

Juvenile Justice Outcomes of Youth in Systems of Care: Comparison Study Results

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Overview

- ▶ The cross-agency collaboration and service coordination, that are at the center of system-of-care approach, are crucial for identifying and serving youth with mental health problems who are also involved in the juvenile system
- ▶ A large overlap exists between youth with mental health problems and youth involved in the juvenile justice system



Questions

- ▶ Are systems of care effective in reducing the risk of juvenile justice involvement?
- ▶ Do the mental health outcomes of children involved in juvenile justice system differ in system of care relative to more traditional service approach?



Past Findings

- ▶ Foster, Qaseem and Connor, (AJPH, 2004): children in systems of care have a reduced risk of juvenile justice involvement
- ▶ Foster (Psychiatric Services, forthcoming): mental health/juvenile justice cost offsets in systems of care
- ▶ Lurigio (Crime and Delinquency, 2001): cross-agency collaboration reduces future criminal involvement among those with emotional and behavioral problems



Data

- ▶ Data from the national evaluation of the Comprehensive Community Mental Health Services for Children and Their Families Program
- ▶ Comparison Study: quasi-experimental study where system-of-care community funded through CMHS is matched with the similar community with a more traditional service approach
- ▶ The 1997 comparison study:
 - 1) Region 3 (system of care) and Region 4 (comparison), Nebraska
 - 2) Jefferson County (system of care) and Montgomery County (comparison), Alabama



Data (continued)

- ▶ The analysis includes only the data for the Alabama pair, because of the availability of detailed juvenile justice data
- ▶ Juvenile records were provided by Family Court and Probation Administration in the two counties
- ▶ Demographic and clinical data were collected as a part of the national evaluation



Description of Communities

- ▶ The catchment area for the system-of-care grant-funded program (The Jefferson Community Partnership) in Alabama is Jefferson, Blount, and St. Clair counties. The implementation of interagency approaches by the Jefferson Community Partnership includes particular focus on children with mental health or behavioral problems who are involved in the juvenile justice system.
- ▶ The matched comparison community is located in four contiguous counties (Montgomery, Lowndes, Elmore and Autauga) that are served by the Montgomery Area Mental Health Authority.



Juvenile Justice Contacts Prior to Entry into the Study

- ▶ Review of juvenile justice records showed that 66.8% ($n = 202$) of youth in Jefferson County and 9.5% ($n = 189$) of youth in Montgomery County had juvenile justice contacts during the 18 months prior to entry into the study
- ▶ Referrals from Courts and Corrections constituted 63.9% of youth in Jefferson County system of care and 3.3% of youth in Montgomery County



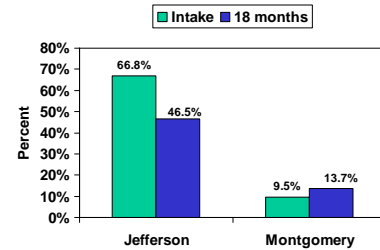
Baseline Characteristics of Youth by Juvenile Justice Involvement

| | Jefferson County (System of Care) $n = 202$ | | | Montgomery County (Comparison Community) $n = 189$ | | |
|---------------------|--|------------|---------|---|------------|---------|
| | No JJ Contact | JJ Contact | p-value | No JJ Contact | JJ Contact | p-value |
| Age | 12.8 | 14.2 | <0.01 | 11.3 | 13.8 | <0.01 |
| Male | 61.2% | 62.9% | n.s. | 56.1% | 55.1% | n.s. |
| Income < \$15,000 | 32.3% | 47.4% | <0.05 | 63.7% | 72.2% | n.s. |
| Child Risk Factors | 0.81 | 1.41 | <0.01 | 0.53 | 1.0 | <0.05 |
| Family Risk Factors | 2.44 | 2.65 | n.s. | 2.55 | 2.21 | n.s. |

Note: Juvenile justice involvement was measured during the 18 months prior to entry into the study. In both communities, youth who had contact with the juvenile justice system were significantly older and experienced more child risk factors. In Jefferson County, they were more likely to come from lower income families.



Changes in Juvenile Justice Involvement Rates over Time



The proportion of youth charged with crimes decreased significantly* during the first 18 months of services in the Jefferson county system of care. Conversely, the rates of juvenile justice involvement among youth in Montgomery county increased.

* $z = 4.1, p < 0.01$



Changes in Juvenile Justice Involvement Rates over Time, Logistic Regression

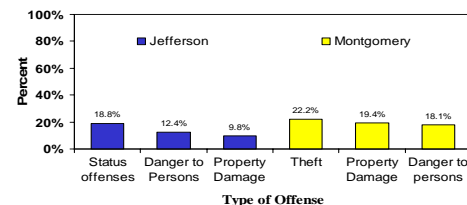
| | Model 1 estimates | Model 2 estimates |
|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| System of Care (SOC) | 2.94 ($p < 0.01$) | 2.75 ($p < 0.01$) |
| Time | 0.37 (n.s.) | 0.39 (n.s.) |
| SOC*Time | -1.21 ($p < 0.05$) | -1.31 ($p < 0.01$) |
| Age | - | 0.26 ($p < 0.01$) |
| Male | - | 0.42 ($p < 0.05$) |
| Income < \$15,000 | - | 0.44 ($p < 0.05$) |
| CBCL > 63 | - | 0.26 (n.s.) |

Both models included constant term ($n = 382$, time periods = 2)

Multivariate analysis of changes in juvenile justice involvement over time demonstrates that greater reductions in juvenile justice involvement in Jefferson County system of care are evident even after controlling of baseline differences in demographic and clinical characteristics of youth.

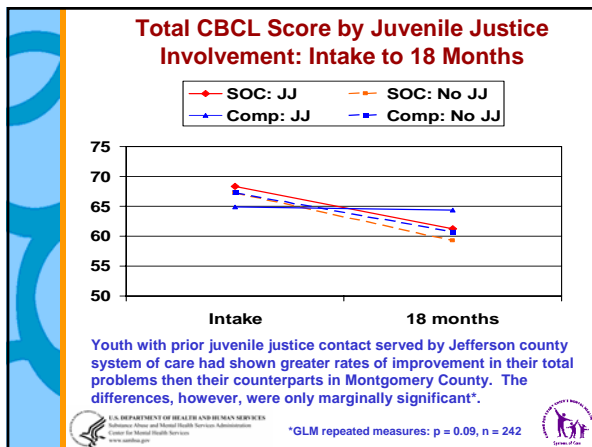
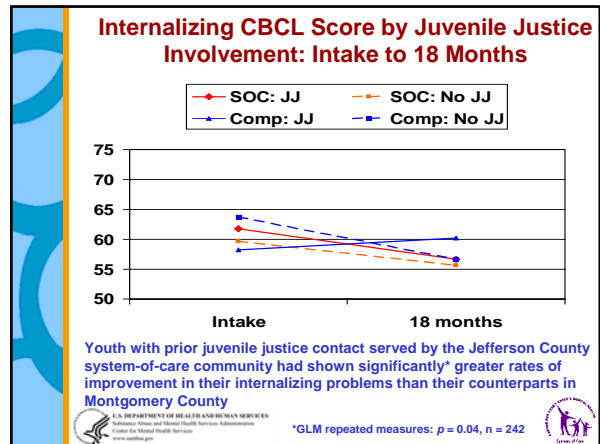
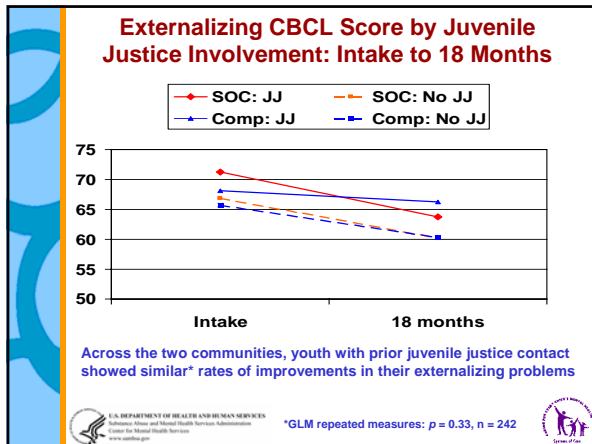


Types of Offenses Reported in the Alabama Comparison Study Sites



The user's guide to Alabama Juvenile Justice Records was used to further classify charges into Part I (more serious) and Part II (less serious offenses). In Jefferson County system of care, 31.0% of charges filed were Part I crimes, while in Montgomery County the corresponding number was 39.4%





Clinical Outcomes: Multivariate Analysis

- ▶ GLM repeated measures analysis of externalizing, internalizing and total CBCL scores was expanded to include additional covariates, such as age, gender, income, and child and family risk factors
- ▶ The results did not change substantially: children with prior juvenile justice involvement in the Jefferson County system of care showed more improvement in internalizing problems than their counterparts in Montgomery County

Conclusions

- ▶ Youth served by Jefferson County system of care exhibited significant reductions in juvenile justice involvement
- ▶ Youth involved in juvenile justice system served by Jefferson county system of care showed significantly more improvement in their internalizing problems relative to their counterparts in the matched community

Implications

- ▶ These results add to a growing body of evidence that the SOC approach is particularly beneficial for youth with both mental health problems and juvenile justice involvement
- ▶ Results suggest that the benefits of services received in SOC are sustained up to 18 months following entry into services
- ▶ While youth with mental health problems and juvenile justice involvement often exhibit externalizing problems, it is important to note the possibility of co-occurring internalizing problems for these youth

Future Work

- ▶ **Expand analysis to examine changes in additional outcomes (school, caregiver strain etc.)**
- ▶ **Examine the service use of children involved in juvenile justice system in the two communities**
- ▶ **Examine costs of the serving children involved in juvenile justice system in the two communities**