Day Reporting Centers for Reducing Recidivism: A Systematic Review

The day reporting center (DRC) model emerged in Great Britain in the late 1960s, and was first seen in the US a couple of decades later, in the mid-1980s (Boyle, Ragusa, Lanterman, & Marcus, 2011; Craddock, 2000). Its arrival coincided with a wave of interest in alternative to incarceration programs that might help limit the costs of jail and prison and reduce overcrowding, while maintaining public safety. DRCs are non-residential facilities that provide offenders with supervision and forms of rehabilitative programming (Boyle et al., 2011). Offenders participating in DRC programs typically reside at home and report to the DRC on a regular schedule, which can be a couple of times per week or several times per day (Diggs & Pieper, 1994). They provide a higher level of supervision compared to probation and parole (more frequent contacts between offenders and supervisors) while being less restrictive than traditional imprisonment. Rehabilitative components may include cognitive-behavioral therapies, substance abuse treatment, life skills training, education classes, or community referrals.

Notwithstanding commonalities, DRC programs vary considerably. They differ according to the types of offenders serviced, the duration of offenders' involvement in the program (see Craddock, 2000; Jones & Lacey, 1999), the frequency of reporting required (Craddock, 2000) and the treatment and services offered. This variety is evident across studies of different DRCs. Thus Boyle et al. (2011) describe a set of DRC programs in New Jersey targeting parolees at risk of revocation because of technical violations of supervision. The program involves an
initial 90 day term, which may be extended, and offer a variety of services, with an
emphasis on vocational training and readiness. In a different example, Champion,
Harvey and Sanz (2011) describe a DRC program targeting habitual non-violent
offenders on probation supervision with services to address substance abuse
problems and a lack of basic living skills. Meanwhile, Jones and Lacey (1999)
examined DRC programs in Maricopa County, AZ targeting adult felony DWI
offenders.

These studies and others have sought to assess the effects of DRCs on
offending outcomes. While there are few randomized control trials of DRCs, there is
at least one: Boyle et al., 2011’s study of DRCs catering for New Jersey parolees.
There are also a number of quasi-experimental studies that appear to use
credible comparison groups and/or appropriate statistical controls to assure a level
of internal validity (e.g. Champion, Harvey, & Schanz, 2011; Jones & Lacey, 1999;
Ostermann, 2009; Solomon, 2008). For example, Solomon (2008) compared
defendants sentenced to a “day custody program” in Manhattan, New York, with a
control group of comparable cases from a pre-program period, while Craddock
(2000) compares probationers in Wisconsin attending a DRC with a similar group
who would have been eligible, but did not participate.

The systematic review will focus on adult and juvenile offenders sentenced
to attend a day reporting program. In practice, this will incorporate a range of
offender types contingent upon the local context of the DRC program (Diggs &
Pieper, 1994; Parent, 1990; also see Jones & Lacey, 1999; Martin, 2003; Solomon,
2008). Generally speaking, most DRC programs do not service violent or sex
offenders. However, participants range through pretrial releases, violators of
probation or parole, probationers, work releases, furloughs, those who have maxed
out their sentence and are on mandatory supervision, early-releases close to parole
eligibility, and those released due to overcrowding emergencies (McDevitt &

Outcome measures will focus on recidivism indicators (including measures
of rearrest, reconviction, reincarceration) for two time periods. The first will focus
on recidivism outcomes during the period of the program, in particular to assess
evidence for a short-term suppression effect. The second will focus on the long-term
recidivism outcomes of DRC participants during and beyond the end of program
participation, to assess longer-term rehabilitative effects of DRC programs. Studies
vary in the length of time they follow-up on recidivism post-DRC completion (see
Marion, 2002; Martin et al., 2000; Rhyne & Hamblin, 2010).

**OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of this systematic review are (i) to assess the short-term
suppression effects of DRC programs on recidivism while participants are attending
the DRC, and (ii) assess the longer term effects on recidivism during and beyond the
period of participation, indicative of broader rehabilitative impacts.

**METHODOLOGY**

Eligible studies must meet the following requirements: 1) include
comparison groups of offenders sentenced to another type of community
supervision or imprisoned that are plausibly similar to DRC participants, or involve comparison groups and statistical controls that address likely selection biases; 2) report recidivism rates for all study participants; 3) be written in English. Examples of qualified studies include Boyle et al. (2011) who randomly assigned study participants, parolees, into either a DRC or intensive supervision parole condition to compare recidivism rates. They also include studies such as Solomon (2008), Craddock (2000) and Ostermann’s (2009) which use credible comparison groups as a basis for comparison, or comparison groups with appropriate statistical controls. We will search for published and unpublished, experimental and quasi-experimental studies using a combination of database searches, hand searches, and communications with experts in the field. Because of the relative newness of DRC programs, no specific time frame of studies is set. However, in practice the late 1960s is the earliest conceivable point at which evaluation studies of DRCs will be available.

We will use random effects meta-analysis procedure to analyze study effects. If a sufficient number of studies are identified, the review will conduct moderator analysis focused on DRC characteristics and offender characteristics.

**SOURCES OF SUPPORT**

**Internal funding:**
None.

**External funding:**
None.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None

**REQUEST SUPPORT**

No support requested at this time.

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ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Joel Miller will take responsibility for directing the study, including finalizing the protocol strategy, leading the statistical analysis, quality assuring the search and coding process, and writing the final review. Nicole Sachs will take the lead on the literature searches and identifying and coding studies, and will take a substantial role in writing the final review.

PRELIMINARY TIMEFRAME

The draft protocol will be submitted by April 1 2014. A full review will be submitted by April 1 2015.


