

WHAT IS EVIDENCE-BASED POLICING AND HOW CAN POLICE LEARN MORE ABOUT IT?

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Outline

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- What is evidence-based policing?
 - ▣ Definitions
 - ▣ What are the benefits of evidence-based policing?
 - ▣ Are police familiar with the term “evidence-based policing”?

- How can police learn more about evidence-based policing?
 - ▣ Lots of freely available resources to learn more about the evidence base and “what works?” in policing

What is evidence-based policing?

IDEAS IN AMERICAN POLICING

POLICE FOUNDATION
July 1998

Evidence-Based Policing

By **Lawrence W. Sherman**

Abstract

The new paradigm of "evidence-based medicine" holds important implications for policing. It suggests that just doing research is not enough and that proactive efforts are required to push accumulated research evidence into practice through national and community guidelines. These guidelines can then focus in-house evaluations of what works best across agencies, units, victims, and officers. Statistical adjustments for the risk factors shaping crime can provide fair comparisons across police units, including national rankings of police agencies by their crime prevention effectiveness. The example of domestic violence, for which accumulated National Institute of Justice research could lead to evidence-based guidelines, illustrates the way in which agency-based outcomes research could further reduce violence against victims. National pressure to adopt this paradigm could come from agency-ranking studies, but police agency capacity to adopt it will require new data systems creating "medical charts" for crime victims, annual audits of crime reporting systems, and in-house "evidence cops" who document the ongoing patterns and effects of police practices in light of published and in-house research. These analyses can then be integrated into the NYPD Compstat feedback model for management accountability and continuous quality improvement.

Most of us have thought of the statistician's work as that of measuring and predicting... but few of us have thought it the statistician's duty to try to bring about changes in the things that he [or she] measures.
—W. Edwards Deming

Ideas in American Policing presents commentary and insight from leading criminologists on issues of interest to scholars, practitioners, and policymakers. The papers published in this series are from the Police Foundation lecture series of the same name. Points of view in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position of the Police Foundation.

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Lawrence W. Sherman is professor and chair of the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of Maryland at College Park. He was the Police Foundation's director of research from 1979 to 1985.

“Police practices should be based on scientific evidence about what works best.”

Lawrence Sherman, 1998

Definitions of evidence-based policing

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Author (Year)	Definition
Sherman (1998)	“the use of the best available research on the outcomes of police work to implement guidelines and evaluate agencies, units, and officers”
Welsh (2006)	“the police using the highest quality available research evidence on what works best to reduce a specific crime problem and tailoring the intervention to the local context and conditions”
Lum & Koper (2013)	“law-enforcement perspective and philosophy that implicates the use of research, evaluation, analysis, and scientific processes in law-enforcement decision making”

Benefits of evidence-based policing

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- Reduces crime by focusing on effective tactics
- Maximizes efficiency by focusing on strategies most likely to work
- Avoids “cures that harm” (McCord, 2003)
 - ▣ Sometimes well-intentioned programs, like Scared Straight, can have backfire effects
- Could improve departmental transparency and legitimacy

Are police familiar with “evidence-based policing?”

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- Have you ever heard of the term “evidence-based policing” (EBP)?

Sample	Heard of EBP	Provided a Definition
Officers (4 agencies, n = 1094)	304 (27.8%)	250 (22.9%)
Supervisors/managers (Oregon, n = 163)	106 (65.0%)	106 (65.0%)
Chiefs/leaders (Oregon, n=104)	86 (87.8%)	72 (83.7%)
Total (n=1355)	496 (36.6%)	428 (31.6%)

(Telep & Somers, under review)

Key words in police officer definitions

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Key Word	Percentage Of Definitions That Included...			
	Officers	Supervisors	Chiefs	Total
Statistics/data*	27.2	38.7	52.8	34.3
Effective/what works*	18.4	34.9	29.2	24.3
Research/empirical	19.6	31.1	25.0	23.4
Evaluation/analysis	12.4	9.4	15.3	19.2
Specific places/people	21.2	17.0	15.3	12.1
Science/scientific*	5.2	8.5	13.9	7.5
Prevention/proactive	7.2	5.7	6.9	6.8
Forensics/case evidence*	12.4	7.5	1.4	9.3

* χ^2 p < .05

Learning about evidence-based policing

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- There are lots of free resources to learn more about the policing evidence base
 - ▣ Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy (CEBCP)
 - www.cebc.org
 - Evidence-Based Policing Matrix
 - What Works in Policing?
 - ▣ Campbell Collaboration
 - ▣ College of Policing Crime Reduction Toolkit
 - ▣ CrimeSolutions.gov

Evidence-Based Policing Matrix

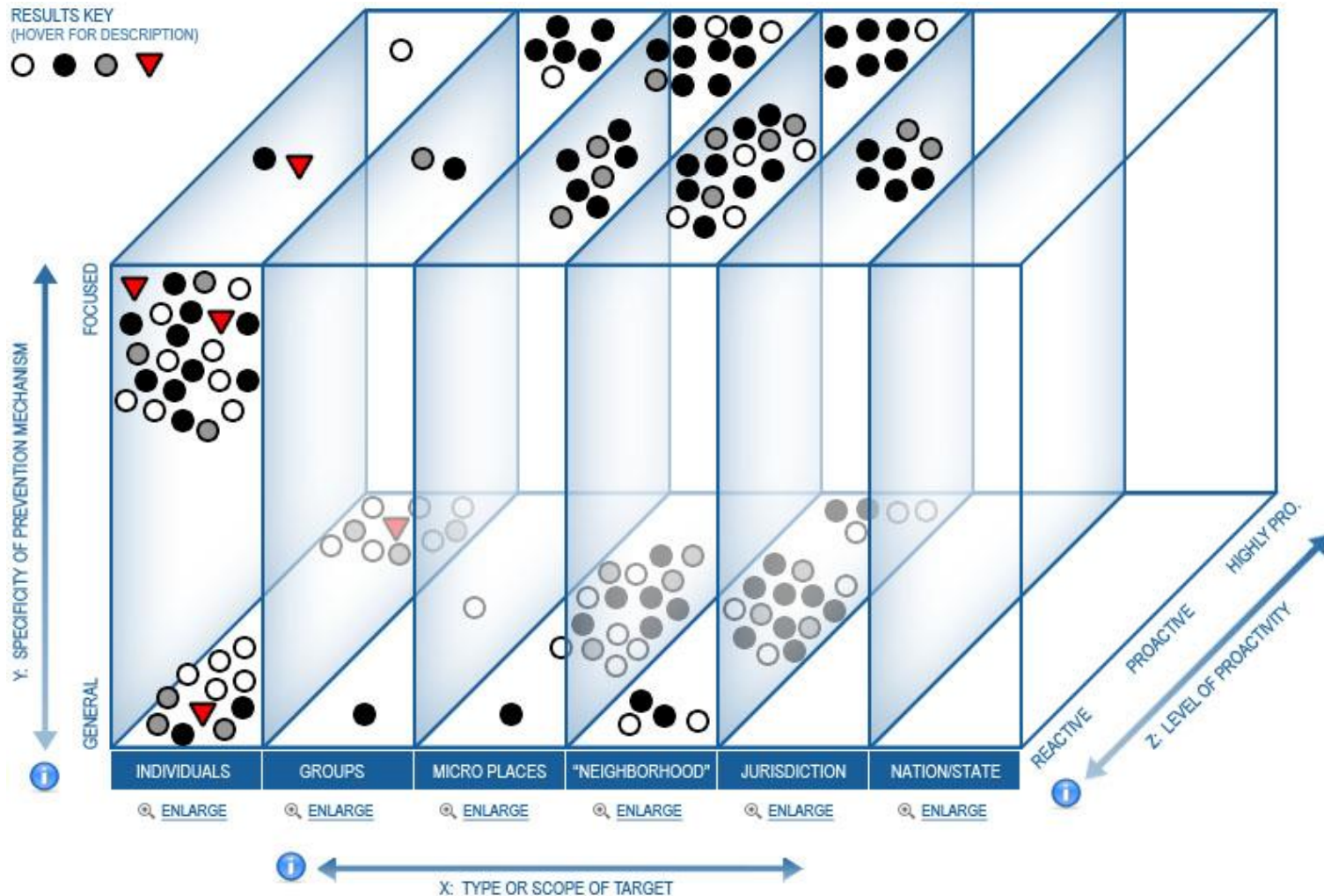
(Lum, Koper, & Telep, 2011)

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- Research to practice translation tool that provides a visual of rigorous crime control evaluation evidence

- www.policingmatrix.org
 - Interactive version of the Matrix
 - Pages for every study included in the Matrix
 - Matrix Demonstration Project
 - Videos and training resources on evidence-based policing

Evidence-Based Policing Matrix



What Works in Policing? (CEBCP)

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- Summary of the evaluation literature by program type
 - ▣ What is it? What is the evidence? What should the police be doing?
- <http://cebcop.org/what-works-in-policing/>

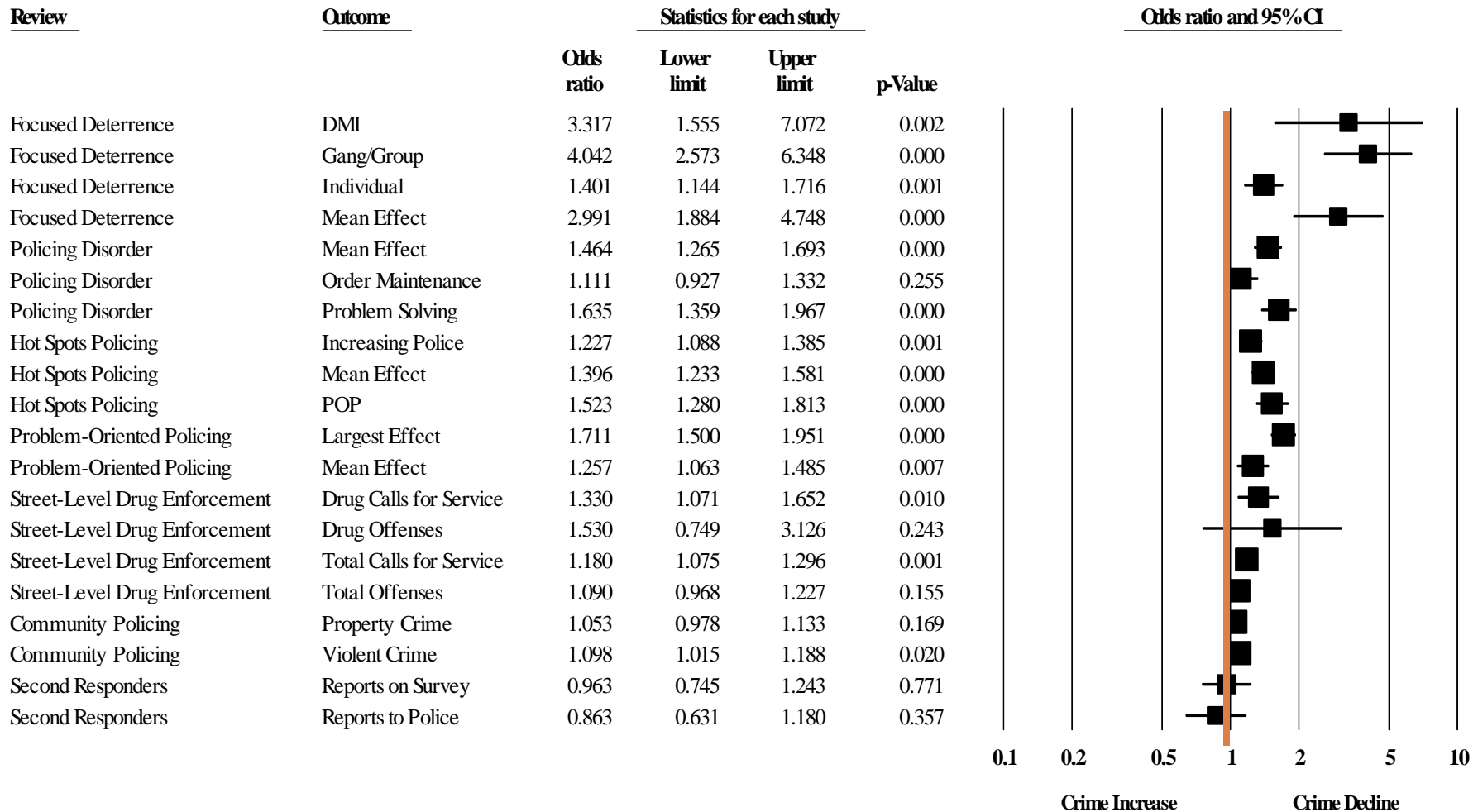
What Works?	What's Promising	What Doesn't Work?	What Do We Need to Know More About?
Hot spots policing	Community policing	Standard model policing tactics	Broken windows policing
Problem-oriented policing	CCTV	Second responder programs	Increasing department size
Focused deterrence strategies		D.A.R.E	Police technology
Directed patrol for gun violence			

- Library of systematic reviews of the rigorous research evidence on 40+ criminal justice topics
 - 15+ reviews relevant to policing on topics such as hot spots policing, problem-oriented policing, displacement, and stress management programs

- www.campbellcollaboration.org
 - Search by Crime and Justice Coordinating Group
 - Campbell Library includes reviews and plain-language summaries of the findings

Review of policing systematic reviews

(Telep & Weisburd, 2016)



CrimeSolutions.gov

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- National Institute of Justice, U.S. Department of Justice
- Can search by programs, and practices with clear evidence ratings based on expert assessments

View	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> View	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> View	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> View	Filter Results
All Practices (9)	Effective (1)	Promising (7)	No Effects (4)	
Showing 1 to 9 of 9 entries		Records per Page: 10		
Title	Evidence Rating (by Outcomes)	Summary		
Hot Spots Policing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Crime & Delinquency - Multiple crime/offense types	Used by many U.S. police departments, hot spots policing strategies focus on small geographic areas or places, usually in urban settings, where crime is concentrated. The practice is rated Effective. The analysis suggests that hot spots policing efforts that rely on problem-oriented policing strategies generate larger crime reduction effects than those that apply traditional policing strategies in crime hot spots.		
Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) Surveillance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Crime & Delinquency - Multiple crime/offense types <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Crime & Delinquency - Property offenses <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Crime & Delinquency - Violent offenses	Public surveillance systems include a network of cameras and components for monitoring, recording, and transmitting video images. The ultimate goal of installing public surveillance cameras is to reduce both property and personal crime. The practice was rated Promising for reducing overall crime and property offenses (i.e. vehicle crimes), but rated No Effects on impacting violent crime.		
Focused Deterrence Strategies	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Crime & Delinquency - Multiple crime/offense types	Problem-oriented policing strategies that follow the core principles of deterrence theory. The practice is rated Promising. The evaluation found that focused deterrence strategies (also referred to as "pulling levers" policing) can reduce crime.		
Neighborhood Watch	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Crime & Delinquency - Multiple crime/offense types <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Victimization - Multiple victimization outcomes	Also known as block watch, apartment watch, home watch, and community watch, these programs involve citizens trying to prevent crime in their neighborhood or community. Citizens remain alert for suspicious activities and report those activities to the police. The practice is rated Promising in reducing crime in the control area compared to the experimental area; and rated No Effects in reducing victimization.		
Problem-Oriented Policing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Crime & Delinquency - Multiple crime/offense types	These analytic methods are used by police to develop crime prevention and reduction strategies. The practice is rated Promising and led to a significant decline in crime and disorder.		
Reducing Gun Violence	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Crime & Delinquency - Violent offenses	Reducing gun violence is a persistent public policy concern for communities, policymakers and leaders. To reduce gun violence, several strategies have		

Crime Reduction Toolkit

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- What Works Centre for Crime Reduction (College of Policing) toolkit based on systematic reviews:

<http://whatworks.college.police.uk/>

About the Crime Reduction Toolkit and EMMIE

Our effect scale

Our quality scale

Key

Quality of evidence

- No information
- Limited quality
- Moderate quality
- Strong quality
- Very strong quality

Filters

Impact on Crime (select a range using the markers below)

Search term...

Violent Crime Off On

Property Crime Off On

Offender Based Off On

Victim Based Off On

Location Based Off On

Crime Reduction Toolkit

Intervention	Impact on crime	How it works	Where it works	How to do it	What it costs
	Effect	Mechanism	Moderator	Implementation	Economic cost
Alcohol tax and price policies	✓✓	⚙️	📍	?	£
Alley gating	✓✓	⚙️	📍	?	£
CCTV	✓✓	⚙️	📍	?	£
Electronic monitoring	✓	⚙️	📍	?	£
Environmental design to prevent robbery	✓	⚙️	📍	?	£
Hot spots policing NEW	✓✓	⚙️	📍	?	£
Increased police patrols to reduce drink driving	✓	⚙️	📍	?	£
Juvenile curfew laws	✗✓	⚙️	📍	?	£
Neighbourhood watch	✓✓	⚙️	📍	?	£
Policies on hours and days of alcohol sales	✗✓	⚙️	📍	?	£
Problem-orientated policing NEW	✓✓	⚙️	📍	?	£

Even more resources!

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- Global Policing Database (University of Queensland): www.gpd.uq.edu.au
- Evidence-Based Policing Mobile App (Police Foundation): Android, iOS, Windows devices: www.policefoundation.org
- Center for Problem-Oriented Policing: www.popcenter.org

Summary

- Evidence-based policing focuses on using high-quality research studies to guide policing policy and practice
 - ▣ Strong evidence base particularly for strategies to reduce crime

- There are many translation tools for learning about “what works?” in policing
 - ▣ Freely available online from government, nonprofit, and academic websites

Thank you

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