Juvenile Recidivism Rates

Logan Stump & April N. Terry
## Fort Hays State University

Introduction

Juvenile crime peaked in the 1990s and has been on a downward decline since that time. However, youth remain overly represented in various stages of the juvenile and criminal legal systems. This poster outlines known criminogenic and non-criminogenic risk factors that influence juvenile offending. These risk factors have been identified in decades of correctional research and are reflected within many validated risk assessment instruments. The most widely used actuarial risk assessments will be outlined to demonstrate their effectiveness in predicting future offending behavior in youth. Lastly, based on known factors, this poster offers primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention and intervention suggestions for reducing juvenile offending and subsequent juvenile and criminal legal system involvement.

Juvenile Risk Factors

"Central Eight" Criminogenic Risk Factors
- The Central Eight risk factors help predict which youth will be most likely to engage in repeat offending; risk is increased as factors are combined (Goodley et al., 2022).
- History of antisocial behavior
- Antisocial attitudes
- Antisocial personality pattern
- Antisocial peers

→ **"Big Four" predictors**

- Family factors
- Lack of achievement in education
- Lack of prosocial leisure activities
- Substance abuse
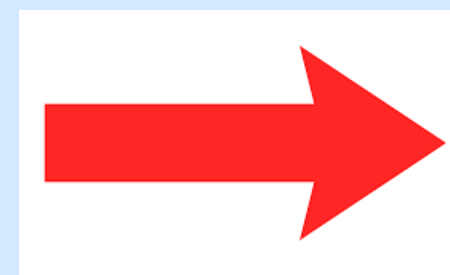
Non-criminogenic Risk Factors
- Non-criminogenic risk factors may also influence future risk for offending although they are not top predictors—these factors should help identify treatment needs (Turner et al., 2021).
- Mental health
- Medical needs
- Learning disabilities
- Self-esteem

Protective Factors
- Protective factors serve as positive supports that may help prevent a pathway into the justice system while also helping youth already involved in this system (Barnert et al., 2015).
- Academic aptitude
- Self-efficacy
- Peer social support
- Coping strategies

Risk Assessments

Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) Model
- The RNR-model assesses one's risk to reoffend while then matching that level of risk to the amount of treatment to help reduce future offending (e.g., high-risk means high-level of treatment) (Bonta, 2023).
- Treatment should target specific dynamic risk factors—those factors that can change with appropriate intervention (e.g., antisocial attitudes) (Bonta, 2023).
- Targeting dynamic risk factors works best by means of cognitive-behavioral treatment (Bonta, 2023).

Youth Assessment and Screening Instrument (YASI)
- The YASI is a predictive tool able to identify youth who are likely to engage in both general and violent crimes (Jones et al., 2016).
- This tool screens for risks as well as strengths—this combined scoring approach helps identify ways to reduce future risk (Jones et al., 2016).

Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (YLS/CMI)
- The YLS/CMI is based on 42 scored items broken down into the "Central Eight" domains (Campbell et al., 2018).
- An overall score of low, moderate, high, and very high is offered, and used to predict youth reoffending (Campbell et al., 2018).
- Just as the RNR-model suggests, this tool identifies risks to then be matched to appropriate levels of treatment needs.

Ohio Youth Assessment System (OYAS)
- The OYAS is similar to the YLS/CMI, having 32 scored items and a final score ranging from low to high-risk (Papp et al., 2020).
- One unique difference in the OYAS compared to other youth risk assessments is that it provides different overall cut-off scores for girls and boys (Papp et al., 2020).

Prevention and Intervention Suggestions

Evidence-based Practices
- The "What Works" literature has identified programs that are consistently effective in reducing future offending (Latessa et al., 2020).
- This literature has identified that programs that offer cognitive-behavioral therapy are the most effective (Latessa et al., 2020).
- Examples of evidence-based programs include Moral Reconation Therapy while options like boot camps are ineffective (MacKenzie, 2006).

Primary Prevention Programs
- Primary prevention efforts seek to prevent delinquency and offending before it begins.
- A primary prevention approach should include early identification of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) (abuse, neglect, and household dysfunction) as ACEs influence system involvement (Campbell, 2020).

Secondary Prevention Programs
- Secondary prevention efforts focus on intervening with youth who are at-risk for offending.
- A restorative justice approach aims to prevent future issues by maintaining a youth's community supports while also reducing recidivism (Roadmap for Resilience).

Tertiary Prevention Programs
- Tertiary prevention efforts work to prevent future behaviors for those already within the juvenile justice system.
- Providing treatment-oriented services for a youth's physical and mental health while incarcerated can lower rates of delinquency and improve employment and social functioning (Roadmap for Resilience).

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