Evaluation of Florida's Group Treatment Programs

1977

DEPARTMENT
OF
HEALTH
AND
REHABILITATIVE
SERVICES

Youth Services Program

PLANNING
COORDINATION
UNIT

Florida's Community-Based, Residential, Group Treatment Programs:

A Population Profile

and

Recidivism Study

Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services
Youth Services Program Office
Planning Coordination Unit
February, 1977

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Introduction: Group Treatment Community Residential Programs

The Florida Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services Youth Services (YS) component operates a variety of relatively small (7 - 25 beds) community-based treatment programs for the rehabilitation of juvenile delinquents. This study has as its focus the Residential Group Treatment (GT) Programs,[1] a category which includes Halfway Houses, START Centers and Group Treatment Homes. There are variations between these programs, in terms of their target populations as well as in their security level and degree of community orientation, which will be described. During the period from which the study population was drawn (1973), these GT programs constituted the only residential alternatives to Training School placement for committed delinquents. All of the programs are located in urban or suburban areas. All programs have a selective element in that, in order to be admitted, a child must evidence some willingness to cooperate with the program's positive peer culture, which is structured around group discussion sessions.

Fourteen separate facilities were included in the sample pool for this study. Several other new facilities were in operation during 1973, but did not meet the criterion for inclusion. The study design required that a 10-month "phase-in time" elapse (to allow for staff orientation, gradual filling of the program, etc.) before a program's graduates were included in the sample.

Halfway Houses are urban-based centers for 25 boys or 20 girls in the 14-18 year age range. These youth are expected to attend public or vocational school or maintain full or part-time employment in the community. Group meetings are held daily, and provide the primary mode of both treatment and social control, with peers and a trained group leader participating in discussion, conflict resolution, and personal problem solving.

Eight Halfway Houses were sampled: Pensacola Boys Base (Pensacola, HRS District I - only sampled from June 1973); Walter Scott Criswell House (Tallahassee, District 2); Volusia House (Daytona Beach, District 4); Pinellas House (St. Petersburg, District 5); Hillsborough House (Tampa, District 6); McCoy Boys Base (Orlando, District 7); Plam Beach House (Palm Beach, District 9) and Pentland Hall (Miami, District 11). Pentland Hall was the only female facility in the sample.

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[1] A change in nomenclature under departmental reorganization in 1976 designated these programs as Community Residential Programs, but the terminology of the sample period was used throughout this study in order to avoid the confusion of nominal versus functional titles which has ensued.

START (Short Term Adolescent Residential Treatment) Centers also have a capacity of 25 boys or 20 girls. They differ from Halfway Houses in that they have an in-house educational unit and there is less community involvement planned for the residents. START Centers may be in suburban or other less densely populated locations, and the children placed there are considered inappropriate candidates for daily, urban community involvement. The sampled START Centers, both male facilities in HRS District 4, were Ft. Clinch START (Fernandina Beach) and St. John's START (Mandarin).

Group Treatment Homes (GTH) are small facilities designed to provide a group of seven behaviorally disturbed boys, aged 14 or younger, with a home-like atmosphere and an intensive treatment program, under the supervision of a resident husband-and-wife team. There were four GTH's in the sample: Cedar House GTH (Holly Hill, District 4); Palm Beach GTH (Palm Beach, District 9); Broward GTH (Ft. Lauderdale, District 10); and Dade GTH (Miami, District 11).

Purpose of the Study

This study was designed for the dual purposes of providing a profile of the population of the GT residential facilities in 1973 while examining the recidivism rate of program graduates. The profile information feeds into the on-going study of trends in client characteristics over time. Comparison of this profile with those of other programs allows a post hoc analysis of the placement process under which committed children are assigned to the various program options.

The study of the "success rate" of the GT program, and the relationship between background variables and recidivism, constitutes the second major purpose of the paper. Such data are a crucial element in accountability, since recidivism is the traditional outcome measure for evaluating the effectiveness of criminal justice system programs.

Some researchers have argued against the sole reliance on recidivism for evaluating delinquency treatment programs. They note that there are other important criteria that should be considered regarding the operation and impact of the program. They also point out that post-program circumstances should be addressed for their part in determining the eventual success or failure of a youth, since their input may be as important as that of the program itself. Lerman (1968) suggests that claiming parole outcomes, whether success or failure, as attributable to program impact may be unwarranted. Stating that "regardless of the type program investigated, residential institutions for delinquents are characterized by high rates of potential failure," he urges that research be focused on whether (and how) failure rates have been

reduced, rather than simply on discovering what the rate is. He also proposes that separate and primary consideration should be given to the issue of humanitarianism, apart from the usual foci of treatment and success. This is an especially valuable point to keep in mind in the evaluation of small community-based programs for youthful offenders, as compared to large, isolated institutions.

Useful management information for those who make policy and operate programs can be provided by analyses which reveal what program conditions and/or client characteristics are related to reduced levels of failure (recidivism). For example, if length of stay in a program is found to predict recidivism, management decisions can implement a policy to take advantage of this information by mandating the optimal length of stay. A review of previous research reveals inconclusive evidence on the relationship between length of stay and recidivism (e.g., see Romig, 1975, for a review of other studies as well as his own data). However, we continue to examine this relationship in studies of Florida's programs, in search of consistent findings that may provide policy direction.

Development of placement policies to maximize success by optimal use of program alternatives is one example of how recidivism data can be directly utilized. Since demographic characteristics and records of prior juvenile justice system involvement are routinely available on all clients, knowledge that such variables are differentially related to success in various types of programs can make significant input into the development of assignment criteria. No definitive conclusions about correlates of recidivism were found in a review of criminological literature. Many researchers note a nearly equal balance between studies which support their own findings and those whose findings are counter-indicative (e.g., Laulicht, 1963). Age and sex are the variables which show the most consistent relationship to recidivism, with females and older youths having lower failure rates than males and younger delinquents (e.g., Unkovic and Ducsay, 1967).

While recidivism data cannot be eliminated as a basis for evaluating delinquency rehabilitation programs, it can be usefully supplemented with 1) in-program adjustment measures, and 2) measures of "partial success" after leaving a program. As an example of the former, Sakata and Litwak (1971) investigated inmate adjustment to institutional rules and found this negatively related to parole success (i.e., poor adjustment to rules predicted high probability of recidivism). Other researchers have designed sets of attitude scales to measure participants' perceptions of a program's impact on them (Eynon, Allen, and Reckless, 1971; Miller and Dinitz, 1973). By and large, such scales have not proven predictive of recidivism although they do yield interesting data on how inmates assess their program experience.

Examination of in-program adjustment and how it relates to post-program outcome is another aspect of this study of GT programs. While the "process" measures available are few and not very sophisticated, some indication of the program experience can be gained from information on length of stay, runaways, and transfers to other programs.

"Partial success" measures, interpreted as more specific information on the timing, severity, and type of recidivism, can also broaden the evaluational information base beyond the simple success-failure dichotomy. Webb, et al (1976) offer a more comprehensive definition and approach by supplementing the traditional recidivism measures with other suggested criteria. Several of the suggested measures are appropriate for assessing partial success of juveniles, and were examined within the present study. Length of time in the community prior to recidivism, severity of the new offense relative to the original commitment offense, and distribution of recidivists between the adult and juvenile systems are all matters of interest in the effort to develop more varied and useful recidivism measures which go beyond the standard success/failure dichotomy.

Methodology

One hundred youngsters were randomly sampled by drawing every Nth case, from 1973 GT furlough (parole) lists, for inclusion in this study. (This procedure yielded a 29% sample of the 349 furloughs.) Sampling from admission lists would have given a more complete view of the program process and outcome, since it would include absconders, transfers, and "other exits" as well as program completers. However, it would have required a significantly larger sample size in order to compensate for "losses" due to non-completion; only 46% of all movement out of the sampled GT programs was accounted for by furloughs in 1973. It would also require a longer time frame to allow sufficient follow-up time.

Youth Services case files were the major source of data for the study, providing demographic and family information on each child as well as records of previous and subsequent involvement with the juvenile justice system. These data were supplemented by checking "rap sheets" at the Florida Department of Criminal Law Enforcement for adult arrest and disposition records on sampled youngsters who reached age 18 by July 1, 1975.

The follow-up time for the study ranged from a minimum of 1½ years up to 2½ years from the time of furlough, since the furlough lists used for sampling spanned a full year. Longer follow-up times are typically found to correlate with higher numbers of failures being discovered, due to the increased time permitting more opportunities for offenses to be committed and detected.

Follow-up information was coded for all cases at the point of 18 months from furlough so that a common time frame could be compared. Additional follow-up information (covering an additional zero to twelve months depending on furlough date), up to the cut-off date of July 1, 1975 was coded as a separate block in order to avoid omitting available data.

Reinvolvements in the criminal justice system during the follow-up periods were recorded only if an official sanction resulting in a restriction of liberty occurred. Comparison of all subsequent referrals was impossible since YS central files are often up-dated only if the youth is recommitted so that lesser dispositions within the juvenile system might go undetected. Nine variations of reinvolvement were distinquished but these were dichotomized into "success" and "failure" in terms of recidivism as follows:

Success (Non-recidivist):

> Youth who had no subsequent charges in either the juvenile or adult criminal justice system, which resulted in a punitive (liberty restricting) sanction.

Failure (Recidivist):

> Youth who was subsequently revoked or recommitted to the juvenile justice system, placed on adult probation or suspended sentence, or committed to an adult jail or prison. [2]

Group Treatment Sample Profile

Table 1 displays the major variables of the demographic and juvenile justice backgrounds of the GT sample. Predominantly male (96%)[3], the sample was 63% white, 35% black. This racial distribution is very similar to that found in previous studies of the GT population, which argues for the representativeness of the current sample. Average age at furlough was 15.5 years (range 10 - 18). The sample represented urban and non-urban counties of the state about equally. Only 38% of the children lived with intact natural families prior to their commitment.

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[2] Those who were jailed pending a hearing on a charge but then released by the court are included as non-recidivists, as are those who were only fined for an offense.

[3] The sex ratio found in this sample appears to be a fairly accurate representation of the GT population in 1973, since 7% of the program slots available in GT were in the one female facility and the sample is 4% female.

Family incomes were generally low; a third of the cases where income information was available had less than $5,000 per year, and another third had only $5-10,000. An accurate assessment of the proportion of GT youths who come from poverty level homes would require further knowledge about the numbers of persons supported by the income stated. Data from samples to determine Title XX eligibility of YS clients indicate that about 27% of committed youngsters are eligible for Aid to Families with Dependent Children, etc. Thus, a substantial portion of the GT population may be assumed to be from financially deprived home situations. A review of GT sample youngsters in terms of their previous experience with the juvenile justice system (see part B of Table 1) indicates a wide range of involvement. The average youth in this group had had 5.04 referrals to Youth Services prior to the sample commitment. The modal, or most frequently occurring number of referrals, was four.

A referral does not mean that a youth was guilty and convicted of the charged offense. It is simply a reported law violation, usually involving a law enforcement contact, although schools and parents also refer substantial numbers of youths. The treatment-oriented juvenile justice system often considers the number and nature of previous referrals in determining how to handle a new charge against a child. Whether to file a petition on the new offense and/or what type of sanction to impose are usually decided on the basis of an overall view of the child's record and the prognosis for "adjustment" rather than on the merits of a single charge.

Property and CINS[4] offenses were the most common reasons for previous referrals of GT youths. Two-thirds of the sample had never been referred for any offenses against persons, technical violations or victimless offenses. (See Appendix A for the list of specific offenses included in the general categories of persons, property, victimless, technical and status offenses.)

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[4]CINS (Child in Need of Supervision) or "status" offenses include truancy, runaway, and ungovernable behavior. These behaviors are not illegal for adults but are chargeable only for a person of juvenile status (age 0-18). The 1975 Florida Legislature deleted CINS offenses as delinquent acts, but during the period of this study, a child could be charged and committed as a delinquent for CINS behavior. Effective July 1, 1975, a child charged with a CINS offense could only be adjudicated "dependent" and could not be treated as delinquent. The only exception to this rule is that a second-time ungovernable adjudication may result in a delinquent label and assignment to Youth Services.

TABLE 1

GROUP TREATMENT PROFILE

A. Demographic Data

1) Sex

	#,% *
Female:	4
Male :	96

2) Race

	#,	%
Black:	35	(34%)
White:	63	(64%)

3) Age at Selection Furlough

	#,	%
10-14 years:	14	(14.1%)
15 years:	27	(27.3%)
16 years:	36	(36.4%)
17-18 years:	22	(22.2%)
Average Age:	15.5 years	

4) Committing County**

	#,%
Urban:	48
Non-Urban:	52

5) Living Arrangement Prior to Commitment

	#,%
Both Natural Parents	38
Mother Only	30
Mother and Stepfather	18
Father (w/ or w/o Stepmother)	6
Other (relative or non-relative)	8

6) Family Income

	#	%
Less than $ 5,000	25	(33%)
$ 5,000 - $10,000	27	(35%)
$10,100 - $15,000	20	(26%)
$15,100 - $50,000	5	(6%)
No Information	23	

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* Since the sample size is 100 cases, the percent is the same as the number except where data are missing. In those cases, the percentage of the known total is shown in parentheses.

** Urban: County with population of 250,000 or more: Broward, Dade, Duval, Hillsborough, Orange, Palm Beach, Pinellas.

Non-Urban: County with population of less than 250,000.

TABLE 1 (continued)

B. Juvenile Justice History

7) Previous Referrals — Average = 5.04 (range, 1-16)

**for Persons Offenses: (range, 0-4)	none = 69%	$\bar{x}$ = .43
for Property Offenses: (range, 0-8+)	none = 22%	$\bar{x}$ = 2.28
for Victimless Offenses: (range, 0-6)	none = 63%	$\bar{x}$ = .55
for Technical Violations: (range, 0-3)	none = 68%	$\bar{x}$ = .40
for CINS Offenses: (range, 0-8+)	none = 37%	$\bar{x}$ = 1.21

8) YS Status Prior to Selected Commitment

	#	%
None	12	(12.2%)
Consent Supervision	2	(2.1%)
Probation	65	(66.3%)
Aftercare	16	(16.3%)
Corrections	1	(1.0%)
Committed*	2	(2.1%)

9) Number Previous Commitments

	#,%
None	83
One	12
Two	3
Three	2

10) Offense** of Selected Commitment

	#,%
Persons	12
Property	45
Victimless	9
Technical	23
CINS	11

* Occasionally a child is recommitted by the court even though already currently committed.

** See Appendix A for list of offenses included in each category.

Only 12% of the GT sample were not under some type of supervision by the juvenile (or adult) justice system immediately prior to this commitment. The majority (66%) of the sampled children were probationers, with Aftercare (parole) cases making up the next largest group (16%). Eighty percent of the GT youngsters had been on probation at some time prior to the selected commitment,[5] indicating that YS had tried to deal with the child in a less severe manner prior to recommending commitment.

Eighty-three percent of the GT youngsters were first commitments, 12% had one previous commitment and only 5% had more than one. Sixteen of the seventeen return commitments had been in a Training School previously, and four had been in Group Treatment programs. (The overlap comes from three youths who had been in both types of facilities previously.) The average time spent on these previous commitments was 10.7 months.

The offense of the selected commitment to Youth Services was most commonly a property crime (45%). Technical violations were second most frequent, accounting for 23% of the sample. Offenses against persons (12%), CINS offenses (11%), and victimless offenses (9%) comprised the remainder of the sample.

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[5]"Selected commitment" is used to specify a commitment ending in a 1973 furlough which was sampled for this study.

In-program Experience

The length of the selected commitment for the GT sample averaged 6.8 months. The range for individual youths was from 55 to 691 days (8 youngsters were committed for longer than a year).

The 17 youths from the GT sample who had been committed prior to the selection commitment had already served an average of 11.2 months. These multiple commitment youths spent an average of 6.1 months (range, 55-384 days) on the selected commitment, compared to 7.0 months (range, 63-691 days) average stay for youths on their first commitment. Youths on repeat commitments appeared to have "learned the ropes", and thus complete the program nearly a month earlier, on the average, than first commitments.

Thirty-four GT youngsters spent a part of their selected commitment time at some facility other than the one which furloughed them, i.e., they were transfers, with 47 program shifts among them. Most (24) of these youths were transferred only once; 18 came from another GT facility, 5 from a TS, and 1 from an adult prison. Eight youngsters had been transferred twice, one had moved three times, and one four times.

For these transferred youths, the average amount of time spent in the transferring facility(ies) was 5.6 months (range, 11-635 days), and the average time at the furloughing facility was 3.9 months (range, 42-286 days), so that their total average time on the selected commitment was 9.5 months. Non-transferred youths spent a longer time at the furloughing facility, but their total time on the selected commitment is still shorter, averaging 5.4 months[6] (range, 55-353 days).

The total GT sample averaged a 4.9 month stay at the furloughing facility. Adding in the pre-transfer commitment time of the transferred children raises the overall GT average length of stay on the selected commitment by 1.9 months (about 7 weeks), to the 6.8 month mean reported above.[7]

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[6]The additional commitment time served by youths who are transferred adds greatly to the cost of commitment, which averaged about $26 per child/day for all commitment programs in 1973. If one-third of the population were consistently committed 4 months longer, due to transfers, than the average time in the single facility, the cost would be an additional $103,000 per 100 children.

[7]The extent to which transfers increase total commitment time began to be systematically documented in the Fall of 1976 with the initiation of a new data card. Recognition of these increases led to a new policy whereby transfers after 45 days in a program are discouraged by means of a strict review and approval process.

Reasons for transfers were coded in very general categories, which do not allow for detailed consideration of how moves are caused by youths or used by staff. The most frequent categories of reasons given for transferring a child were: 1) not fitting into the program or not showing improvement; and 2) administrative reasons, such as, more bed space elsewhere; move to a place nearer the child's home, etc.; or improvement in behavior. These two general categories were each used 13 times in explaining the 47 transfers. New offenses, whether in the community or against staff or peers in the program, accounted for 9 transfers; 5 moves were due to runaways; and "causing trouble in the program" was the cited reason for 3 shifts. (There was no information available on the reasons for the remaining four transfers.)

During the selected commitment, twenty-three GT youngsters ran away from their program; eight ran more than once. The number of days on runaway status ranged from 1 to more than 98, averaging 31 days.[8] The location of GT facilities in urban areas and the community participation feature of their programs makes running away an easy option and finding the runaway more difficult. These factors must be taken into account in considering the runaway data.

Group Treatment facilities do not have a secure "adjustment unit" to be used for holding a youth who is a danger to himself or others or who represents a clear threat to the security of the program. When necessary, a child is transported to a detention facility for secure keeping. The GT sample included 7 youngsters who were so detained during the selected commitment, and 3 additional youths who had been in Training School adjustment units from 1 to 5 times prior to transferring to a GT program.

Post-Program Outcome: Success vs. Recidivism

Post program results are the primary measure of success or failure for committed youths. At a follow-up point eighteen months after furlough, the success rate for the Group Treatment sample was 59%, the recidivism rate 41%.

As shown in Table 2, a variety of criminal justice system involvements were collapsed to derive this single recidivism figure. In slightly more than half of these reinvolvements, the youth went into the adult criminal justice system.

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[8] Since coding allowed for only two digits, "98" was coded for any amount of time in excess of 98 days, thus attenuating the variance and making the average a slight underestimate.

TABLE 2

Reinvolvement in the Criminal Justice System
for the GT Sample: with 18 Month Follow-Up.

Successes = 59%		Recidivists = 41%		
No Reinvolvement:	55	Revoked to YS:	7	Juvenile
Jailed/released:	3	Recommitted to YS:	12	
Court fine:	1			
		Adult Probation:	6	
		Jail Commitment:	3	Adult
		Prison Commitment:	13	

When information for the additional follow-up time was added in (the additional time ranging from 0 to 12 months depending on the furlough date of each case), the success rate dropped from 59% to 53% and the recidivism rate for the GT Sample reciprocally rose to 47%. There were 12 instances of reinvolvement during this interval, but 6 of these cases were already counted as recidivists due to charges during the initial follow-up period. Table 3 summarizes the results of the full 18 - 30 month follow-up period. The last placement of multiple recidivists is shown in instances where more than one reinvolvement occurred.

TABLE 3

Reinvolvement in the Criminal Justice System
for the GT Sample: with up to 30 Month Follow-up

Successes = 53%		Recidivists = 47%		
No reinvolvement:	50	Revoked to YS:	7	Juvenile
Jailed/released:	2	Recommitted to YS:	12	
Court fine	1			
		Suspended sentence:	1	
		Adult Probation:	9	Adult
		Jail Commitment:	3	
		Prison Commitment:	15	

A total of 63 post-furlough offenses was recorded for the 50 members of the GT sample who were "reinvolved", including the 3 non-recidivists who did have some legal involvement.

A comparison was made for the 47 recidivists, between the offense of the selected commitment and their (first) recidivous offense. The offenses of recidivism included larger numbers of the more serious offenses than did the commitment offenses. A cross-classification of recidivating individuals by the type of their two offenses found that 9 youths committed an offense of the same type (e.g., both the commitment and the recidivism offense were property crimes), 17 committed less serious offenses, and 21 committed more serious offenses.

The length of time between selected furlough and reinvolvement is of interest as an indication of continuing program effect. Also, the longer a youngsters "stays straight" before committing another offense, the fewer total offenses he/she will probably commit. For the recidivists in the GT sample, the average length of time that passed before their first failure was 13 months (range, 21-852 days). Only 19% of the failures occurred within 6 months, the period that has often been assumed the most hazardous for a releasee. This delayed reinvolvement may be interpreted as indicating that the program has the intended effect and does in fact deter delinquent behavior for an extended period of post-program time. Another unmeasured input into this time variable is the effect of the YS Aftercare (parole) program, under which supervision is provided for all furloughed youths on an individual contract basis. Effective post-program attention is probably as important as carry-over from the program itself in prolonging legal behavior.

Relationship Between Key Variables and Success

The search for strong relationships between post-program successes and other variables which might be used as predictors proved disappointing in this study. As shown in Table 4, no statistically significant differences between success and failure were found in the GT sample by controlling for any of the single background variables investigated. Nor were in-program experiences predictive; length of commitment, transfers, runaways and detention placements all failed to show significant relationship to post-program outcome. Despite the non-significant data, humanitarian as well as budgetary considerations incline us to point out that shorter stays (6 month or less) tend to be related to more positive outcomes, and should be encouraged.

TABLE 4

Relationship Between Key Variables and Success
For Group Treatment Sample

Variable	# Cases*	# Non-Recidivists	# Recidivists	% Success (Non-Recidivism)	X^2	Signif.
1) Sex						
Female	4	4	-	100%	**	
Male	96	49	47	51%		
2) Race						
Black	35	21	14	60%	.768	.399
White	63	32	31	51%	df=1	
3) Age at Selected Furlough						
≤ 14 years	14	5	9	36%	3.69	
15-16 years	63	39	24	62%	df=2	.166
≥ 17 years	22	11	11	50%		
4) Committing County						
Urban	48	28	20	58%	.414	.529
Non-Urban	52	27	25	52%	df=1	
5) Living Arrangement Prior To Commitment						
Both Natural Parents	38	24	14	63%	2.384	.584
Mother Only	30	15	15	50%	df=4	
Mother and Stepfather	18	8	10	44%		
Father(w/wo Stepmother)	6	3	3	50%		
Other (relative or non-relative)	8	5	3	62%		
6) Family Income						
Less than $ 5,000	25	10	15	40%	5.703	.134
$ 5,000 - $10,000	30	15	15	50%	df=3	
$10,100 - $15,000	17	12	5	71%		
More than $15,100	5	1	4	20%		
7) Previous Commitments						
None	83	44	39	53%	.780	.395
1-3	17	11	6	65%	df=1	

* Where number of cases does not total 100 on any variable, missing data accounts for the variation.

** Chi square was not calculated since there were too few females for a real comparison.

TABLE 4 (continued)

Variable	# Cases*	# Non-Recidivists	# Recidivists	% Success (Non-Recidivism)	X^2	Signif.
8) Offense of Selected Commitment						
Persons	12	6	6	50%	1.029	.905
Property	45	25	20	56%	df=4	
Victimless	9	6	3	67%		
Technical	23	13	10	56%		
CINS	11	5	6	45%		
9) Runaways During Selected Commitment						
None	77	45	32	58%	1.602	.207
1 or more	23	10	13	43%	df=1	
10) Length of Selected Commitment						
Less than 4 months	10	6	4	60%	4.571	.340
4-6 months	35	21	14	60%	df=4	
6-8 months	27	14	13	52%		
8-10 months	13	4	9	31%		
More than 10 months	15	10	5	67%		

* Where number of cases does not total 100 on any variable, missing data accounts for the variation.

Comparison of Data with Previous GT Study

The concluding section of analyses draws comparisons between the current study of 1973 GT furloughs and an earlier study of 1972 furloughs. The 1972 study utilized a stratified random sample, comprised of one sub-sample of male first commitments who had never been transferred (N=41), and a second sub-sample of boys who had previous commitments and/or transfers (N=40). No GT programs for females had been in operation sufficiently long to have graduates eligible for inclusion in the study sample. The 1973 sample was a simple random sample and included females (only four, but this was very close to the proportional representation in the population). A statistical test was applied and it was determined that the two years total samples did not differ significantly with regard to the size of the similar (male) sub-samples.[9] Thus, the two studies may be compared as wholes as well as on a sub-sample level.

[9] In the 1973 sample, male first commitments with no transfers totaled 53, and males with previous commitments and/or transfers totaled 43. There were 4 females and these cases were not excluded from the calculations in comparison of total 1972 and 1973 data since the number was too small to have sizeable impact.

The following is a list of variables common to both studies on which comparisons (on both sub-sample and total sample level) were made: race, age at selected furlough, urban/non-urban county, commitment offense, length of selected commitment, recidivism and length of time from furlough to recidivism. Table 5 lists the comparisons which produced statistically significant differences.

TABLE 5

Summary of Significant Comparisons
Between the 1972 and 1973 GT Studies

Total Samples 1972 vs. 1973	Male First Commitments 1972 vs. 1973	Male Previous Commitments and/or Transfers 1972 vs. 1973
Age	----	----
---	Recidivism	----

A comparison of average ages may be used to summarize the only significant difference between the total samples for the two years. The 1973 GT sample was younger (mean = 15.6 years) than the 1972 sample (mean = 16.5 years).

The 1973 sub-sample of first commitment youths has a significantly higher recidivism rate than the similar 1972 group (47% vs. 32%). This finding may perhaps be related to the age difference between the two years' samples since younger delinquents typically have higher failure rates.

The relationships between sample characteristics and recidivism were examined in each of the two years studied. In the 1972 study, race was found to have a significant relationship to recidivism; blacks had higher failure rates after GT programs than did whites. This finding was the source of a tentative policy recommendation aimed at improving programs, suggesting that new variations of YS programs (including, or perhaps especially, Aftercare programs, in an attempt to counter the effect of poor neighborhoods and peer influences) might need to be developed to deal with black youths more effectively. Failure of the 1973 data to confirm this relationship between race and recidivism would not change the recommendation, however. Comparison of the two years' studies shows that black recidivism rates were constant (59% and 60%) while the recidivism for white youths increased (32% to 49%), thus, accounting for the non-significant difference between the races in 1973. The 1973 data, in fact, revealed no significant relationships between recidivism and any of the single variables tested.

Summary and Conclusions

Data from a sample of 1973 furloughs from Group Treatment Residential Programs have been analyzed to provide a profile of the age, race, sex, family structure and delinquency record of youth served in these community commitment facilities. The sample for this study differed in composition from the sample of 1972 furloughs on two points. First, the 1972 sample was all male (so were all GT programs which had been operating sufficiently long to have their graduates sampled) while the 1973 sample included 4 females, thus, approximating their representation in the population of furloughs for the year. Secondly, the two years' samples differed on age, with the 1973 sample being younger; the average age of 1972 furloughs was 16.5 years, while the 1973 mean age was 15.6 years.

Several available indicators of in-program experience were assessed. The average commitment length for the total sample was 6.8 months, about the same as for the 1972 sample. Youths who had been committed previously (17%) averaged slightly shorter stays, while those who were transferred during their commitment (34%) served considerably longer, averaging 9.5 months committed. Twenty-three percent of the GT sample ran away from the program during their commitment and seven percent were temporarily removed to a detention facility due to poor adjustment. None of these measures of in-program experience were found to be significantly related to post-program success or failure.

Recidivism served as the primary measure of post-program outcome. At 18 months after furlough, the Group Treatment recidivism rate was 41%. When the follow-up period was extended (to a period varying from 18-30 months, depending on furlough date), the recidivism rate was 47%. For the 1972 sample, with an 18-24 month follow-up, the recidivism rate was 41%, remarkably similar.

Measures of "partial success" were examined in order to supplement the post-program outcome information provided by the dichotomous recidivism data. For one such measure, the commitment offense and the recidivism offense of each youth who failed was compared for seriousness. More boys (44%) were found to have committed a more serious type of offense than committed the same type (20%) or a less serious type of crime (36%). Time between furlough and reinvolvement, used as a measure of how long positive program impact on behavior was maintained by graduates, averaged 13 months. The results on this measure did not differ significantly between the 1972 and 1973 studies. Whether the recidivists went into the adult criminal justice system (as did 40% of the 1973 failures) or returned to the juvenile system (60%) was also considered among these partial success measures. However, age is a greater determinant of this disposition than is severity of offense, so the data are not especially informative.

Recidivism was found to be not significantly related to any of the background variables, delinquency record variables or in-program adjustment variables for the 1973 sample. For the 1972 sample it had been found that blacks had much higher failure rates than whites subsequent to furlough from GT programs. In the 1973 sample, this race-recidivism relationship disappeared due to a higher failure for whites, thus making them more comparable to black outcomes.

Further improvements of evaluative measures of program outcome should be a goal of future studies. In the Florida Youth Services system, data on aftercare (juvenile parole) status and progress is available on Case Review Cards completed monthly on all cases under field supervision. Ability to match cases and mesh this data source with sample populations, however, presents costly analysis problems which have not yet been overcome.

More sophisticated and exacting ways of measuring what goes on during the "treatment process" are also needed. Runaways, transfers, etc. tap only the negative aspects of adjustment. What is needed for evaluative purposes is clear statements of the objective, measurable (probably individualized) goals which a youth must attain in order to be furloughed, as well as an in-program information system capable of tracking data on progress toward those goals at systematic intervals. Steps toward implementing these ideas for better evaluation research would also provide much improved management data for program operation and should be eagerly sought.

Appendix A: Offense Codes

Offenses against persons:

1. Murder
2. Manslaughter
3. Sexual Battery
4. Armed Robbery
5. Other Robbery
6. Aggravated Assault
7. Assault (except aggravated)

Offenses against property:

8. Arson
9. Burglary (and Breaking and Entering)
10. Grand Larceny (except Auto)
11. Auto Theft
12. Receiving Stolen Property
13. Other Felony
14. Unauthorized Use of Motor Vehicle
15. Petit Larceny (except Shoplifting)
16. Shoplifting

Victimless Offenses:

17. Concealed Firearm
18. Narcotic Drug Law Violation
19. Marijuana Offense
20. Acloholic Beverage Possession
21. Other Drug Law Violation
22. Concealed Weapon (except firearm)
23. Criminal Mischief (Vandalism)
24. Trespassing
25. Prostitution
26. Misdemeanor Sex Offense
27. Disorderly Intoxication
28. Loitering and Prowling
29. Traffic (delinquency)
30. Other Misdemeanor

Technical Violations:

31. Violation of Probation (technical)
32. Violation of Aftercare (technical)
33. Violation of Court Order (technical)

CINS (Child in Need of Supervision) Offenses:

34. Runaway
35. Truancy
36. Incorrigible, Beyond Control
37. CINS (unspecified)

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