

## Drunk Driving Interventions

Maruschak, Laura. 1999. *DWI Offenders Under Correctional Supervision*. Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Justice Statistics. [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/dwiocs.pdf](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/dwiocs.pdf)

This study, conducted by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, provides an overview of DWI offenders in 1997. Key findings include the following: In 1997, 1.5 million people were arrested for driving under the influence, and 513,200 were under correctional supervision. Of these, most (89 percent) were sentenced to probation. These offenders constituted 14 percent of the total probation population. While most (69 percent) of these probationers were sentenced to probation only, 31 percent were given a split sentence serving part of the sentence in jail or prison. Table 1 shows the conditions of their probationary sentences.

DWI offenders differ from other probationers in several ways. They tend to be older, better educated, and more likely to be white. The study estimates that one third of the probationers had a history of alcohol abuse or dependence. Seventy-one percent of the probationers reported having participated in alcohol or drug treatment prior to their arrest. One third of the probationers also reported a prior DWI offense.

DeYoung, David J. 1997. "An Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Alcohol Treatment, Driver License Actions, and Jail Terms in Reducing Drunk Driving Recidivism in California." *Addiction* 92:989-997

DeYoung examines a sample of 148,632 drunk driving offenders in California, dividing them into groups of first time offenders, second time offenders, and third or more time offenders. Specifically, he examined the independent effects of alcohol treatment, driver's license action (including restrictions, suspensions and revocations), and jail terms on recidivism. For all offenders, the lowest rate of recidivism was found for those who received treatment in combination with a license action. The highest rate was found among those who went to jail. Although this difference was substantial, it is possible that the difference may be because the offenders sent to jail were higher risk offenders, and therefore more likely to reoffend.

Breckenridge, James, L. Thomas Winfree, James Maupin, and Dennis Clason. 2000. "Drunk Drivers, DWI "Drug Court" Treatment, and Recidivism: Who Fails?" *Justice Research and Policy* 2:87-105

This study focuses on the Las Cruces Municipal DWI Drug Court in New Mexico. Applying the drug court model to DWI offenders,

this court applies a treatment model to address offenders while they serve their time in the community. Working with police and court personnel, the researchers were able to apply an experimental design, randomly assigning alcoholic offenders to the DWI court or to normal court processing. Normal court processing included sanctions such as probation, fines and jail. Outcomes for these groups were compared to each other as well as to a third control group of non-alcoholic DWI offenders that also received normal court processing. One year after sentencing, the non-alcoholics and the alcoholics had similar rates of reoffending, but the alcoholics were more likely to have committed serious and alcohol-related offenses. More importantly, though higher than the non-alcoholics, reoffending rates were lower for the alcoholic offenders in the DWI court than for the alcoholic offenders who received normal court processing. Though these findings are promising, the small sample size and application to only one court program require that they be replicated elsewhere before we can be confident about the effectiveness of DWI courts.

Rojek, Dean G., James E. Coverdill, and Stuart W. Fors. 2003. "The Effect of Victim Impact Panels on DUI Rearrest Rates: A Five-Year Follow-Up." *Criminology* 41:1319-1340

Approximately 400,000 drunk drivers are sentenced to attend victim impact panels (VIP) each year. These panels, designed originally by Mothers Against Drunk Driving, include victims and covictims of drunk driving accidents. The emotional impact of their stories are intended to reduce drunk driver recidivism. In this study, 404 offenders who attended a VIP were compared with 430 offenders who did not attend over a five year period. The researchers found that by the end of the study period, 34 percent of the comparison group had been rearrested for a DUI, while only 16 percent of the VIP group was rearrested. This difference is strongest in the first two years, suggesting that the effect of the VIP may wear off over time, but is particularly strong during the initial time period when risk of rearrest is at its highest. Although the findings were supportive of this intervention, the researchers note significant variation in the implementation of VIP's

Table 1. Conditions of Sentences of DWI Offenders on Probation, 1997

Condition of Sentence	Total	Felony	Misdemeanor
	%	%	%
Fees/fines/courts costs	94	91	95
Confinement/monitoring	13	20	10
Community Service	24	35	22
Employment and training	41	50	41
Counseling	21	8	22
Driving restriction	13	21	11
Alcohol treatment	86	77	88
Drug treatment	27	31	27
Mandatory drug testing	28	35	28
Remain alcohol/drug free	10	15	9

BY DAVID KARP

nationwide and caution that the effective model they found in Clarke County, Georgia, may not generalize to all programs in operation.

**Voas, Robert B., Kenneth O. Blackman, A. Scott Tippetts, and Paul R. Marques. 2002. "Evaluation of a program to motivate impaired driving offenders to install ignition interlocks." *Accident Analysis and Prevention* 34:449-455**

Prior research has demonstrated that ignition interlocks are an effective strategy to reduce DWI recidivism. These devices use a breath test to measure BAC level (blood alcohol level) and prevent the driver to start the vehicle if the test is failed. Although thousands of interlocks are in use in the United States and recent legislation in many states provide for their use, participation rates for eligible DWI offenders has been very low. This study examines a court strategy for increasing participation, and whether such participation leads to lower DWI recidivism rates. Specifically, the study examines the introduction of stronger sanctioning alternatives for offenders that do not wish to participate in the interlock program, i.e., interlock or jail/house arrest. Focusing on Hancock County Court in Indiana, the study compares recidivism rates in Hancock County with six other nearby counties that did not have an interlock program. The study also compares effects for first time and for repeat DWI offenders. First, Hancock County was successful in increasing its interlock participation rate. Sixty-two percent of eligible offenders participated, which may be compared with the 10 percent or lower rate typically found in other interlock programs. Second, overall recidivism rates were found to be lower in Hancock County for both first time and repeat offenders, compared with the surrounding counties.

**Wells-Parker, Elisabeth, Robert Bangert-Drowns, Robert McMillen, and Marsha Williams. 1995. "Final results of a meta-analysis of remedial interventions with drink/drive offenders." *Addiction* 90:907-926**

A meta-analysis is a statistical procedure that summarizes the results of a number of research studies. In this meta-analysis, 215 independent studies are included. Though variations in the quality of individual studies is noted, and further limitations exist due to variations in both methods and data reporting, this (and other) meta-analysis may be the best overall assessment of current research knowledge. Because this study combines the results from many other studies, it necessarily must provide very general categories of interventions for DWI offenders. Specifically, the

study considers the effect of educational programs, such as on the effects of alcohol, alcoholism, or traffic safety; counseling programs, which includes any kind of therapy, but excludes medical or drug treatments; antidipsotropic medication, anti-alcohol drugs; contact probation, involving in person contacts with probation officers; and self-help programs, such as Alcoholics Anonymous. Not included in the meta-analysis were some popular DWI programs such as ignition interlocks, victim impact panels, jail-based programs and home detention. These remedial interventions are compared to traditional court sanctions such as fines, license revocation and incarceration. The researchers found that remedial programs reduce both DWI recidivism and alcohol-related crashes 7-9 percent more than traditional sanctions.

Which programs are most effective? The combination of education, counseling and contact probation had the largest impact. Contact probation alone was found to be less effective than education alone and less effective than when it is coupled with other programs. Also of note, both court-mandated counseling by itself and court-mandated self-help (AA) by itself had negative effects—that is, they produce higher recidivism rates than traditional sanctions. But in combination with other interventions, they produce positive effects. □

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