eligible Nonparticipants
<u>Race:</u> White	67% (204)	63% (58)
Black	33 (101)	37 (34)
<u>Sex:</u> Female	26 (79)	17 (16)
Male	74 (226)	83 (76)
<u>Total Prior Arrests:</u>		
None	27 (81)	26 (24)
One	17 (52)	13 (12)
Two or More	56 (172)	61 (56)
<u>Total Prior Misdemeanor Arrests:</u>		
None	52 (158)	49 (45)
One	20 (61)	16 (15)
Two or More	28 (86)	35 (32)
<u>Total Prior Felony Arrests:</u>		
None	37 (112)	35 (32)
One	18 (56)	22 (20)
Two or More	45 (137)	43 (40)

(Frequencies in parentheses.)

It can be seen that the groups differ very little on the sociodemographic factors race and sex. The greatest discrepancy between the two groups is the nine percentage point difference in sexual composition. The TASC participant group shows a higher proportion of females than the no-show group does. This difference should be kept in mind at later points in the analysis.

The difference between the two groups on prior legal record is also surprisingly small. On total prior arrest record, only a five percentage point difference exists between the two groups for those arrested two or more times prior to the TASC referral arrest. Table 1 shows that the no-shows have a slightly greater record of multiple prior arrests than do the TASC participants. The TASC participants, in turn, hold a slight advantage at the "no arrest level" and the "one prior" arrest level. It should be pointed out, however, that these data did not include the juvenile arrest records for these individuals.

Total prior arrests do not offer an indication of the seriousness of the individual's criminal behavior. To do this the arrest records are broken down into prior misdemeanor and prior felony arrest categories. Again it can be seen that the differences between the two groups are not substantial. In fact, the largest difference between the two groups is in the proportions with a history of multiple arrests for misdemeanors. Table 1 shows that the no-shows tended to be arrested for misdemeanor offenses slightly more often than the TASC participants. The other differences in arrest records, for both misdemeanor and felony offenses, are minimal.

On the basis of these characteristics, it is believed that the two groups are reasonably comparable. This is

important, particularly at the bivariate analysis stage, because it allows more confidence in attributing differences in post-program performance to TASC participation. It will remain for multivariate analyses to allow a more accurate point difference in sexual composition. The TASC participant group shows a higher proportion of females than the no-show group does. This difference should be kept in mind at later points in the analysis.

#### Client Treatment Outcomes

Client treatment outcomes have been traditionally measured through the use of an end-point "success" estimate. In the present analysis, two such "success rates" will be calculated. The first of these may be called the "actual" success rate. That is, the proportion of the total processed clients who successfully complete TASC requirements. This is calculated as follows:

$$\text{Actual Success} = \frac{\text{Successful Terminations}}{\text{Total Terminations}}$$

Using the figures for the quarter ending September 30, 1981, which include the totals since the inception of the TASC Network in Florida, the following actual success rate is obtained.

$$\text{Actual Successes} = \frac{806}{2569} = .314$$

Thus, TASC graduates represent 31.4 percent of the total clients processed into the program since its inception.

Perhaps a more accurate indicator of treatment outcomes would involve dropping the neutral terminations from both the numerator and denominator of the equation. This reformulation is offered due to the fact that neutral terminations are the result of actions generally beyond the control of both the client and treatment personnel. For example, the incarceration of a TASC client for an offense prior to that for which he or she was referred to TASC would not be under the direct control of either the client, TASC, or treatment staff. It is the evaluators' opinion that the termination of treatment on this basis makes cases neutrally terminated illegitimate for the consideration of outcomes based on treatment or performance in TASC. This "treatment success" rate is calculated accordingly:

$$\text{Treatment Success} = \frac{\text{Successful Terminations}}{\text{Total Terminations} - \text{Neutrals}}$$

Substituting the September 1981 figures into this formula reveals the following treatment success rate:

$$\text{Treatment Success} = \frac{806}{1981} = .407$$

Of all the TASC clients actively terminated from the program then, 40.7 percent were successful.

The success rates figured here refer only to achieving treatment requirements. The "true" success of any treatment is its ability to stop the behaviors at which it is targeted. TASC clients who complete the programs successfully have succeeded in not using drugs or being rearrested while in treatment. It is to their post-program behavior that attention is now turned to gauge the "success" of TASC. This evaluation is concerned only with



Recidivism Comparison

Table 2 presents the first step in determining whether TASC participation has an effect on the likelihood of rearrest. In Table 2, a comparison of all TASC participants (graduates, neutrals, and failures) with TASC eligible non-participants (no-shows) is offered. The proportions of those with no subsequent arrests in the two groups are very close, with a slight edge going to the nonparticipants. A 9.6 percentage point difference between the two groups is noted at the one rearrest level. At the multiple rearrest level (two or more) a substantial difference is noted (11.4 percentage points).

TABLE 2: Comparison of TASC Participants and Nonparticipants on Total Subsequent Arrests

Subsequent Arrests	TASC Participants	Nonparticipants (no shows)
None	33.8% (103)	34.8% (32)
One	22.6 (69)	13.0 (12)
Two or More	43.6 (133)	52.2 (48)

(Frequencies in parentheses.)

The TASC participants do not appear to perform as well subsequent to the TASC referral as the nonparticipants if only the first two levels of recidivism are examined. However, in terms of multiple rearrests, the TASC participants begin to distinguish themselves. While they may be rearrested once proportionately more often than the nonparticipants, the participants do not have nearly as high a proportion rearrested multiple times as the nonparticipants do. At a very simple bivariate level, then, TASC participation does appear to have an impact on the number of times an individual will be rearrested. It seems to make little difference in the likelihood that an individual will not be rearrested at least once. However, more detailed analyses follow to explore the question of what effect one's performance in TASC has on the likelihood of recidivism. This will involve breaking the TASC participants into the three groups outlined above and comparing them to each other and the non-participants.

Performance and Recidivism

The most crucial question at this point in the study is whether or not successfully "graduating" from a TASC program has any impact on the likelihood of recidivism. For the purpose of this analysis, recidivism is operationally defined as any new rearrest, regardless of the charge or disposition. Table 3 presents not only a comparison of the four groups on total recidivism, but also broken down by subsequent misdemeanor and felony arrests.

The first thing to note is that TASC graduates show the highest proportion of nonrecidivists. That is, 47.8 percent of the TASC graduates do not have any type of rearrest up to 18 months after release from the program. The TASC neutral terminations have the next best record of nonrecidivism

TABLE 3: Rearrests by Category of TASC Participation

	TASC Participants			Eligible Nonparticipants
	Graduates	Neutrals	Failures	No-shows
<b>Total Rearrests:</b>				
None	47.8% (44)	36.7% (22)	24.2% (37)	34.8% (32)
One	26.1 (24)	20.0 (12)	21.6 (33)	13.0 (12)
Two or More	26.1 (24)	43.3 (26)	54.2 (83)	52.2 (48)
<b>Misdemeanor Rearrests:</b>				
None	79.3% (78)	80.0% (48)	69.3% (106)	72.8% (67)
One	12.0 (11)	11.7 (7)	17.0 (26)	13.0 (12)
Two or More	17.0 (8)	8.3 (5)	13.7 (21)	14.1 (13)
<b>Felony Rearrests:</b>				
None	58.7% (54)	43.3% (26)	33.3% (51)	41.3% (38)
One	27.2 (25)	25.0 (15)	37.5 (33)	16.3 (15)
Two or More	14.1 (13)	31.7 (19)	45.1 (69)	42.4 (39)

(Frequencies in parentheses.)

(36.7%), followed closely by the no-shows (34.7%). The group with the highest rearrest rate is the TASC failure group (75.8%). Initially, at least at the bivariate level of analysis, it appears that successfully completing a TASC program is associated with a lower rate of recidivism than is non-completion or non-participation.

However, over half of the TASC graduates do recidivate within 18 months after graduation from the program. Examining Table 3 further it can be seen that TASC graduates who do recidivate are evenly distributed between those who have only one rearrest and those with two or more rearrests (26.1%, respectively). Comparing the TASC graduates to the other categories shows some interesting results. Looking at those who have only one rearrest, the differences among TASC graduates, failures, and neutrals are not very substantial. No-shows, on the other hand, have the smallest proportion of one time recidivists. When attention is focused on those who recidivate two or more times, the differences among the groups once again prove substantial. Over half of both the TASC failures and the no-shows (54.2% and 52.2%, respectively) recidivate two or more times, compared to 43.3 percent of the neutral terminations. It would appear at this stage of the analysis that the successful completion of a TASC program has a substantial impact on the likelihood of subsequent arrest. Further, the TASC graduates who do recidivate tend to do so at a much lower rate than any of the three other groups, particularly the TASC failures and no-shows.

The seriousness of the subsequent arrest records of each group now becomes an important issue. It is not enough to simply note that TASC graduates tend to recidivate less often than do the individuals in the other groups. If, for example, TASC graduates who did recidivate tended to commit felony offenses more often than those in the other groups,

then the impact of their fewer but more serious rearrests would be substantial. The proportional rearrest figures for each client category, broken down by the seriousness of the rearrest charge and number of rearrests, are presented in Table 3.

Looking first at rearrests on misdemeanor charges, it can be seen that the majority of individuals in each category are not rearrested for a misdemeanor offense. A pattern is observed across all levels of misdemeanor rearrests, however. It shows that TASC graduates and neutral terminations tend to be rearrested for misdemeanor offenses at a lower rate than TASC failures and no-shows. The differences (7 to 10 percentage points) are not overwhelming, but certainly noteworthy. For the present, then, it appears that TASC graduates and neutral terminations fare somewhat better than TASC failures and no-shows on misdemeanor rearrests.

Felony offenses generally involve more injurious crimes than do misdemeanor offenses. For this reason they become the more important barometer of TASC success. Examining Table 3, again, the first thing to note is that TASC graduates show the lowest proportion of felony rearrests of any category. The majority (58.7%) of the TASC graduates are not rearrested for felony offenses, leaving 41.3 percent who are. Looking further, it can be seen that TASC graduates have the lowest proportion of individuals rearrested for felony offenses two or more times. TASC graduates do show the highest proportion of those rearrested only once on felony charges, though the other categories tend to be comparable, with the exception of the no-shows.

TASC neutral terminations have the second best overall record for felony rearrests. It appears, however, that neutral terminations who are rearrested on felony charges have a slight tendency to recidivate two or more times. The

no-show group is almost evenly divided between those who are not rearrested on felony charges (41.3%) and those who are rearrested on such charges two or more times (42.4%). When the no-shows who are rearrested once on a felony charge are added to those with two or more rearrests, it becomes clear that this group tends to recidivate proportionately more often than either the TASC graduates or neutral terminations. The worst group performance, proportionately, is shown by the TASC failures. Two-thirds (66.7%) of these individuals have at least one felony rearrest. Nearly half of them (45.1%) have been rearrested on felony charges two or more times since their referral to TASC.

This three step bivariate analysis has consistently shown TASC graduates to perform better, in terms of recorded rearrests, than any of the three other groups. That is, TASC graduates tend to recidivate less often overall, and have the least number of both misdemeanor and felony rearrests of all the categories. It should be pointed out that in all categories the individuals tended to be rearrested for both types of offenses more often than simply for any one type. Further, this methodology does not take into account the outcomes of any charge, only the fact that a rearrest occurred. These issues and others will be more fully addressed in the discussion section.

Pursuing the recidivism analysis further, Tables 4 and 5 present the rearrest figures for each termination category, controlling for total arrest records prior to the TASC referral. Total prior arrests is used as a control variable, in these analyses due to the fact that it is the most highly correlated with total subsequent arrest of any of the independent variables ( $r=.25$ ). Further, controlling for prior arrest record allows the standardization of each termination group on a variable that is both practically and theoretically important.

Table 4 appears to be somewhat complex at first glance. However, closer examination reveals some definite patterns in the relationship between both termination type and prior arrest record with total subsequent arrests. First, looking at the table as a whole, it can be seen that as the number of prior arrests increases, so does the proportion of each group showing a rearrest after the TASC referral. This culminates in the fact that those with two or more prior arrests tend to be rearrested more often than individuals in any other category, regardless of the outcome of TASC participation. Reversing this, those with no prior arrests tend to be rearrested less often than individuals in any other group.

Examining this more closely, the TASC successful graduates exhibit the lowest rearrest proportion among those with no prior arrest record. That is, 72.7 percent of TASC successes with no prior arrest record did not recidivate within the 18-month study period. In this section of the table, the no-shows with no prior record show the largest proportion (45.8%) of individuals recidivating multiple times. When one-time and multiple time recidivists are combined among those with no prior arrests, it is the TASC failures who have the largest total proportion of recidivists (62.1% recidivated).

Among those with one prior arrest, the no-shows are the least likely of any group within this section of the table to have recidivated. One-half (50.9%) of the no-shows in this category did not recidivate. For those with one prior arrest, the TASC failures again show the greatest proportion of recidivists, both one time (28.6%) and multiple times (47.6%). The TASC successes and neutrals did not distinguish themselves either favorably or unfavorably at this level.

Finally, those individuals with two or more prior arrests definitely show a propensity for rearrest after the TASC

TABLE 4: Total Subsequent Arrests by Type of Termination Controlling for Prior Arrest Record

Prior Arrests	Subsequent Arrests	TASC Participants			Non-Participants
		Successful	Neutral	Failure	No-shows
None	None	72.7% (24)	42.1% (8)	37.9% (11)	45.8% (11)
	One	15.2 (5)	21.1 (4)	27.6 (8)	8.3 (2)
	Two or More	12.1 (4)	36.8 (7)	34.5 (10)	45.8 (11)
One	None	38.1% (8)	30.0% (3)	23.8% (5)	50.0% (6)
	One	38.1 (8)	20.0 (2)	28.6 (6)	25.0 (3)
	Two or More	23.8 (5)	50.0 (5)	47.6 (10)	25.0 (3)
Two or More	None	31.6% (12)	35.5% (11)	20.4% (21)	26.8% (15)
	One	28.9 (11)	19.4 (6)	18.4 (19)	12.5 (7)
	Two or More	39.5 (15)	45.2 (14)	61.2 (63)	60.7 (34)

(Frequencies in parentheses.)

referral. The TASC neutrals exhibit the highest proportion (35.5%) of nonrecidivists at this state, but they have an even greater proportion (45.2%) of clients rearrested two or more times. TASC failures and the no-shows are almost even with respect to multiple time recidivists (61.2% and 60.7%, respectively). The TASC failures, however, show the greatest proportion of total recidivists (79.6%). TASC successes with two or more prior arrests recidivated in a less than desirable proportion (68.4% overall). They do, on the other hand, exhibit the smallest proportion of multiple time offenders (39.5%) of any group in this section of the table.

This analysis indicates that the relationship between the type of termination from TASC and subsequent arrests persists even after controls for prior arrest record are introduced. Further, a definite association between prior arrest record and subsequent arrests is graphically illustrated. Table 4 shows the proportions within each category of prior arrest record who do or do not recidivate after the TASC referral. It remains to be seen how many times these clients are rearrested, on the average, if they are rearrested at all.

Table 5 contains the mean rearrest values and standard deviations for the categories already explored in Table 4. The analysis presented in Table 5 basically shows that the lower proportion of TASC successes who are rearrested are rearrested at a lower rate, on the average, than those in the three comparison groups. The rather large standard deviations also suggest that there is great variability within groups on how many times the individuals within each cell are rearrested. In essence, then, Tables 4 and 5 point out the fact that TASC graduates tend to recidivate proportionately less often as a group and at a lower rate than any of the other three comparison groups.

TABLE 5: Mean Rearrest Values for Termination Type Controlling for Prior Arrest Record

Prior Arrests	TASC Participants			Non-Participants
	Successful	Neutral	Failure	No-Shows
<u>None</u>				
Mean	0.394	0.947	0.966	1.000
Standard Deviation	.704	.911	.865	.978
(N)	(33)	(19)	(29)	(24)
<u>One</u>				
Mean	0.857	1.200	1.238	0.750
Standard Deviation	.793	.919	.831	.866
(N)	(21)	(10)	(21)	(12)
<u>Two or More</u>				
Mean	1.079	1.097	1.408	1.339
Standard Deviation	.850	.908	.810	.880
(N)	(38)	(31)	(103)	(56)

### Multiple Regression Analysis

The preceding analyses have consistently shown TASC graduation to be associated with lower rearrest proportions and rates. Further, TASC graduates were observed to maintain this better performance record even when controls for prior arrest record were introduced. A correlation analysis bears out the relationships between total subsequent arrests and both termination type ( $r=.18$ ) and prior arrest record ( $r=.25$ ). These correlations show that as one moves from being in the TASC graduate group to the nonparticipant group, one's chances of being rearrested are increased. Likewise, as one goes from having no prior arrest record to a record of two or more prior arrests, the chance of being rearrested is increased. Two other variables are also found to be significantly correlated with total subsequent arrests. These are race ( $r=.13$ ) and sex ( $r=.10$ ). This means that blacks and males are most likely to be rearrested after the TASC referral.

The analyses presented to this point have taken into account the effects of only one or two variables at a time on the dependent variable (total subsequent arrests). It may be that when the effects of one variable are controlled for, the impact of other variables may be reduced below both statistical and substantive significance. In order to find out which variables do exert substantive impacts on the likelihood of subsequent arrest(s), taking all other relevant variables into account, an ordinary least squares regression model was constructed that incorporated all of the variables listed above. This model regresses total subsequent arrests on the independent variables race, sex, total prior arrests, and type of termination. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 6. A more detailed explanation of regression analysis is offered in Appendix A.

Table 6 shows that only two independent variables, total prior arrests and type of termination, have significant impacts on subsequent rearrests, net of the effects of the other variables. Total prior arrests is found to have the greatest impact on subsequent rearrests of any of the independent variables ( $b=.213$ ). Thus, if we assumed that being in the group with no prior arrests meant that the person would not be rearrested, then those with one prior arrest would have their chance of rearrest raised by 21 percentage points, and those in the group with two or more prior arrests would be 42 percentage points more likely to be rearrested than those in the no prior arrest group. Likewise, the neutral terminations show an 11 percentage point greater likelihood of rearrest than the successful graduates, the failures a 22 percentage point greater likelihood, and the nonparticipants a 33 percentage point greater likelihood, of rearrest than the successes. Race and sex, however, show no substantive or significant impact on the likelihood of rearrest when total prior arrests and termination type are controlled for.

Table 6: Ordinary Least Squares Regression of Total Subsequent Arrests on Relevant Independent Variables.

Variables	b	Standard Error	Beta
Race	.139	.093	.075
Sex	.190	.101	.091
Total Prior Arrests	.213*	.052	.208
Type of Termination	.111*	.050	.135
Intercept	.466		
N	396		

\*p .01  
R<sup>2</sup>=.095

Analysis of TASC Participants

The analysis of Table 2 showed that TASC participants tended to have a smaller proportion of individuals rearrested two or more times than the nonparticipants did. The subsequent analyses showed that TASC graduates tended to perform better after release than the other comparison groups. However, all of the tables showed that TASC participants, overall, recidivated at a higher proportion than might be desired. The guiding assumption behind TASC is that criminal offenders whose law-breaking behavior is the result of substance abuse can be cured of their dependance on drugs/alcohol and turn away from the criminal activities necessary to supply themselves with drugs/alcohol. This assumption, coupled with the previous analyses of TASC participants' recidivism, leads to the following analysis of what types of offenders show reduced recidivism following TASC participation.

Table 7 presents a comparison of TASC clients on subsequent arrests broken down by the TASC referral arrest type. Controls for prior arrest record are also included to allow more detailed analysis. TASC referral arrest type was determined by the major charge against the individual at arrest. Surveying the Table as a whole it is again apparent that clients with a prior record of multiple arrests are the most likely to recidivate, regardless of the TASC referral arrest type.

Focusing on the type of arrest and subsequent arrests history reveals some interesting patterns. First, those clients referred to TASC whose major charge was drug-related showed the largest proportion of no subsequent arrests. Further, they have the lowest proportion of multiple time

TABLE 7: Subsequent Arrests For TASC Participants by TASC Referral Arrest Type Controlling for Prior Arrest Record

Prior Arrests	Subsequent Arrests	TASC Referral Arrest Type			
		Property	Drug	Personal/Violent	Other/Victimless
None	None	48.0% (12)	58.3% (28)	25.0% (1)	50.0% (2)
	One	20.0 (5)	22.9 (11)	0.0 (0)	25.0 (1)
	Two or More	32.0 (8)	18.8 (9)	75.0 (3)	25.0 (1)
One	None	23.5% (4)	36.0% (9)	0.0% (0)	42.9% (3)
	One	35.3 (6)	28.0 (7)	0.0 (0)	42.9 (3)
	Two or More	41.2 (7)	36.0 (9)	100.0 (3)	14.3 (1)
Two or More	None	24.1% (13)	29.5% (18)	13.3% (2)	26.2% (11)
	One	11.1 (6)	32.8 (20)	26.7 (4)	14.3 (6)
	Two or More	64.8 (35)	37.7 (23)	60.0 (9)	59.5 (25)

(Frequencies in parentheses.)

recidivism, substantially lower than any other group, both on total and felony rearrest. Clients charged with "other/victimless" crimes (e.g., prostitution, DWI), have the second best overall performance. TASC clients whose major referral offense was property related (e.g., burglary, larceny, auto theft) have an overall record similar to that of the "other/victims" category.

It is the smallest group of TASC clients, those charged with "personal/violent" offenses, that displays the highest proportion of multiple time recidivists. Further, they display the lowest proportion of nonrecidivists. Looking more closely, it can be observed that these clients tend to have the highest proportional record of multiple prior arrest. Combining all categories of recidivism, the TASC clients whose primary charge at referral arrest was for a personal/violent offense account for the highest proportion of rearrests of any TASC group. In addition, they are charged proportionately more often with serious felony offenses than any other offender type.

This analysis points out some potential problems that TASC staff may wish to deal with in meeting their program and philosophical goals. First, the fact that TASC clients whose major offense was drug-related turn in the best overall performance in terms of rearrest suggests that TASC does have a substantive impact on these offenders. The analysis further suggest that other/victimless offenders and property offenders may also be helped by TASC participation. Clients charged with personal/violent offenses, on the other hand, do not appear to benefit greatly from TASC participation. The interaction between violent offenders and prior record may have an impact here that should be explored further.

Second, the impact of prior record must be taken into account when examining subsequent arrest record. Throughout these analyses the evaluators have pointed out that prior arrest record has a great, in fact the greatest, impact on the likelihood of subsequent arrest. Table 7 shows that this is the case regardless of the type of offense for which the client was referred. The more often a person was arrested before TASC, the more likely it is that he or she will be arrested after TASC, independent of the type of arrest. However, drug offenders represent the lower end of this rearrest range in comparison to other offender types.

These considerations suggest that TASC is most effective with substance-related offenders who have a minor prior arrest record. It is hard to say whether or not all persons who use drugs and commit crimes are truly drug dependent. More rigorous screening of TASC volunteers with regard to substance-using behaviors, criminal activity, the relationship between these, and prior record appears to be called for. This might help to deter some of those who view TASC as merely an alternative to incarceration, rather than as a method for achieving a life-style independent of both drug dependency and criminal behavior.

Seeking a further answer to the question of the impact of TASC on the likelihood of recidivism, Table 8 presents analyses of the effects of type of treatment on rearrest. The clients show the best overall proportional performance of any TASC treatment group. However, this is not a standard treatment mode, and represents a small segment of the client population.

Attention is thus given primarily to differences between out-patient and residential treatment modes. Both of these



categories contain different types of treatment modalities and philosophies. It would be more instructive to break them down further into specific types of treatment (e.g., methadone, group vs. individual counseling, family counseling, etc.). Unfortunately such information was not available to the present evaluators. The results should be interpreted in the light of this omission.

Looking at total rearrests in Table 8, out-patients are seen to have proportionately more nonrecidivists than residentially treated clients. Further, at both levels of rearrest, there are substantially fewer out-patients rearrested than residential clients. This relationship is also observed to hold with regard to felony rearrests. That is, out-patients tend to be rearrested at a lower proportion than residentials for felony offenses. The differences in misdemeanor rearrests between the two groups are negligible. From this analysis, then, it appears that treatments carried out on an out-patient basis are more effective at stemming recidivism, particularly for felony offenses.

#### Discussion

The preceding analyses have shown that persons who graduated from TASC programs tended to have a lower probability of rearrest than those terminated either neutrally or unsuccessfully. Throughout these analyses TASC graduates display the lowest proportions of recidivists overall and the lowest rates of rearrest if they do recidivate. In the multivariate analysis TASC graduation maintains its significant, as well as substantive, impact on the probability of rearrest, even when controlling for the effects of other independent variables. The best predictor of rearrest after TASC

TABLE 8: Subsequent Arrests by Treatment Type

	Out-Patient	Residential	In-Jail
<u>Total Rearrestes</u>			
None	35.6% (64)	26.9% (29)	53.3% (8)
One	25.6 (46)	19.4 (21)	13.3 (2)
Two or More	38.9 (70)	53.7 (58)	33.3 (5)
<u>Misdemeanors</u>			
None	73.3% (132)	75.0% (81)	80.0% (12)
One	15.6 (28)	13.0 (14)	13.3 (2)
Two or More	11.1 (20)	12.0 (13)	6.7 (1)
<u>Felonies</u>			
None	48.3% (87)	31.5% (34)	53.3% (8)
One	25.6 (46)	21.3 (23)	26.7 (4)
Two or More	26.1 (47)	47.2 (51)	20.0 (3)

(Frequencies in parentheses.)

referral, however, is the total number of arrests prior to TASC referral. Thus, while successfully completing a TASC program does have an impact on the likelihood of recidivism, those with multiple arrests prior to TASC referral are most likely to be rearrested, regardless of TASC success, failure, or nonparticipation.

The comparison of the proportion of each termination category who do not recidivate, however, points out that TASC graduation may not be substantially more effective at stopping recidivism than simply participating in the program. It does point out that TASC graduation may help reduce the amount, overall, that TASC graduates recidivate compared to other termination categories. A question raised at this point concerns whether it is graduation from TASC, rather than simply participation in TASC, that makes the major difference in rearrest probability. The observation that prior arrest record is the best predictor of subsequent arrest casts some doubt on the relationship between TASC graduation and rearrest probability.

It must be concluded that TASC participation, and TASC graduation in particular, do not substantially lower the probability of one rearrest. TASC participation, and TASC graduation in particular, do substantially reduce the likelihood of multiple rearrests. Thus, the result of TASC may not show up when the proportions of nonrecidivists and one time recidivists are examined. However, when the proportions recidivating two or more times are compared, TASC participants, and TASC graduates particularly, turn in the best performances. The benefit of TASC does not seem to be in totally stopping recidivism, but in reducing its frequency.



Treatment personnel interviewed by the evaluators provided a possible explanation for this pattern particularly among the successes. The counselors said that a client will often "backslide" once, and sometimes get caught. This would account for the number who are rearrested once. Whether it is the experience associated with the rearrest, or simply a feeling of guilt, the individual tends to "straighten up" after that point. Data are not available to test this explanation, and others may have alternative answers. This answer is, however, as plausible as any offered to this point.

The analysis of in-program variation is more straightforward. Clients with drug-related charges as the major offense at TASC referral show the best performance, in terms of rearrest record, of any offender type processed through TASC. Those charged with personal/violent crimes exhibit the worst performance by far. With regard to types of treatment, clients treated on an out-patient basis showed proportionately fewer rearrests than those placed in residential programs. In-jail clients had the best record of non-recidivism overall, but not all TASC projects have these programs, so that they are not a truly representative category.

From these analyses it would seem logical to narrow the scope of TASC's focus to "truly" drug-dependent offenders. The "casual" or "recreational" drug user may see TASC as an easy way out of the legal entanglement. Enrolling such persons in TASC programs may help to meet program enrollment goals, and may offer an alternative to prosecutors and judges, but it is not consistent with TASC philosophy. Indeed, it may function to dilute the effectiveness of TASC because of deviation from the TASC model. To remedy this would require more stringent screening procedures to identify drug-dependent offenders, the "true" TASC target population.

A second programmatic concern centers around the performances of the two dominant treatment types. The lower recidivism exhibited by those in out-patient treatment programs, compared to residential clients, may suggest that out-patient treatment be more fully utilized. Turning again to interviews conducted with TASC and treatment staff, they point out that out-patient treatment does not represent the disruption in the client's life that residential treatment does. Further, out-patients do not have to reveal their drug use to as many people, actively or through their absence, as residential clients do. Such an explanation has grounding in at least one major theoretical approach, that of societal reaction, or labeling theory (see, for example, Becker, 1973).

#### COST-EFFECTIVENESS ANALYSIS

"Cost effectiveness" analyses presented in evaluation studies for criminal and juvenile justice agencies are generally aimed at determining how well a particular program achieves its goals for a given price. This is usually done through the comparison of a new program and an existing program with regard to goals achieved and costs incurred. This means that, quite often, the least expensive method is perceived as the most "cost effective." The present analysis will be somewhat different, since many of the standard assumptions about costs and impacts do not hold when TASC is examined. In addition, TASC is a somewhat unique program in that it combines both the criminal justice process and "purchase of service" treatment programs.

One caution should be extended at the beginning of this section: TASC will rarely offer a less expensive processing option than the cost of traditional criminal justice processing. In practice, the only way that TASC can be less expensive than traditional processing is if a TASC client is diverted out of the system at an earlier stage than that at which he or she would probably have left the system under normal conditions. If the TASC client were to be diverted out of the system at any point after the judicial disposition, then not only would there be the costs of traditional processing, but also the added costs of TASC supervision and treatment.

The actual "cost effectiveness" of TASC participation, then, should not be expected to show up in the "front-end" costs of TASC participation versus traditional processing. Rather, if a benefit is to be expected, in economic terms, it

will most likely show up in the impact of lower recidivism on the part of TASC clients. The expense of TASC treatment should be considered in two ways: First, an examination of whether TASC does offer a savings compared to the depth of penetration into the criminal justice system of a comparable non-TASC case (e.g., is it cheaper to divert someone to TASC after a judicial disposition or to send them to jail or prison?); Second, TASC costs must be weighed against the cost of processing an individual through the criminal justice system again in the future (a comparison of recidivism rates between TASC participants and nonparticipants).

Trying to determine the cost of processing an individual through the criminal justice system in the State of Florida is not an easy task. In the present study a first stab at developing a system whereby the standardized cost of processing an offender through the criminal justice system in Florida has been attempted. It is, at best, a very rough estimate of the total cost. The evaluators hope that future refinements can be made in this attempt, thereby creating a standardized methodology for use by agencies in the criminal justice system to study their own costs, and provide comparison data for studies such as this one.

The flowchart presented in Figure 1 contains the cost estimates developed for processing criminals through the various segments of the criminal justice system in the districts served by the four TASC projects under study. The sources from which these data were gathered are numerous and are listed in Appendix B.

The cost estimates in Figure 1 are arranged in such a manner that the reader can simply sum up the costs for each stage of processing, adjusting for certain lengths of time,

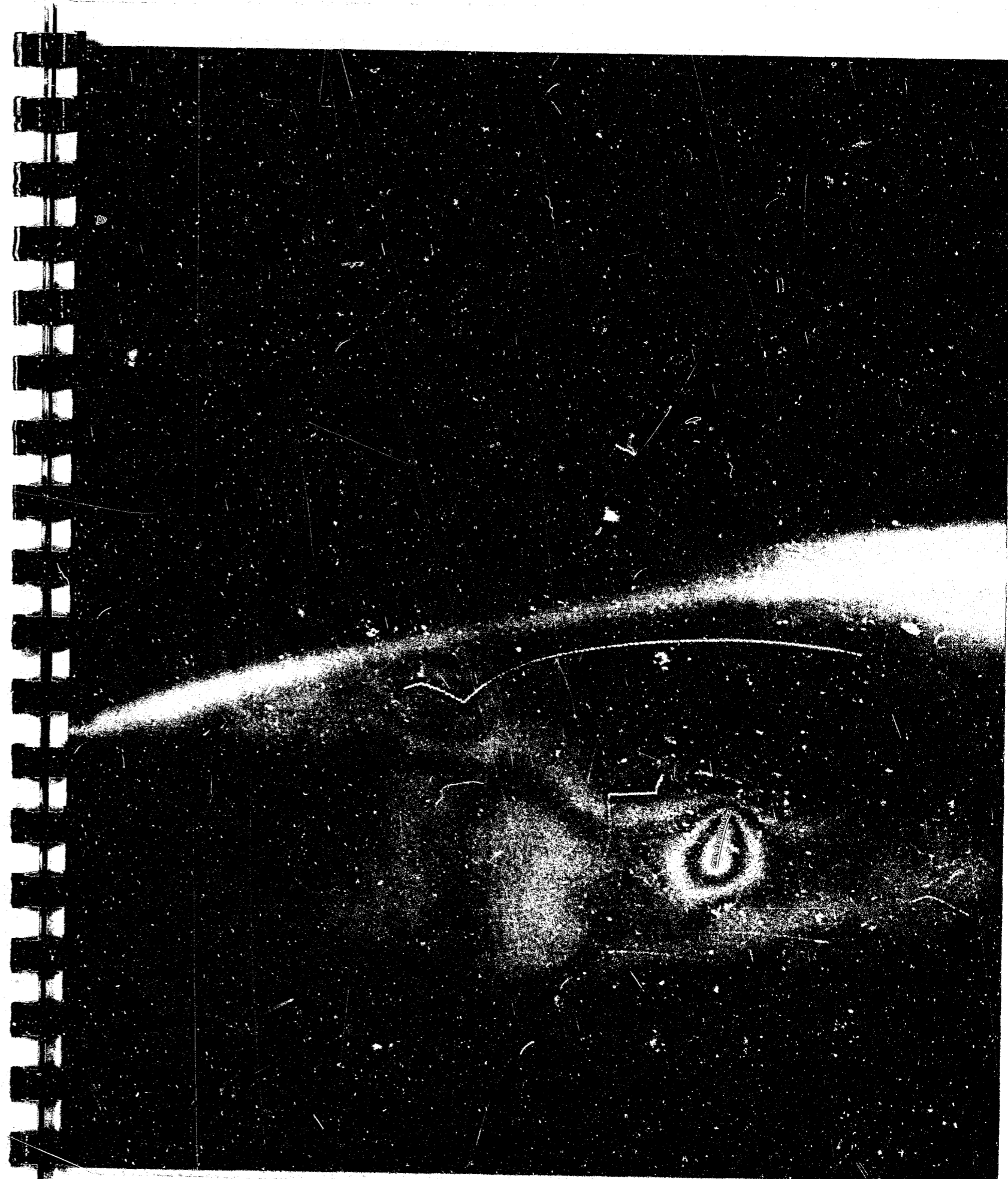
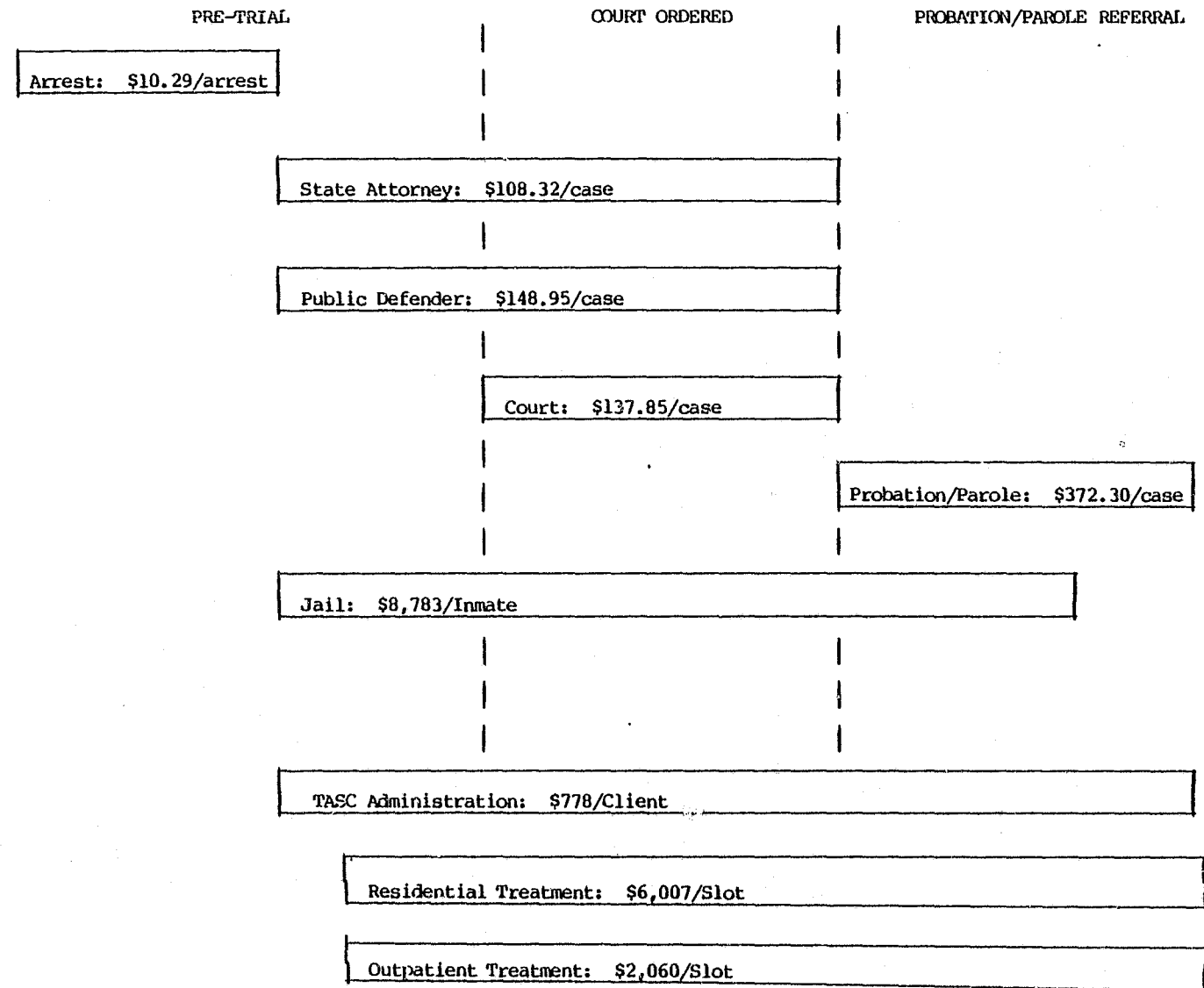


FIGURE 1  
ANNUALIZED PROCESSING COSTS  
Based on 1980-81 Data



and obtain an average total processing cost estimate. Sample cost estimates have been figured out below (see Figure 2) for two different nonTASC participants processed to "equivalent" stages of the criminal justice system with differing outcomes. Below those are the cost estimates for a TASC residential client and a TASC out-patient. It should be reiterated that these are still rough estimates.

The sample cost estimates which have been developed show that TASC, on the average, does not offer a less expensive option than the cost of traditional criminal justice processing in the short run. TASC out-patient treatment offers a less costly alternative than a jail term does. Conversely, TASC residential treatment is the most expensive alternative when dealing with a substance-abusing offender. The least expensive alternative when comparing the processing costs of TASC and nonTASC participants is the use of traditional probation. If there are any "cost savings" as a result of TASC participation, they would have to be in the long run.

#### Long-Term Projection

Figure 2 helps to substantiate the assertion made at the beginning of this section: TASC will rarely represent a less expensive alternative to traditional criminal justice processing. Given certain combinations of processing decisions, TASC could be a less expensive alternative than deeper penetration into the criminal justice system. Such an example would include early diversion to TASC out-patient treatment versus court trial and probation. At this point in time, however, diversion to TASC without court approval is still not the norm. Thus, at the front-end of the criminal justice system, TASC will rarely be "cost effective."

FIGURE 2: NonTASC versus TASC processing costs Comparisons

Non-TASC Client

Arrest + 1 month Jail + State Attorney + Public Defender + Court + 6 months Probation

$$\$10.29 + \$731.92 + \$108.32 + \$148.95 + \$137.85 + \$166.15 = \$1,302.56$$

Arrest + 1 month Jail + State Attorney + Public Defender + Court + 6 months Jail

$$\$10.29 + \$731.92 + \$108.32 + \$148.95 + \$137.85 + \$4,391.50 = \$5,527.91$$

TASC Participants

Arrest + 1 month Jail + State Attorney + Public Defender + Court + TASC + Residential Treatment

$$\$10.29 + 731.92 + 108.32 + 148.95 + 137.85 + 778.00 + 6,007.00 = \$7,921.41$$

Arrest + 1 month Jail + State Attorney + Public Defender + Court + TASC + Out-Patient Treatment

$$\$10.29 + 731.92 + 108.32 + 148.95 + 137.85 + 778.00 + 2,060.00 = \$3,974.41$$

The long-term cost savings from TASC offer a somewhat brighter picture. The analysis in the recidivism study showed that TASC participants, and particularly TASC graduates, tend to be rearrested less often than nonparticipants. TASC failures are the exception to this, being rearrested proportionately more often than any other group. But, overall, TASC participants reveal a lower incidence of rearrest than non-participants. The cost incurred from processing the same individual due to rearrest is thereby lowered among TASC participants. This is especially true of the TASC graduates. TASC failures wind up costing more because they recidivate more often than any other groups. However, comparing the proportions of TASC clients who recidivate multiple times to the nonparticipants who recidivate multiple times, TASC does appear to save money in the long run.

#### Discussion

In terms of "front-end" processing costs, TASC participation is rarely a less expensive option for treating drug offenders than traditional criminal justice processing. However, the reduced cost incurred as a result of fewer rearrests by TASC participants as a whole does represent a substantial savings to the criminal justice system. Taken group by group, however, TASC failures do represent the most expensive and least efficient category of treatment. The savings from TASC graduates and neutrals with lower recidivism should offset this added overall cost. In the long run, then, TASC does appear to offer a "cost-effective" alternative for dealing with substance-abusing offenders.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Impact Assessment

Interviews were conducted with representatives from both the criminal justice system and treatment agencies to determine the impact of TASC on both systems. The interviews resulted in a supportive and favorable assessment of TASC by both systems. The major impact of TASC on the criminal justice system appeared to be the availability of a new alternative to incarceration. In addition, TASC provided valuable sentencing information and options to judges dealing with cases involving substance-abusing offenders. TASC referrals have also had a substantive impact on the treatment system. In those treatment agencies contacted by the evaluators, TASC referrals made up 50 percent to 75 percent of the treatment client populations.

### TASC and Recidivism

The comparison of TASC participants and nonparticipants showed that TASC participation does have an impact on how many times a person is likely to be rearrested after TASC referral. While there were no substantive differences between TASC participants and nonparticipants at the "no rearrest" and "one rearrest" levels, TASC participants performed substantially better at the "multiple rearrest" level than did the nonparticipants.

Breaking the TASC participants into three groups, the TASC successes had the fewest rearrests, overall, of any comparison group. The TASC failures, on the other hand, turned in the worst rearrest record, even worse than that of the nonparticipants. While TASC graduation did appear to play a substantive role in predicting rearrests, the best predictor of rearrest was prior



arrest history. The more prior arrests an individual had, the greater the likelihood that he or she would be rearrested after TASC referral.

When only the TASC participants were examined, both the type of offense at TASC referral and the treatment modality were found to have an impact on the likelihood of rearrest. TASC participation appeared to have its greatest impact on those arrested for drug-related charges. The group of participants who appeared to be the least affected by TASC participation were those charged with personal/violent offenses at arrest. Clients treated on an out-patient basis were found to recidivate less often than those clients treated in a residential program.

#### TASC and Cost-Effectiveness

The potential for TASC participation to offer a less expensive option than traditional criminal justice processing, in the case of substance-abusing offenders, was shown to be intimately tied to the recidivism analysis. At the "front-end" of the process, TASC cannot be less expensive than traditional processing because its costs are added to those of traditional processing. In the long term analysis, given that TASC participants showed a tendency to be rearrested less often than the nonparticipants, TASC does represent a savings. This is due to the fact that they do not get processed through the system as often as the nonparticipants do. Thus, in the long run, TASC participation does appear to represent a "cost-effective" alternative for dealing with substance-abusing criminals.

#### Recommendations

The major findings and conclusions outlined above lead to the following recommendations aimed at reducing both the cost of TASC participation and recidivism:

- (1) TASC screening and admission goals should be scrutinized to determine whether they accurately reflect the proportion of criminal offenders who have substance-abuse problems that motivate their criminal activity;
- (2) Implementation of urinalysis at the screening interview. It would represent an increased front-end expenditure. However, its potential for helping to identify appropriate TASC admissions should off-set its initial costs;
- (3) The use of pretrial diversion from the criminal justice system should be increased. Such action would help to alleviate jail overcrowding and reduce the backlog of cases within the criminal court system. Further, pretrial diversion would also help to defray the cost of judicial processing, the end-point for most TASC cases at present. This would require greater cooperation and communication among TASC staff, public defenders, and prosecutors to insure informed decision making;
- (4) The screening process for admission to TASC programs should be made more rigid to insure that substance-dependent offenders, the "true" TASC targets, are being admitted into the program. This would help to eliminate the abuse of TASC as simply an alternative to incarceration by offenders who are not truly substance-dependent. Some suggested steps are:

- a) The revamping of the screeners' presentation of TASC to potential volunteers in a manner that emphasizes the impact of a drug-free lifestyle, rather than TASC's potential as an alternative to incarceration;
  - b) The implementation of an initial urinalysis at TASC screening for all volunteers in an attempt to ascertain whether the volunteer is truly substance-dependent, rather than a casual drug user seeking an alternative to incarceration;
  - c) Since prior arrest history has been found to be the best single predictor of recidivism, more thorough scrutiny of the volunteers' arrest histories might help to screen out offenders with substantial arrest histories;
  - d) In the same vein, screening of TASC potential admissions with regard to the types of prior and current offenses may help to insure that certain types of offenders (e.g., personal/violent offenders) that have proven to be least affected by TASC will be screened out initially. This would leave more room in the programs for clients with offenses that have been shown to benefit most from TASC participation.
- (5) Steps should be taken to increase referrals and admissions of appropriate substance-abusing offenders of minority status.
- (6) The screening process and client evaluation should be combined with the presentence investigation. This would

increase the amount of information available to all parties concerned with the client's case and speed the processing of the client through the system. In order to meet confidentiality requirements, such action would have to be approved by the client.

- (7) Increased utilization of out-patient treatment programs. Out-patient programs have been shown to be less expensive than residential treatment. In addition, TASC clients treated on an out-patient basis exhibited a better performance record in terms of rearrest than the TASC clients treated on a residential basis.
- (8) A standardized reporting system of client progress to the representatives of the criminal justice system should be developed.

All of these recommendations point back to the necessity for more rigorous screening procedures. Increased expenditure at the front-end of the process, coupled with competent judgement on the part of TASC personnel and justice system personnel, should lead to both reduced cost and recidivism.

REFERENCES

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1978 TASC: An Approach for Dealing with the Substance Abusing Offender. Washington, D.C.: United States Department of Justice.

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1980 Applied Regression: An Introduction. Beverly Hills, California. Sage Publications.

APPENDIX A: A Brief Explanation of Multiple Regression

The b coefficients in Table 6 show the unstandardized changes in the dependent variable for a one-unit change in the value of a particular independent variable. For example, a one-unit change in the value of total prior arrests (say, from zero to one prior arrest), "causes" a 21.3 percentage point increase in the likelihood of a subsequent arrest. The Beta coefficient, on the other hand, indicates the "average standard deviation change in Y (the dependent variable) associated with a standard deviation change in X (the independent variable under consideration), when the other independent variables are held constant" (Lewis-Beck, 1980). This allows the comparison of the magnitude of the effects of two or more independent variables.

Table 6 shows that only two independent variables, total prior arrests and type of termination, have significant impacts on subsequent rearrests, net of the effects of the other variables. Examining the b coefficients, total prior arrests is found to have the strongest effect of any independent variable ( $b=.213$ ). Thus, a one unit change in total prior arrests is associated with a 21.3 percentage point change in the value of total subsequent arrests. Likewise, the other significant effect is shown by type of termination ( $b=.111$ ), an eleven percentage point change in subsequent arrest probability for each one-unit change in type of termination. This means that a person terminated as a TASC failure is 22 percent more likely to recidivate than a person terminated as a TASC success. The b values for these two variables show their standardized effects, significantly above those of race and sex.

This analysis allows the prediction of total subsequent arrests by knowing the value of a particular independent variable, net of the effects of the other variables in the model. Thus, the best predictor of total subsequent arrests is total prior arrests (B=.208), followed by type of termination (B=.135). It turns out then, that the type of termination one receives from TASC does significantly impact on the likelihood of subsequent arrests, but the best predictor of subsequent arrests is total prior arrests.

Finally, the R<sup>2</sup> value presented at the bottom of Table 6 is the amount of variation in the value of the dependent variable (subsequent arrests) explained by the combination of variables used in the regression model. It shows that 9.5 percent of the variance in total subsequent arrests is explained by this model. More practically stated, this means that knowing an individual's race, sex, total prior arrest record, and his or her termination from the TASC program would improve the prediction of subsequent arrests, on the average, by 9.5 percent. Conversely, this leaves 90.5 percent of the variance unexplained. In practical terms this means that we still cannot explain who will or will not recidivate with a great deal of accuracy.

#### APPENDIX B: Sources for Cost Benefit Analysis

- A. Arrest Costs: The arrest costs were derived from the cost of one hour of a police officer's time and the average mileage traveled in making one arrest. This figure was developed by the Duval County's Sheriff Office, Planning and Research Division, 1981.
- B. Jail Costs: The jail data were obtained from A Study of the Current Status of Florida's County Jails prepared for the Florida Council on Criminal Justice by the Bureau of Criminal Justice Assistance, Department of Veteran and Community Affairs, Tallahassee, Florida.
- C. States Attorney's Costs: The State Attorney costs were derived from the following formula:

$$\frac{\text{Expenditures}}{\text{Caseload}} = \text{Cost Per Case}$$

The expenditures consist of both county and state expenditures. County expenditure data were obtained from County Budget Offices. The state expenditure data were obtained from the Judicial Administrative Commission (JAC), Tallahassee, Florida. The caseload data includes felony, misdemeanor, juvenile, and Baker Act case dispositions. These data were obtained from the Florida Judicial System Statistical Reports, State Courts Administrator, Tallahassee, Florida.

- D. Public Defender's Costs: The Public Defender costs were derived from the following formula:

$$\frac{\text{Expenditures}}{\text{Caseload}} = \text{Cost Per Case}$$

The expenditures consist of both county and state expenditures. County expenditures data were obtained from County Budget Offices. The state expenditure data were obtained from the Judicial Administration Commission (JAC), Tallahassee, Florida. The caseload data include felony, juvenile, misdemeanor, and Baker Act case dispositions. They do not include appeals, special procedure hearings or conflict cases. These data were obtained from Caseload Verification Reports, Florida Public Defenders Coordination Office, Tallahassee, Florida.

- E. Court Costs: The court costs were derived from the following formula:

$$\frac{\text{Expenditures}}{\text{Caseload}} = \text{Cost Per Case}$$

The expenditures include Circuit Court, County Court, Court Clerk, Court Administrator, and Court Reporter. The county expenditures were obtained from County Budget Offices. The state expenditures were obtained from the Judicial Administration Commission (JAC), Tallahassee, Florida. The caseload data were obtained from the Florida Judicial System Statistical Reports, State Courts Administrator, Tallahassee, Florida.

- F. Probation and Parole Costs: The probation and parole costs were obtained from the Florida Probation and Parole Commission, Tallahassee, Florida.

- G. TASC Administrative Costs: TASC administrative costs were obtained from the TASC Evaluation, Phase I, by combining the unit costs for successful clients, as well as screening/identification, diagnosis/evaluation and tracking/monitoring services.
- H. Residential Treatment Costs: Residential treatment costs are based on the National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA) "approved slot cost" figures.
- I. Out-patient Treatment Costs: Out-patient treatment costs are based on the National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA) "approved slot cost" figures.

**END**