Utah Center for Criminal and Juvenile Justice

Park City Offender Review Board Evaluation

Interim Report October 2007

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Executive Summary

- The main effect of the Park City Offender Review Board was increased detection of misdemeanors in participants under the age of 30.
- The Park City Offender Review Board participants had higher rates of felony recidivism for low risk offenders than high risk. This effect was the reverse for the control group.
- The Offender Review Board did not reduce 6 month recidivism compared to a similar group of offenders on probation/parole.
- The detection effect did not disproportionately affect minorities or either gender group.
- There are very few good predictors of overall recidivism for this sample.
- The best predictors of felony and misdemeanor recidivism were felony and misdemeanor history, respectively. But these factors only predicted a small amount of the variation in recidivism.

Description of Program

This study is examining the efficacy of the Park City Offender Review Board, which is a parole/probation community reentry program. After encountering high recidivism rates for adults on parole or probation, AP&P officers, the Summit County Sheriff's Office and the Park City Police Department realized a need for programs that addressed both community re-integration and accountability for offenders in the area. For the last 3 years, the local Adult Probation and Parole officer and a police lieutenant have been running their "Park City Offender Review Board." This intervention consists of community members meeting with adults on probation and parole in their area once a month. This meeting is designed to allow community members to offer support and advice to the offenders, as well as hold them accountable for their actions. At each meeting, a face sheet detailing the history of each offender is distributed to the community members. These informational sheets also become available to local law enforcement officers.

The need for improved integration of offenders on probation or parole is not unique to Park City. Nationally, 4.9 million adults are either on probation or parole (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2005) and 67.5% of inmates released from prison are re-arrested within the next three years (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2002). Prior to the institution of Truth in Sentencing statutes across the nation, discretionary parole boards held a much stronger role in transitioning inmates from prisons back into the community and ensuring that there were sufficient support structures in place to assist the inmate before he or she was released (Seiter & Kadela, 2003). Since then, many argue that concerns of re-integration are not taken into account for the timing and manner of release (Seiter & Kadela, 2003).

Design

This study utilized a quasi-experimental design. The goal was to compare the participants in the Park City Offender Review Board with a similar group of parolees and probationers in Wasatch and Summit counties, examining the effect of the program on recidivism. The hypothesis was that for less serious offenders, the program would decrease recidivism, and for more serious offenders it would increase recidivism, due to greater detection and community monitoring.

Measures

This experiment used Utah Department of Corrections data to compile information on offense history and subsequent offenses, seriousness of offense, legal status history and demographic information. For offenders in the ORB program, subsequent offenses were calculated from the first date of attendance until the specified time (2 months, 6 months and 12 months). For the comparison group, subsequent offenses were calculated from the beginning of a probation or parole period in Wasatch or Summit counties or the moving date when a parolee or probationer entered either county. These dates were used for the control group to mirror the variety of attendance start dates used by the Offender Review Board[1]. If an individual had more than one qualifying date, a randomization script was used to select one of the qualifying dates.

The intermediate measure of 6 month recidivism was used as the primary outcome, rather than the more standard 12 or 18 month. This measure was used because most participants only attended one or two sessions, and it is unlikely that the effects of the program would extend to 12 or 18 months. Though, 12 month outcomes are reported as well.

The Level of Supervision Inventory (LSI) is a risk/need assessment specifically designed to assist case managers working with parolees/probationers. The LSI has been shown to have good interrater reliability (alpha r = .94) and 3 month test-retest stability and (r = .80) (Andrews, Kiessling, Mickus & Robinson, 1986). Additionally, total score on the LSI has predictive validity for recidivism (r = .47) and likelihood of reincarceration (r = .40) (Bonta & Motiuk, 1992). The LSI was used in this study as a measure of the offender's risk to the community.

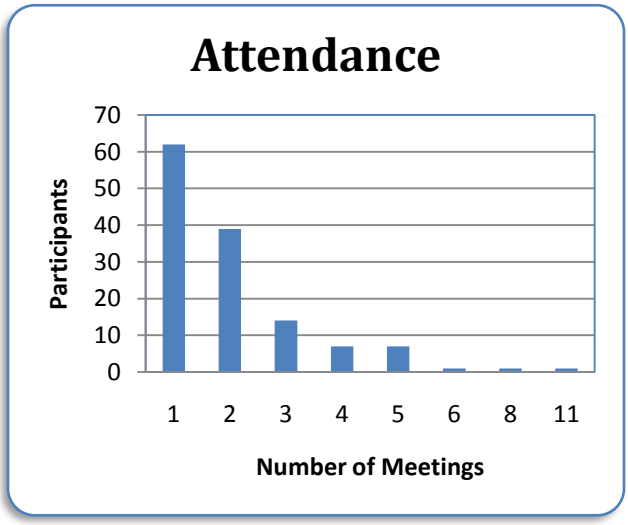
Participants

For this study, the treatment group consisted of 104 adults who were either on probation or parole between November 2003 and January 2007. Participants were individuals who were under the supervision of the Park City Adult Probation and Parole Officer. The treatment group was 78% male and the average age was 32.4. These participants were 84% white/Caucasian, 3% Hispanic, 1% African American, 1% Native American and the remaining 9.5% were "unknown". From attendance records, participants were removed who were either still inmates, on compact from another state (and had offense histories of dubious accuracy), or were shown by

[1] For the PC-ORB, some participants started at the outset of their probation or parole, others were invited to come at other times in their sentences. Using moving dates and probation/parole start dates for the control group gave a similar variety of "break dates" from which to calculate recidivism.

corrections data to no longer be on probation or parole at the time of the first meeting.[2] The total number of removed participants was 30.

Importantly, the attendance records did not always represent an accurate record of who *actually* attended, but instead the expectation of attendance which was met 90% of the time, according to the program administrators. If the participant did not attend, their face sheet was still made available to local law enforcement officers. Thus, this evaluation is really examining the effect of the Offender Review Board's intent to treat.



The control group was over-sampled, to allow comparison between control group subjects in Summit County and control group subjects in Wasatch County. This group consisted of 212 adults, who were also on parole or probation: 127 from Wasatch County and 85 from Summit County. (An equal group would have been preferable from Summit County, but could not be obtained due to the small number of adults who were on parole or probation in this community, and not included in the treatment group).

[2] It should be noted that this program brought in a variety of offenders for the education of the community. Some were inmates, about to be released from prison, and some were "success stories" of persons who were successfully discharged. Only individuals on probation or parole were included in the analysis.

This control group did not differ from the treatment group significantly on number of prior felonies, misdemeanors, highest offense, age or gender. Additionally, the Wasatch County control group and the Summit County control group did not differ significantly on these same measures. One difference between the groups that allowed for an adequate sample of Summit County Offenders was that the control sample dated back to 2001.

Inclusion in the final sample required six months of time to have elapsed after the start date (either the start of treatment, or the randomly selected time on probation or parole). For all data referring to 12 months of recidivism, a sub-sample was used of offenders for whom 12 months of time had elapsed since their start date.

A chi-squared test revealed a significant difference between the treatment and control group on the type of parole or probation being served. Though this statistic was highly influenced by the small percentage of parolees in the sample relative to the group (5.6%), a random group of parolees were removed from the control group to make the groups similar on this measure as well: $\chi^2(2, N = 308) = 1.704, p = .427$. The parolees remaining were matched for offense history with the control group. This removal improved the similarity of the two groups on all measures of offense history as well. For the final group, 26% were on class A probation, 72% were on felony probation and 1% were on parole.

Study Sample

County	Group	N
Summit	PC-ORB	104
Summit	Control	85
Wasatch	Control	127
	Total	**316**

Results

For the aggregated group, six month recidivism rates were 22.4% for felonies, 18.5% for misdemeanors and 30.2% for either crime. At 12 months, the rates were 37.6% for felonies, 27.6% for misdemeanors and 50.3% for either crime. Rates by group are reported below:

Six and Twelve Month Recidivism by Group

		PC-ORB	Control Group
		%	%
Twelve Month Recidivism	No	48.2	50.6
	Yes	51.8	49.4
Six Month Recidivism	No	74.2	67.0
	Yes	25.8	33.0

Six Month Felony and Misdemeanor Charges by Group

Treatment Status		6 Month Felony Charges	6 Month Misdemeanor Charges	Max. Severity[3]
PC-ORB	Mean	**1.36**	**1.32**	**4.59**
	N	96.00	96.00	96.00
	Std. Dev	1.41	1.37	1.40
Control	Mean	**1.47**	**1.31**	**4.56**
	N	212	212	212
	Std. Dev	1.33	1.56	1.47

[3] Maximum Severity in this study was a number calculated from the degree of the offense (F1,F2,F3 etc). Felony 1 = 1, F2 = 2, Unspecified Felony = 3, F3 = 4, MA = 5, MB = 6 and MC = 7. Thus, lower scores constituted more serious crimes.

Six month recidivism characteristics (see table below) showed differences in the type of recidivism that the Park City Review Board was exhibiting compared to the control group. The PC-ORB group had higher rates of drug and alcohol reoffending and person crimes but lower rates of possession and property crimes.

6 Month Recidivism Offense Characteristics

		PC-ORB	Control
		%	%
Offense Type	ALCOHOL & DRUG	27.8	8.7
	DRIVING	14.8	19.1
	DRUG POSSESSION ONLY	10.2	24.6
	OTHER	11.9	6.6
	PERSON	13.6	5.5
	PROPERTY	18.2	32.8
	SEX/REGISTERABLE	1.1	1.1
	WEAPONS	2.3	1.6

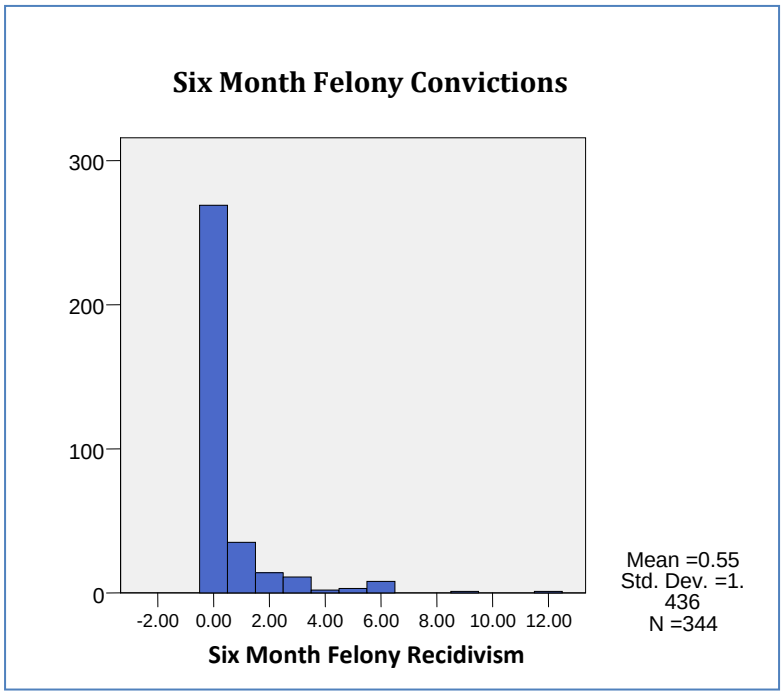
Differences for outcomes between Wasatch and Summit counties:

An analysis of variance revealed no significant differences between Wasatch and Summit county offender's 2 month and 6 month recidivism data. This result validates the assumption that differences between the two counties are not confounding the differences between participants and non-participants.

Differences between treatment and control groups:

Felony Recidivism:

The average number of felonies committed at 6 months, by all groups, was .55 (SD = 1.43).



Pearson bivariate correlations of 6 month felony recidivism revealed that the total number of past felonies ($r = .31$, $p < .000$), and total number of past felonies and misdemeanors ($r = .185$, $p = .001$) were significantly associated with felony recidivism. There was no significant association with past misdemeanors, highest level of past offense, whether or not the participant was in the treatment group, or the total LSI Score. This finding suggests that, for this sample, the best predictor for the *number* of subsequent felonies is simply the *number* of past felonies.

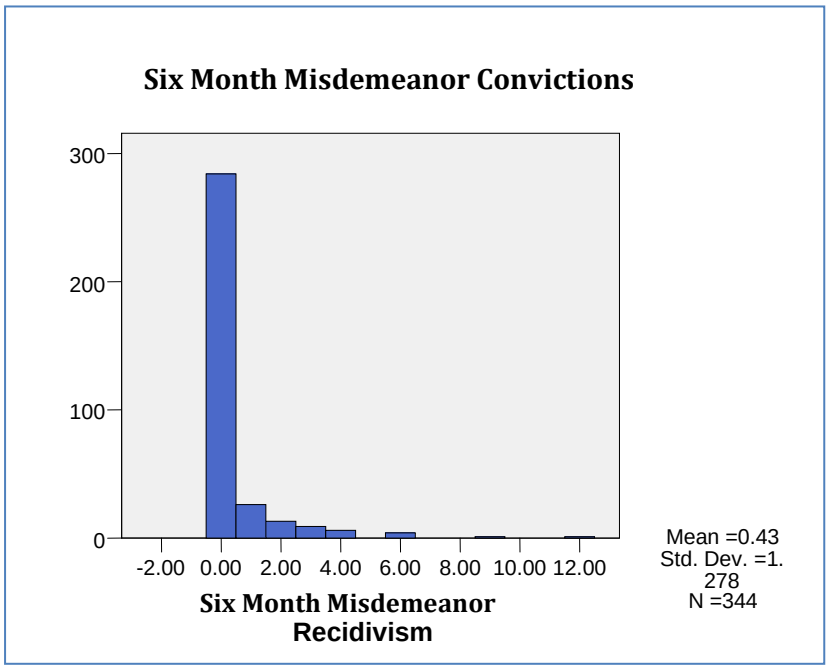
A multiple linear regression analysis of treatment status on 6 month felony recidivism, controlling for past felonies, revealed a result that approached significance ($\beta = -.10$, $p = .066$), but the R^2 change, when treatment status was entered into the model, was quite small (.010). In this model, treatment status only predicted 1% of the variance beyond felony history. Felony history predicted 9.6% of the variance in 6 month recidivism. Average subsequent felonies were slightly lower (though, not significantly) for the PC-ORB group (M = 1.36, SD = 1.40), than for the control group (M = 1.47, SD = 1.33). This result demonstrates that, after controlling for felony history, treatment status did not have a significant effect on felony recidivism.

Six month felony recidivism was dichotomized into presence/absence and analyzed using binary logistic regression. Treatment status was regressed on six month felony recidivism after controlling for felony history. Treatment status was not significant in this analysis (p=.34). This result suggests that while treatment status may have had some borderline effect on the number of subsequent felonies, it is not associated with the presence or absence of recidivism.

For both models, the variable "total number of felonies plus misdemeanors" was not included because of its high correlation with misdemeanor history (and lack of additional explanatory power).

Misdemeanor Recidivism

The average number of misdemeanors committed across groups at 6 months was 0.43 (SD = 1.278).



Pearson bivariate correlations revealed a significant association between 6 month misdemeanor recidivism and total prior misdemeanors ($r = .23$, $p < .000$), most severe crime committed ($r = .22$, $p < .000$) and total number of felonies and misdemeanors ($r = .171$, $p = .003$). There was no association between 6 month misdemeanor recidivism and prior felonies, PC-ORB attendance and LSI risk score. The association between PC-ORB participation and 6 month misdemeanor recidivism was of borderline significance ($r = -.10$, $p = .06$). This borderline effect represented lower recidivism rates for the control group.

A multiple regression analysis of treatment status on 6 month misdemeanor recidivism, controlling for misdemeanor history revealed a borderline effect (β = -.10, p = .059). The R^2 change, when treatment status was entered into the model, was quite small (treatment predicted 1% of the overall variance) and thus, the effect of borderline significance represents very little predictive power above that of misdemeanor history. Again, this result shows that, after controlling for misdemeanor history, treatment status did not have a significant effect on misdemeanor recidivism.

Six month misdemeanor recidivism was dichotomized into presence/absence and analyzed using a logistic regression model. Treatment status was regressed on six month recidivism, controlling for misdemeanor history. Treatment status was not significant in this model (p = .59). Additionally, both variables only yielded a Nagelkerke R^2 of .08, thus, only explaining 8% of the total variance in recidivism. Moreover, this effect is better accounted for by the interaction effect of age and treatment status (see "Age" analysis).

For both models, most severe crime committed and total number of felonies plus misdemeanors were not included because of high correlations with misdemeanor history (r = .70 and .71, respectively). Especially with reference to the variable "felonies plus misdemeanors", there is no explanatory power beyond number of misdemeanors.

Overall Recidivism

In addition to felony and misdemeanor recidivism, this study examined to the relationships with dichotomized 6 month recidivism (whether an individual offended or not in six months). There were no significant spearman correlations between 6 month dichotomized recidivism and treatment status, attendance, felony history, misdemeanor history, LSI total score, age and minority status.

Age

The average age for both groups was 32 (SD = 10.22). Age was dichotomized, due to a highly right skewed curve, into a high/low variable cut at the median (31 years).

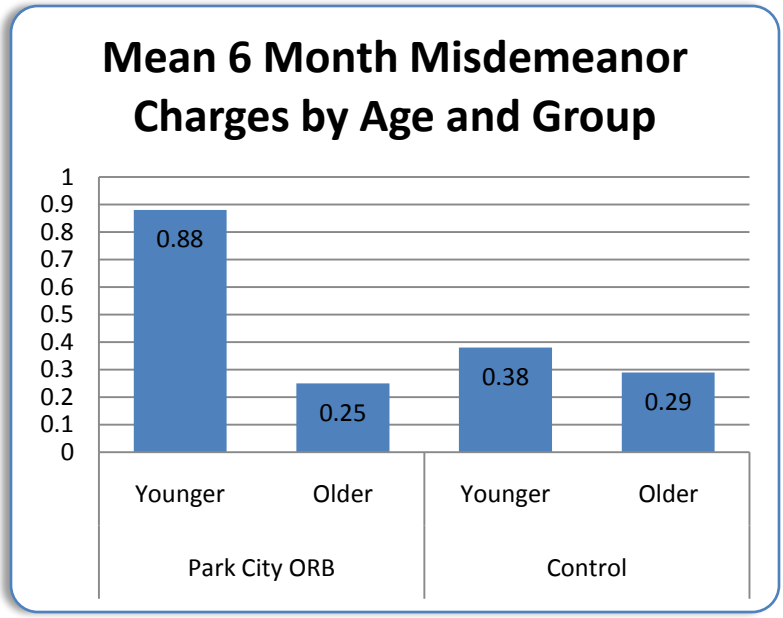
An analysis of variance revealed no significant differences in offense history by dichotomized age. An analysis of variance revealed no significant differences in 6 month felony recidivism by dichotomized age (though misdemeanor recidivism approached significance, p = .08).

An ANOVA using a general linear model, revealed an interaction effect between age and treatment status, F(1, 308) = 4.07, p = .04, on 6 month misdemeanor recidivism, even after controlling for misdemeanor history. Older participant in the PC-ORB had similarly low rates of misdemeanor recidivism to older non-participants and younger non-participants (not statistically different). Younger participants in the offender review board had *significantly higher rates* of 6 month misdemeanor recidivism (M = .884) compared to older participants (M = .24), older non-participants (M=.28) and younger non-participants (M = .38). (See table and graph).

6 Month Misdemeanor Recidivism, by Age and Treatment Status

Group	Age	Mean M. Charges	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval*	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Park City ORB	Younger	0.88	0.15	0.59	1.18
	Older	0.25	0.16	-0.08	0.57
Control	Younger	0.38	0.11	0.17	0.59
	Older	0.29	0.11	0.08	0.50

**Confidence intervals have controlled for misdemeanor history*



Parole Contacts

Unexpectedly, parole officer contacts did not mediate the relationship between treatment status and higher recidivism rates for this sample of offenders. There was no significant effect of the interaction of treatment status and dichotomized PO contacts on 6 month felony recidivism or 6 month misdemeanor recidivism. There were no significant bivariate correlations between 6 month parole officer contacts and 6 month felony recidivism, misdemeanor recidivism, highest degree of recidivism or total 6 month recidivism. An analysis of variance revealed no significant effects of treatment status on 6 month AP&P contacts. There were also no interaction effects between treatment status and age or minority status on AP&P contact.

6 Month Parole Contacts by Group

	Mean	Standard Dev.
PC-ORB	11.1	12.0
Control Group	11.5	10.3

These results demonstrate that increases in detected recidivism for the PC-ORB group were not accompanied by increases in parole contacts. Thus, the *number* of parole contacts was likely not the source of increased detection of misdemeanor crime in younger PC-ORB participants.

LSI Risk Assessment

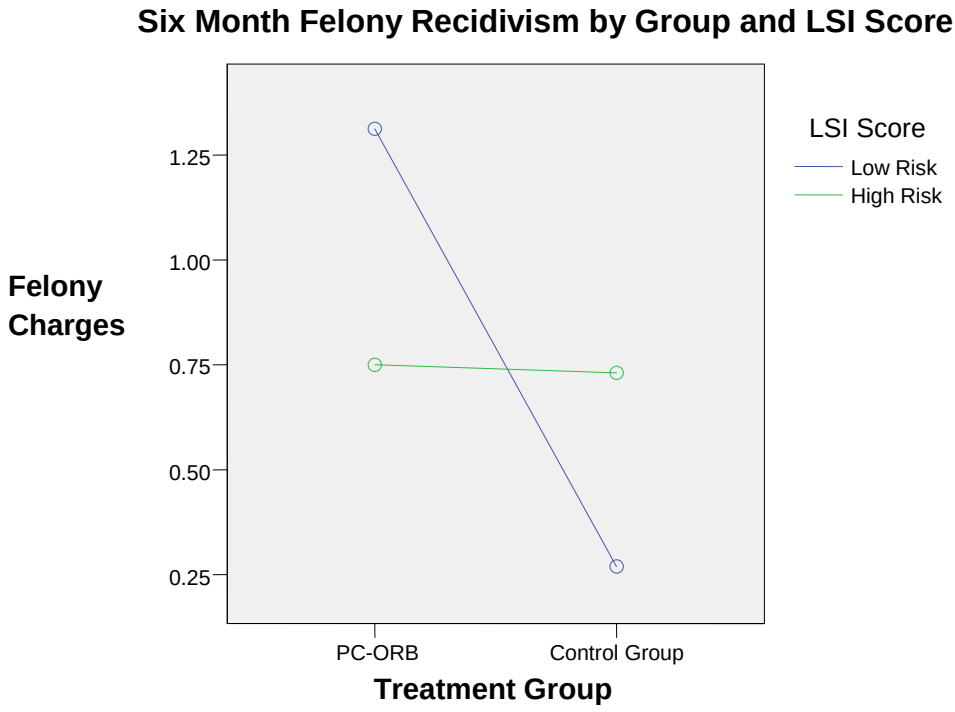
The total LSI risk assessment had no zero-order Pearson correlations with any of the recidivism outcome variables. This was surprising, as the LSI is a tool designed to measure risk of recidivism in adult offenders. Further analysis revealed a significant interaction effect between treatment status and dichotomized LSI score[4] on six month felony recidivism ($F=4.423$, $p = .037$). It appears that for both groups, high risk offenders have similar rates of felony charges after six months. Low risk offenders showed low rates of felony offenses in the control group, but higher rates of offenses in the PC-ORB group than high risk offenders (see chart and graph below).

[4] LSI was split at the 50th percentile for this sample. 0-17 on the total score was "low" and 18 and above was "high"

Number of Charges at 6 Months by Group and Risk

Group	LSI Score	Six Month Felony Recidivism		Six Month Misdemeanor Recidivism	
		Mean	Standard Dev.	Mean	Standard Dev.
PC-ORB	Low Risk	1.31	2.63	1.00	2.20
	High Risk	0.75	1.90	0.64	1.73
Control Group	Low Risk	0.27	0.77	0.31	0.78
	High Risk	0.73	1.55	0.44	0.93

After controlling for felony history, this effect remained, but with borderline significance (F = 3.814, p = .052). This new model with felony history predicted 15% of the variation in Felony recidivism. This interaction of LSI score and treatment status should not be dismissed as a result of the regression model controlling for felony history, because LSI and felony history are both measures of historical risk factors. There was no significant interaction between dichotomized LSI score and treatment status for 6 month misdemeanor recidivism.



Minority Status/ Gender

Important to note is that minority status was not a significant predictor of recidivism in either the treatment or control groups. Minorities were not disproportionately affected by the detection effect mentioned above. Additionally, there were no significant differences between felony or misdemeanor recidivism by gender. There were no interaction effects of gender and treatment status for felony or misdemeanor recidivism.

Discussion

Overall, results suggest that the main quantifiable effect of the Park City Offender Review Board is increased detection of minor crimes for younger (under 30) participants. This relationship does not seem to be mediated by increased contacts by parole officers, leaving the possibility that the detection may be the result of increased awareness among community members and police officers. Unexpectedly, the PC-ORB group seems to inversely re-incarcerate low-risk offenders, while charging high risk offenders about the same as the control group.

This program has successfully accomplished the goal of increasing detection of misdemeanor offenses in the community, but there is no evidence that it has assisted reentry, and thus reduced recidivism among any specific group.

Recidivism

The difficulty in interpreting the results of this study lies in the dual purpose of the Park City Offender Review Board. The program intends to both to assist offenders in re-entry and connect them with programs in individuals that can help them, but to also increase detection of chronic offenders. Theoretically, both effects could be masking each other in this group.

Generally, short term recidivism is difficult to predict in this group. The best variables only predict 8% and 9.5% of the total variance in misdemeanor and felony recidivism. It is notable that for this sample, felony and misdemeanor history was a better predictor for future felony and misdemeanor recidivism than the LSI risk assessment. One can roughly predict that an individual with a misdemeanor history is more likely to incur a misdemeanor offense and an individual with a felony history is more likely to incur a felony offense (if they re-offend at all).

The 50% 12 month recidivism rate confirms the need to pay attention to the role of re-entry of parole/probationers into the community.

Risk Assessment and Reoffending

The interaction effect of LSI score and treatment status on 6 month felony recidivism suggests the possibility that an unintended consequence of the Offender Review Board may be to increase the detection of crime disproportionately among low-risk offenders. Contrary to the original hypothesis, the PC-ORB group may, in fact, be targeting the offenders that are a low risk

to the community, while not increasing re-incarceration of high risk offenders. It is not entirely clear how this effect is taking place. It is possible that the different demographics of the PC-ORB group, specifically the higher proportion of drug offenders, could be confounding the results. Also, this effect could be the result of "charge piling" that is, charging an individual with several offenses for the same event.

Age

The interaction effect between age and misdemeanor recidivism confirms that the PC-ORB program does result in increased detection of certain crimes. Interestingly, the detection effect is specific to younger offenders. It should be noted that this effect is *dramatic*; the misdemeanor recidivism rate is more than double for the younger treatment group in contrast to the comparison group. This may be a positive result, in that offenders are being held accountable for their actions. The more important question may be how to integrate these offenders in the community and prevent such high rates of re-offense.

AP&P Contacts

Contrary to a preliminary analysis, it appears that the treatment effect (which seems to be increased detection) is not mediated by number of parole officer contacts. This analysis revealed similar levels of parole contacts for all ages, races and for both treatment and non-treatment groups. This suggests that the detection effect may be influenced by police contact instead of AP&P contact. Although, number of AP&P contacts may not be as important as the familiarity of the AP&P officer with the individual for increasing detection.

Limitations

The primary limitation to this study was the quality of the reported attendance. Attendance was estimated to be 90% correct, thus there was 10% error introduced into all of the analyses. In effect this study could really only analyze the intent to treat. Additionally, many of the statistics in this study could be influenced by the practice of "charge piling" or charging and individual with many offenses, all from the same event. Thus, the statistics reporting "number" of criminal events may be reflecting charging policies, rather than actual recidivism. This problem was partially combated by the use of logistic regression (examining the data with

presence/absence of recidivism as an outcome) for several of the analyses. The logistic regressions, though less sensitive, may be more trustworthy in this case.

Finally, great care was taken to account for differences between the control group and the PC-ORB group, but the possibility remains that the PC-ORB group was being unintentionally selected for some variable that was unaccounted for in this study. A more robust evaluation of the PC-ORB group might involve using a randomized waiting-list design. This would involve inviting a random half of probationers in Summit County to participate in the intervention. The other half would wait 6 months before starting (thus, not denying anyone treatment, in the end, but allowing a sufficient follow-up period to compare recidivism).

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