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The Campbell Crime and Justice Group

EXPEDITED REVIEWS PROJECT

National Institute of Justice Grant # 2004-DD-BX-0003

To the Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania

FINAL REPORT: SEPTEMBER 27, 2006

By Lawrence W. Sherman¹ and Michael B. Schlossman²

In August 2004, the Campbell Collaboration's Crime and Justice Group (CCJG) received funding from the National Institute of Justice for the purpose of expediting nine systematic reviews on "what works" in the criminal justice system. The topics examined in these reviews ranged from the effect of street lighting on crime to the effectiveness of terrorism prevention programs. Thanks in large part to the NIJ funding and deadline, CCJG has produced nine drafts of systematic reviews that will contribute greatly to our knowledge of effective methods to reduce crime and improve the quality of justice. Not

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only will these reviews assist scholars and researchers, they offer policymakers and practitioners the least biased and most scientifically rigorous resource on which crime prevention strategies work and which do not. By making these reviews available online (see <http://www.campbellcollaboration.org/CCJG/reviews/published.asp>) in either their approved protocol version or final approved review, CCJG hopes to provide an easily accessible resource for policymakers, practitioners, researchers, teachers, students, journalists, and ordinary citizens.

The results of several of these and other Campbell reviews were featured at the 14th World Congress of Criminology, held in August 2005 at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, PA. The reviews presented in various stages of completion and approval were as follows:

Boot Camps	Doris MacKenzie, David Wilson and Ojmarrh Mitchell
Drug Courts	David Wilson, Ojmarrh Mitchell and Doris MacKenzie
Child Skills Training and Sex Offender Treatment	Friedrich Losel
Cognitive Behavioral Treatment	Nana Landenberger and Mark Lipsey
Court Domestic Violence Programs	Lynette Feder and David Wilson
Effects of Improved Street Lighting on Crime	David Farrington and Brandon C. Welsh
Effects of CCTV on Crime	Brandon C. Welsh and David Farrington
Employment of Ex-Offenders	Christy Visher
Hot Spots Policing and Crime Prevention	Anthony Braga
Institutional Violence	David Cooke and Lisa Gadon
Multisystemic Treatment	Julia Littell
Neighborhood Watch	Trevor Bennett and Katy Holloway
Police Action vs. Gun Violence	Chris Koper
Prison Drug Programs	Ojmarrh Mitchell, David Wilson, and Doris MacKenzie
Restorative Justice	Heather Strang and Lawrence W. Sherman
Terrorism	Cynthia Lum, Leslie Kennedy, and Alison Sherley
Treating Serious Juvenile Offenders	Vicente Garrido

Of these presentations, five systematic reviews that came out of the grant support are now posted on the website. More are still in progress, and a total of eight should be completed by the end of 2006. This result, while not as speedy as originally anticipated, has nonetheless resulted in the goals of the grant being largely accomplished. This accomplishment resulted from targeting some, but not all, of the review protocols

approved by the CCJG. This targeting included all reviews presented at the World Congress, and all reviews that are now on the website. While the original plans for topics have not all reached completion, the fact that five reviews overall are now posted and three more will soon be is a direct reflection of the NIJ support for the CCJG infrastructure during the expediting period prior to the World Congress.

This report summarizes the work product of nine of the Systematic Reviews commissioned by CCJG, and supported directly or indirectly through the NIJ grant. Most of them have not yet achieved final Campbell Collaboration (C2) approval, yet all have made substantial progress in assessing the state of knowledge in the field.

1. *Effects of correctional boot camps on offending*, David B. Wilson, Doris MacKenzie, and Fawn Ngo Mitchell, University of Maryland
2. *Closed-circuit television*, Brandon Welsh, University of Massachusetts, USA and David Farrington, Cambridge University, UK
3. *Street lighting*, Brandon Welsh, University of Massachusetts, USA and David Farrington, Cambridge University, UK
4. *The effectiveness of counter-terrorism strategies*, Cynthia Lum, Leslie W. Kennedy, and Alison J Sherley, George Mason University
5. *Neighborhood watch*, Trevor Bennett and Katy Holloway, Glamorgan University, UK and David Farrington, Cambridge University, UK
6. *Cost-benefits of sentencing*, Cynthia McDougall, Raymond Swaray, Amanda Perry, University of York, UK
7. *Community-based alternatives versus incarceration*, Martin Killias and Patrice Villetaz, University of the Lausanne, Switzerland
8. *Institutional Violence: A Systematic Review of the Impact of Situational Factors on Violence*, Lisa Gadon, David J. Cooke, and Lorraine Johnstone, Glasgow Caledonian University
9. *Screening for juvenile and young adult suicide risk*, Amanda Perry, University of York, UK

What do these reviews have in common? What makes them uniquely Campbell?

As anyone who attended the World Congress presentations can attest, what makes Campbell systematic reviews unique is the use of easy-to-follow, transparent methods so that readers can trace how an author arrived at his conclusions. The fact that Campbell is an online publication gives authors more space to go into detail on their methodology than they would have in a normal academic journal. Each Campbell review describes in detail the search strategies used, the study eligibility criteria employed, descriptions of the included studies and how they were coded and analyzed, the main result, and the reviewers' conclusions. These sections are also briefly summarized in the abstract. Campbell's rigorous editorial process subjects all protocols and reviews to two substantive critiques and one methods critique by experts from all over the world. In addition, each review is assigned a principal advisor, who is familiar with the Campbell Group's goals and methods. This rigorous editorial process ensures that Campbell's requirements for transparent methodology and evidence-based conclusions are met.

While the following nine reviews share something uniquely Campbell, they diverge both in the precise methodologies they use and the conclusions they reach. Five reviews conducted a meta-analysis, while four did not. Meta-analysis is a quantitative analytic technique used to combine the results from multiple experimental studies into one analysis allowing researchers arrive at tentative conclusions as to whether or not a program worked. In general, the Campbell Crime and Justice Group prefers meta-analysis to traditional narrative reviews.

In order to conduct a meta-analysis, however, there needs to be numerous methodologically and substantively similar, high quality studies on the effect of an

intervention on crime. Unfortunately, as Martin Killias and Patrice Villetaz concluded in *Community-based alternatives versus incarceration* (see description below), despite some progress, there is still a paucity of randomized, controlled or quasi-experimental studies in many areas, making meta-analysis impossible. Though drawing cautious conclusions from the available evidence, several Campbell authors argue that there are not enough high quality studies out there to draw definitive conclusions about whether or not a program works. We hope that the findings from these reviews both encourage and provide guidance for future experimental and quasi-experimental research.

The more conclusive findings from the five reviews that were able to use meta-analysis point to the type of useful knowledge that policymakers and practitioners can learn from systematic reviews of criminal justice interventions. Not surprisingly, the results of these reviews show that some programs work, others don't, and others may work in certain situations but not in others. For example, Trevor Bennett and Katy Holloway concluded that Neighborhood Watch is effective overall in reducing crime.

On the other hand, Wilson and MacKenzie found that boot camps are generally ineffective at reducing crime, while Welsh and Farrington discovered that closed-circuit television does not generally prevent crime in the U.S. and even in the U.K. except in parking lots, when combined with improved street lighting. Although all authors stress the need for more and better research before drawing definitive conclusions, these reviews represent the most systematic, up-to-date evidence of which programs in the criminal justice system work and which do not. Below is a summary of each of the methods and findings of nine of the reviews that were supported at least in part by the NIJ grant.

REVIEW SUMMARIES

1. *Effects of correctional boot camps on offending*, David B. Wilson, Doris MacKenzie, and Fawn Ngo Mitchell, University of Maryland

In this review, Wilson et al. conducted a meta-analysis of 43 studies on the effect of boot camp on reoffending, including four randomized controlled trials (RCTs) and 39 quasi-experimental designs. As will become clear from the rest of this report, to have this number of high quality experimental studies to draw on is rare. All of the included studies compared a group that participated in boot camp to a control group that participated in a conventional correctional program such as probation or short-term incarceration or parole.³ They all included a post-program measure of recidivism; most used official arrest data while a few utilized self-report measures of criminal behavior. For studies that had multiple follow-up periods, they included the longest follow-up that maintained at least 90 per cent of the sample in the analysis. All studies except one used dichotomous measures of recidivism.

The overall odds-ratio, using a random effects model, was 1.02, indicating that boot camp participants had approximately the same recidivism rate as the comparison group. They re-ran the results using the longest follow-up in each study; the results were the same. Perhaps, though, the effect of boot camp depended on whether the studies were randomized controlled trials or had quasi-experimental designs. However, the authors tested for this and found no significant differences. The effect of juvenile boot camps was slightly but not significantly better than adult boot camps. Also, juvenile boot camps

³ The content of the control group's treatment varied among the different included studies.

that only included non-violent/non-person offenders observed slightly but not significantly larger effects than those that had a more mixed offender profile.

Last, the authors tested to see whether boot camps that emphasize offender rehabilitation were more beneficial than those that did not. They found that this was the case (1.10 vs. 0.90), but the difference was not statistically significant. The authors concluded, “Correctional boot camps are neither as good as the advocates expect nor as bad as the critics hypothesize . . .” “Further research is clearly needed to establish whether a rehabilitative emphasis within a boot camp is an effective combination” (16).

2. *Closed-circuit television*, Brandon Welsh, University of Massachusetts, USA and David Farrington, Cambridge University, UK

Closed-circuit television (CCTV) is the single most heavily funded non-criminal justice crime prevention measure in the UK and also has a significant presence in the US. Its rationale is both to prevent and detect crime. This review examines the effectiveness of CCTV in preventing crime. After searching electronic databases, literature reviews, bibliographies of CCTV studies, and contacting experts in the field, the authors discovered 49 evaluations of the effect of CCTV.

In order to be included in the review, CCTV had to be the focus of the intervention according to the study author and contain one outcome measure for crime (preferably both official records and citizen surveys), and contain an experimental area and a comparable control area. In total, 22 studies were included in the narrative review and 19 in the meta-analysis. Thirteen were carried out in city centers or public housing,

four in public transportation systems, and five in parking lots. Most studies were carried out in the UK. Results from the narrative review were mixed. For example, of evaluations of CCTV in the city center and public housing, five of thirteen evaluations reduced crime, three increased crime, and five had no clear effect. The meta-analysis, using a fixed effects model, found that CCTV in general had a small but significant overall effect on crime (95% confidence interval 1.06-1.13, $p < .0001$).⁴ In other words, CCTV reduced crime by eight per cent in experimental areas compared to control areas.

Further analysis demonstrated that CCTV was more effective in the United Kingdom than in the United States, when used in parking lots to prevent vehicle crimes than in city centers or public transportation systems, and most effective in combination with improved street lighting. It is not entirely clear what explains the cross-cultural difference in the effectiveness of CCTV. The authors suggest that the short follow-up time used for measures of effectiveness in the U.S. studies might account for the difference, though the difference might also arise because none of them examined CCTV alongside other interventions like street lighting. It could also be that CCTV receives less support from the police and funding in the United States due to lower levels of public support. The authors conclude, “These results lend support for the continued use of CCTV to prevent crime in public space, but suggest that it be more narrowly targeted than its present use would indicate. Future CCTV schemes should employ high-quality evaluation designs with long follow-up periods” (2).

⁴ These findings may or may not be appropriate for statistical tests, depending on which methodological rules are followed. Compare Lipsey and Wilson (2001) to Berk and Freedman (2003).

3. *Street lighting*, Brandon Welsh, University of Massachusetts, USA and David Farrington, Cambridge University, UK

This review evaluates the effectiveness of policies to improve street lighting in order to reduce crime. The authors included all studies where improved street lighting was the main intervention being tested and an experimental area and a comparable control area were tested. In addition, all included studies had to have at least twenty crimes in both areas at the time of the pretest. A thorough search of electronic databases, reviews of the literature, bibliographies of reports, and contacts with leading researchers, turned up 29 studies, of which thirteen met the inclusion criteria. The studies were similar enough and of high enough quality to conduct a meta-analysis. The results of the meta-analysis produced an odds-ratio of 1.25, reflecting an overall 20 per cent reduction in crime. Furthermore, the nine studies that evaluated crime in both the night and day time reduced crime by 28 per cent.

However, only four of the eight studies in the US were found to be effective, showing no significant reduction in crime in the meta-analysis. On the other hand, all five British studies found improved street lighting to be effective, reducing overall crime by 29 per cent, violent crime by 29 per cent and property crime by 37 per cent. Overall, there was little evidence of displacement as some critics had claimed. Also, a cost-benefit analysis of improved street lighting in the UK found benefits five to six times the program costs.

Interestingly, night-time crimes did not decrease more than day-time crimes. This finding would appear to support the community pride theory of situational crime

prevention, which argues that improved street lighting signals community investment and leads to greater community cohesiveness and informal social control. This finding might also explain why the four US studies that found street lighting to be effective measured both day and night-time crimes, while the other four that found no effect did not. The difference in effectiveness between street lighting in the US and the UK might also exist because the US studies were carried out ten to fifteen years before UK studies. The authors concluded that, on the whole, improving street lighting “appears to be a feasible, effective, and inexpensive method of reducing crime” (15).

4. *The effectiveness of counter-terrorism strategies*, Cynthia Lum, Leslie W. Kennedy, and Alison J Sherley, George Mason University

In this systematic review, the authors found an almost complete absence of evaluation research on the effectiveness of counter-terrorism policies. Of over 15,000 studies on terrorism—identified primarily through searching electronic databases—the authors found 80 evaluations of counter-terrorism policies. The authors chose to only include studies that could be scored at least a 3 on the Maryland Scientific Methods Scale—studies that showed a correlation between a program and crime and had a control group or used time series (Sherman *et al.*, 1997). Only seven non-medical studies met these criteria, each of which used a time series analysis. However, these studies contained multiple findings from the same intervention, producing 86 findings of relevance. Each examined the increase or decrease of terrorism events following the implementation of anti-terrorism strategies.

The overall meta-analysis found an average effect size of 2.81 events, which suggests that counter-terrorism strategies overall actually increased the likelihood of terrorism events. However, the authors warned that, “these values are not necessarily meaningful because the values represent effects from different types of interventions, constructs, and time periods” (23). They then disaggregated the findings by type of intervention, including those that increased detection at airports, fortified embassies and protected diplomats, increased the severity of punishment for those apprehended and convicted, UN resolutions, military interventions and/or retaliation, and changes in governance (for example, the end of the Cold War).

The data confirmed the common wisdom that the installation of metal detectors in the 1970s reduced the number of hijackings; the weighted mean effect size was 3.65 events indicating a mean reduction of over three terrorism events after metal detectors were added. However, the authors also found that metal detectors significantly increased the number of non-hijacking events, suggesting a displacement effect; terrorists chose other methods and targets after airplane hijackings became more difficult to accomplish. Fortifying bases and protecting diplomats, U.N. resolutions, and increasing the length of incarceration or severity of punishment for hijackings did not show a significant effect on the number of terrorism events.

Military retaliation by states, in this case Israel’s attack on Lebanon and the United States’ attack on Libya, significantly increased the number of terrorism events in the short-term by an average of 11.60 events. though they had no effect on the long-term trend. The terrorism events most affected in the short term by military interventions were non-casualty events, threats, and miscellaneous bombings. Last, a meta-analysis of five

studies examining the effect of political governance on terrorism found that the existence of intolerant parties and the end of the Cold War brought about an increase in the number and severity of terrorist attacks.

The authors concluded, “The findings of this review press the need for researchers, government leaders, policy makers and agencies that fund counter-terrorism strategies and research to match the massive proliferation of anti-terrorism programs and spending with evaluations of the effectiveness of programs.” “Further, programs should be assessed to establish if they cause more harm than good or if they create unanticipated consequences” (3).

5. *Neighborhood watch*, Trevor Bennett and Katy Holloway, Glamorgan University, UK and David Farrington, Cambridge University, UK

In this review, Bennett and Holloway conducted both a narrative review and meta-analysis of evaluations of neighborhood watch programs. Neighborhood watch schemes are often implemented alongside property marking and security surveys; the three together are referred to as “the big three” (8). This review included stand-alone schemes and those that included “the big three” or two of them as long as one of these was neighborhood watch. The review also excluded evaluations of citizen patrols, in which residents are appointed to specific crime-fighting positions. By contrast, “watch schemes are based solely on residents operating in their capacity as residents” (9).

Furthermore, the authors limited the scope of the review to schemes serving residents living in neighborhoods. Only studies achieving level 3 according to the

Maryland Scientific Methods Scale were included. In this case, only evaluations that compared a neighborhood watch zone to a comparable control area and had before and after measures of crime were included. Drawing from electronic databases, on-line library catalogues, previous reviews of the literature on the effect of neighborhood watch, bibliographies of publications on neighborhood watch, and leading researchers in the field, the authors found 19 studies that met the selection criteria, twelve of which contained data that could be used in the meta-analysis. Most of these were published in the 1980s and combined neighborhood watch with at least one other programmatic element.

The results of the narrative review were mixed, with approximately half of the studies showing neighborhood watch is effective in reducing crime and the other half showing it has no effect or may even increase crime. The results of the meta-analysis were thus illuminating. Using a fixed effects model produced an odds ratio of 1.19. In practical terms, this meant that, in areas with neighborhood watch, crime rates decreased 16 per cent more than in the control group. However, part of the difference between the findings of the narrative review and the meta-analysis appears to be a product of the fact that more of the studies included in the meta-analysis used official crime records, which were significantly more likely to report a reduction in crime following neighborhood watch than studies using victimization surveys. The authors concluded, “On balance, it might be concluded that the results of the review are encouraging, but more research needs to be done to help explain why these variations exist” (35).

6. *Cost-benefits of sentencing*, Cynthia McDougall, Raymond Swaray, Amanda Perry,
University of York, UK

This review examined the cost-benefits of a diverse array of sentencing options such as pre-trial diversions, probation, drug treatment, boot camps, jail and imprisonment. The focus of the review was on cost-benefit studies, which computed both the costs of the intervention and the monetary value of outcomes, and a benefit-cost ratio. However, cost-effectiveness studies, which provided cost information of a sentencing practice and the benefit in non-monetary terms, were used to supplement the findings from the cost-benefit studies.

Electronic database and bibliographic searches yielded 19 studies that met the inclusion criteria, nine of which were cost-benefit and ten cost-effectiveness studies. None of the studies reported standard deviations, and they tested a diverse array of sentencing options, making it impossible to conduct a meta-analysis. The authors found that most of these studies were of poor quality. Only three of the nine cost-benefit studies, for example, had control groups with pre- and post- measures. Not to mention, these studies varied greatly in which costs and benefits were included; only two, for example, tried to monetize the costs of victim pain and suffering. The cost-effectiveness studies were also of variable quality.

Still, the combined evidence led to several tentative conclusions. Two high quality cost-benefit studies found that in-prison sex offender treatment programs were cost-beneficial when compared to imprisonment alone. High quality cost-benefit studies also suggest that drug treatment diversion programs, intensive supervision, and

imprisonment for high-risk offenders were also cost-beneficial. The finding that intensive supervision is effective contradicts prior research (Sherman et al., 1997; 2002). This particular program differed, however, in that shock incarceration preceded intensive supervision, suggesting that punishment and supervision is a combination worthy of future research. The study that found that imprisonment works for violent or repeat offenders also concluded that there could be a saving of 25 per cent if less serious offenders, particularly drug offenders, were given a community sentence. The authors concluded, “Evidence from the small number of studies in this review of the cost-benefit analyses of sentencing would suggest that combining rehabilitation with structure may also be cost-beneficial . . .” (17).

7. *Community-based alternatives versus incarceration*, Martin Killias and Patrice Villetaz, University of the Lausanne, Switzerland

This is a narrative review of studies that compared offenders who received non-custodial sanction such as probation, outpatient drug treatment, or electronic monitoring to those that were sent to prison, boot camp, residential treatment, or any other program that involved the deprivation of liberty. Through a search of electronic databases, bibliographies of published works, and contact with experts from several different countries, a total of 300 relevant studies were found. The authors chose to only include studies that achieved at least level 4 on the Maryland Scientific Methods Scale, twenty-six in total. In practice, this meant that randomized controlled and quasi-experimental studies were included as were matched comparison studies and those that compared a

treatment to a control group and controlled for at least three variables. They found and reported on four randomized controlled trials, two quasi-experimental studies, five matched comparison studies, and eighteen studies that controlled for more than three variables.

The authors decided it was inappropriate to conduct a meta-analysis due to the enormous variation in study methods, types of offenders, sanctions, and outcome measures and the small number of high quality evaluations. Twelve studies found that the rate of re-offending was significantly lower for non-custodial versus custodial sanctions. In thirteen studies, no significant differences were found; only two studies found custodial sanctions to be more effective. However, because of small sample size, differences in the length of study observation periods, and differences in the programs being compared and the type of offenders targeted, no definitive conclusions could be reached about the effectiveness of custodial versus non-custodial sanctions. The authors concluded, “. . . randomized controlled trials ought to be preferred whenever possible, not only by researchers, but also by policy makers. Indeed, only an experimental research design can establish definitively the relative effects of custodial and non-custodial sanctions on recidivism” (35).

8. *Institutional Violence: A Systematic Review of the Impact of Situational Factors on Violence*, Lisa Gadon, David J. Cooke, and Lorraine Johnstone, Glasgow Caledonian University

This review examined the situational factors that predict levels of violence within closed-psychiatric and prison settings. The authors defined “situational factors” as, “. . . aspects of the environment such as crowding, staff skills levels, programme availability, security levels and managements factors, etc.” (2). “Institutional violence” was defined as sexual, verbal, and/or physical violence committed by inmates against staff and other inmates.

There were two stages to this review: the first stage examined the effect of manipulating situational factors on institutional violence; the second summarized more generally the literature on the relationship between situational factors and institutional violence. For a study to be included in Stage One, the authors’ selection criteria required only that it examine the effects of an intervention and that it include outcome measures. The authors did not place any further restrictions on study methodology because of the wide variation of methodologies used in this area and the paucity of high quality studies. Stage Two included studies that analyzed the impact of situational variables on levels of institutional violence. Electronic databases were searched and key researchers were contacted. In total, eleven studies met the selection criteria for Stage One and thirty-seven for Stage Two with some overlap. A meta-analysis was not possible due to the diversity of methodological approaches in the relevant research. As such, the authors undertook a narrative review. Most studies examined utilized before/after measures with no control group.

The authors concluded from Stage One that situational-based interventions may indeed affect the level of institutional violence. For example, one study of a psychiatric ward found that playing music at meal times, allowing patients to use the court yard and

gymnasium during and after meal times and training the food service workers in better communication skills decreased meal-time incidents of violence. In addition, two studies showed that having prisoner's programs reduced the level of violence. But, the lack of high quality research and the wide range of interventions examined made it impossible to draw clear-cut conclusions. The literature synthesized from Stage Two indicated that factors such as security level, staff experience, temporal aspects, and certain locations are related to institutional violence in prisons. For instance, three studies found that less experienced staff were assaulted more often and poor prison management predicted higher levels of violence. Many of the same factors in a prison setting were related to violence in closed-psychiatric facilities with a few exceptions.

The authors concluded, "By considering the relevance of situational risk factor a more holistic view of the roots to violence is possible. In conjunction with individual based risk assessment, situational-based risk assessment provides an important opportunity to more fully assess and understand violence risk. This in turn may present an opportunity for risk intervention strategies" (4).

9. *Screening for juvenile and young adult suicide risk*, Amanda Perry, University of York, UK

This is a systematic review of the effectiveness of screening and assessment tools for juvenile and young adult offenders in the criminal justice system in identifying those at risk for suicide and Deliberate Self-Harm behavior (DSH). After a search of electronic databases, government reports, unpublished dissertations, and contact with experts in the

field, a total of 23 published evaluations of screening and assessment tools for suicide or DSH were identified. In order to be included, a study had to have both an experimental and control group. Upon further examination, only nine studies met these criteria. No meta-analysis was conducted because of the variation in study designs and outcome measures.

The authors found no randomized controlled trials, and the overall methodological quality of the studies was poor. Seven studies, for example, did not report basic demographic information, making it impossible to ascertain whether or not the treatment and control groups were similar. In order to be sure that an assessment tool is effective and accurate, it is important to have a “reference test” to compare it to. Perry found that none of the studies included sufficient information about the reference test. Also, dropout rates were generally reported inadequately. According to Perry, “We conclude that screening and assessment tools to assess offenders under the care of the criminal justice system should be evaluated using randomized-controlled trial methodology. Without this evidence-base, evaluating the effectiveness of such instruments is limited.” The author also recommended the development of suicide and DSH assessment tools specially tailored to offenders, who tend to have more risk factors than typical clinical populations.

IMPLICATIONS

The implications of these and other reviews are important for the future of both research and policy on crime and justice. While some observers may say that the reviews are repetitive in noting the absence of rigorous research the topic at hand, there is a very

clear response to that charge. If there is no rigorous process to demonstrate the absence of rigorous research, there can be no compelling claim for the need to conduct rigorous research. Many legislators and public executives are astonished and incredulous when told that, for example, major anti-terrorism strategies have never been rigorously evaluated. Much the same can be said for the effects of prison versus community corrections.

If research policy is to be driven by a rational analysis of what we need to know, it must be premised on a clear criterion of what we don't know. By establishing transparent standards for what qualifies as worthy of inclusion in a CCJG Review, this procedure discourages funding of research designs that cannot qualify by those standards. That, in turn, should help to improve the quality of funded research on program evaluations. It may also help to justify increased public investment in evaluations of highly expensive programs of totally unknown effectiveness.

For those who fear that the "nothing is known" conclusion may be misread as a "nothings works" conclusion, the CCJG response is also clear. The need to promote public and professional education on the difference between knowledge and inherent effectiveness is huge. Nothing can help to promote such education better than repeating the message that we don't know because we have not conducted the necessary tests. This distinction is made on a daily basis in media coverage of the Food and Drug Administration and the safety of new drugs. It should not be impossible, and would certainly be useful, to persist in the same vein with crime and justice policies until much wider public understanding has been achieved.

Finally, the CCJG reviews to date raise the important question of whether CCJG authors should be spending their time documenting what we don't know, rather than leading new controlled trials to answer unanswered questions. While there is always a tradeoff between doing new research and interpreting past studies, science requires that all new research be informed by the cumulative findings of all prior research. Only by a rigorous and transparent process of reviewing previous literature can the advancement of knowledge about crime and justice interventions proceed on a truly scientific basis. In the end there is no choice between systematic reviews and primary evaluation research. Both are essential, and both must be kept in view in the design of research strategies that can help reduce crime and increase justice.