AN EVIDENCE-BASED APPROACH TO COMMUNITY SAFETY

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Abstract: The author notes that despite the fact that the fight to move crime prevention to a more prominent place in the public agenda has been partially won after decades of effort, there is nonetheless a significant segment of the population and legislators who still believe that "cracking down on crime" is the best way to protect society. Some policy-makers have now been convinced that crime prevention is a better way of controlling crime than tinkering with laws and fine-tuning the justice system, but unless crime prevention advocates can continue to demonstrate that the time and money now going to crime prevention produces results, the author argues there is a risk of losing what has been gained. He describes some of what we know about the causation of crime and delinquency, links these findings with crime reduction strategies, and looks at some of the evidence concerning the effectiveness of these crime prevention programs. He observes sardonically that if reducing crime were a simple task, Canada would have become crime-free many years ago.

After decades of effort, the fight to move crime prevention to a more prominent place in the public agenda has been partially won. Some policy-makers have now been convinced that crime prevention is a better way of controlling crime than tinkering with laws and fine-tuning the justice system. However, many political leaders and a significant segment of society still believe that "cracking down on crime" after it happens is the best way to protect society, and they are eager to criticize the "softer" preventive approach. Unless crime prevention advocates can continue to demonstrate that the time and money now going to crime prevention produces results, there is a risk of losing what has been gained.

While it is hard to be critical of good intentions, the sad truth is that much of the time and money spent on crime prevention has been wasted. Despite the successes of the last decade, efforts to prevent crime haven't been nearly as successful as they might have been. There is ample research demonstrating that most crime prevention programs fail to prevent crime (Rosenbaum, 1986; Sherman et al., 1997). A major reason for this is that prevention programs often have no theoretical or empirical connection with the factors that cause crime[1]. Programs are adopted for a variety of reasons: Some are fashionable; some have strong lobbies[2]; some are set up for political reasons (such as showing the public that government is doing something, or putting politicians in the spotlight by allowing them to present cheques to the community). Evidence-based crime prevention means that we select programs that are demonstrably likely to be successful. This means that planners must analyze crime and disorder problems, determine likely causes of those problems, and implement programs that address these causes. This paper will describe some of what we know about the causation of crime and delinquency, link these findings with crime reduction strategies, and look at some of the evidence concerning the effectiveness of these crime prevention programs.

While this volume focuses on social development programs, it is worth noting that a wide variety of other crime prevention strategies have also been shown to be effective. These include situational crime prevention (i.e., environmental design), community-based strategies (i.e., Neighbourhood Watch), administrative/legal strategies (i.e., zoning bylaws), and police-based strategies (i.e., offender-oriented policing). A long-standing debate in the field of crime prevention has been whether prevention programs should focus on immediate problems or if the root causes of crime should be addressed. Unfortunately, this debate has often been framed in "either/or" terms when in reality a multi-faceted approach is necessary. Dealing with the root causes of crime takes time and often depends on actions which can be very difficult to achieve, such as reducing unemployment and improving the education system. To wait for these changes to take place would mean that nothing would be done to prevent victimization in the meantime. Also, even if all the changes proposed in a social development "wish list" could be implemented, the pool of motivated offenders would only be reduced, not eliminated.

On the other hand, many of the defensive crime prevention strategies, particularly those involving target hardening, can isolate members of a community from one another, as those who can afford it barricade themselves in locked apartments with security systems in buildings guarded by doormen and policed by private security guards. There are several other reasons why strategies must deal with the underlying causes of crime. First, even when opportunity reduction strategies are effective, they may result in some displacement to other parts of the community. Second, most crime prevention programs are targeted at property crimes and do not address the serious problem of interpersonal violence[3]. Finally, community-based crime prevention can be very difficult to accomplish – programs are often hard to implement and even harder to maintain. This is particularly the case in disorganized communities with high crime rates. It is by no means a sure thing that organizing neighbours, or marking property, or altering housing design will be successful, so there is a need to find ways of reducing the number of potential offenders. Ideally, a mix of strategies will be used so that short-term needs can be addressed through situational and police-based strategies while the number of potential offenders is reduced over the longer term.

Also, there are many situations in which the distinction between social development approaches and situational strategies may be an artificial one. While some see social development approaches as the most valuable ones and reject the others, strategies such as more effective police tactics and target hardening may play a critical role in the social development of communities. For example, in a recent volume looking at youth violence in the United States, Moore and Tonry (1998) point out the importance of cultural supports for violence. They feel that a culture of violence has grown up in some communities because of the emergence of violent street drug markets, particularly those associated with crack cocaine. Young people growing up in such communities will find violence very difficult to resist. In these circumstances, creating a safe, orderly environment is a necessary first step toward changing the neighbourhood. In very disorganized communities, this means that police and environmental design strategies may actually be vital components of a social development strategy. Unless order is restored, local residents and organizations will be unable to rebuild their communities.

Kelling and Sousa (2001) concluded that police strategies were responsible for significant reductions in crime in New York[4] and they feel that it is likely these crime reductions will help neighbourhoods to regain the social capital they need to keep rates of crime at a lower level. In a similar vein, an experiment in a British community (Painter & Farrington, 1997) showed that improving street lighting reduced crime significantly in a public housing project compared to a control project where the lighting was not changed. Not only did crime go down, but residents also reported feeling much safer, and pedestrian traffic (particularly females) increased. Somewhat surprisingly, rather than being displaced to the poorly lit neighbouring control estate, the numbers of young people who gathered at night in the experimental estate actually increased significantly. Thus the improved lighting helped to strengthen the social capital of the estate and to reduce crime. The situational tactics that are normally called secondary prevention may be the catalysts needed to initiate a "virtuous cycle" of prevention that will lead to changes that would be categorized as social development.

What We Know About the Causes of Crime and Delinquency

Criminologists have found that a small proportion of offenders commit the majority of serious crimes. Studies have shown that from 5% to 10% of young people are responsible for 50% to 70% of offences (Waller, 2006). Research on the causes of crime among these persistent offenders has looked at a wide range of factors including individual characteristics and social variables such as the neighbourhood, the family, the peer group, and the school. Our knowledge in this area is now well established. Over the last decade much of the early research on correlates of crime has been replicated many times and there is a high degree of consensus about the risk factors that should be addressed in prevention programs (cf. Surgeon General, 2001). The most important of these risk factors are:

1. **Neuropsychological factors**.
   There is some evidence of neuropsychological correlates of offending, particularly chronic offending. These can be caused by a variety of factors including heredity, maternal drug or alcohol abuse, exposure to toxic materials, and poor prenatal nutrition. Some of the behavioural correlates include learning disorders, attention deficit disorder, impulsivity, and hyperactivity (Moffitt, 1990, 1993).

2. **Family factors.**
   Family variables are important predictors of crime and delinquency. Among these family variables are: lack of supervision and monitoring of children's behaviour (Linden, 2004); harsh and/or inconsistent punishment (Thomas, 2004); poor communication; parent-child conflict; family violence; family dependence on welfare; and parental criminality (Howell & Hawkins, 1998). In their review of longitudinal delinquency studies, Lipsey and Derzon (1998) found that the strongest predictor of youth violence was the quality of parent-child relations.

3. **School factors.**
   Early school failure is predictive of subsequent violent behaviour (Maguin & Loeber, 1996). Many other measures of school adjustment and school success are also correlated

with delinquency.

4. **Peer Factors**.
Crime and delinquency are strongly influenced by peer groups.
   (a) Gangs increase the likelihood of delinquency even more than other peer groups (Huizinga, 1997; Thornberry, Krohn, Lizotte, & Chard-Wierschem, 1993).
   (b) Much of the violence that takes place among young people is caused by the need to maintain "respect" from their peers. The street code of conduct is difficult for any young person to resist (Anderson, 1998).

5. **Neighbourhood factors**.
Crime and delinquency breed in disorganized communities where community members cannot exercise control over things that happen in their neighbourhood.
   (a) Poor neighbourhoods with high rates of residential mobility have high crime rates (Sampson, 1995).
   (b) Neighbourhoods with high rates of single-parent households have high crime rates (Sampson, 1995).
   (c) Neighbourhoods with high anonymity and minimal relationships among people will have high rates of crime and delinquency (Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls, 1997).

6. **Economic factors.**
While there is almost no correlation between crime and broad measures of social class, there is evidence that those at the very bottom of the class ladder are much more likely to become involved in criminal behaviour than the rest of the population (Clelland & Carter, 1980).

Successful crime prevention programs must address these causal factors. There are two ways of approaching these correlates or risk factors for crime and delinquency. First, we can try to change the factors directly. For example, if we conclude that poor parenting skills contribute to crime in a community, we can develop parenting programs that help to teach parents to deal with their children more effectively. Changes in the operation of schools can help some children perform better socially and academically. Second, when we cannot change risk factors such as the presence of fetal alcohol syndrome[5] or chronically abusive parenting, our only option is to identify at-risk youth and prescribe protective measures. For example, intensive education programs can moderate some of the effects of FAS and if parents cannot or will not provide them with love and support, these must be provided in other settings. The importance of an environment that mitigates the impact of risk factors is suggested by research such as that cited by Reiss and Roth (1993) who conclude that children affected by prenatal trauma or pregnancy complications will only have higher than normal rates of violence if they are raised in unstable homes.

Evidence-Based Crime Prevention: What Do We Know?

The first step in preventing crime is ensuring that programs address the risk factors that lead to crime. The second is ensuring that prevention programs are based on research

demonstrating their effectiveness. In this section, I will discuss the research evaluating programs that have addressed the risk factors for crime and delinquency. Following the lessons learned elsewhere will help to ensure success in preventing crime. However, solutions cannot just be adopted off the shelf. Each community is different, so it is also important that people planning prevention programs first conduct an intensive analysis of their community's problems and resources so that programs can be modified to suit local circumstances.

Programs to Improve Parenting

Many studies have shown the importance of the family in the causation and prevention of crime and delinquency. For example, in their review of research on the predictors of male delinquency, Loeber and Dishion (1983) found that parental family management was the best predictor of delinquency involvement. Other research has found that the strength of family ties, parental supervision and discipline, and the role model provided by parents are all related to delinquency (Linden, 2000).

There have been few evaluations of programs directed at improving parenting. One promising start was made by Gerald Patterson and his colleagues at the Oregon Learning Center. Based on his experiences treating several hundred families of anti-social children and on very detailed observation of interaction patterns within these families, Patterson (1980) concluded that "since anti-social acts that are not punished tend to persist" the key to changing the behaviour of these troublesome children was to teach their parents how to discipline them. This process consisted of teaching parents to (a) monitor the child's behaviour; (b) recognize deviance; and (c) deal with such behaviour.

In a properly functioning family, parents understand this process and the system is activated by the bonds of affection and caring which exist between the parent and the child. The key is not just punishment – it was found that many parents of problem children punished them more often and more harshly than did the parents of normal children. However, the parents of problem children did not know how to punish their children, and punishment actually made things worse.

Working with the families of preadolescent problem children, Patterson developed a program in which parents are taught how to shape their children's behaviour by using non-physical punishments, by rewarding good conduct, and by interacting more positively as a family. The results suggest the program has potential. One evaluation showed that stealing was reduced from an average of 0.83 incidents per week to 0.07 incidents per week. The treatment effects persisted for six months, but by one year stealing rates had gone back to pre-treatment levels (Moore, Chamberlain, & Mukai, 1979). This finding suggests that parental retraining may be necessary.

Patterson's methods were tested among French-speaking Montréal youth by Tremblay et al. (1992). All kindergarten teachers in 53 low-income Montréal schools were asked to rate the disruptive behaviour of their male students. The 30% most disruptive were randomly assigned to a treatment group, a no-contact control group, and an attention-control group. When the boys

were entering their second year of elementary school, intervention was provided with parents and in school. Over a two-year period, parents were given an average of 15 parenting training sessions based on Patterson's work. Social skills training was given to the boys in school in small groups of pro-social peers who met 19 times over the two years.

An evaluation of the program was conducted when the boys were 15 years of age. The treated boys showed less self-reported delinquency involvement from ages 10 to 15. While the number of boys charged under the Young Offenders Act was very low (8%) there were no significant differences between treatment and control groups. The program appeared to have other positive effects that diminished over time. Teacher-rated disruptive behaviour was less from ages 10 to 13, but the difference disappeared at 14. School adjustment was also better for the treatment group from ages 10 to 12, but this difference also disappeared. As with Patterson's work, this study suggests that ongoing or repeated training may be needed in order to maintain program effects.

Another study took place in the United Kingdom from 1995 to 1999 (Scott, Spender, Doolan, Jacobs, & Aspland, 2001). This trial involved children from 3 to 8 years of age who were referred to the local mental health service for anti-social behaviour. The program involved small groups of parents who met for two hours each week for three to four months. The parents learned techniques for dealing with their children more effectively and were given tasks to practice at home. Following the intervention, the parents were much more likely than the control parents to use praise rather than inappropriate commands. The children showed major improvement in anti-social behaviour, while the control children showed no change.

A recent development in the treatment of high-risk youth is Multisystemic Therapy (MST). MST is an intensive home-based service that involves the family as well as the other groups that have an influence on the young person, such as the school, the peer group, and the neighbourhood. MST therapists are available 24 hours a day and work very intensively with the youth and his or her family as well as with the other groups. The ultimate goal of MST is to "empower the family to take responsibility for making and maintaining gains.... parents are encouraged to develop the requisite skills to solve their own problems rather than rely on professionals" (Leschied & Cunningham, 2002, p. 9). Evaluation results have been mixed, with several U.S. studies showing significant reductions in criminality, institutionalization, and drug abuse (Farrington & Welsh, 2003) while other research, including a large randomized trial in London, Ontario (Leschied & Cunningham, 2002), did not show any difference between treated and untreated young people. Where it has been successful, the MST program is very cost-effective. The Washington State Institute for Public Policy (1998) has estimated that MST could potentially result in a net gain of $21,863 per program participant.

Positive results have also been obtained for a similar program called Functional Family Therapy that also includes a variety of interventions with youth and their families (Surgeon General, 2001). This is a short-term intervention that has lowered rates of offending for foster care and institutional placement by 25% to 60% (Alexander et al., 1998) compared with controls who did not receive the services.

Another important parenting issue concerns foster care, as a relatively high proportion of children in trouble are also in care. One improvement is making foster care more stable. It is not uncommon to encounter young people who have lived in ten or more foster care homes. Foster parents need to be trained and monitored and support should be provided so that children can stay with the same foster parents until they can return to their natural parents or live on their own. Several communities in the United States have implemented a Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care program for chronic young offenders, which is similar to the MST program discussed earlier in this report. Those responsible for this program work with foster parents, biological parents, and with the young people themselves. An important component of this program is the role played by a community liaison worker who coordinates the different people and agencies involved with each young person (Surgeon General, 2001). Compared with a control group, participants in this project were less likely to use hard drugs, were only one-third as likely to run away from their programs, and had 60% fewer arrests in the 12 months following the program (Chamberlain & Mihalic, 1998).

Several studies have focused on prenatal and perinatal parenting. Although delinquency was not used as an outcome measure in most of these studies, the research did show that some of the programs reduced risk factors, so they at least have a potential impact on delinquency. In the best known of these studies, Olds et al. (1997, 1998) studied the effect of a home visit program in Rochester, New York. Nurses made home visits every two weeks to a treatment group of mothers who had one or more of the following problems: young age, single-parent status, or low socio-economic status. Families were randomly assigned to treatment or control groups. One treatment group received prenatal care home visits and postnatal transportation for care; a second treatment group received biweekly visits until the child was 2 years of age. The program was very comprehensive and dealt with a variety of health and social issues including trying to involve the mothers' friends and relatives and to refer families to medical and social service agencies.

A 46-month follow-up demonstrated that the home visits had an impact on a wide range of outcomes. The visited mothers were less likely to punish their children, had fewer hospital emergency visits, and had fewer episodes of child maltreatment than the control mothers. The visited mothers also had better employment records and fewer subsequent pregnancies. A subsequent 15-year follow-up found that the postnatal visit group showed significantly lower levels of neglect and child abuse. The mothers in this group also had fewer subsequent births, lower need for Aid for Dependent Children, and less use of alcohol and illegal drugs (Olds et al., 1997). The program also had a significant impact on the criminal and anti-social behaviour of the children (Olds et al., 1998). The children in the postnatal visitation program had fewer instances of running away, fewer reported criminal violations, arrests[6] and convictions, and lower rates of consumption of cigarettes and alcohol. Parents reported their children had fewer alcohol and drug-related problems than those in the comparison group.

The programs discussed here suggest that it is possible to improve parenting skills and to support parents who may be having a difficult time coping with the simultaneous demands of poverty, isolation, and child-rearing[7]. However, this is not a problem that can be considered apart from other social ills. One cannot separate parenting from other issues related to resources and skills. For example, many persistent delinquents come from single-parent families typically

headed by females. Even if parenting skills could be taught, it can be extremely difficult for a poor parent, acting on her or his own, to effectively manage a household consisting of several children without outside help. Currie (1985) has pointed out that the relationship between broken homes and crime is due to the history of conflict prior to the break, and to the fact that the parent with custody of the children may lack the financial resources and support systems to do an adequate job of child rearing. Thus family problems may be caused outside the family and may be amenable to change if support programs are provided. In a similar vein, Wilson (1982) has concluded that poor supervision on the part of parents is a result of chronic stress, unemployment, disabilities, and poverty. Thus the ineffectiveness of parents who do not properly supervise their children may itself be a result of the parents' social situation. Programs such as Big Brothers, Big Sisters have demonstrated that they can be successful in providing extra support for single parents. An evaluation of the Big Brothers, Big Sisters Program showed that young people who had been in the program for 18 months were less likely to use drugs and alcohol or to hit someone, and had better relationships with parents, peers, and their schools than young people in the control group (McGill, Mihalic, & Grotpeter, 1998).

Research by Furstenberg (1993) has added a new dimension to the relationship between parenting and crime. He observed that in our society parenting is viewed as a very private matter. However, his work showed that conditions outside the family interact with parental competence in that where parents live affects how they manage their children. Neighbourhood characteristics such as the availability of resources, the extensiveness of social networks, and social trust all affect the support parents receive. If neighbourhood supports are weak, parents must be highly effective if they are to raise their children successfully. Sampson (1995) also found the importance of a network of families in collectively contributing to the supervision of the community's children. He feels these networks are a form of social capital that contributes to the effective socialization of children. This work suggests that in addition to teaching parenting skills to high-risk families, it is also important to rebuild the neighbourhood social institutions that support families. It is likely that changes in housing and neighbourhood structures will also have an impact on social development factors such as families, education, and employment. Strong communities help their members in many different ways.

The research also speaks to the need for strengthening the family economically. Employment and upgrading training for those who are unemployed or underemployed is a necessary step. Single-parent families and those families in which both parents work, require adequate day care and flexible work schedules. Single mothers, whether employed or at home, may benefit from support programs where they can get child care and counselling. Programs such as communal kitchens, which offer contacts outside the home, can help to break down the isolation that is often a problem for poor single parents, as well as helping with nutrition. Economic problems can also be alleviated if provinces more aggressively pursue maintenance and child support orders against husbands who attempt to avoid paying.

The evidence suggests that it may be possible to improve parenting skills and to support parents who are having a difficult time coping with the simultaneous demands of poverty, isolation, and child rearing. While the research supporting most social development programs, including parenting programs, is limited it does suggest that carefully designed programs do have

great potential. However, the research does tell us clearly that unless these interventions are substantial in nature and continued over time, there is no chance they will be effective[8].

Programs to Improve Educational Adjustment and Outcomes

Like the family, the school plays a major role in socializing young people and is an important predictor of delinquency. The school is a pervasive influence in a child's life. For most of the year, children spend all day in classes and often return to the school after classes to participate in sports and social activities. More importantly, the school is an arena in which a child's performance is constantly being judged. Those who are successful are given prestige by teachers, parents, and other adults, as well as by many of their classmates. Those who do well in school and who enjoy their educational experience are less likely to be involved in delinquency while those who fail and who dislike school are more likely to be involved in delinquency. The correlation between school failure and delinquency is relatively strong and has been replicated in Canada (Gomme, 1985; Kupfer, 1966), Britain (Hargreaves, 1967), and the United States (Hirschi, 1969; Polk & Schafer, 1972). The school has an impact on delinquency in two distinct, but related ways. First, the school is one of the major factors that determine an individual's future social and economic position. Second, the school affects the daily life of the child. For some, the school experience is interesting, pleasant, and enriching. For others, it is irrelevant, degrading, and humiliating. Those who have bad school experiences may react by getting into trouble both inside and outside the school setting.

There are a number of ways in which the school can help to reduce delinquency. There is some evidence that teacher style can play a role in provoking deviance or in obtaining cooperation, and that schools which allow pupils to participate in decision-making will be more successful (Rutter & Giller, 1984). The curriculum and the way it is taught may also make a difference in school performance and delinquency. Weis and Hawkins (1979) have recommended that schools make greater use of such programs as performance-based education, which involves establishing learning goals for each student and developing individual programs with rewards for improvement. They also suggest the use of cross-age tutoring and other ways of involving students in the operation of the school, thus enhancing their level of commitment.

Preschool Programs

Recent research tracking subjects from childhood to adolescence has shown the importance of early childhood intervention in reducing delinquency. Tremblay (2000) has summarized these findings:

> Children who fail to learn alternatives to physical aggression during the preschool years are at very high risk of a huge number of problems. They tend to be hyperactive, inattentive, anxious, and fail to help when others are in need; they are rejected by the majority of their classmates; they get poor grades; and their behaviour disrupts school activities. They are thus swiftly taken out of their "natural" peer group and placed in special classes, special schools and institutions with other "deviants", the ideal situation to reinforce marginal behaviour. They are among the most delinquent from pre-adolescence onward, ... the most

at risk of dropping out of school ... being violent offenders ... [and] being charged under the Young Offenders' Act. (p. 23)

One area that appears to have great potential to reduce crime and delinquency is that of preschool programs for children from deprived backgrounds[9]. One of the few programs that has undergone a long-term evaluation is a Michigan program called the Perry Preschool Project. The students were 123 African-American children from poor families. At ages 3 and 4 the children in the program attended a preschool with an active learning curriculum five mornings a week and teachers visited the children's homes once a week. The program lasted 30 weeks each year. A control group did not receive these services.

The most recent follow-up of the Perry Preschool Project looked at the participants at age 40 (Schweinhart et al., 2005). Far fewer of the program participants than controls had been arrested five or more times (36% versus 55%) and had less than half the arrest rate for drug offences (14% versus 34%). The program group had higher incomes, were more likely to own their own homes, and were less likely to have been on welfare. They had greater educational achievement and lower rates of illiteracy. Program group members were more likely to have had stable marriages and females had lower rates of out-of-wedlock births. The costs of the program were more than recovered because of gains in reduced welfare costs and increased earnings of the graduates. Schweinhart et al. (2005) estimate that the saving was over $17 for every dollar invested in the program[10]. The researchers responsible for this program suggest that the intervention must be made while the children are young, and must be thorough enough to overcome the range of disadvantages faced by the participants. One very important factor in the success of the program was the fact that it combined education with training and support for the family. Thus the work done in school was reinforced in the home. Several other programs combining these two services also had positive effects (Lally, Mangione, & Honig, 1988; Seitz & Apfel, 1994; and Johnson & Walker, 1987).

Tremblay and Craig (1995) reviewed the results of 13 educational prevention experiments with delinquency outcomes (including the Perry Preschool study). While most were school- or daycare-based, they typically also involved intervention with parents outside the school setting. Half the studies showed a beneficial impact on delinquency. The success rate was highest for programs for pre-adolescents, with five of the seven programs having lower delinquency rates for program youth than for controls. The successful programs were of long duration – from six months to five years – and involved intense interventions aimed at children, parents, and teachers.

Programs for Older Children

One of the most common responses to the problems of children and youth is to establish in-school programs to educate students about the nature and consequences of their problem behaviour. Unfortunately, there is little evidence that these educational programs have any positive impact. For example, DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) is the most widely used drug prevention program in schools across North America. However, research has shown that DARE has had no impact on drug use (Surgeon General, 2001; West & O'Neal, 2004).

After several years of resisting these findings, the DARE organization is currently evaluating a new DARE program that has taken into account some of the criticisms (www.D.A.R.E.com).

As Tremblay and Craig (1995) have observed, the evidence shows that preschool programs have been more effective than school-based programs for older children. There is some evidence that alternative classes or schools might be better for high-risk older children. A major review of crime prevention programs conducted for the United States Congress (Sherman et al., 1997) concluded that the following types of programs had an impact on delinquency: (a) programs that build school capacity to initiate and to sustain innovation; (b) programs that effectively communicate appropriate behavioural norms; and (c) programs that teach social competency skills such as problem solving, communication skills, and decision-making. Outside the immediate school environment, mentoring programs have also shown some success (Sherman et al., 1997). School-based peer programs such as peer counselling and peer mediation have been found to be ineffective at reducing youth violence and other risk factors. However, cross-age tutoring programs in which older children tutor younger ones have led to academic gains for both groups (Surgeon General, 2001).

As with parenting programs, evaluations of school-based programs show that multi-faceted programs are the most likely to be effective. For example, work continues on the implementation and evaluation of three school-based programs designed for young people aged 6 to 12. These were the Success for All Program, the Fast Track Project, and the Seattle Social Development Project (Howell & Hawkins, 1998).

The Success for All curriculum is enriched in many ways and special help is quickly provided to children who are having difficulties (www.successforall.net). There is also a family support team consisting of a variety of helping professionals who work with the parents to teach them to support the efforts of the school and who provide support to children and to families. Program evaluations showed the program was successful in improving academic achievement (Borman & Hewes, 2001). While no conduct measures were reported, this improved academic achievement may have an impact on delinquency.

The Fast Track Project (www.fasttrackproject.org) is designed to serve high-risk children in high-crime communities. Like the other successful intervention programs, the Fast Track Project is multi-faceted. Teachers try to improve thinking processes and emotional and problem solving skills; parents are trained to reinforce the lessons from the school and to better manage their children's behaviour; and positive peers are involved in social and academic activities. The intervention was very intensive and continued for five years. Research summarized on the project website indicates that:

> Significant progress was made toward the goal of improving competencies of the children receiving intervention services and their parents. Compared to the control group, the intervention children improved their social-cognitive and academic skills, and their parents reduced their use of harsh discipline. These group differences also were reflected in behavioral improvements during the elementary school years and beyond. Compared with children in the control group, children in the intervention group displayed significantly less

aggressive behavior at home, in the classroom, and on the playground. By the end of third grade, 37 percent of the intervention group had become free of conduct problems, in contrast with 27 percent of the control group. By the end of elementary school, 33 percent of the intervention group had a developmental trajectory of decreasing conduct problems, as compared with 27 percent of the control group. Furthermore, placement in special education by the end of elementary school was about one-fourth lower in the intervention group than in the control group (Fast Track, 2010).

This improvement continued into adolescence. By the eighth grade there were modestly favourable differences between participants and controls in arrest rates and substantial differences in serious conduct disorders.

The Seattle Social Development Project (http://depts.washington.edu/ssdp) is also a school-based program with several components. These include training teachers in classroom management and effective instruction, helping children to develop a variety of learning and coping skills, and training parents in behaviour management and academic support (Howell & Hawkins, 1998). The program has been evaluated since the early 1980s. Positive long-term outcomes include: reducing anti-social behaviour including drug abuse; improving academic skills, attachment to school, and school behaviour; and increasing bonding to conventional others.

Finally, the Quantum Opportunities Program is a program for older students. The program encourages disadvantaged young people to complete high school and to go on to post-secondary education. The Quantum program is very intensive, involving 750 hours per year over a four-year period. Program activities include tutoring, computer skills training, life skills training, and community service. Participants received a small hourly stipend for their time and some financial support for post-secondary education. The program had very positive educational outcomes and male controls had six times more convictions than program participants (Lattimore, Mihalic, Grotpeter, & Taggart, 1998). A subsequent evaluation was not nearly as positive and showed no impact on crime. In fact, program participants had higher rates of drinking and drug use than controls[11] (Maxfield, Schirm, & Rodriquez-Planas, 2003). However, the evaluators found that the replication sites did not implement the program as intensively as had been done in the pilot program. Because of the potential of the program, the Eisenhower Foundation has funded another replication. While the implementation is not yet complete, initial results are once again quite positive (Eisenhower Foundation, 2006).

As with parenting, there is an obvious connection between education and broader community issues. The community finances the education system and instills general attitudes about the role and value of education that affect students' attitudes toward learning. The schools also rely on the community to reinforce the lessons and values they teach. For example, housing policy can be a critical factor in education, as unstable housing can be very detrimental to learning. In the inner city Winnipeg School Division, 22% of students changed schools at least once during the 1994-95 year. One school had a 44% turnover among its 500 students. This obviously makes the classroom situation very difficult for students and teachers and can also be emotionally trying for students who are constantly losing friends, trying to fit into a new

environment, and struggling to catch up with the disrupted studies. Housing and foster parenting policies that reduce this turnover can be beneficial to children and the community in many ways, including reductions in crime.

Employment

While research clearly shows that positive experiences at home and in school reduce the likelihood of delinquency, the link between employment and crime is less clear. For example, there is no consistent pattern in the relationship between employment rates and crime rates. That is, an increase in the rate of unemployment does not necessarily translate into a corresponding increase (or decrease) in the crime rate. Further, the evidence indicates that having a job does not constrain high-risk offenders from committing criminal acts. In his review of the research concerning the relationship between crime and employment, Currie (1985) concludes that, "...it is not just the fact of having or not having a job that is most important, nor is the level of crime most strongly or consistently affected by fluctuations in the national unemployment rate. The more consistent influence is the *quality* of work – its stability, its level of pay, its capacity to give the worker a sense of dignity and participation..." (p. 116).

Even this conclusion is based on very limited research, as it is very difficult to isolate the effects of employment on behaviour. By the time they get to the age of employment, many high-risk youth have already had serious criminal involvement, and behaviour patterns have been established which can be very difficult to end. If a youth has a lengthy record of serious offences, a limited education, and poor work habits, it is difficult to find anyone willing to give him or her the kind of meaningful work described by Currie. However, it does seem apparent that the short-run training and job placement programs, which are most commonly used, are ineffective (McGahey & Jeffries, 1985).

While the research correlating crime with unemployment rates and looking at the impact of jobs on an individual's involvement in crime are not conclusive, there is substantial evidence that inequality is related to crime. A number of researchers have documented the fact that serious violent crime is correlated with the inequality of income in a city. Further, there is also evidence that serious crime is most likely to be committed by those at the bottom of the social class ladder and that crime rates are highest in neighbourhoods with high unemployment (McGahey, 1986). Economic inequality is also linked with racial inequality – the overrepresentation of Aboriginal people in the Canadian criminal justice system is due both to their position at the bottom of the class system and to the history of racism that is a major cause of their poverty.

The policy implications of the research on the economic correlates of crime are simple to state, but difficult to implement. The research tells us to reduce the inequality of incomes, to minimize the effects of racism, and to provide meaningful and stable jobs for as many people as possible. These are difficult tasks in a world where most new jobs are in the service industry and where global competition puts pressure on companies to reduce wages and to keep the labour force as small as possible.

One large-scale study has examined the impact of the provision of employment assistance

to disadvantaged young people. The U.S. Job Corps Program is a national program for disadvantaged young people between the ages of 16 and 24. It is a residential program that offers a broad range of training in academic, vocational, and life skills as well as transition and job placement assistance after graduation. In addition to its other benefits, including increased employment and earnings compared with control groups, the Job Corps Program also had an impact on crime. The evaluators found that there were 100 fewer arrests per 1,000 participants in the program and that program participants were also less likely themselves to be victimized by crime (McConnell & Glazerman, 2001).

Recreation

While many people assume that recreation programs will prevent crime, there is surprisingly little evidence supporting this belief. In fact, a U.S. Congressional review pointed out that recreation programs may actually increase criminality if high-risk youth are allowed to mix with low-risk youth without a strong intervention to establish positive group norms (Sherman et al., 1997). Regular supervision may help some high-risk young people, but children most in need of help are also the most unlikely to choose to participate in these programs.

The limited research that is available does suggest that recreational programs will not be effective unless they are very intensive. That is, a program that involves young people for an hour or two a week will not be effective. There is some evidence that programs such as Outward Bound, which allow youth to test themselves in a wilderness setting, may help. In Manitoba, the summer fly-in sports camps run by University of Manitoba physical education students on reserves in Northern Manitoba showed significant declines in crime rates compared with reserves that did not have the programs (Murray, 1993). This program involved very intensive recreation activities that were run over an entire summer. Finally, the Congressional review found that after-school recreation programs operating in high-crime areas by community-based organizations such as Boys and Girls Clubs may have a positive impact on crime, but here again the intervention must be substantial if it is to have any effect (Sherman et al., 1997).

An Ottawa study also provides evidence that properly run recreation programs can have an impact. For almost three years, low-income children 5 to 15 years of age living in a public housing project took part in an intensive after-school program that offered sports, music, dancing, and scouting. The children were compared with young people in another public housing project with minimal services. Arrests in the program site declined by 75% compared with the two years prior to the program while they rose by 67% in the comparison site. However, within 16 months after the program ended, these positive effects had worn off (Jones & Offord, 1989, as cited in Howell, 1995, p. 95).

Another program that shows the benefits of recreational programming is Britain's Youth Inclusion Program, which uses recreation as one element of a more comprehensive intervention (Morgan Harris Burrows, 2003). This program was implemented in 70 of the most deprived communities in England and Wales. Program staff identified the "top 50" young people in each neighbourhood based on a risk assessment process and asked them and their parents to become involved in the program. Other young people who were not assessed as being in the "top 50"

were also allowed to participate in the program. On average, the "top 50" were involved in 10 hours of activities per week. The most common activity was sports, but young people were also involved in many other things including mentoring, family projects, education and training, health and drug education, arts and cultural activities, and environmental activities. While the evaluation did not include a control group, the results were quite promising. Arrest rates dropped by 65% for the "top 50" young people who stayed actively involved with the program compared with a drop of 44% for those identified as being in the "top 50" who were not engaged in the program. The offences for which program participants were arrested were less serious than the offences they committed prior to the program.

Neighbourhood Revitalization

In their discussion of the Merrill neighbourhood in Beloit, Wisconsin, Weisel and Harrell (1996) have drawn a poignant picture of a community in decline:

In this all-too-common story, areas once home to stable families, manifesting the vibrant spirit of community associated with the traditional American neighborhood, enter a downward spiral of decay typified by declining housing stock, the frequent abandonment of dwellings, or a proliferation of properties allowed by absentee landlords to deteriorate and become overgrown with weeds. These neighborhoods gradually begin to show other signs of neglect, such as trash and litter, abandoned cars, and gang graffiti defacing walls.

Most conspicuous in such communities is the absence of normal neighborhood activity: There are no children on the playgrounds and no older people sitting on their porches. Instead, seemingly ubiquitous groups of young men congregate idly on street corners. Taken together, these components too often constitute the visible indicators of rising crime and fear. (p. 18)

The connection between the social condition of a neighbourhood and crime was drawn decades ago by researchers such as Shaw and McKay (1942) who attributed the high rates of crime in slum communities to the failure of neighbourhood institutions including families, schools, and churches, to provide adequate social controls. Shaw and McKay established the Chicago Area Project to assist local residents to work together to improve the manner in which their communities were organized. A number of more recent attempts at crime reduction have followed this tradition. Most notably, in Britain the National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NACRO) used a community development approach to deal with crime on housing estates in England and Wales. NACRO contended that "crime reduction flows from the structure and communality that are injected into run-down housing estates; on a well-managed estate with a stable population, there is likely to be a degree of neighbourliness conducive to good neighbour relations. It is argued by many that the gradual development of neighbourly behaviour and informal networks of support among tenants is the most effective deterrent of anti-social behaviour" (Safe Neighbourhoods Unit, 1993, p. 86).

Typical of the work sponsored by NACRO was the Bushbury Triangle Project in Wolverhampton. The project involved a modernization program, improvements in home

security, new fencing, and a variety of community activities run by the residents from a newly designated community house. During the modernization, it became apparent that behaviour on the estate was not improving. Planners realized that the project needed more consultation with the residents so they would develop a sense of ownership of the improvements. To facilitate this ownership, part of the estate – the Triangle – was designated as a separate community and physical changes were made that encouraged pedestrian circulation within this area. These changes appeared to make a substantial difference. Crimes reported to the police dropped by one-third compared with other parts of the estate which had been modernized but which lacked the community component. Victim surveys showed substantial reductions in crime, and crime fear declined by 50%. These findings were also supported by the community response in meetings with small groups of residents and by interviews with officials of various local social agencies.

Another example of neighbourhood change comes from the work of Oscar Newman (1992). Crime had increased dramatically during the 1980s in the Dayton, Ohio neighbourhood of Five Oaks. Five Oaks is a formerly middle-class neighbourhood which had become a favourite commercial location for drug dealers and prostitutes. In 1991 Oscar Newman was hired to help develop a plan to reduce these problems. A planning team, working in consultation with the community and with civic officials, came up with the idea of using street closures and other design changes to divide the area into ten mini-neighbourhoods. Each had three to six streets that could only be accessed through one entry portal; other entrances were blocked by iron gates that could be unlocked for emergency access. Pedestrian access was not affected. Internal streets were redesigned into culs-de-sac. This redesign was intended to make access more difficult for criminals and also to encourage residents to make more use of the area. Other elements involved police cooperation with the community and aggressive action against the prostitutes and dealers, better enforcement of building code regulations (because many houses had been illegally converted to multiple family rental units), and a city program to encourage residents to own their own homes. The impact of these changes was dramatic. Over a one-year period violent crime dropped by 50%, non-violent crime dropped by 24%, traffic accidents dropped by 40%, and house prices increased by 15%. Residents liked the changes and many noted that resident involvement in the community had increased.

We should not see redesign as a panacea, particularly for very deteriorated, high-crime areas. It may be most useful in neighbourhoods such as Five Oaks which still have some sense of community, high percentages of strong families and home ownership higher than in the city core, and which have the potential to be turned around relatively quickly. One key factor in projects such as Five Oaks is that they involve a rapid and major change, which can help convince residents that their efforts to improve their neighbourhoods are supported and which can help motivate their further efforts

Conclusions

The papers in this issue clearly show that it is not easy to prevent crime. Delinquency and crime do not have simple causes and hence cannot have simple solutions. Put another way, if crime is a result of an interrelationship of the individual with his or her family, school, peer group, and neighbourhood and is influenced by larger forces such as the global economy, then a

midnight basketball program (or amendments to the Youth Criminal Justice Act) will not be sufficient to eliminate it.

This paper has provided some information about the causes of crime and about some of the things that might reduce it. Even though this information is quite accessible, crime prevention programs are rarely based upon evidence that they will have an impact on delinquency and crime. Those responsible for criminal justice policy are reluctant to heed the lessons that we have learned over the years about crime prevention and that must be applied if we want to be successful:

Lesson 1.   Puny interventions will not work. Reducing crime is not easy and it is naïve to believe that underfunded and understaffed prevention programs will have any impact. Evaluation of the multi-site U.S. Weed and Seed Program found that the most successful programs were those that targeted their resources on a limited number of people in a small part of the community (Dunworth & Mills, 1999). A British study looked at 21 burglary prevention programs and found that the more intense the intervention, the more likely it was to have succeeded (Bowers, Johnson, & Hirschfield, 2004).

   Corollary 1.   Social development programs should deal with more than one part of the young person's environment. The most successful education programs had a component that involved the child's family.

   Corollary 2.   Since money is always limited, the best strategy will involve major interventions in small, carefully targeted areas. Interventions are more likely to be successful if they are targeted directly at children and parents rather than at changing community institutions. Thus programs that foster community empowerment or other process goals will not necessarily have any impact on children in that community (Beauvais & Jenson, 2003).

Lesson 2.   Short-term programs won't make a lasting difference. Projects that have had short-term funding usually have short-term futures. In his study of community crime prevention programs in Vancouver, Schneider (2004) found that much of the time of program coordinators was spent on fundraising rather than on developing and implementing programs. One of his respondents reported that, "About 75% of my time is spent on fundraising, not on crime prevention" (p. 167). There is no evidence suggesting that underfunded, short-term programs will be successful in reducing crime.

Lesson 3.   Programs should not be implemented unless there is a reasonable body of evidence suggesting that they are likely to be effective. This should not preclude innovative programs as long as there is a rationale as to why they should be successful. However, these innovative programs should be evaluated.

Lesson 4.   We should not be doctrinaire about what kinds of programs to adopt. Those

wishing to prevent crime must look at all types of programs. There are several reasons why a wide range of options should be considered:

1. Evaluations have shown that a wide variety of programs have been successful in preventing crime. To give just one example, the situational tactic of Caller ID is a much more effective way of quickly reducing the problem of obscene phone calls than any type of social development program.
2. Communities that have high crime rates have a broad range of needs. Any single strategy is quite likely to be swamped by the other things that are taking place in the community.
3. Different types of strategies operate over different time frames. While social development programs are extremely important, they can take years to have an impact on crime rates. People who are afraid to go outside after dark are not going to be satisfied with a prenatal program that might make them safer in 14 years.

On the other hand, situational strategies will not be nearly as effective if nothing is done to reduce the number of motivated offenders. Thus communities should try to use a combination of strategies that have both short-term and long-term outcomes. An example of this kind of programming is the U.S. Weed and Seed Program that combines social development programs with intensive, targeted work by the community and the police to deal with immediate problems.

What should communities do if they wish to make a serious effort to reduce crime? First, they must diagnose their community's problems and try to fix them with solutions that have been demonstrated to be effective. How would we view the competence of a doctor who treated us without finding out the nature of our problem? Would it be appropriate for a doctor to prescribe a particular treatment without any diagnosis because "everybody else was doing it, or because the government would fund it, or because the pharmaceutical representatives said it was good"? Second, we must take a comprehensive approach to crime prevention. This means that if a community is trying to work with young people, they must address as many facets of their lives as possible. The most successful early intervention programs, such as the Perry Preschool Project, deal with the children's families as well as with an enriched school program because the family plays such a critical role in reinforcing the school's lessons. The comprehensive approach also means using as many different types of programs as possible. Auto theft is best addressed by a combination of situational techniques such as mandatory immobilizers, social development programs targeted at youth, efforts by police to shut down chop shops, and inspection by customs to prevent the export of stolen vehicles (Linden & Chaturvedi, 2005).

Finally, most crime prevention efforts are under-resourced and many are funded for short periods of time rather than simply being a part of the way in which communities conduct their affairs. These "puny" interventions are a waste of time and money and have virtually no chance of success. If reducing crime were a simple task, Canada would have become crime-free many years ago.

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Endnotes

[1] Other reasons include such things as failure to target programs properly, failure to implement programs, and failure to evaluate programs.

[2] A notable example is the DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) Program which will be discussed later in this paper. Research on DARE showed that the program had no impact on adolescent drug use, but this research was attacked by the program's proponents and tens of millions of dollars continued to be spent on the program each year.

[3] Although Clarke (1995) has suggested a number of situational prevention programs targeted at violent crimes. These include preventing the congregation of people in small areas at pub closing time; controlling items such as guns and knives and substances such as alcohol that facilitate crime; using Caller ID to reduce obscene phone calls; and providing personal alarms to domestic violence victims.

[4] Some researchers disagree with Kelling and Sousa (e.g., Rosenfield, Fornango, & Baumer, 2005).

[5] This is not to say that working with future mothers will not reduce the incidence of FAS/FAE. Here I am referring to children who already suffer from FAS/FAE which is not reversible.

[6] According to Farrington and Welsh (2003), "At the age of 15, children of the higher risk mothers who received the program incurred fewer arrests than their control counterparts (20 as opposed to 45 per 100 children)" (p. 136).

[7] While this study was successful, Bernazzani, Côté, & Tremblay (2001) reviewed several other studies in this area that were less successful. Their conclusion is that more research is required before we can conclude that parent training programs will reduce delinquency.

[8] For example, Latimer (2001) has shown that while family intervention treatment did help to reduce the recidivism of young offenders, the effect was inversely related to the power of the evaluation. That is, the more rigorous the research design, the less likely programs were to show positive effects.

[9] Five daycare/preschool programs met the criteria for inclusion in the Farrington and Welsh meta-analysis. Four of these programs reported successful interventions (Farrington & Welsh, 2003).

[10] An earlier evaluation of the Perry Preschool Project was the source of the often-made claim that "research shows every dollar spent on crime prevention will save seven dollars". This claim should be limited to this particular program because many crime prevention programs do not save any money and others may be more or less cost-effective than the Perry Preschool Project.

[11] The evaluators suggest this may have been the result of under-reporting of drug and alcohol use by controls.