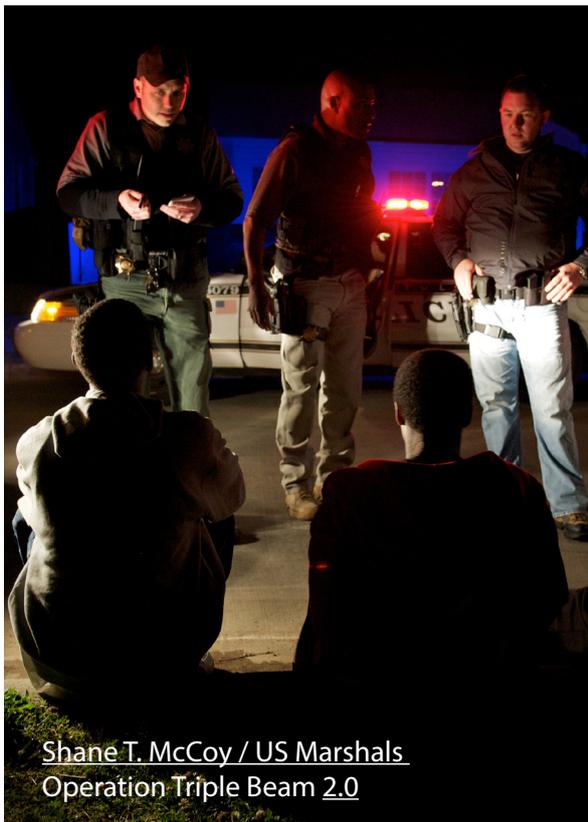


Focused deterrence strategies (“Pulling Levers”) are effective in reducing crime



Shane T. McCoy / US Marshals
Operation Triple Beam 2.0

“Pulling levers” focused deterrence strategies appear to be effective in reducing crime

What is the aim of this review?

This Campbell systematic review assesses the effectiveness of focused deterrence strategies known as “pulling levers” in reducing crime. The review summarises findings from 10 studies, all of which report evidence from programmes in the United States.

Focused deterrence strategies tackle a particular crime problem by applying a varied menu of sanctions (“pulling levers”) as well as focusing social services and community resources on targeted offenders, and communicating with offenders about the attention they are receiving. These strategies have been successful in reducing crime.

What did the review study?

“Pulling levers” focused deterrence strategies are a policing framework to prevent gang, drug market, and individual violence. The approach consists of selecting a particular crime problem, such as gang homicide; convening an interagency working group of law enforcement, social service, and community-based practitioners; conducting research to identify key offenders, groups, and behavior patterns; framing a response to offenders and groups of offenders that uses a varied menu of sanctions (“pulling levers”) to stop them from continuing their violent behavior; focusing social services and community resources on targeted offenders and groups to match law enforcement prevention efforts; and directly and repeatedly communicating with offenders to make them understand why they are receiving this special attention.

This policing framework has been applied in a number of American cities.

What studies are included?

Included studies tested programs which had the core elements of a pulling levers focused deterrence strategy, using a comparison group to test the effect on crime outcomes.

Ten studies were included which examined pulling levers focused deterrence interventions implemented in small, medium, and large U.S. cities.



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How up-to-date is this review?

The review authors searched for studies published until September 2010. This Campbell Systematic Review was published in April 2012.

What is the Campbell Collaboration?

The Campbell Collaboration is an international, voluntary, non-profit research network that publishes systematic reviews. We summarise and evaluate the quality of evidence about programmes in the social and behavioural sciences. We help people make better choices and better policy decisions.

About this summary

This summary was prepared by Ada Chukwudozie and Howard White (Campbell Collaboration) based on the Campbell Systematic Review 2012:6 'The Effects of "Pulling Levers" Focused Deterrence Strategies on Crime by Anthony A. Braga and David L. Weisburd (DOI 10.4073/csr.2012.6). The summary was designed, edited and produced by Tanya Kristiansen (Campbell Collaboration). Financial support from the American Institutes for Research for the production of this summary is gratefully acknowledged.



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What are the main results in this review?

Pulling levers focused deterrence strategies are associated with a medium-sized crime reduction effect. Nine out of ten studies reported a statistically significant positive effect. There is a strongly significant medium size effect average effect across all studies.

Gang or group intervention programs had the largest effect

Gang or group intervention programs had the largest effect, followed by the drug market intervention programs, with the smallest - but still statistically significant - effect for the high-risk individuals programs.

All included studies use non-randomized experimental designs, which have a risk of over-stating impact. However, the effect size is large enough to have reasonable confidence in the effectiveness of these programmes.

What do the findings in this review mean?

Pulling levers focused deterrence strategies appear to be effective in reducing crime.

However, it is recommended to conduct more rigorous randomised controlled trials to test the effectiveness of these programmes.