The Disproportional Use of Detention Following a Parental Assault and the Risk of Re-offending

Midwest Sociological Society Annual Meeting

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Background

16% of all juvenile arrests
About 50% self-report
Juvenile justice system is not specifically designed to address family disputes
These youth may require a different type of system response compared to other types of offenses in order to reduce the likelihood of re-arrest
Currently several states, counties, and major cities are merging CW and JJ services
Research Questions

1. Are youth who are arrested for domestic battery different in terms of demographic characteristics and court outcomes compared to youth arrested for other types of offenses?
2. Are these youth more likely to re-offend compared to youth arrested for other offenses?
3. Due to the nature of their offense (i.e., family dispute), are these youth more likely to be placed in detention rather than returned home to their parents?
4. Has the child welfare system been involved with families of youth arrested for domestic battery prior to the arrest, and does the involvement reduce the likelihood of re-offending?
Methods

Several administrative sources

- Probation
- Arrests
- Detention
- Child Welfare

Offense type  Race
Disposition  Age
Time in Detention  Gender
Dually Involved

- January 2000 to July 2009
- First-time offenders, ages 10 to 17
- N=7250
Results

Domestic Battery represented 8% of all initial arrests

Bivariate relationships:

- More DB were charged at disposition (56% vs. 45%)
- More DB had a history of CPS involvement (18% vs. 9%)
- More DB were placed in detention (16% vs. 2%)
- More DB were rearrested (40% vs. 30%)
Time to Re-Arrests Comparing Domestic and Non-Domestic Battery Arrests
**Cox Regression Model for Re-Arrest**

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<tr>
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<th>Hazards Ratio</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>DB</td>
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<tr>
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<td>DB*CPS</td>
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Conclusion

Results show that once a youth is arrested for a domestic dispute their juvenile justice experience is \textit{disproportionately punitive}, leading to a greater risk of reoffending and further system penetration.

- Formally charged, forgoing less punitive forms of supervision
- Placed in detention compared to other offenders
  - These youth were even more likely to reoffend

Limitations
- No record of MH or socioeconomic status
- Severity of battery
- Who are the victims?

Implications
JJ system response: court monitor + family-level interventions
Must intervene before DB arrest
  - Station adjustment
  - Family crisis counselor
Contact Information

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