

A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

University of Maryland, College Park

CASA Review of Drug Court Evaluations Finds Consistent, Positive Findings

***CASA
Drug Court
Research
Review***

Since the establishment of the first U.S. drug court in 1989, the number of courtrooms dedicated to drug-involved offenders has grown exponentially (see CESAR FAX, Volume 6, Issue 24). The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University recently released a review of drug court research to date (30 evaluations covering 24 drug courts). The review concluded that “despite the different drug court statutes, jurisdictional differences, methods used by evaluators and the limitations of some data, a number of consistent findings emerge from available drug court evaluations” (p. 4).

Findings

- Through regular court hearings and frequent drug testing, drug courts provide more comprehensive and closer monitoring than other forms of community supervision.
- “Retention rates for drug courts are much greater than retention rates typically observed for criminal justice offenders specifically, and treatment clients in general” (p. 4).
- Drug use and criminal behavior are substantially reduced while offenders are participating in the program (based on urine test results and rearrest rates).
- “Drug courts generate cost savings, at least in the short term, from reduced jail/prison use, reduced criminality and lower criminal justice costs” (p. 35).
- “Drug courts have been quite successful in bridging the gap between the court and the treatment/public health systems and spurring greater cooperation among the various agencies and personnel within the criminal justice system, as well as between the criminal justice system and the community” (p. 35).

***Source/
Contact***

Adapted by CESAR from Steven Belenko, “Research on Drug Courts: A Critical Review,” *National Drug Court Institute Review* 1(1):1-42. This issue of the *Review* was funded by a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Complimentary copies of the report are available from the National Drug Court Institute by faxing a request to West Huddleston at 703-706-0577.