

**Saratoga County Victim Impact Panels:
Results from the Offender Exit Survey**

A Report to the
The Alcohol and Substance Abuse Prevention Council of Saratoga County

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Introduction

The first Victim Impact Panel (VIP) was created as part of a hospital-based Driving while Under the Influence (DUI) program in Rutland, MA (Mothers Against Drunk Driving 2003). The instructor held classes to educate offenders about the impact of drunk driving, and contacted Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) seeking a victim to visit his class. This addition to the program was well received and the hospital incorporated it as regular part of the DUI program. VIP's spread across the country and in 1983 VIP's were incorporated into criminal sentencing in Washington State. MADD has lobbied nationally to encourage widespread use in the courts. VIP's are one the most powerful opportunities for victims to participate in the judicial system.

A panel typically consists of three or four victims of drunk driving, including co-victims or those who have lost family members. In addition, a police officer or emergency medical technician describes his or her experiences with drunk driving accidents. Offenders are ordered to go by the court, and a court supervisor attends the panels to take attendance. Each presentation may include family photographs of victims, pictures of crash scenes, along with stories about the victims and the impact of the loss. Panelists often end up in tears, as do many offenders (Mothers Against Drunk Driving, 2003).

The idea of VIP's according to MADD is to let the victims tell their story without assigning blame. The offenders should understand the pain they caused or might have caused without feeling personally humiliated. According to MADD the five main goals of VIP's are to:

1. Allow offenders to consider the true impact of their crimes,

2. Allow offenders to look past their own situation and see the consequences of their actions,
3. Serve as the first step to breaking through the denial of an alcohol problem,
4. Put a face to the crime of drinking and driving to prevent recidivism, and
5. Change behavior and save lives.

The panels attempt to achieve these goals by personalizing the crime of drunk driving which may allow offenders to better perceive consequences. Presenters are trained to ensure that their presentations do not place blame, but instead emotionally influence offenders to change their behavior. For example, panelists are encouraged to refer to the offenders as "good people, who make bad decisions" (Polacsek et al. 2001:346). Panelists also make a point of saying that they do not oppose drinking, but only drinking and driving (Polacsek et al. 2001).

Drunk driving offenders often believe they were simply unlucky to be caught while they were drinking and driving, denying they actually did anything wrong. Offenders sometimes also believe that they did not have enough alcohol to really affect their driving (Fors and Rojek 1999). Given that for every 2,000 drunk drivers on the road only one is arrested, the convicted offender *is* relatively unlucky (Polacsek et al. 2001). VIP's shift the focus from bad luck to potential consequences.

The premise of a VIP is that attitudes of any person are more subject to change in response to heightened emotion. In exit surveys completed by VIP attendees, 80% of the offenders say they would never drink and drive again (Polacsek et al. 2001).

This study reports on the findings from exits surveys completed in Saratoga County. We provide information about the characteristics of offenders and their

attitudes about drunk driving. Before reporting our results, we review the research from other studies of VIP's.

Literature Review

Despite the growth in use of VIP's, little research has been done to evaluate the effectiveness of the program. Below we review the published research, noting that available findings are contradictory—some studies show positive effects, but others show no benefits, or even worse, negative effects.

I. Victim impact panels are designed to affect the attitudes of drunk drivers by making them aware of the consequences of their actions, by making them feel guilt or remorse for what they have done, and to feel empathy towards the victims. It is believed that these changes in attitudes will lead to behavioral changes regarding drinking and driving.

A study done by Kimberly Badovinac provide limited support for this hypothesis. Badovinac (1994) studied the effects of 62 DWI offenders who attended a VIP and 46 offenders who did not attend a VIP. A questionnaire was given to the offenders before and after the VIP, and to the control group at predetermined times similar to the VIP group. The questionnaire was designed to track changes in empathy and behavioral intentions. The majority of respondents in both groups tended to provide responses supportive of safe drinking and driving behaviors, however, the VIP group showed significant changes in attitudes after the intervention. While the control group showed no changes in attitudes, members of the VIP group expressed a greater willingness to stop others from drunk driving, be a designated driver, and take a taxi if drunk. Badovinac

found no significant changes in empathy, using a standardized instrument, for either group. It is important to note the sample size was relatively small, and all evidence is self-reported. Offenders may have felt some pressure to answer questions in a more positive manner.

A similar study was done by Ginny Sprang (1997) in which offenders completed surveys before VIP's and one month after. The sample included a control group of 75 DWI offenders who were sentenced in one county without VIP's, and 103 offenders sentenced to the VIP in another county. While the control group exhibited no attitudinal changes, Sprang found that the VIP respondents following the panel were more likely to state they would not drink and drive, showed more support for laws against drunk driving, and had a better understanding of the consequences of their offense. Before the panel, most respondents believed they understood the consequences, but afterwards, they claimed they had not fully comprehended the impact.

Polacsek et al. (2001) also studied the attitudes of offenders before and after the VIP. This study used the "stages-of-change model" to measure attitudes (see also Prochaska et al., 1994). This model consists of pre-contemplation, contemplation, action, and maintenance stages, each being a stage of recovery from problematic behaviors such as smoking, substance abuse, and drunk driving. The instrument locates the respondents' stage, and the study evaluates the effectiveness of VIP in moving respondents to a higher stage. The instrument was provided before the VIP, one year and two years after the VIP. This study found that the group who attended the VIP might have moved through the stages-of-change a little better than the control group, but the difference was not statistically significant. Although the emotional response was very strong immediately after the VIP,

one and two years later the effects could not be detected for the group as a whole. However, the researcher speculated that respondents in certain stages of change (pre-contemplation and maintenance stages) could benefit more from the VIP than those in other stages. This is because the emotional elements of VIP could best motivate those to either move from no contemplation of change to contemplation or to reaffirm their commitment (maintenance). However, the emotional appeals are less likely, according to these researchers, to motivate behavioral change, such as moving from contemplation to action. They noted that only 18% of the VIP group were in the pre-contemplation stage and 8% were in the maintenance stage, suggesting that offenders could be better targeted for referral. Nevertheless, their data do not show that any of the respondents, in any particular stage, were moved to another stage by the VIP.

II. Victim Impact Panels change behavior by reducing drinking and driving, lowering the recidivism rates for convicted offenders.

Woodall et al. (2000) conducted a randomized experiment with 833 convicted first time drunk drivers. Both the VIP group and the control group attended a DWI school, which includes six four-hour sessions covering the physical and psychological effects of alcohol, human suffering and loss due to drunk driving, self assessments of alcohol and driving behavior, and alternatives to drunk driving, and individual action planning. But the control group did not attend the VIP. One year later it was shown that those who attended the VIP were actually more likely to be rearrested than those who did not attend, and two years later the odds of having two or more re-arrests were greater for VIP group. Recidivism was not improved by the VIP, if

anything, it was made worse. Although this study is very troubling, it should be noted that both groups received substantial interventions during the DWI school, which may have achieved similar positive impacts as VIP's. It is also possible that the combination is corrosive, such that VIP's undermine the positive benefits of the DWI school.

The Polaseck et al. (2001) study mentioned above studied recidivism along with attitudes, and found similar results for both. There was no significant difference in rearrest rates between the test group and the control group.

Shinar and Compton (1995) examined two-year recidivism data for 2,775 drunk drivers. The sample included control groups for offenders ordered to attend a VIP, and for those ordered, but who did not attend. Recidivism rates were not significantly different between the groups, including close examinations of various subgroups. However, a partial effect was found for drunk drivers *aged 35 or older*; researchers found that VIP's lowered their recidivism in an Oregon subsample, but not in their California subsample.

C'de Baca et al. (2001) examined 5,238 first time offenders and 1,464 repeat drunk drivers, with 67% referred to VIP and 64% referred to treatment. Measuring recidivism between 2.5 and 8 years post conviction, they found that the only group with a lower recidivism rate after attending the VIP was *male first-time offenders*.

In Sprang's (1997) study of 103 VIP drunk drivers and 75 control offenders, she found that after one year the VIP group's recidivism rate was approximately half of the non-VIP's rate (9% and 18%). This result is statistically significant, however, the small sample size should be noted as compared with other studies.

Fors and Rojek (1999), like Sprang, conducted a study that found lower

recidivism rates for those who attended a VIP. This study used a sample of 404 convicted DWI offenders who were sentenced to a VIP. Since the VIP was mandatory in the county, a control group of 431 DWI offenders included those who had been convicted the prior year when the VIP was not mandatory. The study also measured independent variables such as race, gender, age and prior arrests, showing higher rearrest rates for *whites, men, people aged 26-35*, and those with *prior* DWI convictions.

In sum, reviews of Victim Impact Panels have been mixed. Due to the small number of studies that have been done, there is currently no conclusive answer to whether or not VIP's are effective at reducing recidivism or changing attitudes towards drunk driving. One study showed negative affects of VIP's on recidivism, two studies showed positive affects on recidivism and three showed no or very little effect. Potentially, certain subgroups may be more amenable to the message of a VIP. These include persons over 35, first time offenders, and perhaps those in an early stage of the "stages of change" model. Other demographic characteristics need further study, such as race and gender.

Method

Exit surveys were collected from persons attending eight Saratoga County VIP's from April 2002 to April 2003. All persons were expected to complete the survey although there was no mechanism to ensure compliance. Thus, some persons may have left without completing a survey, making the total population unknown. Our analysis excludes attendees (n=53) who were not DWI or DWAI offenders. 476 surveys were collected and this is considered a census of the offender attendee population.

The survey is included on the following page.

DWI – Victim Impact Panel Presentation

Comments and Feedback

Date: _____

1. Person completing this form is Court ordered to attend for DWI/DWAI or DWAI-drugs conviction Guest
 2. Your age: _____ Male Female Marital Status: Single Married Divorced Widowed
 3. How do you feel about the DWI laws in New York State? Too Lenient Fair Too Tough
 4. Who arrest you for your present DWI/DWAI or DWAI-drugs charge?
 Sheriff State Police City/Town Police
 5. What court were you sentenced in?

<input type="checkbox"/> Ballston Spa	<input type="checkbox"/> Day	<input type="checkbox"/> Halfmoon	<input type="checkbox"/> Northumberland	<input type="checkbox"/> Saratoga County Court
<input type="checkbox"/> Town of Ballston (Burnt Hills)	<input type="checkbox"/> Edinburg	<input type="checkbox"/> Malta	<input type="checkbox"/> Providence	<input type="checkbox"/> Stillwater Town
<input type="checkbox"/> Charlton	<input type="checkbox"/> Galway	<input type="checkbox"/> Mechanicville	<input type="checkbox"/> Saratoga Springs City	<input type="checkbox"/> Stillwater Village
<input type="checkbox"/> Clifton Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Greenfeild	<input type="checkbox"/> Milton	<input type="checkbox"/> Town of Saratoga (Schuylerville)	<input type="checkbox"/> Waterford
<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Hadley	<input type="checkbox"/> Moreau		<input type="checkbox"/> Wilton
 6. What was your blood alcohol content (BAC) at the time of your arrest?
 .00 - .07 .08 - .09 .10 - .15 .16 or greater
 No BAC test was given I refused to take the test I took a blood or urine test
 7. Were you using drugs (including prescription and over the counter drugs) at the time of your arrest?
 yes no Which drugs? _____
 8. What was the time of your arrest?
 6:01am-noon 12:01-6:00pm 6:01-9:00pm 9:00pm-midnight 12:01-3:00am 3:01-6:00am
 9. What day of the week were you arrested? _____ What month? _____
 10. Before your arrest, where were you drinking?
 at home at a friend's at a bar? Which bar? _____ other _____
 11. Have you ever been arrested for DWI/DWAI-alcohol? Yes No
If yes, how many times total (not including this one) 1 2 3 4 other _____
 12. Have you ever been arrested for DWAI-drugs? Yes No
If yes, how many times total (not including this one) 1 2 3 4 other _____
 13. Have you attended a victim impact panel before this one? Yes No
If yes, court ordered other (where)? _____
 14. How often do you drink alcohol? Daily Weekly Occasionally
 15. What was your age at the time of your first drink? Under 9 9-11 11-13 14-16 17-20 over 21
 16. Do you think that you have a problem with drugs or alcohol? Yes No Please explain: _____
 17. Had you considered these kinds of consequences to others at the time of your offense? Yes No
 18. Do you think hearing the victims' story will deter you personally from drinking or drugging and driving? Yes No
 19. The victims and other panelists are interested in your comments: _____
-

Findings: Univariate Results

This study reports on exit surveys from eight VIP's.¹ Attendance at these ranged from 124 in April, 2002 to 24 in September, 2002. Figure 1 illustrates the number of attendees at each of the eight VIP's.

Figure 1. Attendance by Date of VIP.

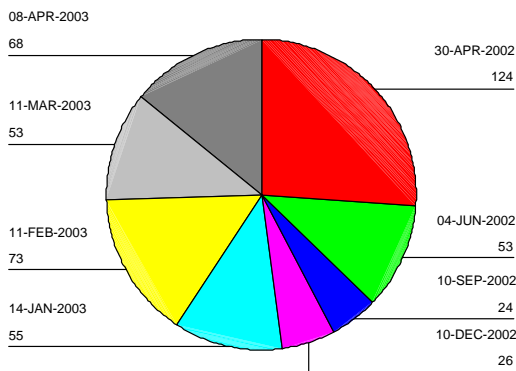


Table 1 shows which court sentenced the offenders. The largest number of offenders were sentenced in Clifton Park (15%) and Saratoga Springs (17%). Those in the “other” category were from local courts, but were fewer than 2% of the sample, or from outside the county.

Table 1. Sentencing Court

	N	Percent
Ballston Spa	22	4.6
Town of Ballston (Burnt Hills)	12	2.5
Clifton Park	73	15.4
Halfmoon	32	6.8
Malta	46	9.7
Mechanicville	10	2.1
Milton	25	5.3
Saratoga Springs City	82	17.3
Saratoga County Court	30	6.3
Stillwater Town	15	3.2
Waterford	43	9.1
Wilton	25	5.3
Other	59	12.4
Total	474	100.0

Table 2 identifies the arresting agency. State police arrested the most offenders, followed by city/town police, and finally Sheriff's departments.

Table 2. Arresting Agency

	N	Percent
Sheriff	70	15.1
State Police	218	46.9
City/Town Police	177	38.1
Total	465	100.0

Figure 2 shows the number of offenders arrested each month. The numbers below seem to drop off during the warmer months of the year, and peak in December and March. These numbers probably do not reflect actual arrest rates by month, given the low rates during the summer period. Instead, they may reflect the pattern of sentencing and appearance at the VIP.

Figure 2. Month of Arrest.

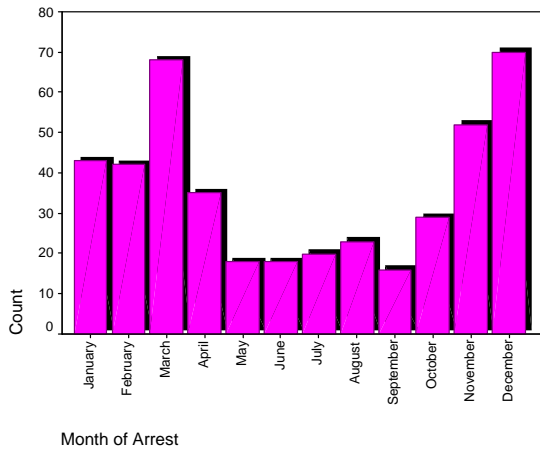


Figure 3. Illustrates the percent of offenders arrested on each day of the week. Not surprisingly, drunk driving in the county is most problematic on the weekends.

Figure 3. Day Attendees Were Arrested.

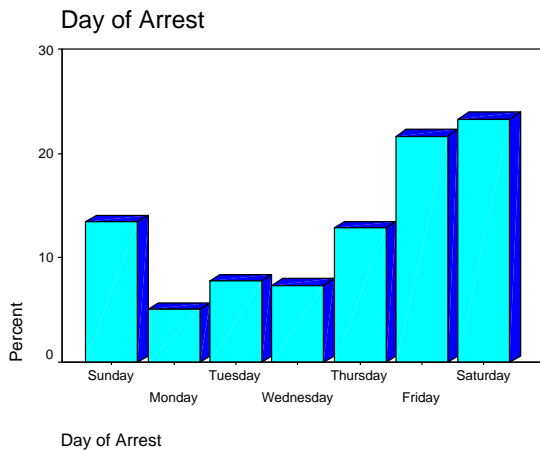


Figure 4 illustrates the percent of attendees arrested during the following periods of the day. The most common times of arrest are during the night and early morning, then the numbers drop off during the day.

Figure 4. Time of Arrest.

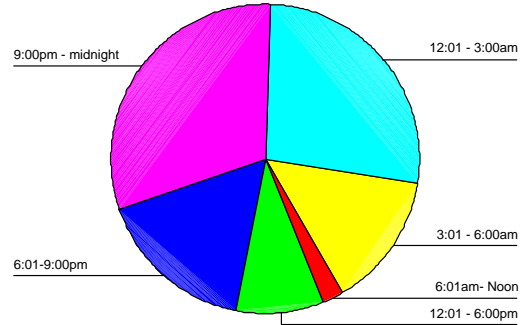


Figure 5 illustrates the percentage of offenders with respective BAC levels at the time of their arrest. The largest group (47%) exceeded .10-levels.

Figure 5. Blood-Alcohol Level at Time of Arrest

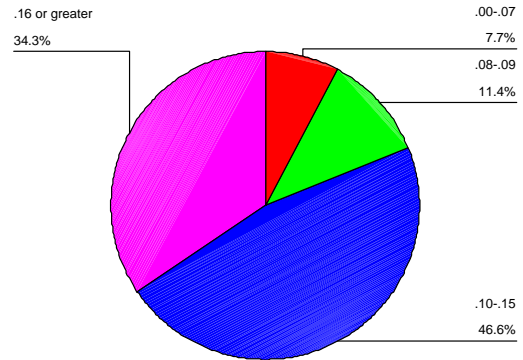


Table 3 reviews offender criminal justice histories. More than half of the attendees had previously been arrested for a DWI offense, and a small percentage having a prior DWAI. Most had not previously attended a VIP, and for those that had, they had gone primarily because of a court order.

Table 3. Criminal Justice History

		N	Percent
Prior DWI			
	Yes	255	53.8
	No	219	46.2
If Yes – How Many			
	1	123	49.8
	2	86	34.8
	3 or more	38	15.4
Prior DWAI-drugs			
	Yes	41	8.7
	No	431	91.3
If Yes – How Many			
	1	26	74.3
	2 or more	9	25.7
Prior VIP Attendance			
	Yes	72	15.2
	No	401	84.8
If Yes – Court Ordered or not			
	Court Ordered	56	78.9
	Not Court Ordered	15	21.1

Table 4 reports on the age, sex, and marital status of VIP attendees. Their ages are fairly evenly divided between those in their 20's, 30's, and 40's, with a smaller percentage of younger and older offenders. Most were male (78%) and single (58%).

Table 4. Demographic Characteristics

Age	N	Percent
17-20	35	7
21-29	148	32
30-39	119	25
40-49	115	25
50 and Older	53	11
Sex		
Male	366	78
Female	101	22
Marital Status		
Single	174	58
Married	69	23
Divorced/Separated	51	17
Widow	6	2

Figure 6 shows that most offenders began drinking before they were 21.

Figure 6. Age of First Drink

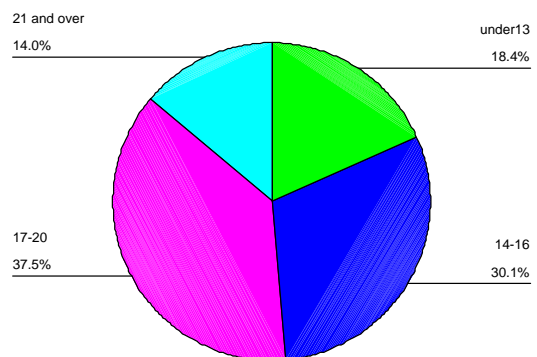


Figure 7 illustrates that most offenders self-report low alcohol use.

Figure 7. Drinking Frequency.

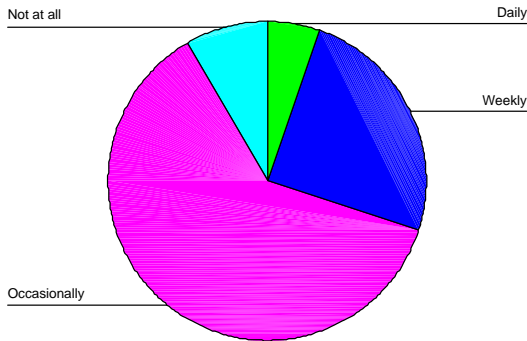


Table 5 reports on offender attitudes. Most do not believe they have a drug or alcohol problem. Most think New York’s DWI laws are fair; only 4% believed they were too tough despite their own sentencing experience. Most believed they had not previously considered the consequences of their offense on others; presumably the VIP opened their eyes. 96% believed the VIP experience would deter them from future drunk driving.

Table 5. Offender Attitudes.

	N	Percent
Do You Think You Have a Drug/Alcohol Problem?		
Yes	101	21.8
No	363	78.2
Feelings About NY DWI Laws		
Too Lenient	112	22.6
Fair	361	72.9
Too Tough	22	4.4
Have You Previously Considered Consequences of Your Offense?		
Yes	153	33.6
No	302	66.4
Will the VIP Deter You?		
Yes	454	96.2
No	18	3.8

Findings: Multivariate Results

In this section, we report findings that examine the relationship between variables in the survey.ⁱⁱ

Are courts sentencing repeat drunk drivers to VIP's? Table 6 shows that all courts do this, overall sending more repeat offenders (54%) to VIP's than first time offenders.

Table 6. Sentencing Court by Prior DWI

	Prior DWI		Total
	yes	no	
Ballston Spa	12	10	22
	54.5%	45.5%	100.0%
Town of Ballston (Burnt Hills)	6	6	12
	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
Clifton Park	38	34	72
	52.8%	47.2%	100.0%
Halfmoon	25	7	32
	78.1%	21.9%	100.0%
Malta	18	27	45
	40.0%	60.0%	100.0%
Mechanicville	5	5	10
	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
Milton	13	12	25
	52.0%	48.0%	100.0%
Saratoga Springs City	46	36	82
	56.1%	43.9%	100.0%
Saratoga County Court	18	12	30
	60.0%	40.0%	100.0%
Stillwater Town	8	7	15
	53.3%	46.7%	100.0%
Waterford	14	29	43
	32.6%	67.4%	100.0%
Wilton	13	12	25
	52.0%	48.0%	100.0%
Other	38	21	59
	64.4%	35.6%	100.0%
Total	254	218	472
	53.8%	46.2%	100.0%

Are some courts sending offenders to VIP's twice? Table 7 shows most courts sentenced some offenders to VIP's more than once, but this is true for only 15% of the offender population.

Table 7. Sentencing Court by Prior VIP Attendance

	Prior VIP Attendance		Total
	yes	no	
Ballston Spa	5	17	22
	22.7%	77.3%	100.0%
Town of Ballston (Burnt Hills)	1	11	12
	8.3%	91.7%	100.0%
Clifton Park	8	64	72
	11.1%	88.9%	100.0%
Halfmoon	8	24	32
	25.0%	75.0%	100.0%
Malta	5	41	46
	10.9%	89.1%	100.0%
Mechanicville	1	9	10
	10.0%	90.0%	100.0%
Milton	0	25	25
	.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Saratoga Springs City	13	67	80
	16.3%	83.8%	100.0%
Saratoga County Court	7	23	30
	23.3%	76.7%	100.0%
Stillwater Town	3	12	15
	20.0%	80.0%	100.0%
Waterford	5	38	43
	11.6%	88.4%	100.0%
Wilton	2	23	25
	8.0%	92.0%	100.0%
Other	14	45	59
	23.7%	76.3%	100.0%
Total	72	399	471
	15.3%	84.7%	100.0%

Figure 8 shows that those who had previously attended a VIP are more likely to believe that the VIP will not deter their future drunk driving. This makes sense since, based on their own experience, a VIP panel did not work for them.

Figure 8. Prior VIP Attendance by VIP Deterrence.

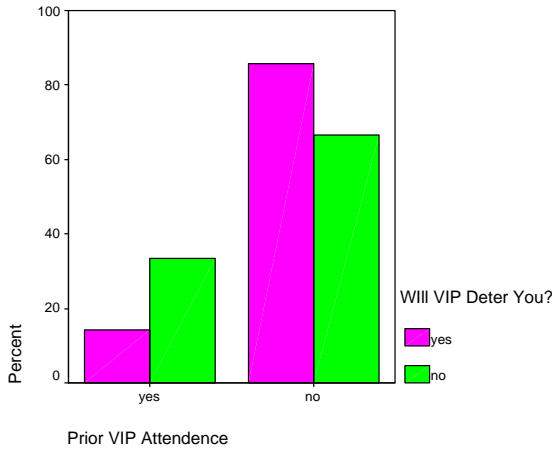


Figure 9 demonstrates that those who had prior DWI's are more likely to say they have a drug/alcohol problem.

Figure 9. Prior DWI by Self-Reported Drug/Alcohol Problem.

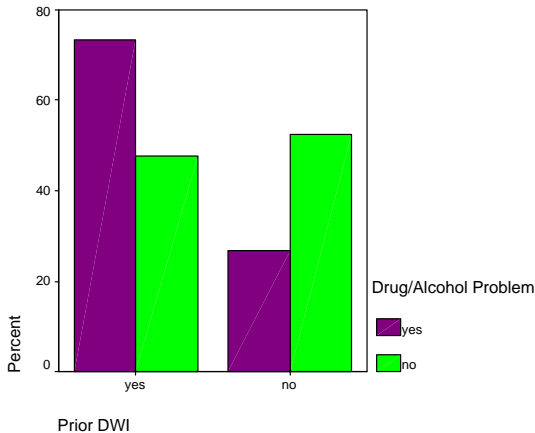
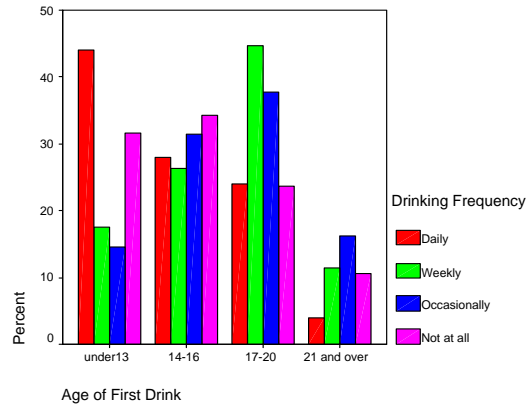


Figure 10 shows that attendees under the age of 13 report drinking daily more than any other age group. Drinking daily decreases as the age of first drink increases.

Figure 10. Age of First Drink by Drinking Frequency.



In figure 11, offenders have similar attitudes about New York's DWI laws, with the exception of those under the age of 21. They are more likely to think that DWI laws are too tough rather than too lenient.

Figure 11. Age by Perception of Fairness of DWI Laws

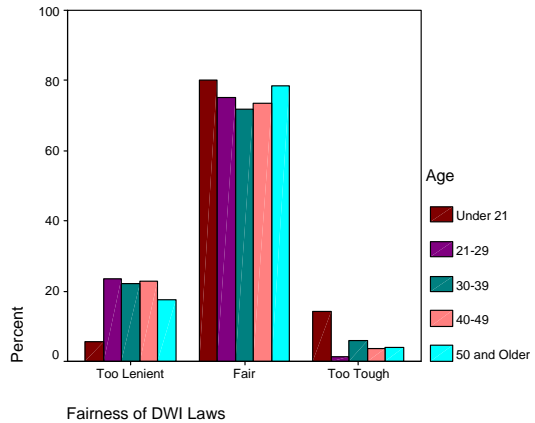


Figure 12 shows that those who began drinking before age 13 are the most likely to report a drug/alcohol problem.

Figure 12. Age of First Drink by Self-Reported Drug/Alcohol Problem.

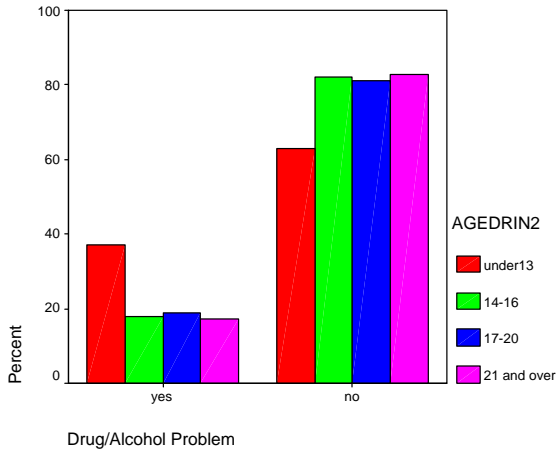


Figure 13 shows that people 50 and older are more likely to be drunk driving during the day, and those in their teens and twenties are more likely to be drunk driving late at night and early in the morning.

Figure 13. Age by Time of Arrest

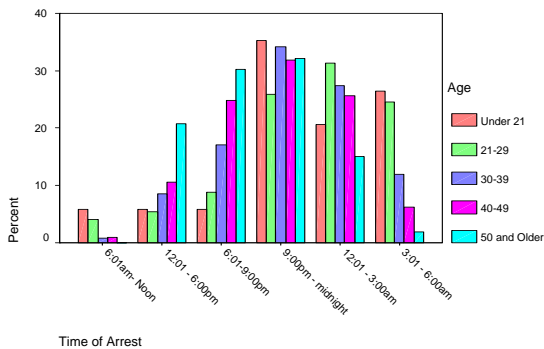


Figure 14 shows that males are more likely to have had a prior DWI than females.

Figure 14. Gender by Prior DWI

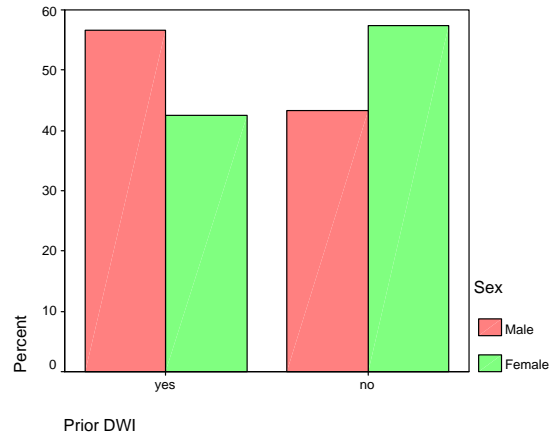
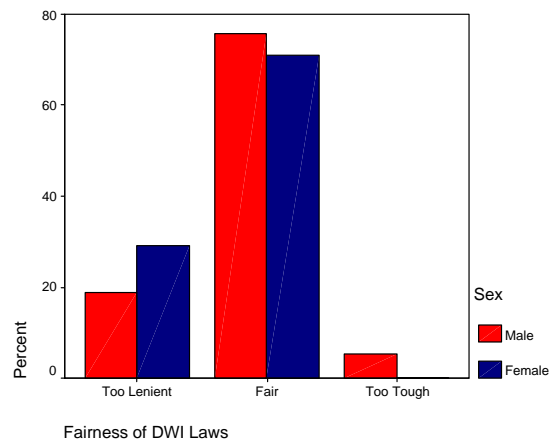


Figure 15 shows that females are more likely to believe DWI laws are fair or even too lenient. None of the female respondents believed they were too tough.

Figure 15. Perception of DWI Laws by Gender.



Conclusion

This report has provided the results from offender exit surveys, completed immediately after attending Saratoga County VIP's. While this information is valuable, we recommend changes to the questionnaire to (a) improve questions that obtained poor response rates, and (b) to gain better insight into offenders' perceptions of their VIP experience. A proposed questionnaire is included on the following page.

Beyond exit surveys, it is important to determine the effectiveness of the program through research on offender recidivism rates. Prior research is inconclusive, but several studies show that VIP's may not be effective in altering behavior. A close examination of its effectiveness in Saratoga is warranted. In order to conduct such a study, data must be obtained from the courts for two groups of offenders: those that have attended VIP's, and a control group of those who did not attend.

This study is unable to provide information that leads directly to recommended program changes because it does not measure behavioral outcomes. For example, we know that both first time offenders and repeat offenders are sentenced to VIP's in large numbers, but we do not know if the program affects these groups differently. Lord (1990) argues that VIP's should target first time offenders only, and are less likely to be effective with repeat offenders (who are more likely to have a serious drinking problem).

One speculation we offer in conclusion is to consider linking the VIP to other sentencing options that would enable offenders to take concrete steps to reduce risk of reoffense and channel their remorse into prosocial action. Such actions might include: (a) cognitive programs to support personal prevention strategies; (b) alcohol or

substance abuse counseling; (c) restitution or other reparative activities to benefit victims; and (d) participation in prevention-oriented community service programming. It may very well be that VIP's elicit a powerful emotional response from offenders, making them receptive to personal change. Unfortunately, VIP's may not have long-lasting effects; the intervention and corresponding emotional reaction is likely to be short-lived. Without being offered concrete opportunities to plan and implement personal behavioral changes, an important moment will be lost. Our recommendations would complement and capitalize on VIP's dramatic narratives.

DWI-Victim Impact Panel Survey (Proposed)

Today's Date: ___/___/___

Please indicate your answer to the following questions. Questionnaires remain anonymous, and are used solely for program evaluation purposes. Thank you.

1. I attended the panel because: Court ordered to attend for DWI/DWAI or DWAI-drugs conviction guest
Your age: _____ Male Female Marital Status: Single Married Divorced/Separated Widowed
2. Last school year completed high school some of college all of college higher degree
3. What court were you sentenced in?

<input type="checkbox"/> Ballston Spa	<input type="checkbox"/> Day	<input type="checkbox"/> Halfmoon	<input type="checkbox"/> Northumberland	<input type="checkbox"/> Saratoga County Court
<input type="checkbox"/> Town of Ballston (Burnt Hills)	<input type="checkbox"/> Edinburg	<input type="checkbox"/> Malta	<input type="checkbox"/> Providence	<input type="checkbox"/> Stillwater Town
<input type="checkbox"/> Charlton	<input type="checkbox"/> Galway	<input type="checkbox"/> Mechanicville	<input type="checkbox"/> Saratoga Springs City	<input type="checkbox"/> Stillwater Village
<input type="checkbox"/> Clifton Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Greenfeild	<input type="checkbox"/> Milton	<input type="checkbox"/> Town of Saratoga (Schuylerville)	<input type="checkbox"/> Waterford
<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Hadley	<input type="checkbox"/> Moreau		<input type="checkbox"/> Wilton
4. What was your blood alcohol content (BAC) at the time of your arrest?
 .00 - .07 .08 - .09 .10 - .15 .16 or greater
 No BAC test was given I refused to take the test I took a blood or urine test
5. Have you ever been arrested for DWI/DWAI-alcohol? Yes No
If yes, how many times total (not including this one) 1 2 3 4 other _____
6. Have you attended a victim impact panel before this one? Yes No
If yes, court ordered guest other (where)? _____
7. How often do you currently drink alcohol? Daily Weekly Occasionally Not at all
8. What was your age at the time of your first drink? Under -13 14-16 17-20 over 21
9. Do you think that you have a problem with drugs or alcohol? Yes No Not Sure
10. If yes, are you planning to seek treatment or counseling? Yes No Not Sure
11. How do you feel about the DWI laws in New York State Too Lenient Fair Too Tough
12. Please check the reactions to the Victim Impact Panel that most fit you.
 I heard nothing new and it made no difference to me.
 I heard things I had never thought of before.
 I knew these things happened, but I have more feelings about it now than before.
 It made a very strong impression on me, and I am reconsidering how I think about drinking and driving.
 It made me committed to never drink and drive again.
 It made me committed to preventing others from driving while impaired.

The victims and other panelists are interested in your comments:

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Endnotes

- ⁱ We do not report information on Item 10 regarding where respondents were drinking before the arrest because too few responded to this question. We also do not report on the qualitative comments for Item 19 because these were not entered into the dataset provided to us for analysis.
- ⁱⁱ While we examined all possible bivariate relationships, we report here only those found to be statistically significant and clearly interpretable.