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Evaluation of Victim Satisfaction and Victim Assistance
In the Pan Am 103 Lockerbie Bombing Case

*Final Report to the
Office for Victims of Crime*

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I. Overview

The application for this project was submitted in response to a request from the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) in the U. S. Department of Justice. OVC has the responsibility for providing victim assistance services to surviving family members of homicide victims in the Pan Am Flight 103 bombing, which occurred December 21, 1988, over Lockerbie, Scotland. OVC requested that the National Crime Victims Research and Treatment Center conduct an evaluation of surviving family members' utilization of, and satisfaction with, services provided by OVC, as well as other events and services that might be expected to influence victim satisfaction in the Pan Am 103/Lockerbie case, which was the largest mass murder in Scottish legal history.

Goals of the project were: 1) to conduct a services utilization and satisfaction survey of surviving family members of the Pan Am 103 Lockerbie, Scotland, bombing with particular emphasis on services provided by OVC; 2) to gather information from the surviving family members about other services and experiences that might be expected to impact satisfaction; 3) to estimate the psychological, physical, and financial impact of the homicide on surviving family members; 4) to determine factors related to increased satisfaction with victim services; and 5) to obtain survivors' recommendations regarding how services could be improved and opinions regarding their needs for future services.

The design of this study was to conduct two telephone interviews with family members known to OVC who were willing to participate. Wave 1 interviews were conducted during the trial in the Fall/Winter of 2000, and Wave 2 interviews were conducted several weeks after the verdict was delivered on January 31, 2001.

II. Background and Significance

On December 21, 1988, Pan Am Flight 103, bound for New York City from London, exploded over Lockerbie, Scotland, killing all 259 people on board and 11 people on the ground. When subsequent investigation revealed that the incident was caused by an explosive device, the largest air disaster in British history also became the largest mass murder in Scottish history.

In 1991, two Libyan citizens were indicted on charges of conspiracy and murder associated with the bombing, but Libyan authorities refused to extradite the suspects for trial until 1999, more than a decade after the bombing. After a protracted series of diplomatic negotiations, the government of Libya agreed to allow the suspects to be tried under Scottish law in the Netherlands if the United Nations Security Council would remove the severe sanctions it had placed on the Libyan government. In May of 2000, a criminal trial began at Kamp van Zeist, resulting in a verdict on January 31, 2001, that found one suspect guilty and one suspect not

guilty. The trial, and the long investigation that proceeded it, had many unique characteristics. As noted, the Pan Am 103 bombing was the largest mass murder in Scottish history. The investigation was the largest ever conducted by the Scottish police, and the case prompted the first UN sanctions against a government to obtain extradition of criminal suspects. The case was the first to be tried under Scottish law outside of Scotland and the first to be tried by a panel of judges instead of a jury.

Although the victims included citizens of 21 nations, the majority of the homicide victims in the Pan Am 103/Lockerbie case were United States citizens. In the U.S., terrorist attacks are considered federal crimes, and victims of crime (including surviving family members of homicide victims) have specific rights. Under many circumstances, crime victims are eligible for compensatory and ameliorative services. Because the Pan Am 103 crime took place outside the United States, however, no coordinated victim services were offered by the U.S. government for some time. In 1996, eight years after the bombing, legislation was enacted that authorized the U.S. Department of Justice's Office for Victims of Crime to provide services to victims of terrorism and mass violence, including American victims of terrorism outside the U.S. However, technicalities in the law interfered with OVC's ability to deliver services to victims of terrorism events that occurred before 1996, so in 1999 Congress passed legislation specifically authorizing OVC to assist the Pan Am 103 families throughout the trial process. In response to this legislation, OVC worked closely with the Scottish government to provide an array of services to the Pan Am 103 families.

These services were based in large part on lessons learned from assisting the victims of the 1995 bombing of the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City (Office for Victims of Crime, 2000). Following the terrorist attack in Oklahoma City, local and federal government agencies were highly involved with assisting victims and their families in multiple ways. For the purposes of this report, federal involvement in the post-crisis and trial stages will be summarized, because they are most applicable in understanding how OVC responded to the Pan Am 103/Lockerbie surviving family members.

Among the victim needs that were identified in the post-crisis stage of the Oklahoma City bombing were: coping with ongoing emotional hardship associated with loss, managing financial burdens associated with the disaster, assistance in dealing with governmental entities to access services, and access to specially trained and well-informed support personnel (Office for Victims of Crime, 2000). When the investigation resulted in arrests and the preparations for trial were begun, additional needs were identified. These included information about the investigation, evidence, and legal processes; access to a prosecutor who was sensitive to the unique victim-witness issues posed by a disaster of this magnitude; ability to observe trial proceedings, either directly or remotely via broadcast; accommodations for travel and housing when observing trial proceedings; waiting and viewing areas at the trial that were separate from the defendants' families; and coordination of media contact, logistics, and debriefing services for families attending the trial. Some of these services were necessitated by the change in trial venue (from

Oklahoma City to Denver, CO) mandated by the court. This change in venue was particularly applicable to the Lockerbie trial, which was conducted a considerable distance from both the site of the crime and the residences of surviving family members.

Although the services provided for victims families following the Murrah Federal building bombing were developed primarily out of pragmatic and victim-driven needs assessment, the services are also consistent with various theoretical formulations of disaster response. For example, Hobfoll's (1989) Conservation of Resources Theory suggests that individuals will be negatively affected by disaster to the extent that their important material and personal resources are depleted. By extension, providing valuable resources to victims, including information, financial assistance, and emotional support will reduce the impact of disaster-related losses. Similarly, Edwards (1998) has noted that families confronted with disaster often focus on three general coping tasks in the aftermath: defining the situation clearly, identifying actions that need to be undertaken, and obtaining access to available resources. The services provided by OVC can clearly be conceptualized as addressing each of these tasks. Information helps victims and survivors define the situation clearly, and other services are specifically designed to assist them in identifying and obtaining important services (e.g., mental health counseling, financial assistance). Furthermore, in the longer term process of post-crime adaptation, past research has identified the importance of legal protection and rights for victims (Beatty, Howley, & Kilpatrick, 1996) and that providing victim services is important to later victim participation and satisfaction with the criminal justice system (Kelley & Erez, 1997). The services offered to Pan Am 103 surviving family members by OVC regarding the trial were generally designed to meet these goals.

For victims of the Pan Am 103/Lockerbie terrorist bombing, OVC offered numerous services. These included: a) an international toll-free telephone line that contained information about the progress of the investigation and trial; b) a secure web site providing case information, an "electronic scrapbook" of information about the bombing, a discussion forum for family members, and daily trial summaries; c) remote, closed-circuit viewing of the trial at Kamp van Zeist; d) funding and coordination of travel and lodging to Kamp van Zeist or one of the remote viewing sites for two family members per victim; e) a secure, "Safe Haven" waiting area separate from defendants and their families at the Scottish Court at Kamp van Zeist; f) on-site personnel at the Scottish Court to assist with local needs, provide family services, and explain Scottish law and procedures; g) funding and coordination of travel for families to attend pre-trial briefings with the Scottish prosecution team; h) a Lockerbie Trial Handbook that provided information about the trial, Scottish law, local amenities at Kamp van Zeist, and other pertinent logistics; and i) funds to pay for mental health counseling for victims family members throughout the trial process. Many of these services, or similar efforts, were first developed and offered to victims following the Murrah Federal Building bombing and during the trials later held in Denver, Colorado.

Unfortunately there was quite a time lag between the time of the bombing and the authorization of OVC to provide services and during this time lag many families were distraught and in need of services, creating a less than ideal situation for family members and for OVC. Past research has indicated the importance of legal protection and rights for victims (Beatty et al., 1996) and that providing victim services is important to later victim participation and satisfaction with the criminal justice system (Kelley & Erez, 1997). Thus, it may have been particularly difficult for family members in the Pan Am case because of dissatisfaction with the lack of services and lack of legal movement early in the case.

The surviving family members in the Pan Am 103 case are key consumers OVC is attempting to serve, and it was critically important to determine feedback from these crime victims about a host of topics including their:

- ◆ Knowledge that services exist
- ◆ Utilization of services
- ◆ Opinions about which services should be offered to crime victims and the extent to which they had adequate access to such services
- ◆ Satisfaction with various aspects of the criminal justice system (CJS) process
- ◆ Exposure to and satisfaction with other events and services in the case that might be expected to influence their overall satisfaction
- ◆ Recommendations as to how services to victims in future cases can be improved. In addition, it was important to gather information from surviving family members about the psychological, physical, and financial impact of the homicide upon them.

Given the magnitude of the Pan Am 103/Lockerbie case and the apparent inevitability that other terrorism mass casualty incidents (such as the September 11th attacks) will happen in the future, it is important to evaluate carefully services utilization and victim satisfaction among key consumers of those services. Such an evaluation has the potential to help OVC determine how its services are utilized and perceived by these family members in an extremely high profile case. The major objective of this project was to conduct such an evaluation.

III. Study Design and Methodology

A. Overview

The project accomplished its goals by conducting two waves of telephone surveys with adult family members on the OVC registry of Pan Am 103/Lockerbie case surviving family members. Both surveys were conducted via telephone. The first survey was designed to gather information before the trial was over. Three hundred surviving family members participated in the first survey. A second followup survey was conducted after the trial was completed and the

verdict was announced. In the second survey, 241 of the original participants completed the interview. The first interview averaged approximately 42 minutes in length and the second interview averaged approximately 22 minutes. See Appendix A for a full Methodological Report submitted by Schulman, Ronca & Bucuvalas, Inc. (SRBI).

B. *Sample*

Participants for this study were identified through the OVC, who maintained a list of 573 adult surviving family members of the Pan Am 103 victims that included contact information. All persons on this list were mailed a letter from the OVC Director describing the project. They were invited to return a postcard if they did not wish to be contacted. From this mailing, 68 (11.9%) refused via postcard, and 505 names remained eligible. Contact information for these names was provided to Schulman, Ronca, & Bucuvalas, Inc. (SRBI), a survey research firm with extensive experience with telephonic survey methods. Of these 505, 70 (12.2%) had no working phone numbers, and another 75 (13.1%) could not be contacted due to incorrect or changed phone numbers. Another five (1%) potential participants were contacted, but not eligible because they were either married to another family member participant or were not related to a victim. Of the 355 remaining eligible participants who could be located and contacted via telephone, interviews were completed with 300. This represents 84.5% of the 355 eligible participants contacted by telephone and 70.9% of the 423 (355 plus 68 postcard refusals) with whom direct contact was made. Thus, the refusal rate was 15.5% for those contacted by telephone and 29.1% for those with whom the researchers had any direct contact (by telephone or postcard). Limited demographic information was obtained, but participants were well-educated, with 81% having completed at least some college coursework and only 3% who did not complete high school. Over half of respondents (64%) were married, with smaller percentages of widowed (16%), single (9%) and divorced (7%) participants.

C. *Measures*

A copy of the full interviews are included in Appendices B and C.

1. **Wave One Interview.**

The Wave One Interview began with an introduction to the study and verified that the person being interviewed had a family member who was killed as a result of the bombing of Pan Am 103. This was followed up by a section on family member and notification characteristics. This section included a question determining how many family members were killed and what the participant's relationship was to that family member (i.e., fiancé, father, daughter, etc.) In addition other relationship characteristics were determined (questions 4-10). The next set of questions gathered information about when the participant learned of the bombing (question 11), how they learned of the bombing (question 12), whether they were uncertain a family member had been killed (question 13), and how they learned a relative was killed (question 14). Finally,

this section included questions about how notification took place and by whom (questions 17-18) and if they thought the crash was due to a terrorist act or accident and how they felt upon learning it was a bombing (questions 19-20).

The next section of the Wave One Interview focused on the helpfulness of various agencies, U.S. government branches and other government branches in providing information, assistance, and support (questions 21-38). This was followed by questions regarding satisfaction with U.N. sanctions (questions 39-42). Question 43-54 focused on awareness of OVC services and satisfaction with those services. The final set of questions (56-62) assessed predictions regarding trial verdicts, opinions about airline security and the risk of terrorism, and suggestions for improving services for victims of terrorist acts.

2. Wave Two Followup Interview.

The questions for the Wave Two Followup Interview were composed in response to answers to the first interview so that we were able to further assess the needs of victims of terrorist acts. In addition, some questions were repeated to determine whether additional services had been used during the course of the trial.

The Followup Interview began with a brief re-orientation to the study (i.e., that SBRI was interviewing them at the behest of the Office for Victims of Crime) and the purpose of the interview (to assess reactions to the verdict, ascertain use of OVC victim assistance services, and to inquire about improvements in federal services for victims of future terrorist acts). After the introduction, participants were asked about satisfaction with: the verdicts (Question 2); efforts to apprehend the perpetrators; efforts to keep the families informed prior to the indictment in 1991, after the indictment in 1991, and after the 1998 extradition agreement; their ability to have input in the case; the thoroughness of the case prepared against the defendants; the fairness of the trial; the explanation they received about how the Scottish Court system would work; the level of information provided about court proceedings; services offered by OVC; fairness of the verdict; and fairness of the sentences (Questions 7a-7m). Participants were also asked to identify the least satisfying aspect (Question 8) and the most satisfying aspect of the way the case was handled (Question 9) and to compare the treatment of the victims to the treatment of the defendants in the case.

The next section of the interview focused specifically on services provided by OVC. Similar to the Wave One Interview, participants were asked if they had ever used each service. They were also asked if they had used each service since the last time they were interviewed, how helpful they found the service, if there were improvements or changes in the service that they would like to see, and if so what those were. Specific services assessed included the toll-free international telephone line (Question 11), the secure internet website (Question 12), the mental health counseling fund (Question 13), funds for travel and lodging to attend the trial or a remote court site (Question 14), assistance in making travel, lodging and transportation

arrangements (Question 15), family liaison officers at the trial (Question 16), secure waiting areas at the trial (Question 17), and the Lockerbie Trial Handbook (Question 17). In addition, all respondents were asked about their efforts to obtain information from OVC by calling or e-mailing OVC directly (Question 18).

This section was followed by an assessment of problems with services that family members identified in the first interview, including possible issues with reimbursing travel expenses for only two family members (Question 19), slow reimbursements (Question 20), lack of daily debriefings at the remote sites (Question 21), providing information only to one family member (Question 22), lack of information on the emotional reactions to the bombing in the Lockerbie Trial Handbook (Question 23), lack of availability of mental health services before and after, not just during, the trial (Question 24), and "payer of last resort" status of federal reimbursement for mental health services (Question 25). Participants were also asked what they viewed as the most important reasons that family members did not seek mental health counseling (Question 26), if they considered mental health counseling in relation to the bombing (Question 27a), if so how helpful the services were and if not why (Question 27 b-c). In addition, participants were asked to describe their emotional state since learning the verdicts (Question 28) and specific emotional reactions that they may have been experienced in the past week (Question 29). The final questions focused on opinions about policy change that would give OVC the authority to provide services similar to what they provided in the Pan Am 103/Lockerbie case to family members in future cases in which ample reasons exist to suspect the incident may be a crime but accidental causes cannot be ruled out (Question 30), and any final recommendations about how the U.S. Government or OVC can improve services provided to family members of terrorist cases (Question 31).

D. *Procedure*

Training for telephone interviewing for Wave One began on September 7, 2000, in SRBI's New York interviewing center. Because the average length (59.9 minutes) exceeded the planned maximum (45 minutes), and because the sensitive nature of some of the questions was upsetting to a small number of respondents, only 15 interviews were conducted that evening. Interviewing was suspended pending further review of the questionnaire. After questionnaire revision and additional training, interviewing was again started by SRBI on September 12, 2000. Twelve interviews were conducted, averaging 48.2 minutes. Again, because this exceeded the 45 minute maximum length, the questionnaire was revised to shorten the interview. The final version of the Wave One questionnaire was restarted on September 14, 2000. Interviewing for Wave One was completed on December 19, 2000, with 300 completed telephone surveys that averaged 42.1 minutes in length.

Training and interviewing for Wave Two of the study began on March 28, 2001, between seven and eight weeks after the announcement of the verdicts. This time frame was selected to allow family members sufficient time to process their reaction to the verdict before answering

questions about their reactions. The total sample consisted of the 296 completes from Wave One who had consented to being called back for the follow-up survey (four respondents in Wave One specified they did not want to be called back). Interviews were completed with 241 (80.3% of 300; 81.4% of those consenting to re-contact) of these cases on July 9, 2001 (the large majority were completed within four weeks, but continuing efforts were made to contact as many participants as possible). The Wave Two telephone interview averaged 22.4 minutes in length.

1. Initial Contact.

The sample was divided into domestic (U. S.) and international sub-samples to make the international phone numbers and time zones easier to track and administer effectively. Of the 573 possible contacts in the sample, 107 were determined to be in the international sub-sample and 466 were in the U. S. sub-sample. Initial telephone contact was attempted at times with the greatest probability of respondent contact. The primary interviewing period was from 5:30 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. on weekdays, from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. on Saturdays, and from 10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. on Sundays (all times local). Since interviewing was conducted across time zones, the interviewing shift lasted until 1:00 a.m. Eastern Time (10:00 p.m. Pacific Time).

SRBI also attempted to dial during these hours for the international sample, but some daytime calls were also made because of the extreme difference in dialing hours available and waking hours in the sample.

There were no maximum attempts placed on the number of times interviewers attempted to reach each telephone number during the field period. If the phone number was judged to be working, it was called at least once a day during the field period. If the phone number was identified as a wrong number or not in service, directory assistance was attempted to obtain a working number. When the household was reached, the interviewer asked to speak to the designated person on the sample. In a few cases the list identified a "Mr. or Mrs." as the designated contact, so interviewers asked for either one and conducted the interview with the person most readily available.

When the designated respondent was reached but an interview at that time was inconvenient or inappropriate, interviewers set up appointments with respondents. When contact was made with the household, but not the designated respondent(s), interviewers probed for appropriate callback times and attempted to set up an appointment.

2. Language Barriers

All households in which a language barrier was encountered were designated for special call back. Based on their country, SRBI attempted to have a native language-speaking interviewer make the call back. This was done not only to facilitate communication, but also to

make sure the person responding was actually the designated contact, in case someone else had answered the phone. If the contact could speak English the interview was conducted in English. There was one language barrier in German, where the respondent did not speak enough English to conduct the interview. One interview was conducted with a respondent in Italian using an Italian translator. When SRBI contacted the other cases with language barriers, they determined either that the phone number was wrong or that the respondent did not wish to participate.

IV. Results

A. Overview

This report focuses on the following major areas: 1) utilization of and satisfaction with OVC services; 2) recommendations for improvements of services; 3) satisfaction with process and outcome of the legal case; 4) mental health-related issues; and 5) support for public policy changes in OVC services.

B. Initial Interview Results

Three hundred adult relatives of the Pan Am/Lockerbie bombing completed Wave One interviews. Results of the interview indicated that 36% of relatives, upon learning of the crash, thought the bombing was an accident, 18% thought it was a terrorist act and the remaining 46% were not sure of the cause. Most family members were satisfied with their contact with the Scottish police but not the other agencies who were involved (see Figure 1). During the investigation, only one-third of family members stated that they were kept informed about the status of the investigation (35%) or about negotiations to bring suspects to trial (34%). When the investigation ultimately resulted in the indictment of the two suspects, fewer than half (44%) said that they had received any official notification.

Not surprisingly, many surviving family members reported considerable problems associated with the loss of their loved ones. Over half (54%) reported that they had missed work days after the disaster (either due to their health, distress, or demands of the investigation), although only one-third (31%) reported that they felt a need for financial assistance to help them recover from their loss. Forty percent reported that they increased their personal healthcare expenditures as a result of the bombing. Over half of respondents (53%) reported increased conflict and other problems with family members. Nearly three-quarters (72%) reported great difficulty coping in the aftermath of the bombing, with 57% reporting that they felt the need for individual counseling or therapy, and 61% expressing the need for family support groups.

Over four-fifths of the sample (81%) reported a need for better information about what happened, and 75% stated they felt they needed someone to advocate for their interests in the criminal justice system and with government agencies. Participants were asked about their

satisfaction with official efforts to keep them informed during three different time frames: 1988-1991 (prior to the indictment of the defendants); 1991-1998 (after the indictment but before the extradition agreement); and 1998-present (after the extradition agreement). Figure 2 clearly indicates increased satisfaction after the extradition agreement. This also coincides with OVC's provision of services to surviving family members (which began in 1999), which many respondents identified as marking a significant change in their attitudes toward the government's response to victims' family members. Specifically, 77% of family members were very satisfied with the services offered by OVC and fewer than 3% reported being somewhat or very dissatisfied. When family members were asked about specific services provided by OVC, most were aware of services such as the international telephone line (86.3%), website information (90%), family liaison officers (79.7%), a secured waiting area in the Netherlands (81.3%), case brief meetings with the Lord Advocate and his team (70.7%), closed circuit viewing of the trial proceedings (94.3%), and the Lockerbie Trial Briefing Handbook (75.3%). However, only 43% of relatives knew that OVC established a fund to pay for mental health counseling, only 8% had ever used these funds, and 24% said they had inadequate access to counseling.

Results indicate that most family members were aware of and satisfied with services provided by OVC, suggesting that OVC's goal to provide victim services to surviving family members was accomplished, with the notable exception of mental health services.

Family members were asked how much improvement they thought there has been in airline security since the Pan Am 103 bombing. Only 14% thought there had been "a lot" of improvement, and 32% thought there had been "some" improvement. Almost half (49%), however, thought there had been no real improvement in airline security.

Respondents were also asked about their perceptions of in the future risk of further terrorism. Just over one third (34%) thought the risk had stayed about the same. However, almost 20% reported that the risk had increased substantially since the Pan Am 103 bombing, about 24% thought it had increase somewhat. Only 14% thought terrorism risk had decreased somewhat, and only 3% thought it had decreased substantially.

Finally, family members were asked about improvement in the ability of the U.S. government to respond to the needs of victims of terrorists acts. About 21% thought there was "a lot" of improvement, and almost half (45%) thought there was some improvement in the government's ability to respond to terrorism victims. Twenty percent thought that there was only a little (12%) or no (8%) improvement, and approximately 13% said they did not have an opinion.

C. *Follow-up Interview Results: Findings from Wave Two*

As was previously noted, 80.3% of Wave One participants were located and completed the Wave Two interviews.

1. Utilization of and Satisfaction with OVC Services.

Each family member was asked four questions about each service offered by OVC; 1) Did they ever use the services? 2) Did they use it since the Wave One interview? 3) How helpful was the service? and 4) What improvements would they like to see in the service. Data on utilization of OVC services are presented in Table 1. As inspection of Table 1 shows, many of the services were used by a substantial proportion of family members.

- ◆ Three-fourths (75%) of family members reported using the Lockerbie Trial Handbook, and approximately 6 out of 10 family members (61%) reported having used the secure website.
- ◆ More than 4 out of 10 family members (42%) said they had used travel funds to attend the trial or one of the remote viewing sites.
- ◆ Over one-third of family members (36%) reported having received assistance with travel arrangements; one-third of family members (33%) had used the services of Family Liaison Officers at the Trial Court; and almost one-third of family members (32%) had utilized the secure waiting areas at the trial court.
- ◆ Almost one-fourth of family members (24%) had used the toll free international telephone number.
- ◆ Only 6% of family members had used the crime victim compensation fund for mental health counseling.

Likewise, many family members reported having used OVC services in the period since Wave One interviews. Specifically,

- ◆ Over half of family members (52%) had used the secure internet website, and almost half (47%) had used the Lockerbie Trial Handbook.
- ◆ Almost one-third of family members (32%) had used OVC funds to attend the trial or visit one of the remote sites, and more than one-fourth of family members (27%) received OVC assistance with travel arrangements.
- ◆ Approximately one-fifth (21%) of family members used the toll free international telephone number, the Family Liaison Officers at the trial court (20%), or the secure waiting areas at the trial court (18%).

With respect to satisfaction with these OVC services, family members almost uniformly thought each of the services was helpful. Respondents who had utilized a service were asked if they thought it was very helpful, somewhat helpful, or not too helpful. As is quite clear from inspection of Figure 3, virtually all family members thought that each OVC service was helpful. The combined "very" and "somewhat" helpful ratings ranged from a low of 93% for the fund for mental health counseling to a high of 100% for the Lockerbie Trial Handbook. This means that

only an extremely small proportion of family members who had used a service said that it was not too helpful.

In addition to questions about the specific OVC services, family members were also asked whether they had ever simply contacted OVC via telephone or e-mail requesting assistance or information. A total of 130 family members (54%) had done so, and 96 had called or e-mailed since the Wave One interview (40%). Of those who had ever contacted OVC, 99% said it was either very easy (89%) or somewhat easy (10%) to get through to OVC. Over 9 out of 10 family members who contacted OVC said they were either very satisfied (92%) or somewhat satisfied (5%) with the information or service they received from OVC in response to their request.

As will be described subsequently, family members were also asked a series of questions about their overall level of satisfaction about several aspects of the case. This included their overall satisfaction with OVC. Only 1% of family members said they were somewhat dissatisfied with OVC, and no one said they were very dissatisfied. The remaining 99% said they were either very satisfied (93%) or somewhat satisfied with OVC.

2. Family Member Recommendations for How OVC Services Might be Improved.

All family members who had ever used an OVC service were asked if there were any improvements they would like to see in that service. Those who responded affirmatively were asked open ended questions about what changes or improvements they would like to see. Generally, responses clustered around two primary themes: perceived need for more timely and more comprehensive information, and greater emotional support. These responses are summarized below. With respect to the toll free telephone number, eight family members offered the following recommendations for changes or improvements in this OVC service:

- ◆ OVC should obtain and provide families with more rapid analysis from the prosecution team so they can provide up-to-date information to victims.
- ◆ Update information more quickly so victims can find out things from the OVC phone line instead of from the media.

Twenty-two family members made the following suggestions for improving the website:

- ◆ Provide more frequent updates of information.
- ◆ Update the material as quickly as possible because things change rapidly.
- ◆ Include more detailed information; do not withhold anything.
- ◆ Provide a secure part of the website for family members to communicate with each other.

Only two family members offered suggestions for improving crime victims compensation for mental health services. Both of these family members suggested that OVC should pay for counseling before, during, and after the trial.

Family members (n=8) offered several suggestions about the OVC service funds to attend the trial or one of the remote court sites:

- ◆ Provide opportunity for more than one family member to attend so they do not have to choose among family members and family members can support each other.
- ◆ The travel agency should be more victim friendly; do not make victims take connecting flights just because they are cheaper.
- ◆ Let victims know which hotels provide free breakfasts; this would be helpful since OVC does not reimburse meal expenses.

With respect to family liaison officers at the trial court site, only two family members offered suggestions. The first was for the liaison officers to use everyday language in their explanations of proceedings. The second suggestion was to increase interactions among family members.

Six family members provided suggestions about how to improve the secure waiting areas at the trial court. One suggestion was to provide greater security from the press. The family member making this suggestions noted that a reporter had tried to enter the waiting area. A second suggestion was that friends or attorneys of the family member should be allowed to enter the waiting area with the family member's permission.

Twelve family members offered suggestions for improving Lockerbie Trial Handbook. Most frequently noted suggestions were:

- ◆ Provide a local map with directions to the trial court that includes how to get there using different forms of transportation.
- ◆ Try to provide better explanations using simpler language of some of the complicated legal terms
- ◆ Place much of the material in the Handbook on the website, which would permit it to be updated if necessary.

In addition, Wave Two participants were asked whether they had experienced specific problems identified by individual Wave One respondents. Specifically, they were asked if:

- ◆ their family had been affected by the OVC policy of only reimbursing expenses for two family members;
- ◆ they had experienced problems with untimely reimbursements;

- ◆ they were satisfied with the amount of debriefing provided at the remote viewing sites;
- ◆ they wanted OVC to contact all interested family members about new information, rather than one designated contact person; and
- ◆ they thought the Lockerbie Trial Handbook should have contained more information concerning their emotional reactions during the trial.

Over one-third (38%) of respondents thought that the two person limit affected their family's ability to travel to the trial or a remote viewing site, and over 80% believed that it was either very (48%) or somewhat (33%) important for OVC to support travel for all family members who wished to attend the trial. However, only 5% of those who requested reimbursement from OVC were at all dissatisfied with the speed of reimbursements; 75% were very satisfied, and 14% were somewhat satisfied. With respect to debriefing at remote viewing sites, 91% stated that it was "very" (67%) or "somewhat" (24%) important to provide daily on-site debriefings. Nearly 90% of respondents indicated that it was at least somewhat important for OVC to maintain contact with all family members, rather than just one designated contact person from each family. Finally, nearly three-fourths (71%) of family members stated that it was also at least somewhat important for the Trial Handbook to include more information regarding emotional reactions experienced during the trial itself. Thus, although a majority of surviving family members did not spontaneously identify these issues as important during Wave One, in all but one case (reimbursement speed), a large majority of them thought that the suggested improvements or changes in service were important.

3. Satisfaction with Process and Outcome of Case:

One reason the Wave Two interviews were conducted was to gather information from family members after the criminal case had been resolved. This would provide the opinions of family members after they had the opportunity to digest the process and outcome of the case and place their experiences in some perspective. Family members were asked how satisfied they were with the verdict. Only 17% said they were very satisfied, but 54% said they were somewhat satisfied. In contrast, 20% said they were somewhat dissatisfied, and 9% said they were very dissatisfied. Thus, about 7 out of 10 family members were at least somewhat satisfied with the verdict, whereas about 3 out of 10 were at least somewhat dissatisfied.

Figure 4 provides information about family members' ratings of satisfaction with a number of other aspects of the case process and outcome. For each of these aspects of the case, family members were asked whether they were very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied. Figure 4 provides a visual comparison of the relative levels of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the case elements on a scale ranging from -100 to +100. The positive scores (from +1 to +100) were assigned to ratings of somewhat satisfied or very satisfied. Thus, if all family members said they were somewhat or very satisfied with a given aspect of the case, the entire bar for that variable would be displayed above zero. Likewise, negative scores (from -1 to -100) were assigned to ratings of somewhat or very dissatisfied.

Thus, if all family members rated an aspect of the case negatively, the entire bar would be displayed below zero. Thus, the relative satisfaction versus dissatisfaction of family members for each aspect of the case corresponds to the proportion of the bar is above or below zero. In addition, the shaded portions of each bar depict the proportion of family members who were either somewhat satisfied or somewhat dissatisfied.

Inspection of Figure 4 reveals the following important findings.

- ◆ In general, family members' satisfaction with all aspects of the case was more positive than negative. However, there was considerable variation in the extent of family member satisfaction. For example, almost all family members were either very or somewhat satisfied with support services during trial (99%), explanations of how the court works and what to expect (98%), how informed they were about court proceedings (98%), and the services provided by OVC (99%).
- ◆ In contrast, a significant minority of family members were either somewhat or very dissatisfied with efforts to apprehend the perpetrators (25%), efforts to keep family members informed prior to the indictment (38%), ability to have input into the case (29%), and the speed of the investigation (34%).
- ◆ Approximately one-third of family members (34%) said they were dissatisfied with the fairness of the verdicts, and almost half (48%) said they were dissatisfied with the fairness of the sentence.

These findings have some important implications for understanding family members' opinions about OVC services. First, ratings were not uniformly positive and differed depending on the aspect of case being rated, suggesting that family members were capable of making distinctions in their satisfaction assessments. Second, the aspects of the case that obtained the highest ratings were those that OVC services were specifically designed to address. Third, consistent with the Wave One results, OVC services received the highest positive satisfaction ratings of any aspect of the case, with 99% of family members being either very satisfied (93%) or somewhat satisfied (6%).

4. Mental Health and Counseling Issues

As has been previously noted, a relatively small percentage of family members reported having used OVC crime victim compensation-funded mental health counseling services. However, previous research with surviving family members of homicide victims suggests that many such survivors have mental health problems even in much less complex cases than the Pan Am 103 bombing (Amick-McMullan, Kilpatrick, & Resnick, 1991). In the Wave Two interview, time limitations (i.e., limited duration of interviews) precluded assessment of mental health at the

diagnostic level. Therefore, questions about mental health focused on past utilization of services, rather than on problems or symptoms, per se.

Data indicate that 48% of family members said they had experienced emotional or behavioral problems since the bombing that were sufficiently bad that they considered seeking mental health counseling. Only 36%, however, had actually sought mental health services (this value is different from the 6% who used OVC funds to pay for mental health services because many family members sought and received services prior to the availability of OVC funds, which could not be applied retroactively). Of those who actually received some type of mental health services, 57% rated them as very helpful and 27% as somewhat helpful. Only 15% rated the mental health services as not too helpful. Given the relatively low level of mental health service utilization, it was important to determine why family members did not seek mental health services.

Two open-ended questions obtained family members' opinions about this issue. First, all respondents were asked what they thought the most important reasons were that some victims' family members might not seek mental health counseling in a case like this one. Of 214 responses, the most frequent reasons were that: a) they think that they can handle it on their own with the support of family, friends, and through their religious faith; b) mental health counseling is stigmatizing or a sign of weakness; c) their financial or insurance situation precluded it; and d) they may be in denial or cannot admit they have a problem. Second, the 30 family members who considered seeking, but did not actually obtain, mental health services were asked about the reasons they personally did not seek mental health services. The most frequently mentioned reasons were a desire to grieve privately, lack of time to attend counseling sessions, financial considerations, lack of knowledge about and access to available services, and perception of adequate support from family members.

Emotional reactions to the announcement of the verdicts was also assessed. A majority of family members (54%) said it had been very (17%) or somewhat difficult (37%) to cope with the stress and upsetting situations produced by the bombing since they learned about the verdicts. Furthermore, although the majority of respondents reported being relatively symptom-free during the week prior to the Wave Two interview, over one-third reported having been bothered by trouble falling asleep (37%); almost one-fourth were bothered by restless, disturbed sleep (23%), and approximately one-eighth were bothered by frightening thoughts and images (13%) or feeling hopeless about the future (12%). This suggests that for some family members, bombing-related stress is an ongoing concern associated with potentially troubling symptoms.

5. Family Members' Support for Public Policy Changes in Eligibility for OVC Services:

Family members were asked a series of questions about potential public policy options that would change eligibility for or the nature of some OVC services. Their opinions regarding

the first set of these potential changes are displayed in Figure 5. Most family members thought it was important to make each of the proposed changes.

- ◆ 81% said it was very (48%) or somewhat important (33%) for OVC to change the current policy of supporting only two members per family to attend the trial so that all family members who desired to attend could do so.
- ◆ 91% said it was very (67%) or somewhat important (24%) for OVC to provide daily briefings for people who watched trials at remote viewing sites.
- ◆ 89% said it was very (63%) or somewhat (26%) important for the government to try to directly contact all surviving family members who wish to be kept informed about the case. OVC policy in the Pan Am 103 case was to contact only one member per family.
- ◆ 71% thought it was very (35%) or somewhat (36%) important to include more information about emotional reactions to crimes and trials so family members might know what to expect and normalize their feelings.
- ◆ 84% said it was very (51%) or somewhat (33%) important for OVC to offer to pay for counseling services for family members immediately after the crime and continuing until the legal case and appeals are over.

Family members were also asked about two other potential changes in OVC services that would require changes in United States law. The first potential change concerned eligibility for crime victim compensation. Under current law, these compensation funds can only be used if the family members does not have health insurance that would pay for counseling. When asked if they would favor or oppose a change in U.S. law permitting family members in cases like this to be eligible for crime victim compensation funding for mental health counseling whether or not they had private insurance:

- ◆ 64% favored this change
- ◆ 33% opposed this change
- ◆ 3% were not sure

The final public policy change family members were asked about concerned eligibility criteria for the types of services OVC provided in this case. Under current US law, OVC can only provide these types of services once a determination has been made that an incident occurred as a result of a criminal act. However, it is sometimes not clear for some time as to whether some events are crimes or accidents (e.g., the TWA Flight 800 crash). Family members were asked if they favored or opposed changing the law so that OVC could provide these types of services to family members in cases in which there are ample reasons to suspect that the incident may be a crime but accidental causes cannot be ruled out.

- ◆ 88% of family members favored this change
- ◆ 10% oppose this change
- ◆ 2% were not sure.

In summary, there was strong support among the Pan Am 103 family members for each of the proposed changes in OVC policy and law.

V. *Summary and Recommendations*

These findings have important implications for intervening with victims of terrorism and surviving family members of terrorist attacks. Prior to the involvement of the Office for Victims of Crime, family members held negative opinions about virtually all official responses from U.S. federal entities and corporations. Once OVC became involved, however, and served to coordinate information and support services for victims' families, satisfaction ratings increased. Furthermore, despite generally negative prior opinions of federal involvement, family members expressed considerable awareness and utilization of almost all OVC services and very high (over 90%) levels of satisfaction with these services. Satisfaction ratings were not uniformly positive and differed according to the aspect of case being rated, which indicates that family members were able to distinguish among the different agencies involved and services provided. The aspects of the case that obtained the highest satisfaction ratings were those that OVC services were specifically designed to address, suggesting that providing information about investigatory activities, access to legal proceedings, and financial and personal support is useful and may meet some needs of victims' family members. Indeed, future changes in OVC services recommended by family members centered around providing even more information and allowing for greater access to personal and professional support, further underscoring the importance of these resources for terrorism victims. While the design of this study does not permit the conclusion that OVC involvement led directly to improved satisfaction, anecdotal information provided by family members during interviews certainly supports this view. That information and support should be perceived as beneficial and increase satisfaction for crime victims should come as no surprise. Many programs that train victim advocates to respond to terrorist acts include components that focus on providing information, psycho-education, and problem solving (Office for Victims of Crime, 1998), as do many empirically supported psychological interventions for individuals exposed to traumatic stress (e.g., Abueg, Woods, & Watson, 2000; Muran & DiGiuseppe, 2000; Resnick, Acierno, Holmes, Kilpatrick, & Jager, 1999).

Results also indicated that many family members reported considerable stress and/or coping problems associated with the bombing, with some concerns continuing to the present time. Very few, however, had ever sought counseling services. This is particularly unfortunate, as research has identified several effective interventions for post-trauma adjustment problems (e.g., Foa, Keane, & Friedman, 2000). Access and ability to pay for such services were cited as common obstacles to mental health treatment. It should be noted that OVC funds to defray treatment costs were not available immediately after the bombing, when need for psychological interventions was likely to be highest. However, some family members reported lasting

symptoms, and others described a recurrence of distress associated with the trial. These symptom patterns highlight the need for access to counseling services at each stage of the justice process, consistent with previous OVC recommendations (Office for Victims of Crime, 1998). Concern about stigma associated with seeking treatment for, and informing insurers about, emotional problems were also mentioned as inhibiting factors. The high rate of stress and mental health-related problems reported by victim families, and the contrasting low levels of awareness and utilization of this service, clearly highlight the need for efforts to increase access to counseling throughout the criminal justice process.

Finally, proposed changes in federal policies and law pertaining to terrorism victim assistance were generally supported by victims' families, who appear to constitute an organized, relatively vocal group, with strong feelings about the way the aftermath of the attack was handled. The most commonly endorsed changes concerned providing increased information to all family members (rather than one or two designated individuals), increased access to crime-related mental health services, and greater regulatory adaptability to permit OVC involvement in incidents for which ample evidence suggests terrorist involvement. Overall, these findings underscore the importance of rapid involvement with victims and their families following terrorist violence and the high regard in which family members of Pan Am Flight 103 victims hold the Office for Victims of Crime.

The results of the study have particular relevance for survivors and family members of those killed during the September 11th terrorist attacks. First, the importance of developing a prompt, coordinated response to provide victims and surviving family members with information about the attacks, services for which they might be eligible, avenues for accessing those services, common reactions to disaster and disaster-related bereavement, and the progress of any subsequent legal actions taken against the parties deemed to be responsible should be emphasized. Pan Am 103 family members found that having one agency (in their case, the Office for Victims of Crime) take clear responsibility for communication with them was helpful and may have served to reduce their feelings of being overwhelmed with the complexity of the many systems, agencies, and governments involved.

In addition, data from the Pan Am 103 case indicates that timely access to mental health services was absent for many family members, in part due to lack of awareness and limited finances. Efforts should be put in place to offer services to victims and family members, not simply make services available and presume that individuals that need treatment will find them (Mitchell, 1997). This may require innovative collaborations among practitioners, governmental agencies, and other responding charitable services, but such efforts are clearly worthwhile and important. Given the apparent inevitability of future terror attacks, such partnerships and collaborations may become essential in providing needed mental health counseling to those affected.

Recommendations

1. The Office for Victims of Crime should initiate involvement on behalf of victims and/or victims' families as soon as it can be reasonably determined (or ample evidence suggests) that an incident resulted from terrorist activity. The 11-year delay between the Pan Am 103 bombing and the decision to allow OVC's involvement in providing victim assistance resulted in considerable unnecessary suffering and ill feelings by victims' families.
2. The Office for Victims of Crime should adopt the Trial Briefing Handbook and secure internet website as standard services for victims of international crime, as appropriate. Although all but one of the victim assistance efforts undertaken by OVC in response to the bombing resulted in high victim satisfaction, the most consistently utilized and highly rated were the Handbook and website. OVC should consider posting the contents of the Handbook on the website, which would allow for maintaining the accuracy of all relevant information.
3. Access to mental health services should be facilitated by establishing a fund to support counseling services for victims and their families; this fund should be established quickly after the onset of OVC involvement, and victims and their families should have access to it throughout the investigation and during any ensuing legal processes (trial, appeal, etc.). The high rate of stress and mental health-related problems reported by victim families, and the contrasting low levels of awareness and utilization of this service, clearly highlight the need for efforts to increase access to counseling.
4. The Office for Victims of Crime should be designated as the official liaison between the federal government and victims and their families. The sensitivity to victim issues and awareness of resources and victim services demonstrated by OVC personnel and staff clearly indicate that they are the best-suited agency to respond to the varying needs for support, information, and assistance of victims and their families.

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Table 1

Wave Two Utilization of OVC Victim Assistance Services

OVC Service	Ever Used?	Used Since Wave One
Toll Free Telephone Number	24%	21%
Secure Website	61%	52%
Funds for Mental Health Counseling	6%	6%
Travel Funds to Attend Trial or Remote Viewing Site	42%	32%
Travel Arrangement Assistance	36%	27%
On-site Family Liaison Officers	33%	20%
Secure Waiting Areas at Kamp van Zeist	32%	18%
Lockerbie Trial Handbook	75%	47%