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Centre of Criminology
University of Toronto
Toronto, Ontario
Canada M5S 3H1



Telephone: 416/978-6438 x230 (Doob)
416/978-6438 x236 (Finlay)
Fax: 416/978-4195
Electronic Mail: anthony.doob@utoronto.ca
finlay@library.utoronto.ca
Courier address: 130 St. George Street, Room 8001

Criminological Highlights
Volume 5, Number 4: March 2003

Criminological Highlights is produced approximately six times a year by the Centre of Criminology, University of Toronto and is designed to provide an accessible look at some of the more interesting criminological research that is currently being published. Copies of the original articles can be obtained (at cost) from the Centre of Criminology Information Service and Library. Please contact Tom Finlay or Andrea Shier.

This issue of *Criminological Highlights* will address the following questions:

- 1) Can social programs for disadvantaged youths be harmful to this population?
 - 2) Are African-Americans more likely to be stopped and questioned by police in particular areas of the city?
 - 3) Does house arrest reduce recidivism?
 - 4) Do demographic changes explain the drop in Canada's homicide rate?
 - 5) Can police detect when people are lying to them?
 - 6) Do high rates of immigration into an area increase crime?
 - 7) Do heroin addicts support their habits through crime?
 - 8) Is 'getting tough' on young offenders cost effective?
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Contents: Three pages containing "headlines and conclusions" for each of the eight articles.
One-page summaries of each of the eight articles.

Criminological Highlights is prepared by Anthony Doob, Tom Finlay, Cheryl Webster, Rosemary Gartner, John Beattie, Carla Cesaroni, Myrna Dawson, Dena Demos, Elizabeth Griffiths, Voula Marinos, Andrea Shier, Jane Sprott, Kimberly Varma, and Carolyn Yule. The production of *Criminological Highlights* is assisted by contributions from the Department of Justice, Canada, and the Correctional Service of Canada. Comments or suggestions should be addressed to Anthony N. Doob or Tom Finlay at the Centre of Criminology, University of Toronto.

Carefully planned, well-motivated, social interventions for youths can have serious long-term negative impacts on this population. More specifically, they can lead to *increased* involvement in crime, alcoholism, mental illness, and early death.

The lesson from interventions such as the 1939-45 Cambridge-Somerville program for young people is that programs which sound good can still have negative impacts. Said differently, we cannot automatically assume that interventions will have beneficial effects or at worst will have no effects. While the reasons for the adverse impacts are not clear, the lesson from this study is: social interventions into the lives of youths need to be assessed carefully before they can be presumed to be safe, let alone helpful.

Reference: McCord, Joan (2002). Counterproductive Juvenile Justice. *The Australian and New Zealand Journal of Criminology*, 35, 230-237. See, as well, McCord, Joan (1978). A Thirty-Year Follow-Up of Treatment Effects. *American Psychologist*, 33, 284-289. **[Item 1]**

African-American automobile drivers are more likely to be stopped and questioned than other drivers, when taking into account the racial makeup of those who drive. In addition, African-American drivers are particularly likely to be stopped in areas which are predominantly white.

Compared to their numbers as drivers, blacks appear to be more likely than whites to be subject to proactive stops. This phenomenon is most pronounced when blacks are driving through white areas. These results suggest that “a focus on individual attitudes and behaviour [of police officers] misses the underlying societal and occupational *structural* problems that produce racial profiling” (p.423) since racial profiling was responsive to place.

Reference: Meehan, Albert J. and Michael C. Ponder (2002). Race and Place: The Ecology of Racial Profiling African American Motorists. *Justice Quarterly*, 19, 399-430. **[Item 2]**

House arrest reduces recidivism.

House arrest appears to be an effective sanction for offenders. “The sentence combination associated with the least likelihood of re-arrest was house arrest/probation” (p.184). One explanation for this finding might be that house arrest puts offenders in touch with various rehabilitative services while simultaneously providing close monitoring. It may be precisely this combination which is critical for achieving positive results.

Reference: Ulmer, Jeffrey T. (2001). Intermediate Sanctions: A Comparative Analysis of the Probability and Severity of Recidivism. *Sociological Inquiry*, 71, 164-193. **[Item 3]**

The drop in Canada's homicide rate over the past 25 years is not closely related to changes in the age distribution of the Canadian population.

Homicide trends in the U.S. and Canada have been fairly similar in the past 25 years, though overall rates have been higher in the U.S. than in Canada. Further, in neither country are changes in the age structure important in understanding changes in homicide rates. More intriguingly, the changes in age specific rates of homicide offending appear to be similar (the exception being Canadians aged 15-19 years old). Therefore, explanations which focus on the activities of specific sectors of the population (e.g., those in their 20s) or their proportion in the population are not particularly useful in looking at the overall changes taking place across age groups.

Reference: Sprott, Jane B. and Carla Cesaroni (2002). Similarities in Homicide Trends in the United States and Canada. *Homicide Studies*, 6, 348-359. **[Item 4]**

Police officers are no more accurate than naïve or trained university students at detecting whether or not a person being interrogated is telling the truth.

Neither police officers nor university students are good at judging whether individuals whom they do not know are lying or telling the truth. In fact, police officers appear to be no better at this task than chance or than ordinary people. Nevertheless, the police are more confident in their abilities to detect deception. This finding is of particular concern when one considers that a confident - but incorrect - police officer may conclude that an innocent person is guilty. In this case, not only does a miscarriage of justice become a real possibility, but the police officer may also discontinue investigations which could lead to the apprehension of the real offender.

Reference: Meissner, Christian A. and Saul M. Kassin (2002). "He's guilty!": Investigator Bias in Judgments of Truth and Deception. *Law and Human Behavior*, 26, 469-480. **[Item 5]**

High concentrations of Black and Latino immigrants in U.S. cities are not reliably linked to increases in homicides involving members of those groups.

The factors that shape group-specific homicide risk appear to vary across groups and across cities. Furthermore, the proportion of new immigrants was as likely to be negatively associated with homicides as it was to be positively related. Hence, when looking for explanations for homicide rates, it would appear more sensible to examine factors other than immigration patterns. As this research has shown, measures of economic deprivation, labour market involvement, and residential instability seem to offer more promising explanatory factors. However, social policies aimed at reducing violence may also need to be considered and evaluated in line with the local context.

Reference: Lee, Matthew T.; Ramiro Martinez, Jr., and Richard Rosenfeld (2001). Does Immigration Increase Homicide: Negative Evidence From Three Border Cities. *The Sociological Quarterly*, 42, 559-580. **[Item 6]**

Heroin users get their money from various sources -- legal and illegal. However, only a relatively small portion of their income comes from property crime.

The income needed to purchase heroin did not appear to come from any single source. Rather, sources of income were fluid and depended on opportunity. Like many people with no obvious sources of income, drug users draw on any available means. They include illegal activities such as property crime. However, drug users also receive income from the drug trade itself and from legitimate activities. Said differently, the findings of this study challenge the widely held assumption that the income of drug users is largely derived from property offences. Thus assessments of the value of the drugs used daily by addicts should not be used to estimate the amount obtained through acquisitive property crime.

Reference: Maher, Lisa; David Dixon; Wayne Hall and Michael Lynskey (2002). Property Crime and Income Generation by Heroin Users. *The Australian and New Zealand Journal of Criminology*, 35, 187-202. **[Item 7]**

“Getting tough” on juvenile crime has its costs. When compared to the benefits, it may not be worth it.

The results of any estimation exercise such as this one have to be considered with caution. However, this simulation suggests that there were no criminal justice savings obtained from harsher policies compared to alternatives. In addition, the authors' estimates of gains for victims and others are only substantial when “quality of life” factors are included in the equation. In some instances, tough penalties may even increase estimated costs to victims. Indeed, harsh policies appear to augment crime and criminal justice processing in the long term, despite temporarily deferring criminal activity as a result of the sentence that is handed down.

Reference: Fass, Simon M. and Chung-Ron Pi (2002). Getting Tough on Juvenile Crime: An Analysis of Costs and Benefits. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 39, 363-399. **[Item 8]**

Carefully planned, well-motivated, social interventions for youths can have serious long-term negative impacts on this population. More specifically, they can lead to *increased* involvement in crime, alcoholism, mental illness, and early death.

Background. Various programs are imposed on delinquent youths. When considering the impact of a program, the worst-case scenario is typically thought to be that an intervention will have no effect on young people. As such, many intuitively sensible programs run for years without being evaluated. The problem is that they can harm as well as help. Starting in 1939 and for approximately 5.5 years thereafter, youths in “congested urban areas” of Cambridge and Somerville, Massachusetts, were interviewed and each was matched with another similar young person. As a result of a flip of a coin, one of these individuals was assigned to a control group in which normal social services in the community were provided. In contrast, the other youth was given intensive interventions including guidance, after-school activities, social support, tutoring, and medical and psychiatric attention. By the end of the program in 1945, the boys in the treatment group had generally received a variety of services and help -- from tutoring to medical intervention, being sent to summer camp, or assistance in finding a job. Many of them showed dramatic improvements and suggested - in a formal follow-up study conducted 20 years later – that the program had been beneficial to them. Based simply of these findings, one could not help but consider this program to have been a success.

The results are not, however, as simple as one may have initially thought. Indeed, the improvements in the treatment group have to be compared to those in the control group before any confident conclusions regarding the success of the program may be drawn. In fact, it was found that almost equal numbers of youths in both groups showed unexpected improvement. Similarly, the overall involvement of the two groups in the criminal justice system was nearly identical. However, when these individuals were re-examined in a follow-up study between 1975 and 1981 (the youths were middle aged at this time), disturbing differences emerged. Those in the *treatment* group were more likely to have been convicted of serious crimes, to have died early, to have serious mental illness problems, and to be alcoholics than those in the control group. In fact, the deleterious effects of treatment appeared to occur most often with those youths who had cooperated most with the youth study staff. Indeed, the more frequently that they received treatment, the worse off they were. These harmful effects of the program were only evident because an equivalent control group was used. Without the control group, a program that appeared to have had harmful effects would have been seen as a success.

Unfortunately, this is not the only study that has demonstrated adverse effects of treatment. Other counseling programs (*e.g.*, a court counseling program in the U.S., a social skills program, and a peer counseling program) have also been shown to have similar negative impacts.

Conclusion. The lesson from interventions such as the 1939-45 Cambridge-Somerville program for young people is that programs which sound good can still have negative impacts. Said differently, we cannot automatically assume that interventions will have beneficial effects or at worst will have no effects. While the reasons for the adverse impacts are not clear, the lesson from this study is: social interventions into the lives of youths need to be assessed carefully before they can be presumed to be safe, let alone helpful.

Reference. McCord, Joan (2002). Counterproductive Juvenile Justice. *The Australian and New Zealand Journal of Criminology*, 35, 230-237. See, as well, McCord, Joan (1978). A Thirty-Year Follow-Up of Treatment Effects. *American Psychologist*, 33, 284-289.

African-American automobile drivers are more likely to be stopped and questioned than other drivers, when taking into account the racial makeup of those who drive. In addition, African-American drivers are particularly likely to be stopped in areas which are predominantly white.

Background. Racial profiling - or “a police initiated action that relies on the race... rather than the behaviour of an individual...” (pp. 403-4) - has been the subject of considerable controversy and research. There is substantial evidence that a black American automobile driver is more likely than a white person to be stopped and questioned by the police. To the extent that the police believe that blacks are more inclined toward criminality, they can explain such a propensity to stop/question blacks as “good police work” (p.402). This explanation should be particularly salient if the black drivers are not in a “place” in which they might be seen as “belonging.” More specifically, if a driver is seen as being “out of place,” he or she may be especially subject to surveillance in the form of proactive police stops. To the extent that blacks are seen as having a low probability of living in the suburbs or middle class areas (and, therefore, are “out of place”), they should be particularly subject to proactive police stops in these locations.

This study took advantage of the fact that police in the jurisdiction under examination have access to in-car computers, permitting them to check citizens directly without consulting anyone. Given that such computer verification can be seen as a form of surveillance and that the computer can be programmed to keep records of those persons (by way of the license plate number) who are queried, accurate records of the individuals who are subject to proactive record checks can be obtained. The department under study – in a city of 75,000 which is characterized as largely white and blue-collar, with a police force with few women and no minorities – borders a city that is predominantly black.

The results are based on comparisons drawn between the race of those proactively stopped and questioned and the race of others driving on the roads in those neighbourhoods. Thirteen percent of the drivers were African-Americans, but 27% of all proactive queries (on the mobile computer) were of this group. However, the proactive stopping of blacks was not uniform across the city. The relative ratio (*i.e.* relative to the proportion of drivers of each race) of blacks to whites being stopped was highest in the areas of the city located furthest from the black residential areas. “As African American drivers move from [the sectors of the city that border black residential areas] their chances of being the subject of a query increase dramatically” (p.417). In fact, they are three to four times as likely to be stopped and questioned as their numbers in the driving population would suggest.

The “hit rate” (*i.e.* the rate at which the computer indicated a legal problem with the car or driver) for African Americans was not significantly higher than that for whites. However, the “hit rate” for whites was higher than that for blacks in the white areas (*i.e.*, locations distant from the black residential areas). Finally, the proactive stops of blacks were particularly pronounced for those police officers who made frequent use, generally, of the in-car computers during proactive stops. It would seem that racial profiling is most frequent for those officers who carry out the most proactive stops.

Conclusion. Compared to their numbers as drivers, blacks appear to be more likely than whites to be subject to proactive stops. This phenomenon is most pronounced when blacks are driving through white areas. These results suggest that “a focus on individual attitudes and behaviour [of police officers] misses the underlying societal and occupational *structural* problems that produce racial profiling” (p.423) since racial profiling was responsive to place.

Reference: Meehan, Albert J. and Michael C. Ponder (2002). Race and Place: The Ecology of Racial Profiling African American Motorists. *Justice Quarterly*, 19, 399-430.

House arrest reduces recidivism.

Background. It has been repeatedly argued that the imprisonment of offenders may increase the likelihood of recidivism in part because imprisonment cuts off “conventional bonds and opportunities” (p.165). In contrast, intermediate sanctions may be effective because they can “preserve or strengthen conventional social bonds and help enmesh offenders in networks of informal social control” (p.166). As such, these non-custodial alternatives to incarceration have the virtue of providing reintegrative opportunities for an offender while simultaneously permitting closer monitoring and supervision than is typically available from traditional (less restrictive) forms of probation.

This study examines the impact of various sanctions on recidivism independent of the effect of other factors known to be highly related to recidivism (*e.g.*, criminal record, age, gender, marital status, race/ethnicity and level of education). The data were collected from a county in Indiana which, generally, had lower than average (state or national) crime rates and unemployment levels. In addition, it had a relatively well-funded and staffed community corrections program that was seen as one of the state’s “flagship” (p.170) initiatives. The offenders in the study were those sentenced to one of the following: the county’s intermediate sanctions program, traditional probation, or the county jail or state prison. All subjects had a minimum follow-up period of two years (with the maximum “at risk” period being 6 years) during which time they had the opportunity to re-offend. The analysis controlled for the offender’s length of time “on the street.”

Qualitative data from interviews of criminal justice personnel in the county suggest that those offenders seen as less problematic tended to receive probation only (rather than house arrest alone or in combination with another sanction). House arrest was seen as being appropriate for those whose records precluded traditional probation. Therefore, those receiving house arrest were *more* likely than were simple probationers to be seen as problematic offenders.

The results show that recidivism patterns were consistent with those found in other studies. More specifically, males, those with less education, property offenders and those with longer prior criminal records were more likely to re-offend. Over and above these factors though, those who had received house arrest – alone or combined with other sanctions – were *less* likely to be re-arrested than were those sentenced to probation alone. Other sanctions – incarceration and work release – did not appear to differ from probation. This generalization held true for those given house arrest in combination with either incarceration or probation. Indeed, “[e]ach sentence combination that includes house arrest [was] associated with significantly decreased likelihood of arrest” (p.178). Interestingly, when looking at offenders who had received probation as part of their sentences, those given house arrest were more likely to have their probation revoked.

Conclusion. House arrest appears to be an effective sanction for offenders. “The sentence combination associated with the least likelihood of re-arrest was house arrest/probation” (p.184). One explanation for this finding might be that house arrest puts offenders in touch with various rehabilitative services while simultaneously providing close monitoring. It may be precisely this combination which is critical for achieving positive results.

Reference. Ulmer, Jeffrey T. (2001). Intermediate Sanctions: A Comparative Analysis of the Probability and Severity of Recidivism. *Sociological Inquiry*, 71, 164-193.

The drop in Canada's homicide rate over the past 25 years is not closely related to changes in the age distribution of the Canadian population.

Background. U.S. and Canadian homicide rates have had similar trends over the last 40 years, even though rates in Canada have always been lower than those of its closest neighbour. In each country, rates doubled from the early 1960s to the mid-1970s. After subsequently declining to some extent but peaking again in the early 1990s, both Canadian and U.S. rates have been dropping ever since. Having said this, homicides in the U.S. tend to have somewhat different characteristics from those committed in Canada. For example, American homicides are roughly twice as likely to involve firearms (especially handguns) and are more concentrated in large cities than are Canadian homicide rates. Various explanations have been proposed for the drop in homicides in the U.S. (e.g., changes in gun availability, an increase in the prison population, changes in the crack cocaine markets in inner cities). However, an American study (See *Highlights*, Volume 2, Number 6, Item 7) has demonstrated that changes in the demographic makeup of the U.S. accounted for only a small proportion of the decline in homicide rates.

This study looks at age specific rates of homicide offending and assesses the impact of changes in the age distribution of the Canadian population on overall homicide rates. "Age specific rates" of homicide are the rates at which particular age groups (e.g., those in their 20s) commit homicide offences. Changes in "demographics" would appear to provide a plausible explanation for decreases in homicide rates in Canada: the proportion of individuals over thirty years old (typically people not involved in serious crime) has increased over the past 40 years while the proportion of those in their late teens and 20s (those more likely to be involved in serious crime) has decreased.

The results do not support this theory. More specifically, they suggest that the most important changes in Canada since the mid-1970s are the rates at which individuals of almost all ages commit offences. In fact, Canadians 20-24 years old, 25-29, 30-39, and 40 and over all committed homicides at a lower rate in the late 1990s than they did in the mid-1970s. In contrast, the rates for 15-19 year olds increased slightly during this period. If Canadians of each age group during the period 1995-9 committed homicides at the rates that the same age cohort did in 1974-9 (i.e. if the age specific rates had not changed), the overall rate of homicide offenders in the population would have declined by 4.3%. In actuality, there was a 31.8% decrease in the proportion of individuals identified as homicide offenders. "This means that of the total decrease... roughly 14% was due to changes in the age structure of the Canadian population" (p.355).

Conclusion. Homicide trends in the U.S. and Canada have been fairly similar in the past 25 years, though overall rates have been higher in the U.S. than in Canada. Further, in neither country are changes in the age structure important in understanding changes in homicide rates. More intriguingly, the changes in age specific rates of homicide offending appear to be similar (the exception being Canadians aged 15-19 years old). Therefore, explanations which focus on the activities of specific sectors of the population (e.g., those in their 20s) or their proportion in the population are not particularly useful in looking at the overall changes taking place across age groups.

Reference: Sprott, Jane B. and Carla Cesaroni (2002). Similarities in Homicide Trends in the United States and Canada. *Homicide Studies*, 6, 348-359.

Police officers are no more accurate than naïve or trained university students at detecting whether or not a person being interrogated is telling the truth.

Background. Previous research has failed to support the claim that individuals are accurate in making judgements about whether others are being truthful or deceptive. Generally speaking, people do not score above “chance” in detecting deceit in individuals whom they did not previously know. Furthermore, training does not appear to improve the rate of success of those attempting to detect deception. Indeed, other emotions – *e.g.*, fear or embarrassment – are often confused with deceit. A summary of 6 independent studies shows that overall accuracy did not exceed chance and that training did not increase participants’ ability to discriminate truth from deception. Interestingly though, training and prior experience (*e.g.*, as a police officer) in attempting to discern deceit seemed to increase the likelihood that people would *perceive* deception. In addition, it appeared that people who had received standard police training in detecting deceit were more confident in their abilities to succeed at this task even though their performance was not more likely to be accurate than that of lay persons.

This study - building on previous research (See *Highlights 2 (6) Item 8*) - assessed the deception-detection abilities of a sample of American and Canadian police officers. The police officers were shown a set of videotapes of interrogations involving people who either had or had not participated in a staged crime. All suspects denied involvement in the criminal activity. Participants in the study were told that between $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{3}{4}$ of the suspects were lying.

The results show that police officers’ overall accuracy was no better than chance. Compared to naïve and trained students who had - in the previous study - viewed the same tapes, the police officers were no more likely to correctly detect deception. However, they were more confident in their performance. Unfortunately, judgement accuracy and confidence were *not* related. Indeed, police officers who were confident that they had correctly judged a suspect to be telling the truth or lying were no more likely to be accurate than officers who were not certain in their judgements. The number of years of experience as a police officer was also unrelated to accuracy in detecting deception. Nevertheless, participants in the experiment with the longest time on a police force had a greater tendency to judge suspects as deceitful and, as such, were more likely than less experienced officers to decide that honest suspects were lying.

Conclusion. Neither police officers nor university students are good at judging whether individuals whom they do not know are lying or telling the truth. In fact, police officers appear to be no better at this task than chance or than ordinary people. Nevertheless, the police are more confident in their abilities to detect deception. This finding is of particular concern when one considers that a confident - but incorrect - police officer may conclude that an innocent person is guilty. In this case, not only does a miscarriage of justice become a real possibility, but the police officer may also discontinue investigations which could lead to the apprehension of the real offender.

Reference: Meissner, Christian A. and Saul M. Kassin (2002). “He’s guilty!”: Investigator Bias in Judgments of Truth and Deception. *Law and Human Behavior*, 26, 469-480.

High concentrations of Black and Latino immigrants in U.S. cities are not reliably linked to increases in homicides involving members of those groups.

Background. Even though research on early 20th-century immigration to the U.S. suggests that immigrants were less involved in crime than their native neighbours, the stereotypic notion of the black (or, in the U.S., Latino) immigrant being a source of serious violent crime has persisted. While certain sociological theories (*e.g.*, the “culture of poverty” hypothesis, social disorganization, opportunity structure theories) would predict that these groups were likely to participate in criminal activity, it could be equally argued that immigrants -- who typically have strong ties to the labour market and to family -- should be less involved in crime.

This study examines homicides (probably the only crime in which reasonably reliable data exist on the race/ethnicity of the offender) at the “census tract” level in each of three cities (Miami, San Diego, and El Paso) between 1985 and 1995. This research assessed whether the proportion of “new immigrants” (those arriving in 1980 or later) was related to the number of homicides apparently committed by Blacks and Latinos. The effects of “standard” predictors of crime -- poverty, proportion of young males in the population, unemployment, residential instability (vacancy rates and population turnover), *etc.* -- were held constant.

The results show no consistent impact of immigration patterns on homicide offences across the three cities. More specifically, the proportion of new immigrants in a census tract in El Paso was negatively associated with Latino homicides (*i.e.* an increase in the number of immigrants was related to a *reduction* in the number of homicides). No effects of immigration on Latino homicides were found in Miami or San Diego.

The data for black homicides was equally inconsistent. The proportion of new immigrants was negatively associated with black homicides in Miami, positively associated with black homicides in San Diego and had no significant effect on them in El Paso.

Other factors showed stronger impacts. For instance, the proportion of those members of the group (Black or Latino) in the census tract living in poverty was positively associated with homicides in 5 of the 6 comparisons (*i.e.* Blacks and Latinos in each of three cities). Residential instability was also positively associated with Black and Latino homicides in El Paso and San Diego (but not Miami). Further, while the proportion of unemployed black males in the census tract was positively associated with black homicides, the proportion of unemployed Latino males was not related to Latino homicides.

Conclusion. The factors that shape group-specific homicide risk appear to vary across groups and across cities. Furthermore, the proportion of new immigrants was as likely to be negatively associated with homicides as it was to be positively related. Hence, when looking for explanations for homicide rates, it would appear more sensible to examine factors other than immigration patterns. As this research has shown, measures of economic deprivation, labour market involvement, and residential instability seem to offer more promising explanatory factors. However, social policies aimed at reducing violence may also need to be considered and evaluated in line with the local context.

Reference: Lee, Matthew T.; Ramiro Martinez, Jr., and Richard Rosenfeld (2001). Does Immigration Increase Homicide: Negative Evidence From Three Border Cities. *The Sociological Quarterly*, 42, 559-580.

Heroin users get their money from various sources -- legal and illegal. However, only a relatively small portion of their income comes from property crime.

Background. Research carried out in a number of western countries suggests that heroin users - and presumably other "hard drug" users - engage in significant amounts of property crime. Similarly, several studies of imprisoned adult property offenders have found that as many as two thirds spend at least part of their income on drugs. While informative, this literature clearly lacks systematic studies of heroin users which focus on the identification of the sources(s) of their total income.

This study draws on data from 202 heroin users who agreed to participate in in-depth interviews which inquired into a wide range of issues surrounding their lives and incomes. Subjects were residents of Sydney, Australia and were primarily male, young, relatively uneducated (average: 9 years of schooling) and unemployed (76%). When interviewed, most participants were not in a drug treatment program, although the majority had participated in one at some point in the past. To minimize problems of recall, respondents were only asked about income and expenditures relative to the previous week. In addition to drug use, almost all (91%) subjects reported illegal behaviour in the week prior to being interviewed.

Results of the interviews show that 70% derived at least a portion of their income from acquisitive property crime, with the median amount obtained during the previous week being A\$450 (mean=A\$782). Approximately one quarter (28%) of participants had committed a burglary in the week prior to being interviewed. Surprisingly though, property offences accounted for only 38% of their total income. This proportion is comparable to the findings from 7 other studies carried out in 6 different countries in which the range was found to be between 19% (Norway) and 65% (England). Beyond this source of revenue, 70% of respondents also indicated that a portion of their total income (in the form of drugs or money) was obtained from the drug trade. More specifically, transactions in the drug market were found to account for 44% of their income. In contrast, 59% reported having received some legitimate income. "In kind" income was reported by 28%. Women were more likely than men to obtain income from prostitution and legitimate sources.

Conclusions. The income needed to purchase heroin did not appear to come from any single source. Rather, sources of income were fluid and depended on opportunity. Like many people with no obvious sources of income, drug users draw on any available means. They include illegal activities such as property crime. However, drug users also receive income from the drug trade itself and from legitimate activities. Said differently, the findings of this study challenge the widely held assumption that the income of drug users is largely derived from property offences. Thus assessments of the value of the drugs used daily by addicts should not be used to estimate the amount obtained through acquisitive property crime.

Reference: Maher, Lisa; David Dixon; Wayne Hall and Michael Lynskey (2002). Property Crime and Income Generation by Heroin Users. *The Australian and New Zealand Journal of Criminology*, 35, 187-202.

“Getting tough” on juvenile crime has its costs. When compared to the benefits, it may not be worth it.

Background. Those who support “getting tough” on young offenders rarely think about the costs of that which they advocate. Given that those areas of social life which are supported, in part, by government -- health care, education, transportation, housing -- are all in need of money, it is important to consider the costs and benefits of “tough approaches” to youths. Unfortunately, there has been little serious “cost-benefit” analysis of youth justice policies. In this light, this case study is interesting not so much because of its conclusions but rather because it helps to identify some of the variables that need to be assessed when evaluating the utility of youth justice policies.

This study compares “tougher” responses to their less punitive alternatives. More specifically, this research examines: probation vs. diversion, intensive vs. regular probation, open custody vs. probation, and prison vs. open custody. The principal data for the study come from the records of 13,144 youths referred to the Texas Youth Commission in Dallas County.

The results suggest that the following factors are important when thinking about the costs and benefits of “tough approaches” to young offenders:

- Apprehension rates may increase as a function of surveillance (*e.g.*, probation rather than deferred prosecution or diversion). As such, additional justice costs “down stream” of an initial decision may exist. Similarly, offending obviously decreases temporarily as a result of incarceration.
- Second or subsequent dispositions tend to be more severe than earlier dispositions. This is also the case in Canada: See *Criminological Highlights*, 4(4), Item 3. Hence, criminal justice costs increase at the second disposition largely as a function of the disposition handed down in an earlier case. The “costs” of a harsh disposition, therefore, may appear later in a youth’s court career.
- The first time someone is apprehended, police, court, probation, prosecution, legal aid, and detention costs have to be initially considered in terms of additional costs for the harsher of two sentences. However, there are likely to be additional costs in each of these domains at subsequent apprehensions. In this study, it was found that these expenditures tended to increase - sometimes dramatically - as a function of the disposition that was being sought. Of course, the costs largely reflect what happens after the decision is made on how to dispose of the case.
- Costs to victims and others of additional crimes clearly also have to be taken into consideration. Estimates of these factors vary enormously.
- Benefits to victims can be found in the form of short term incapacitation effects. For instance, it was found in this one case study that placement in a local facility could reduce victim costs (*including* estimated “quality of life” costs) by as much as \$1718 per offender (but only \$666 if “quality of life” cost estimates were not included). The difficulty is that this “saving” was far outweighed by the additional criminal justice expenditures involved (\$15,190 or \$23,680 per offender depending on certain assumptions).

Conclusion. The results of any estimation exercise such as this one have to be considered with caution. However, this simulation suggests that there were no criminal justice savings obtained from harsher policies compared to alternatives. In addition, the authors’ estimates of gains for victims and others are only substantial when “quality of life” factors are included in the equation. In some instances, tough penalties may even increase estimated costs to victims. Indeed, harsh policies appear to augment crime and criminal justice processing in the long term, despite temporarily deferring criminal activity as a result of the sentence that is handed down.

Reference. Fass, Simon M. and Chung-Ron Pi (2002). Getting Tough on Juvenile Crime: An Analysis of Costs and Benefits. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 39, 363-399.