

EFFECTIVELY TRAINING COMMUNITY SUPERVISION OFFICERS

A Meta-Analytic Review of the Impact on Offender Outcome

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The development and implementation of training programs aimed at increasing community supervision officers' use of core correctional practices served as the focus of this review. Studies that evaluated the effect that officer training had on offender outcome were included in the review. Based on 10 studies ($N = 8,335$), this meta-analysis found that when offenders were supervised by officers who received training in core correctional practices, they demonstrated reductions in recidivism (odds ratio [OR] = 1.48) compared with those offenders supervised by the status quo. The results support further use of such training programs and emphasize the benefit to public safety as well as the fiscal savings that can result from sound implementation. However, this was an initial review, and further research is needed to confirm and extend these findings.

Keywords: core correctional practices; offender outcome; officer training; recidivism; meta-analysis

As the costs of incarceration continue to rise, the need for an effective correctional alternative is prominent. Recent research suggests that community supervision may be a viable alternative (Andrews & Bonta, 2010), although more rigorous training of officers may be required. The majority of offenders will have some exposure to community supervision as those sentenced to incarceration are typically released onto community supervision orders, so improvements to the system can yield considerable benefits. Improving community supervision methods can lead to more efficient management of offenders and potentially lead to substantial fiscal savings.

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CURRENT PRACTICES

Previous research indicates that the current strategies used by community supervision officers are not efficient and are not likely to lead to the best outcome for offenders (Bonta, Ruge, Scott, Bourgon, & Yessine, 2008; Dowden & Andrews, 2004). An important initial stage of supervision involves identifying an offender's criminogenic needs, followed by developing an intervention plan to address those needs. An examination of a sample of community supervision officers revealed that officers were successful at identifying their client's needs but only developed a plan of action for 39.4% of the needs identified (Bonta et al., 2008). Robinson, VanBenschoten, Alexander, and Lowenkamp (2011) emphasized that officers who they observed were less likely to identify and target their client's core criminogenic needs prior to receiving additional training in this skill. An investigation into the importance of matching intervention strategies with identified needs revealed that when there was an intervention recommended for a given criminogenic need, there was a 37.9% reduction in the likelihood of recidivism among a sample of high-risk juvenile offenders (Luong & Wormith, 2011). Alternatively, the absence of planned interventions for identified needs was associated with an 81.7% increase in the likelihood of recidivism.

A comprehensive review of current practices among frontline correctional staff suggested that skills anticipated to increase the effectiveness of such programs are scarcely utilized (Dowden & Andrews, 2004). Relevant skills such as problem solving and use of community resources were only identified in 16% of the studies involving case managers. The review also identified a troubling finding, suggesting that the most infrequently observed skill was effective disapproval of their client's antisocial behavior (Dowden & Andrews, 2004). Similarly, Trotter and Evans (2012) observed actual officer-client interactions and determined that officers failed to effectively clarify their role, spent insufficient time goal setting and problem solving, and failed to utilize cognitive-behavioral intervention techniques with their clients.

Although community supervision officers often report having demanding caseloads and insufficient resources to comprehensively supervise each client, it appears that organizing the structure of the supervision session is pertinent to the potential efficacy of the process. Research has suggested that officers typically struggle with effectively structuring their sessions to ensure that they address the most important aspects while still doing so in a timely manner (Bonta et al., 2008; Dowden & Andrews, 2004). Officers often focus on the conditions of the supervision to ensure that they have been adhered to, although Bonta and colleagues (2008) suggested that this is not an effective use of valuable face-to-face time with their client. When officers spent more than 15 min solely discussing the conditions of release, the corresponding recidivism rate, after adjusting for risk, was 42.3%. Alternatively, when officers spent 15 min or less discussing the conditions of release, their clients demonstrated a recidivism rate of 18.9% (Bonta et al., 2008).

These investigations into the practices of community supervision officers have revealed that improvements can be made to the manner in which offenders are managed in the community. A growing body of literature has identified the best practices for community supervision officers, which has slowly led to the implementation of training programs aimed at increasing officers' proficiency in utilizing such skills.

Although skills-based training is intended to improve the practices of community supervision officers, additional attention needs to be directed at addressing the concerns of

frontline staff. Central to the implementation of skills-based training, supervisors need to support the training process and ensure their teams are given sufficient resources to provide meaningful service. Recent qualitative surveys examining what represents a quality supervision perceived by frontline staff have suggested that having sufficient resources and support from supervisors is critical (Grant & McNeil, 2014; Robinson, Priede, Farrall, Shapland, & McNeil, 2014). Officers additionally emphasized the value of collaboration among internal and external colleagues as a contributing factor to enhanced quality supervision.

FRAMEWORK FOR EFFECTIVE SUPERVISION

Andrews and Bonta's (2010) Risk, Need, and Responsivity (RNR) principles form the foundation of the recommended best practices that can be applied to correctional interventions, including community supervision. Consequently, it is suggested that supervision efforts should be directed to those offenders who demonstrate the highest risk, with an emphasis on challenging their client's core criminogenic needs. Any intervention strategies utilized should also be delivered in a manner that will likely be received by the offender. Interventions that are rooted in cognitive-behavioral techniques are also recommended and anticipated to have the highest likelihood of success. Within this framework, the importance of establishing a professional relationship with the client, which is characterized as positive, warm, and respectful, remains central to the success of influencing change among the offenders (Andrews & Bonta, 2010).

In addition to the RNR principles, there has been a recent emphasis on a series of skills that are anticipated to increase the efficacy of community supervision and correctional intervention efforts. These skills represent a framework commonly referred to as Core Correctional Practices (CCPs; Dowden & Andrews, 2004) and fall within a growing body of research identified as evidence-based practices. There are five dimensions of effective correctional practice that are included within this framework that encompass the following skills: effective use of authority, prosocial modeling, effective problem-solving strategies, the use of community resources, and interpersonal relationship factors (Andrews & Kiessling, 1980; Dowden & Andrews, 2004). Initial research suggests that utilizing these skills can improve the efficacy of community supervision and can lead to reductions in recidivism (Bonta et al., 2008; Lowenkamp, Holsinger, Robinson, & Alexander, 2014; Robinson et al., 2012; Trotter, 1996). These findings have spurred an interest to develop and implement structured training programs that emphasize the importance of these skills and teach officers how to effectively utilize them throughout their sessions.

STRUCTURED TRAINING PROGRAMS

Foundationally, CCP training programs emphasize the importance of using a validated risk assessment procedure to accurately capture the offender's current level of risk. Reliance on a validated risk assessment will permit appropriate allocation of resources informed by the risk level of each offender on the caseload, such that higher risk individuals receive more attention. During the initial supervision sessions, officers are trained to review and create an individualized case plan while briefly highlighting the conditions of the supervision. A critical component of this process is role clarification, whereby an officer discusses his or her responsibilities and the client demonstrates an understanding of the supervision

process, including outlining expected behavior. Strategies for developing a professional and supportive relationship with their client are also highlighted throughout training in CCPs. Relationship-building skills include actively listening, administering appropriate feedback, being aware of non-verbal cues such as maintaining eye contact, and effectively reinforcing or disapproving behavior. Research suggests that when a relationship between an officer and client is characterized as caring, warm, and enthusiastic, combined with respect, fairness, and trust, the relationship can reduce the likelihood of recidivism (Dowden & Andrews, 2004; Kennealy, Skeem, Eno Loudon, & Manchak, 2012). In a sample of offenders who rated the quality of their relationship with their supervising officer, results indicated that the higher the quality of the relationship, the greater the reduction in recidivism (Kennealy et al., 2012). Specifically for every 1-point increase on a measure of relationship quality, there was a 31% reduction in the rate of rearrest among the sample when controlling for risk (Kennealy et al., 2012). Pappozzi and Gendreau (2005) found similar results, which suggested that clients who were supervised by officers using a balanced orientation between law enforcer and social worker demonstrated significant reductions in technical violations and new convictions. Dowden and Andrews (2004) characterized this balanced officer technique as a “firm but fair” (p. 204) approach, which represents an integral component of CCP training.

The utility of cognitive-behavioral intervention techniques is also emphasized throughout CCP training. Officers are specifically encouraged to utilize such techniques to address previous criminal or antisocial behavior and to ameliorate any procriminal attitudes that may be present. Research suggests that cognitive-behavioral intervention techniques are not typically utilized by officers prior to receiving CCP training; however, once officers were trained, their file reviews and audiotapes evidenced use of such techniques (Bourgon, Bonta, Ruge, Scott, & Yessine, 2009; Robinson et al., 2012; Smith, Schweitzer, Labrecque, & Latessa, 2012). Specific skills emphasized include cognitive restructuring, teaching the client to differentiate between internal and external events, and identifying behavioral influences or cues. Utilizing cognitive-behavioral techniques has demonstrated significant reductions in recidivism, as Bonta and colleagues (2011) concluded that clients who were exposed to cognitive-behavioral techniques had a recidivism rate of 19% compared with a reoffending rate of 37.1% among clients who were not exposed to such techniques.

IMPROVING OFFICERS' BEHAVIOR

Initial investigations into the efficacy of additional training in core correctional practices have suggested that those officers who undergo training begin to use the skills in subsequent supervision sessions (Bonta et al., 2008; Robinson et al., 2011; Smith et al., 2012; Trotter, 1996). Bonta and colleagues (2011) found that those officers who received training devoted significantly more time to discussing their clients' criminogenic needs and demonstrated more frequent use of relationship-building skills than officers who did not receive training in CCPs. In a comparable study, trained officers made use of effective approval and disapproval techniques at a rate nearly twice that of officers who were not offered additional training (Robinson et al., 2011).

In an initial pilot evaluation, Smith et al. (2012) found that officers trained in core correctional practices demonstrated immediate beneficial effects in that they made more frequent use of structural and behavioral techniques, as well as challenged procriminal thoughts

more often than control officers. Results did suggest that some of the improvements in officer's behavior deteriorated in subsequent supervision sessions, highlighting the importance of ongoing individual clinical support and feedback. Bourgon, Bonta, Rugge, and Gutierrez (2010) emphasized the need to continually support officers throughout the training process. They reported that the use of some skills demonstrated attenuation over time, suggesting that individualized feedback could mitigate this decline by encouraging the officer to utilize that specific skill again (Bourgon et al., 2010).

Overall, these results suggest that training in core correctional practices can lead to sustained use of effective supervision skills. Although in the initial stages, evaluations have been conducted to examine the impact of the use of these skills on client outcome. Utilizing core correctional practices is expected to enhance the quality of service delivered by case management staff, including improving client motivation, developing a strong relationship, and efficiently utilizing resources to improve the structure of supervision sessions. Ultimately, these improvements are anticipated to lead to reductions in recidivism.

CURRENT STUDY

The purpose of the present study is to apply meta-analytic techniques to summarize the overall effectiveness of structured training programs aimed at enhancing officers' behavior and improving the efficacy of community supervision. As previously detailed, the programs that have been implemented tend to vary slightly from each other, so it is of interest to determine the overall impact these training programs have on recidivism rates. Specifically, as jurisdictions debate whether to utilize such programs, determining the average effect of these programs will assist in their decision. Based on the promising results from the initial training evaluations, it is anticipated that those officers who received formal training in core correctional practices will supervise clients who demonstrate reductions in recidivism relative to those supervised by the status quo.

METHOD

INCLUSION CRITERIA

A comprehensive set of inclusion criteria were developed to ensure that studies examining comparable research questions were included in the review. For a study to be considered, the study had to include a sample of community supervision officers who underwent formal training in core correctional practices. The details of the training provided also had to be available to evaluate the extent to which the training aligned with the CCPs outlined by Dowden and Andrews (2004). In addition to reporting the effect of training officers in CCPs, studies were required to include a control sample of offenders who were not supervised by officers trained in CCPs. Information pertaining to offender outcome had to be available for both samples of offenders to evaluate the extent that being supervised by trained officers affected recidivism rates relative to the control group. Various definitions of offender outcome were permitted, including reconviction, rearrest, or revocation. In the case of multiple indices of recidivism, the most serious outcome was coded. To calculate the effect size for each study, the number of recidivists and non-recidivists for each sample was required. Last, given that this is an emerging area of research, there were no geographical or time restrictions applied to the selection of appropriate studies.

SEARCH STRATEGY

Computer searches of PsychINFO, Criminal Justice Abstracts, National Criminal Justice Reference Service, and Digital Dissertations were conducted with the following key terms: *community supervision, officer skills, recidivism, offender outcome, evidence-based practice, probation, skills training, and parole*. Additional search methods involved reviewing reference lists of empirical studies, conference programs, journals not included in major electronic databases (e.g. *Corrections Today*), online first articles, and contacting researchers known to be involved in relevant projects for any unpublished or forthcoming data. As studies were identified, the methods of the study were screened to determine whether they met the inclusion criteria. If additional information was required, the corresponding authors were contacted. As of April 8, 2014, our search yielded 10 studies that were eligible for inclusion. One recent validation of a training program (Pearson, McDougall, Kanaan, Torgerson, & Bowles, 2014) based on evidence-based principles was not included due to complexities in the methodology. The study utilized a hierarchical step-wedge cluster to examine the impact of officer training on client outcome among a large sample of probationers. This method prevented the computation of an effect size analogous to the other studies included in this review. A two-way table was unable to be constructed as the design methodically transfers offenders originally assigned to the control group to the training group.

SAMPLE

Table 1 provides descriptive information for each study that met the inclusion criteria. There were a total of 8,335 offenders included across the 10 studies. Total sample size for each study ranged from 75 to 5,929. Half of the studies included samples of offenders who were deemed medium risk, while the remaining half included samples of offenders classified as moderate risk. Moderate risk represented a higher level of risk than medium and was indicated when the sample consisted of both high- and medium-risk offenders. Two studies were missing information regarding the gender of the offenders included in the study, seven of the studies included samples of male and female offenders, while one study (Millson, Robinson, & Van Dietsen, 2010) consisted of exclusively female offenders. The majority (70%) of the studies examined the effect of officer training across both parolees and probationers, whereas the remaining studies included only offenders who were on probation. As is typical in correctional research, the definition of recidivism varied across the studies. Four studies defined recidivism as a new arrest, three studies analyzed new convictions, and the remaining three studies classified recidivism as any reoffense. Recidivism rates for the offenders supervised by officers who received training in core correctional practices ranged from 15.66% to 61.17% ($M = 36.23$, $SD = 13.79$) and ranged from 19.33% to 81.25% ($M = 49.47$, $SD = 16.32$) for offenders who were supervised by officers who did not receive training in core correctional practices.

Half of the studies provided sufficient information regarding the length of the initial training in core correctional practices. On average, training lasted approximately 4 days (34 hr, $SD = 12.96$) and ranged from 24 hr to 54 hr. All the studies that commented on the training procedures ($n = 6$) also emphasized that booster sessions were provided to those officers who underwent the initial training. As per the inclusion criteria, all studies provided training to their officers that, to some extent, included the core correctional practices as

TABLE 1: Descriptive Information for Studies Included in the Meta-Analysis

| Study | <i>N</i> | Country | Follow-up ^a | Age Group | Gender | Risk | Recidivism | Recidivism Rate ^b (%) | Training Length ^c |
|---|----------|--------------------|------------------------|-----------|--------|----------|--------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Pearson, McDougall, Kanaan, Bowles, and Torgerson (2011) ^d | 170 | The United Kingdom | — | — | — | Moderate | Reoffense | 41.76 | — |
| Latessa, Smith, Schweitzer, and Labrecque (2013) | 264 | The United States | 24 | Mixed | MF | Moderate | Arrest | 18.18 | 24 |
| Raynor, Ugwu-dike, and Vanstone (2014) | 75 | The United Kingdom | 24 | Adult | — | Medium | Reconviction | 41.33 | — |
| Trotter (2013) | 117 | Australia | 24 | Juvenile | MF | — | Reoffense | 66.67 | — |
| Millson, Robinson, and Van Dieten (2010) | 348 | The United States | 12 | Adult | F | Moderate | Arrest | 37.07 | 54 |
| Taxman (2008) | 548 | The United States | 9 | Adult | MF | Medium | Arrest | 35.99 | — |
| Trotter (1996) | 366 | Australia | 48 | Adult | MF | Medium | Reoffense | 61.48 | 40 |
| Lowenkamp, Holsinger, Robinson, and Alexander (2014) | 406 | The United States | 24 | Adult | MF | Moderate | Arrest | 45.07 | 28 |
| Pearson et al. (2011) | 5,929 | The United Kingdom | 24 | Adult | MF | Medium | Reconviction | 44.21 | — |
| Bonta et al. (2011) | 112 | Canada | 24 | Adult | MF | Moderate | Reconviction | 30.36 | 24 |

Note. Empty cells indicate that information was unable to be obtained for that variable. MF = the sample consisted of males and females. F = the sample consisted of females.

a. Follow-up time is presented in months.

b. Recidivism rate presented is the rate for the total sample, regardless of training status of supervising officer.

c. Length of training is presented in hours.

d. Represents a pilot study embedded within the original article.

proposed by Dowden and Andrews (2004). The size of the groups of officers receiving the training varied across the studies, ranging from 8 to 48 ($M = 23.50$, $SD = 14.44$).

CODING PROCEDURE

Each study was independently coded by two graduate students with a standard list of variables and explicit coding rules.¹ In the case of discrepant coding, a consensus rating was achieved and recorded. The coding process had two components: descriptive information regarding the content of the study (e.g., training program, sample demographics) and relevant information for calculating the effect size. When a study provided information on multiple offender outcomes, the more serious outcome was coded. Each study contributed one calculated effect size resulting in 10 effect sizes for recidivism.

INTERRATER RELIABILITY

Interrater reliability analyses were based on all coded studies. The raters coded the 10 effect sizes with high levels of agreement (absolute intraclass correlation [ICC] based on single rater = 1.00). For continuous variables ($n = 21$), ICC values ranged from .80 to 1.00 (Mdn ICC = 1.00). The level of percentage agreement was calculated for all categorical variables ($n = 33$) and indicated that there was high level of agreement, ranging from 80% to 100% ($Mdn = 100%$). For a subset of categorical variables for which Cohen's κ could be calculated ($n = 24$), reliability ranged from $-.11$ to 1.00 (Mdn $\kappa = 1.00$). One categorical variable—whether the training program emphasized utilizing community resources—demonstrated unacceptable levels of reliability so it was not included in any analyses. By

excluding this variable, reliability indices ranged from .76 to 1.00 (*Mdn* $\kappa = 1.00$), and percentage agreement ranged from 80 to 100 (*Mdn* = 100%).

OVERVIEW OF ANALYSES

Index of Successful Training

The effect size used to summarize the effect that the training had on offender outcome was an odds ratio. Odds ratios represent the ratios of the odds for two groups to determine whether one group experiences higher or lower odds compared with the other group. An addition of 0.5 to each cell was made in the twofold table to allow for the calculation of the odds ratio in the presence of empty cells (Fleiss, 1994).

Odds ratios tend to have asymmetrical variance, which becomes problematic when calculating the standard error and respective confidence intervals. To account for this, odds ratios were transformed into log odds ratios to calculate the standard error and the confidence intervals (CIs) for each effect size. Once appropriate calculations were made, the log odds ratios were transformed back into the original odds ratio units. An odds ratio of 1 is indicative of a null effect or no differences in odds to experience an event between the groups. Therefore, when the limits of the CIs include the value of one, it signifies that the effect is not significant.

Aggregation of Findings

Findings across studies were aggregated using both fixed-effect and random-effects meta-analysis (Borenstein, Hedges, Higgins, & Rothstein, 2009). Although the random-effects model may produce inconsistent results when k is small, it is more appropriate than the fixed-effect model as it assumes that there will be variability among the effect sizes. Random-effects meta-analysis incorporates the variability across studies into the error term, whereas fixed-effect meta-analysis does not include that variability (Borenstein et al., 2009). This allows the results of the random-effects model to be generalized beyond those studies included in the meta-analysis. If the variability across studies is low ($Q < df$), the between-study variance (T^2) disappears, and the fixed-effect and random-effect models produce the same results. However, as the variability across studies increases, the CIs in the random-effects model become wider than the fixed-effect meta-analysis (Borenstein et al., 2009). Consequently, the random-effects model gives more weight to the smaller studies relative to the larger ones, producing inconsistent results when k is small (Borenstein et al., 2009).

To test the variability of findings across studies, Cochran's Q and the I^2 statistic were utilized (Borenstein et al., 2009). The Q statistic is a significance test for the variability across studies and is distributed as a chi-square with $k - 1$ degrees of freedom. A significant Q statistic indicates that there is more variability across studies than would be expected by chance. Although the Q statistic is standardized, it is affected by the number of studies, where, as k increases, Q also increases. The I^2 is an effect size measure of variability and can be compared across analyses. It also describes the proportion of the overall variability (the Q) that is beyond what would be expected by chance from sampling error (Borenstein et al., 2009). I^2 values of 25% are considered low variability, I^2 values of 50% are considered moderate variability, and I^2 values of 75% are considered high variability (Higgins, Thompson, Deeks, & Altman, 2003).

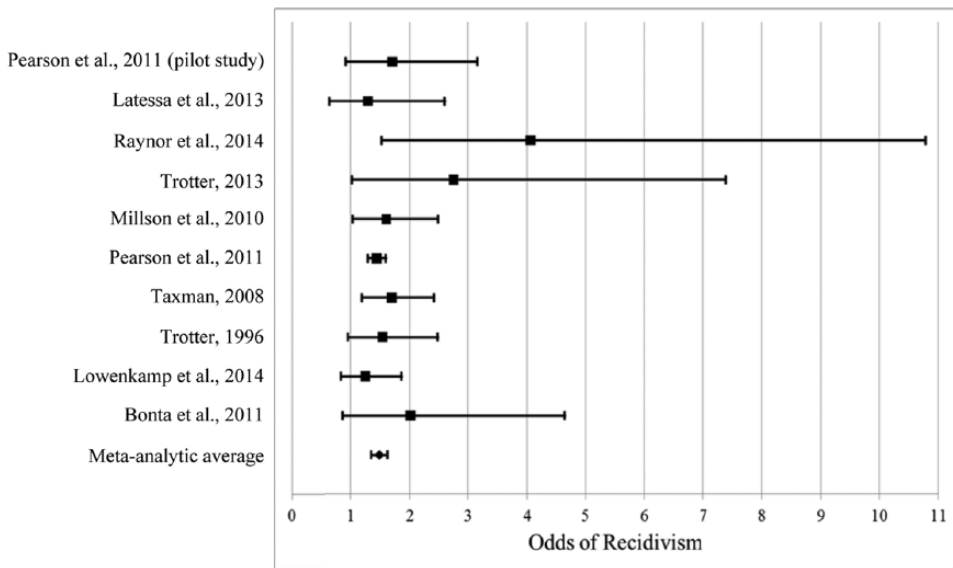


Figure 1: Individual Study Effect Sizes and Overall Meta-Analytic Average (Random Effects; $k = 10$, $N = 8,335$)

Note. Squares represent the odds ratio each study contributed surrounded by the 95% confidence interval for each effect.

RESULTS

Figure 1 displays the individual effect sizes each study contributed, as well as the overall meta-analytic average effect ($k = 10$). Results based on the fixed effect and random effects are presented in Table 2. The meta-analytic average effect was an odds ratio of 1.48, which represents favorable effects for training officers in core correctional practices. Specifically, the results suggested that offenders who were supervised by officers who received training in core correctional practices experienced lower odds to demonstrate any recidivism compared with those offenders supervised by the officers not trained in core correctional practices. The average recidivism rate, weighted by the inverse of variance, for those offenders supervised by trained officers was 36.22% (95% CI [0.30, 0.43]) compared with an average recidivism rate of 49.91% (95% CI [0.49, 0.58]) for offenders supervised by the status quo. A conversion to Cohen's d suggests that an odds ratio of 1.48 represents a small effect ($d = .22$, 95% CI [0.17, 0.27]). The non-significant Q indicated that there was not sufficient variability across the individual effect sizes to conclude that the effect sizes were heterogeneous. This lack of variability explains the consistency between the results based on the fixed- and random-effects models (Borenstein et al., 2009). In addition, the I^2 value suggested that none of the observed variability was more than what would be expected by chance. Outlier analysis was not performed as the study characteristics do not meet the criteria outlined by Hanson and Bussière (1998). Specifically, the magnitude and significance of Q , and the lack of evidence indicating distinct effects across the studies, suggested that there are likely no outliers.

To examine whether the Pearson, McDougall, Kanaan, Bowles, and Torgerson (2011) study was overly influential on the meta-analytic average as a result of the large sample size, an investigation into the study weights was conducted. As expected, this study received

TABLE 2: Average Effect Size for Odds of Recidivism Presented With Both Fixed-Effect and Random-Effects Models

| | <i>Fixed Effect</i> | | <i>Random Effects</i> | | <i>Q</i> | <i>I² (%)</i> | <i>k</i> | <i>N</i> |
|-------------------------|---------------------|---------------|-----------------------|---------------|----------|--------------------------|----------|----------|
| | <i>OR</i> | <i>95% CI</i> | <i>OR</i> | <i>95% CI</i> | | | | |
| Recidivism | 1.48 | [1.35, 1.63] | 1.48 | [1.35, 1.63] | 8.13 | 0.00 | 10 | 8,335 |
| Recidivism ^a | 1.59 | [1.37, 1.85] | 1.49 | [1.36, 1.64] | 6.36 | 0.00 | 10 | 8,335 |

Note. OR = odds ratio. CI = confidence interval.

a. Represents the results with the adjusted weight for the Pearson, McDougall, Kanaan, Bowles, and Torgerson (2011) study.

a weight approximately 11 times larger than the next highest weighted study. To assess whether this study was overly impactful, the study weight was manually reduced to be 50% larger than the next highest weight (reduced from 335.78 to 46.32). Also demonstrated in Table 2, results suggested that when the weight was reduced for the Pearson et al. study, the overall result was not drastically altered. There were no changes under the random-effects model but a slight increase in the effect size under the fixed-effect model. Based on these results, it is sufficient to conclude that the Pearson et al. (2011) study was not overly influential on the meta-analytic average. Consequently, the original model with unaltered weights is recommended for interpretation.

DISCUSSION

Overall, the results of this initial review of studies that have evaluated training officers in core correctional practices are promising. The results demonstrated that when officers received training in core correctional practices, the offenders they supervised experienced lower odds to reoffend. A comparison of the recidivism rates for the two groups of offenders suggested that there was a difference in recidivism rates of approximately 13%, with offenders who were supervised by CCP trained officers demonstrating the lower failure rate. Albeit a small collection of studies contributed to the review, the findings provide an important preliminary overview of the effectiveness of training officers in core correctional practices and offer further support for continued use. The current meta-analysis suggested that the beneficial effects of training officers in core correctional practices certainly warrant future consideration from those responsible for training community supervision officers. It was particularly interesting that the results suggested that there were no distinct differences in the effect sizes contributed by each study. Although this does not necessarily suggest that each study contributed a consistent effect size, as the lack of variability could be the result of random error (Borenstein et al., 2009), it is nonetheless important to note similarities between the studies. As was required for inclusion in the study, the various training programs all emphasized similar core correctional practices that officers should be utilizing throughout supervision sessions. Although the rigor of the clinical support provided post training was unable to be examined through moderation analyses, the majority of studies indicated that some level of clinical support (e.g., refresher courses, individualized feedback) was provided to those officers who underwent training efforts. Given that the importance of continued clinical support following training is critical to sustaining implementation integrity (Alexander, 2011; Miller, Yahne, Moyers, Martinez, & Pirritano, 2004), it may be

feasible to assume that the similar findings across studies are, in part, explained by the additional support provided to officers.

By effectively implementing these training programs, it is anticipated that community supervision officers will be better equipped to handle higher risk clients and ensure that they are provided the best opportunity to successfully reintegrate into society. If these clients can successfully be managed by community supervision officers, more offenders can be diverted out of correctional institutions and placed on community supervision orders. This shift will lead to a higher likelihood of reintegration for the offender and result in substantial fiscal savings for stakeholders. Reintegration via community supervision orders can be beneficial for the offender as they are supported by correctional staff and other community agencies. This ensures that the offender has prosocial supports to turn to in case of problematic scenarios. Community supervision also permits monitoring the offender while initiating the transition back into the community, whereas the alternative option of warrant expiry can leave the offender without prosocial support and direction. The ability to monitor an offender in the community enhances public safety and provides the opportunity to be proactive with correctional interventions rather than reactive. A related benefit to increasing the efficacy of community corrections is that it is substantially cheaper to supervise an offender in the community compared with incarceration. According to La Vigne and Samuels (2012), the annual cost of federal supervision in a medium security institution is US\$26,247 compared with an average of US\$3,433 for the cost of community supervision. These figures suggest that the time and financial commitments required to implement a training program in CCPs are likely to be outweighed by ability to manage more offenders in the community and the resultant fiscal savings. As well, utilizing CCPs in community corrections should be expected to enhance client outcomes, encouraging evaluations of training efficiencies and implementation strategies to examine which method yields sustained treatment effects.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

As this was an initial review, it is inherently limited by the number of studies that have evaluated the impact that officer training in CCPs has had on offender outcome. As a result of the limited sample of studies, the present study was unable to analyze additional research questions, particularly pertaining to questions regarding potential moderating effects across various demographic variables (e.g. offender's risk level). As this area of literature continues to develop, this meta-analysis can be built on to answer these important questions and provide a more comprehensive analysis of the effectiveness of training officers in core correctional practices. Including additional studies will likely lead to increased observed variance in effect size, which will enhance the feasibility of using moderation analyses to explain the variation.

The quality of each study that contributed an effect size was another limitation of the study. Across the 10 studies that were included, there were various methodologies utilized that could have affected the results. If there was more variation between effect sizes than what would be expected by chance, a moderator analysis could have been conducted to determine whether those studies that utilized randomized control trials would have produced a different treatment effect from those studies that used cross-sectional designs. Alternatively, rating the study's quality across a series of variables (e.g. sample size, study

design, attrition rate, etc.) would allow the researcher to assign more weight to studies that are more rigorous, or evaluate the impact of study quality in a moderation analysis.

Although the present study was limited, particularly in the number of studies available for inclusion, it serves as a foundation for future studies to build on. This summary should equip correctional decision makers with the information necessary to decide whether they should invest in training their staff in these practices. Furthermore, these results also reinforce the need for these training programs and, as such, should encourage those who are in the process of developing training materials of their own. As this study demonstrated, few jurisdictions across North America and the United Kingdom have been trained in core correctional practices, but its popularity is increasing. It is anticipated that as favorable results continue to surface, the demand for these training programs will further increase.

NOTE

1. Coding manual available on request.

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