

LONG-TERM EFFECTS OF MULTISYSTEMIC THERAPY ON CAREGIVERS OF SERIOUS AND VIOLENT JUVENILE OFFENDERS

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ABSTRACT

This study examined long-term criminal and civil court outcomes for caregivers of serious and violent juvenile offenders who had participated in either multisystemic therapy (MST) or individual therapy (IT) in a randomized clinical trial (Borduin et al., 1995). Criminal and civil suit data for caregivers ($N = 292$) from 176 families were obtained during a 26.4-year follow-up period. Intent-to-treat analyses showed that for caregivers in the MST condition, the rates of arrests for felonies and misdemeanors, respectively, were 97% and 66% lower than for caregivers in the IT condition. In addition, caregivers in the MST condition were sentenced to 70% fewer years of incarceration and 98% fewer years of probation than caregivers in the IT condition. Furthermore, caregivers in the MST condition were 52% less likely to be involved in a civil suit reflecting family instability than were caregivers in the IT condition. The present study represents the only follow-up to date of caregivers in an MST clinical trial and demonstrates that the positive impact of an evidence-based treatment for serious and violent juvenile offenders can extend to other family members. Implications of the findings for policymakers and service providers are discussed.