Public Abstract

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Title:Evaluating the Long-Term Impact of Youth Interventions on Antisocial Behavior:
An Integrative Review and Analysis

Youth antisocial behavior exacts a tremendous toll on society and often persists into adulthood. Although researchers have identified a number of interventions that prevent or reduce youth antisocial behavior in the short term, only recently has evidence of long-term intervention effects become available. In addition, historical divisions between prevention and therapy have impeded cooperation among researchers and intervention providers alike, thereby limiting progress in addressing an important social concern. The present study used meta-analysis to (1) summarize evidence that youth interventions influence long-term patterns of antisocial behavior, (2) identify factors that moderate long-term outcomes of interventions, and (3) facilitate integration of findings across prevention and therapy outcome studies. Results from 66 intervention trials (i.e., 34 prevention trials, 32 therapy trials) indicated that many interventions delivered during childhood and adolescence can produce lasting reductions in antisocial behavior (mean d = .31, 95% confidence interval = .23 - .39) relative to control conditions. In addition, moderator analyses revealed specific characteristics of participants, interventions, and study methods that influenced the size of those reductions. The results of this meta-analysis have important implications for selecting effective interventions to address antisocial behavior during childhood and adolescence. Moreover, the findings imply that youth service systems (e.g., education, mental health, juvenile justice, child welfare) and researchers who evaluate intervention effects should increase integration of prevention and therapy practices.