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SPECIAL POINT OF INTEREST:

This issue of the OCJS Research Brief highlights the research being done by our partners in the Ohio Consortium of Crime Science (OCCS), who collaborate with practitioners in the criminal justice field to help develop solutions to their pressing criminal justice problems.



Office of Criminal Justice Services

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What is the Ohio Consortium of Crime Science?

The OCCS is an association of researchers from colleges and universities across Ohio whose collective goal is to link criminal justice research to practice and policy. They do so by partnering with local criminal justice agencies who seek evidence-based solutions to the real-world problems they face.

How does OCCS operate?

If a local criminal justice agency needs help with a particular issue, they can request the assistance of a researcher through the OCCS. Making a request for assistance is simple. Local agencies initiate their contact with the OCCS by filling out the Request for Assistance form that can be found on the OCCS [website](#), which can be accessed on the OCJS home page. In the request, they are asked to identify the problem they have encountered, the kind of assistance they are looking for, and the outcomes they wish to achieve.

Members of the OCCS will meet to discuss the feasibility of the request given the resources of the Consortium. If the request is approved, a qualified researcher from the OCCS with expertise in the appropriate area will be provided with resources to assist the agency. The researcher will then work with the agency to develop a solution to the problem that is based on empirical research.

The service that the OCCS provides is free. It is hoped that this program will mutually benefit both researchers and practitioners by strengthening individual and institutional capacities for learning and enhancing public knowledge on criminal justice issues, and that it will set the stage for future researcher-practitioner partnerships.

Examples of completed OCCS projects.

Seven projects are highlighted in this issue of the OCJS Research Brief, touching upon different facets of the criminal justice system and demonstrating the breadth of expertise held by the OCCS members.

Projects include:

- An analysis of police department staffing
- A study of patrol deployment
- An evaluation of a victim advocacy initiative
- An evaluation of a specialty court
- Testing of a risk assessment tool
- Evaluation of a hotspot policing technique
- An evaluation of the Seeking Safety program.

Final reports for each of these projects can be found on the OCCS [website](#).

For more information...

If you represent a local agency and need assistance with a criminal justice issue, you can do one of the following:

- Submit a Request for Assistance form, found on the OCCS [website](#).
- Contact the Office of Criminal Justice Services at 888-448-4842.
- Email Lisa Shoaf, chief of the Policy and Research section at OCJS at lshoaf@dps.ohio.gov.

Montville Police Department Staff and Workload Analysis

Dena Hanley, Ph.D. — *University of Akron*

The Montville Police Department contacted the OCCS in the fall of 2013 to request assistance with an analysis of staffing levels and a cursory workload analysis of its patrol officers. Dr. Dena Hanley was selected to provide assistance to the department.

Data were collected at the end of November and beginning of December of 2013. Montville Police Department sent a brief survey to other local, similar departments. The survey asked for information regarding the following variables: population, number of full-time/part-time officers, department rank structure, number of dispatched calls, number of officer generated calls, number of reports and arrests, and type of community programs.

The data showed that Montville Police Department serves one of the largest jurisdictions in terms of population and miles. Additionally, only 5.7 miles separates Montville from the largest jurisdiction (Hinckley Township) in terms of area. Taken together, they suggest that Montville has more people and more miles to patrol than other jurisdictions.

Additionally, Montville has 13 full-time officers, resulting in a population-to-officer ratio of 888.9 residents per officer. Only Medina Township Police Department has a higher population-to-officer ratio (947.4). However, Medina Township is smaller than Montville in population and area, and also has fewer full time officers (9 compared to 13).

Montville has a comparable number of full-time officers to other similarly-sized departments in the area, but fewer higher-ranking administrators, with two Sergeants and a Chief.

The researcher concluded that Montville Police Department is understaffed, and several suggestions were offered. One recommendation was to hire at least two more full-time officers to maintain its current activity level. In addition, two part-time officers and/or auxiliary officers were also suggested as being beneficial to the department. Another recommendation was to promote officers into higher ranks, such as the rank of Lieutenant, to ease the burden of administrative duties.

Lorain Police Department: A Study to Improve Patrol Deployment

Philip Matthew Stinson, Sr., J.D., Ph.D., John Liederbach, Ph.D. — *Bowling Green State University*
Steven L. Brewer, Jr., Ph.D. — *Pennsylvania State University--Shenango*

The Lorain Police Department requested the assistance of the Ohio Consortium of Crime Sciences (OCCS) in evaluating and revising the department's patrol districts and the allocation of resources for each district. The goal of this collaboration was to increase the efficiency and effectiveness with which the department's patrol units are deployed and provide services. Researchers from Bowling Green State University and Pennsylvania State University were selected to assist the police department.

The current district boundaries were created sometime prior to the mid-1960s and have not been updated since. It was suspected that workload was being unequally distributed among the current five districts. In order to test this hypothesis, researchers from the collaborative analyzed calls for service, officer workload, hotspots,

and violent crimes within the existing police districts for the year 2013. The findings from this analysis were then used to develop new police districts and to predict future calls for service, officers' workload, hotspots, and violent crimes within the proposed districts.

As hypothesized, there was large disparity in workload for calls for service across the five police districts. District 3 accounted for almost 40% of all calls for service, while the remaining districts each accounted for between 10.9% and 19.8% of calls for service. District 3 also accounted for the highest percentage of calls for service within all incident types (e.g. traffic, nuisance, health/welfare, etc.) except administrative incidents, and also accounted for 40.5% of all predatory/violent crime calls for service.

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Calls for service were also examined by shift and priority across the five districts. Citywide, the day shift accounted for 51.8% of all calls for service, while the night shift handled 48.2% of all calls. Within the districts, 58.1% of calls for service in District 2, 51.4% of calls for service in District 4, and 52.2% of calls for service in District 5 were handled by the day shift. The night shift handled 51.4% of calls for service in District 1 and District 3. By service priority, citywide 57.7% of all calls for service were high priority, and high priority calls accounted for at least 55% of all calls for service in each district. High priority calls for service accounted for 62.5% of all calls for service in District 5.

Using specific statistical techniques, the police districts were reconfigured into four new beats using geospatial patterns that emerged based on the calls for service data. The calls for service data from 2013 were utilized again to predict future calls for service, officers' workload, hotspots, and violent crimes within the four proposed new beats. The analysis showed that workload was more equally distributed across each of the new beats, with each beat accounting for roughly one-fourth of all calls for service. The sources of calls for service (e.g. desk calls, found

on patrol, etc.) were also more evenly distributed across the new beats. The sole exception was that 90.5% of desk calls were estimated to occur in the new Beat 2, where the police station is located. Calls for service by incident type (e.g. traffic, nuisance, health/welfare, etc.) were also distributed more evenly. Workload varied in terms of call priority and shift across each new beat based on the source of calls for service.

Based on these findings, the researchers recommended that allocation of resources and staffing for the shifts and new beats consider potential workload in terms of calls for service sources and priority. It was recommended that implementation of the new beats take place to reduce workload disparity, and that criminal analysis be used to identify and target areas that are high in crime. The researchers encouraged patrol units to be specifically assigned to each of the new beats. The researchers also suggested that the department fully integrate its patrol operations within the new computer-aided dispatch (CAD) system the department is planning to install, to further help officers efficiently respond to calls for service and to assist the department to maintain the status of responding patrol resources in the field.

An Evaluation of the Cuyahoga County Prosecutor's Office Sexual Assault Victim Advocacy Initiative

Wendy Regoeczi, Ph.D., Valerie Wright, Ph.D. — *Cleveland State University*

The Sexual Assault Victim Advocacy (SAVA) Initiative is the first of its kind to provide a collaborative victim-centered approach in the handling of backlogged rape kits in Cuyahoga. The initiative was created with the goal of protecting victims' rights and ensuring the cases were being handled with sensitivity. The SAVA Initiative addresses the individual needs of the survivors while providing them with advocacy and counseling services.

The Ohio Consortium of Crime Science received a request for an evaluation of the SAVA Initiative, which was subsequently assigned to researchers at Cleveland State University. The evaluation consisted of two parts. The first part was a process evaluation examining the extent to which the initiative was successfully implemented as proposed and adhered to evidence-based practices. Data collection involved interviews with several representatives of agencies involved in the SAVA Initiative. The

second part was a qualitative outcome evaluation to assess victims' views of the process. Eight victims involved in the SAVA Initiative were interviewed to get their opinions of the process and discover where improvements could be made.

Overall, the SAVA Initiative was found to have successfully met most of its goals. Much of the discussion around the role of individual agencies in the SAVA Initiative focused on achieving justice for victims both through maintaining a victim-centered approach and holding offenders accountable for their crimes. Also emphasized was the importance of working together in a multi-disciplinary fashion, sharing procedures and thought processes, improving protocols, and receiving feedback from other partners on how to improve interactions with victims. This increased communication was felt to have strengthened relationships among members of participat-

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ing agencies. The most frequently mentioned advantage of the SAVA Initiative was the involvement of victim advocates and referrals to the Cleveland Rape Crisis Center much sooner in the process.

The female victims gave very positive feedback regarding their interactions with advocates, and in some cases the prosecutors as well. They felt they had been treated with dignity and respect. Most felt they had been adequately informed and updated about the status of their cases.

Challenges were also noted regarding implementation of the SAVA Initiative. Despite the focused discussion on maintaining a victim-centered approach, not all team members had a clear understanding of what this means, and as a result, some questioned whether the Initiative was meeting its goal of providing a victim-centered approach. The biggest source of contention revolved around how to simultaneously hold offenders accountable while ensuring that a victim's right to participate, or not, is protected during the prosecution of the assailant. Perceptions of the role of other agencies and the degree of collaboration among agencies in the Task Force varied widely, and declining participation was observed at the Task Force meetings. Some noted hiring concerns, such as the hiring of advocates within the Prosecutor's Office rather than independent advocates, as well the hiring of too few advocates. Others expressed concerns about the potential for fallout with the police should it come to light that a case was investigated improperly.

Among victims, areas of improvement were noted regarding maintaining confidentiality. The women raised

concerns regarding their personal safety, the timing and length of the case, and the need for more preparation for trial. Some noted a desire for communication regarding specific aspects of the case, such as when an offender was arrested, released, or when a plea offer was being considered. Some women reported feeling pressure to participate in the legal proceeding. From these challenges, the following recommendations were made:

1. Secure additional funding and support to continue current efforts, particularly with respect to making more advocates available, expanding the Task Force to non-cold cases, testing additional rape kits, and ensuring sufficient manpower for caseloads.
2. Ensure notifications are confidential to protect the privacy of victims, and establish protocols regarding the content of messages left for victims.
3. Establish a victim participation protocol for cases in which a victim expresses she does not want to be involved in the case.
4. Establish a tracking and follow-up protocol to collect aggregate data on the number of rape kits tested, investigations opened, prosecution rates, counseling services rendered, and conviction rates to identify trends and show the project is viable and the goals of the initiative are being met.
5. Renew agency and board members' commitment to SAVA in order to re-engage the Task Force and SAVA board members regarding the Initiative.

An Evaluation Study of a Criminal Justice Reform Specialty Court

Karen Miner-Romanoff, Ph.D., J.D. — *Franklin University*

The Ohio Consortium of Crime Science received a request to examine the effectiveness of a court program that is available to convicted prostitutes who are also victims of human trafficking. This program, located in Columbus, Ohio, is called Changing Actions to Change Habits (CATCH). Franklin University researcher Dr. Karen Miner-Romanoff, was selected to serve as its evaluator.

CATCH is a specialized problem-solving court that

offers comprehensive treatment services to victims while still holding defendants accountable for their criminal behavior. Research has indicated that victims may be more willing to engage in treatment while still in the criminal justice system, so the need exists for programs to be offered in the courtroom. The CATCH court offers a two-year treatment-oriented program for prostitutes suffering from any form of abuse, PTSD, depression, STDs or drug addiction. Based on the premise of therapeutic jurispru-

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dence, the court wants to provide intervention, treatment facility options and additional social services to victims of human trafficking to get them out of the trafficking industry.

This program is tentatively considered the only comprehensive program of its kind in the country because it is the only docket that looks at defendants as victims rather than criminals. Thus far, the court has served about 130 participants, mostly female. The purpose of the present study was to conduct an evaluation of the CATCH program to determine its effectiveness in the lives of the women that enter into it. This study collected data from court records and two CATCH-related parties, criminal justice referrers and participants. The measures used were a 6-item quantitative email survey for referrers, a 20-item quantitative survey for participants and a qualitative discussion with 20 of the participants.

The results of descriptive statistics on participants' experiences indicated that from 48% to 100% of the participants were positively affected by the program. Program completers had fewer jail days, arrests, and recidivism, as well as improved living conditions, than non-completers.

For recidivism, this effect was significant. Participants overall indicated a very positive experience with the program. They reported feelings of being cared for by the staff, compassion, an absence of negative judgment, and saw an improvement in both self-esteem and family relationships. Most importantly, almost all participants said that the CATCH court program rescued them from their former lives.

In the future to increase awareness of the program, participants suggested educating law enforcement about CATCH, educating girls at a young age of the dangers of human trafficking and extending this program to other cities. To improve further research on the effectiveness of the program, recommendations included more frequent data collection, more discrete data accumulation in participant demographics, an even larger sample size and more in-depth interviews with participants. The goal is to have the CATCH court be a model for future courts to emerge across the United States.

The Ohio Risk Assessment System Misdemeanor Assessment Tool (ORAS-MAT) and Misdemeanor Screening Tool (ORAS-MST)

Edward J. Latessa, Ph.D., Brian Lovins, Ph.D., Jenifer Lux, M.S.

The Ohio Consortium of Crime Science (OCCS) received a request from the Ohio Municipal Court Judges Association and the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction to examine the use of the Ohio Risk Assessment System's Community Supervision Tool (ORAS-CST) within municipal courts. Researchers from the University of Cincinnati responded to the request. The researchers tested whether the ORAS-CST was a valid predictor of recidivism among misdemeanor offenders in the state of Ohio.

A total of 1,722 misdemeanor offenders were included in the study, with at least an 11-month follow-up period following the offender's initial assessment. Recidivism was examined using offender re-arrest data. Overall, it was found that the ORAS-CST accurately predicted recidivism for misdemeanor offenders. Offenders who scored low on the tool recidivated at the lowest rate (23%), while

offenders that scored very high on the tool recidivated at the highest rate (52%).

However, concern was expressed over the time required to administer the full ORAS-CST assessment. The full instrument consists of 35 items across seven domains (criminal history; education, employment and financial situation; family and social support; neighborhood problems; substance use; peer associations; and criminal attitudes and behavioral problems) and takes about 45 minutes to administer. To counteract this problem, two new screening tools were developed: the ORAS-Misdemeanor Assessment Tool (ORAS-MAT) and the ORAS-Misdemeanor Screening Tool (ORAS-MST). Items on these tools were based on items in the full ORAS-CST that were found to be the most significant predictors of recidivism for misdemeanor offenders.

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The ORAS-MAT consists of 11 items examining five factors (criminal history; education and employment; drug use; criminal peers; and criminal attitudes), and takes approximately 15 minutes to administer. Based on the instrument, low risk offenders reoffended at the lowest rate (22%) while high risk offenders reoffended at the highest rate (53%). This is consistent with the recidivism rate obtained using the ORAS-CST. Additionally, analyses for the ORAS-MAT were used to examine recidivism by gender. The ORAS-MAT was found to accurately predict recidivism for males and females. Low risk males recidivated at a rate of 19% whereas low risk females recidivated at 31%. Both high risk males and high risk females recidivated at 53%. Finally, the ORAS-MAT was found to accurately predict recidivism for two specific groups: DUI offenders and domestic violence perpetrators. DUI and domestic violence offenders scoring low on the instrument recidivated at the lowest rates (20% and 16%, respectively), and offenders scoring high on the instrument recidivated at the highest rates (43% for both groups).

The ORAS-MST consists of five items examining four primary factors (criminal history; education; drug use; and criminal attitudes), and takes approximately five

minutes to administer. Based on the instrument, low risk offenders recidivated at a rate of 25% while moderate to high risk offenders reoffended at a rate of 46 percent. When compared to the full ORAS-CST, the ORAS-MST had a false positive rate of approximately seven percent.

It was discovered that the predictive validity of the ORAS-MAT could be improved slightly by knowing whether an offender's current offense was heroin-related. As a result, a new question addressing whether an offender's current offense is heroin-related was added to both the ORAS-MAT and ORAS-MST.

Based on these conclusions, the research team provided four recommendations to help municipal courts implement the misdemeanor assessment tools: determine who will be responsible for completing the risk assessment instrument and develop policies and procedures regarding the risk assessment process; train staff to conduct the ORAS assessment; implement a continuum of services based on assessment results; and monitor use of the assessment to support quality improvement and maintain fidelity to the instruments.

Cincinnati Police Department 15-Minute Hotspot Policing Experiment

Robin S. Engel, Ph.D., Nicholas Corsaro, Ph.D., M. Murat Ozer, Ph.D. — *University of Cincinnati*

Hotspot policing is a technique that involves intense police presence in specified crime clusters for an intermittent yet brief period of time, typically fifteen minutes every two hours. The purpose of this technique is to reduce victimization by having an increased police presence in high risk areas. A sizable body of experimental research on hotspot policing led the National Research Council Committee to Review Research on Police Policy and Practices (2004, p. 250) to conclude that studies of "focused police resources on crime hotspots provided the strongest collective evidence of police effectiveness that is now available."

In an effort to promote evidence-based practices to address specific types of crime problems, the Cincinnati Police Department partnered with the University of Cincinnati, a member of the Ohio Consortium of Crime Science, to evaluate hotspot policing as a way to police

more efficiently, and to determine whether different types of policing practices within hotspot locations could lead to discernible differences in crime incidents.

To identify Cincinnati's crime hotspots, Uniform Crime Report Part I data were collected and geocoded over a two-year period (2010-2012) to show the number of serious crimes that were committed on individual street segments in the city, and police officers were consulted to confirm the resulting hotspots based on their own experience. From this, 27 matched hotspot street pairs with similar amounts and types of crimes were created. Each street segment of the hotspot pairs was then randomly assigned to the treatment or control conditions. The treated street segment received an additional 'dose' of directed patrol seven times per day. The non-treated street segment serving as the control was patrolled as normal and did not receive additional directed patrol.

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Those assigned to the treatment condition were further randomly assigned to one of three types of treatments: 1) a stationary officer in car; 2) a stationary officer in the car with emergency lights on; or 3) a proactive officer who parked and walked. The experiment was conducted over a five-month period.

Analyses showed that by and large, both treatment and control segments experienced very similar declines in criminal offenses. However, the treated streets demonstrated larger reductions, including a five percent greater reduction in violent crimes and a six percent greater reduction in property crimes. Additionally, statistically significant declines were found in overall property offenses for both treatment and control segments before (pre-intervention) and during (intervention) treatment.

The effects again were larger in treatment areas than control areas. Finally, the data showed the largest substantive declines in crime occurred in places where police employed standard hotspot policing approaches (i.e., on foot and stationary). There was no evidence of impact for any crime type where the experimental condition was sitting in patrol cars with emergency lighting.

In sum, the researchers found that the additional patrols led to a reduction in property and violent crime. They noted that this impact was not substantively large, and they speculated as to the reasons for the findings. Results from this study can help guide police, not only in terms of where to focus their energies, but also what strategies are potential most beneficial when using hotspot policing.

Process Evaluation of the Seeking Safety Initiative

Steven P. Lab, Ph.D., Adam Watkins, Ph.D. — *Bowling Green State University*

The Seeking Safety counseling program addresses trauma and substance abuse and works to help clients become safe in their relationships, thinking, behaviors, and emotions. Northwest Community Corrections Center instituted the Seeking Safety program in August 2015 with male clients in a residential setting. Researchers from Bowling Green State University were requested through the Ohio Consortium of Crime Science to conduct a process evaluation focusing on program training, implementation, and evaluation, with particular emphasis on program fidelity. The entire curriculum is provided by Treatment Innovations.

Training. The training process for the counselors involved the watching of instructional videos, discussion of the implementation of group sessions, identification of potential problems in the program and ideas on how to best implement the program within the facility. Further training and discussion continued in subsequent training sessions.

Implementation. Clients were selected for the program based on their responses to an assessment tool measuring trauma and past substance abuse. Researchers noted that assessment fatigue and reluctance due to fear of a prolonged stay at the facility resulted in a low number of

clients who met the threshold level for program participation. Delaying the assessment roughly doubled program participation. Seeking Safety is taught over an eight-week period. Eighty-eight clients entered the facility since the program was initiated, and 35 of these clients were referred to the program. Groups were started in September, October, and December, and a fourth group was started during this evaluation. Nineteen successfully completed the program, five failed to complete the program, and eleven were still in the program.

Evaluation. The Seeking Safety initiative was evaluated in terms of its fidelity to the guidelines from Treatment Innovations. These guidelines included assessments to ensure fidelity of client selection and fidelity to program adherence. Additionally, researchers reviewed client assessments of each program meeting.

Researchers found strict adherence to the Seeking Safety recommendations. All clients admitted to the program met the trauma threshold for participation, and the timing of the survey was very important in determining how many clients were eligible. Researchers found that fidelity to the program and client ratings of the sessions improved from the first group to subsequent groups as clinicians became more familiar with the material. Overall, they found

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high program fidelity with mostly positive feedback from the clients.

Researchers noted that group sizes were in excess of what Treatment Innovation recommends. Treatment Innovations recommends group sizes limited to five individuals for hour-long sessions, or extending the length of the individual sessions if larger groups were necessary. The facility was allowing up to 10 clients per group, due to more clients qualifying for acceptance into the program. Modifications to speed up the check-in guidelines were made, and did not appear to negatively impact the clients or program. However, researchers noted that that the program should consider alternatives to the current group size.

The review of client assessments revealed generally positive feedback from clients on most topics, while some topics elicited negative feedback. There was some negativity on the “PTSD: Taking Back Your Power” session, which is a core topic for this program. Although this topic is being implemented with fidelity to the model, further evaluation should be conducted to determine whether this topic is effective, whether more training of the clinicians is needed, or some other action needs to be taken.

While implementation of the Seeking Safety program is being done with fidelity and is meeting the needs of the institution, the researchers recommended several items for consideration.

1. Reduce the number of clients in each group to roughly five to allow greater fidelity with the check-in procedure and possibly allow for more individual participation in program sessions.

2. If it is not possible to run smaller groups, expand the time for each group beyond one hour to allow greater attention to details.

3. Careful consideration should be given to the training protocol used for clinicians new to the Seeking Safety program, by providing opportunities such as shadowing an experienced clinician or watching recorded sessions before leading their first group.

4. Capture all information in electronic form, whether it is screening instrument results, to fidelity ratings for program compliance, to client ratings of quality and helpfulness of sessions, in order to make it easier to identify breakdowns in program fidelity or identify session topics that are rated poorly by clients.

5. Consider evaluating short-term outcomes, such as client behaviors and attitudes, to assess whether Seeking Safety involvement and completion improves short-term outcomes in the facility.

