Program Evaluation: Back on Track – Los Angeles American Society of Criminology Meetings: 2017

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Randie Chance, Ph.D.
Alexander M. Holsinger, Ph.D.
Kevin Walker, M.S.

The problem

- What California has been faced with
  - Prison populations
  - Judicial orders
  - New legislation

The Program

- Origination
- Purpose
- Target Population
- Program process & description

Program Evaluation Groups and Measures

- Two-group design: BOT-LA vs. Control group
- Both groups assessed/compared regarding criminal history
- Both groups provide pre-and-post measures
  - Client Evaluation of Self and Treatment (CEST)
  - Criminal Thinking Scale (CST
- Both groups being tracked for changes across psychometric measures
- Both groups being tracked for standardized recidivism measures (3 year outcome period)

Current analysis

- Utilizes only cases (from both groups) that have been released
  - Complete measures for all pre-post assessment
- Focuses on psychometric measures derived from CEST & CTS and the COMPAS risk/needs assessment
- Examined all comparisons (both intra-group and inter-group comparisons were made)

COMPAS risk/needs assessment

- Primary offender risk/need assessment in California
- Includes static and dynamic (mostly dynamic) items
  - Can measure change over time and w/intervention
- Assesses a comprehensive array of relevant criminogenic risk and need domains and factors
- Used in risk/need classification, and case planning

TCU's CEST – several scales derived

- Desire for help
- Treatment readiness
- Treatment needs
- Pressure for treatment
- Self esteem
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Decision making
- Hostility
- Risk taking
- Treatment participation
- Treatment satisfaction

TCU's CTS

- Entitlement
- Justification
- Power orientation
- Cold heartedness
- Criminal rationalization
- Personal irresponsibility

Results – group equivalency

- BOT-LA and control groups equivalent re: race and age
- BOT-LA and control groups equivalent re: several criminal history measures
  - # arrests and # of convictions for total, person, property, drug, and “other”
- Some criminal history differences (BOT-LA vs. control group)
  - Age @ first arrest (BOT-LA group older)
  - Control group had more person-related ARRESTS
  - BOT-LA group had more person-related CONVICTIONS
- Overall no grave concerns re: criminal history equivalency

Results – COMPAS data

- BOT-LA and control groups:
  - Statistically the same at pre-COMPAS measure
  - Approached significant difference at post-COMPAS measure
- Control group:
  - Statistically the same when comparing pre- to post-COMPAS
- BOT-LA group:
  - Statistically significant decrease in overall risk/need comparing pre- to post-COMPAS
- Note: These results were generated utilizing the COMPAS categorizations as quantitative scores, not raw scores

Results – CEST data

- Desire for help
  - Groups statistically the same at pre-measure
  - BOT-LA scored significantly better than control at post-measure
  - Control scored significantly worse comparing pre- to post internally
- Self-perceived needs for treatment
  - Control nearly significant reduction pre-to post internally
  - BOT-LA remained the same pre- to post
- Pressure for treatment
  - Control had significant reduction comparing pre- to post
  - BOT-LA remained the same pre- to post

Results – CEST data (cont.)

- Self-esteem
  - Approaching significant difference at pre-measure (BOT-LA higher)
  - BOT-LA scored significantly higher than control at post-measure
- Depression
  - BOT-LA and control were the same at pre-measure
  - BOT-LA and control significantly different at post (control more depressed)
- Decision making
  - BOT-LA scored significantly higher than control at both pre- and post measures

Results – CTS data

- Entitlement
  - BOT-LA scored significantly lower than control at pre
  - BOT-LA scored significantly lower than control at post
  - Neither group evinced internal change when comparing pre- to post
- Justification (of antisocial behavior)
  - BOT-LA and control were statistically the same at pre
  - BOT-LA scored significantly lower than control at post
  - Neither group evinced statistically significant change internally, however, control group increased, while BOT-LA decreased

Results – CTS data (cont.)

- Criminal rationalization
  - BOT-LA displayed statistically significant decrease from pre- to post
  - Control group the same comparing pre- to post
- Personal irresponsibility
  - BOT-LA and control were the same at pre
  - BOT-LA scored significantly lower than control at post
  - BOT-LA displayed a significant decrease when comparing pre to post
  - Control remained the same when comparing pre to post

Results – COMPAS subscales

- Control displayed significant increase (pre to post) on anger (BOT-LA showed no change pre to post)
- Control displayed significant increase (pre to post) on need for cognitive behavioral interventions (BOT-LA showed no change pre to post)
- Control displayed significant increase (pre to post) re: financial difficulties (BOT-LA showed a non-significant decrease)
- BOT-LA displayed significant decrease on general propensity for recidivism comparing pre to post (control decreased as well, but not significantly)

Results – COMPAS subscales (cont.)

- Control displayed statistically significant increase re: residential instability (pre to post); BOT-LA showed no substantive or significant change pre to post
- Control group displayed statistically significant increase (pre to post) re: social isolation; BOT-LA showed no substantive or significant change pre to post

Conclusions and next steps

- Some evidence of program impact
  - BOT-LA appears to be performing better on scales
  - Some pre-programming group differences exist but not critical
- More data being collected (e.g., Time 2 assessments)
- Several measures of recidivism being developed/tracked
  - New arrest post-release
  - New conviction post-release
  - New return to jail post-release
  - New return to prison post-release
- More cases under “released status” being added to dataset
- Future analyses utilize multivariate modeling, incorporating control where needed