

The Drugs-Crime Relationship Research, Policy & Practice

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- **McBride, D.C., VanderWaal, C.J., & Terry-McElrath, Y.T. *The Drugs-Crime Wars: Past, Present and Future Directions, in Theory, Policy and Program Interventions in Toward a Drugs and Crime Research Agenda for the 21st Century*. National Institute of Justice Special Report, Washington D.C., NCJ 194616, September, 2003.**
- **VanderWaal, C.J., McBride, D.C., Terry, Y.M. & VanBuren, A.H. Breaking the Juvenile Drug Crime Cycle: A Guide for Practitioners and Policymakers. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, NCJ 186156. 2001.**

The Nature of the Drugs-Crime Relationship

1. Strong statistical overlap:

- a. High proportion of arrestees are current illegal drug users**
- b. High proportion of those in treatment have extensive history of criminal behavior and involvement in Criminal Justice System**
- c. Criminal Justice System is primary referral source for treatment; majority source for juveniles**
- d. The issue of statistical artifact – we create part of the relationship by our laws/policy.**

2. Drug users are a significant part of the ever increasing numbers of Americans in the Criminal Justice System:

- a. Close to equal number of young men in college as under criminal justice supervision**
- b. Higher proportion of young men in prison than any other modern democracy.**

3. Chronic drug use appears to be related to:

a. Increased criminal behavior

b. Sustained criminal behavior

c. Type of criminal behavior

i. property crime for funds to acquire drugs

ii. Violence as a part of subculture and market conflict.

4. National, state, and local policy as well as enforcement matters:

- a. Strong deterrence, medicalization, decriminalization, diversion to treatment/drug court**
- b. Enormous variance by type of drug and by state and locale (Chriqui et al, 2002; Terry-McElrath & McBride, 2004)**
- c. Evidence that treatment works, breaks the cycle, and is cost effective.**

5. Evidence suggests that the following program elements may be the most successful:

- a. Comprehensive assessment of wide variety of needs (issue of multi-morbidities)**

- b. Designing programs to meet assessed needs (VanderWaal et al., 2001):**
 - i. multi-system theory**
 - ii. cognitive behavior motivation approaches**
 - iii. comprehensive cross-system case management**
 - iv. graduated sanctions**
 - v. wrap around services – integration with community – systems handoff – restorative justice**
 - v. increasing social capital (VanderWaal et. al., 2004)**

- 6. Need for testing some of the promising interventions** (e.g., Multi-system theory, motivational interviewing, cognitive behavior therapy):
 - a. Issue of random trials**
 - b. Difficulties of maintaining scientific designs in field situations**
 - c. Focusing on what works (program and elements) for what populations (socio-demographic characteristics).**

7. Using states as “natural laboratories” examining the effect of differences in such policies as: (see Chriqui et. al., 2002)

a. Deterrence

b. Legalization

c. Medicalization

d. Diversion

e. Treatment quality laws/regulations (Chriqui et al., 2004)

8. Analysis of Secondary Data

a. ADAM data to focus on:

- i. rates of current use
- ii. previous treatment
- iii. dependency indicator
- iv. drug markets

b. Other secondary data such as National Household survey and Monitoring the Futures to examine drugs-crime relationship.

Selected References

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- Chriqui, J.F., Smith, S., VanderWaal, McBride, D.C., **Can state policies improve drug treatment quality? Presented at Addiction Health Services Research Conference, October 2004.**
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- **McElrath, Y. M. & McBride, D.C. Local Implementation of Drug Policy and Access to Treatment Services for Juveniles, Crime and Delinquency, 2004, 1:60-87.**
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- **VanderWaal, C.J., Powell, L., Flay, B., Terry-McElrath, & Bao, Y. (2003, under review). Community and school drug prevention programs: Differential effects by setting and substance. Submitted to Journal of Primary Prevention, 2004**