

Public Safety Outcomes of Virginia's Detention Assessment Instrument

Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice
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Background

- DAI was implemented November 2002 in response to a directive from the General Assembly
- The DAI is a structured decision making tool for detention decision making by DJJ intake officers
- Incorporates a limited set of objective, public safety-related criteria

Intended Outcomes

- Increased consistency, equity, and transparency in detention decisions
- Decrease detention of juveniles with less serious and less chronic offenses
- Increase the likelihood of detention of juveniles alleged to have committed serious offenses or a threat to fail to appear in court
- Have a neutral or positive effect on public safety outcomes (pre-trial re-arrest or FTA)

Study Methodology

- Designed to answer two questions
 - Did juveniles who, in accordance with the DAI were not detained, re-offend during the period of risk?
 - Did juveniles who, in accordance with the DAI were not detained, fail to appear in court during the period of risk?
- The period of risk was defined as 30 days after the decision not to detain to reflect statutory limits on the period of detention

Study Methodology

- Sampled all detention eligible intakes not detained in accordance with the DAI (not mitigated from a secure detention score) over a three month period (July – Sept. 2005) in six court service units
 - On call detention decisions were excluded as the DAI may not be completed at the time

Study Methodology

Indicated Decision	Actual Decision
Release	Release
Release	Detention Alternative
Detention Alternative	Release
Detention Alternative	Detention Alternative

DAI Indicated Decisions:

- 0 – 9 points Release
- 10 – 14 points Detention Alternative
- > 14 points Secure Detention

Results

Table 1: New Offense and Failure to Appear (FTA) Rates

Indicated Decision	Actual Decision	# of Cases	New Offenses	Failure Rate (New Offense)	FTA	Failure Rate (FTA)
Release	Release	629	39	6.2%	8	1.3%
Release	Det. Alt.	41	2	4.9%	0	0.0%
Det. Alt.	Release	117	13	11.1%	5	4.3%
Det. Alt.	Det. Alt.	60	6	10.0%	1	1.7%
TOTALS		847	60	7.1%	14	1.7%

Results

Table 2: Felony and Misdemeanor New Offense Rates

Indicated Decision	Actual Decision	# of Cases	Felony	Misd.	Total Offenses	Felony (%)	Misd. (%)	Total Offense (%)
Release	Release	629	12	27	39	1.9%	4.3%	6.2%
Release	Det. Alt.	41	0	2	2	0.0%	4.9%	4.9%
Det. Alt.	Release	117	8	5	13	6.8%	4.3%	11.1%
Det. Alt.	Det. Alt.	60	0	6	6	0.0%	10.0%	10.0%
TOTALS		847	20	40	60	2.4%	4.7%	7.1%

Conclusions

Table 3: Overall DAI Performance Outcomes

New Offense Rates	
Indicated Decision = Actual Decision	Passing
Indicated Decision Different from Actual Decision	Passing
<i>Mitigating</i>	Marginal
<i>Aggravating</i>	Passing
Failure to Appear Rates	
Indicated Decision = Actual Decision	Good
Indicated Decision Different from Actual Decision	Good
<i>Mitigating</i>	Good
<i>Aggravating</i>	Good

Conclusions

- The Virginia DAI performs adequately with regard to public safety outcomes, especially when the indicated decision is not overridden, especially when the indicated decision for a detention alternative is not mitigated to unsupervised release

Limitations

- Limited number of sites, all of which are engaged in significant efforts at managing detention populations
- Follow-up (at risk) period was intentionally limited, although logical and consistent with statutes
- Some re-arrests will not result in findings of guilt, possibly reducing negative outcomes
- Some sub-groups have relatively small sample sizes