

ANNOTATION

DESIGN: This study examined the first year experience following passage of the Young Offenders Act in April, 1998. Three groups were selected for comparison: 590 young people who went to conference in 1998; 5,516 young people who appeared in court the year before conferencing became an option (1997); and 3,830 who appeared to court in 1998. The follow up period ranged from 27 to 39 months.

RECIDIVISM: A wide number of comparisons were performed. While the overall differences were not large, they were consistent across all the forms of comparison examined. “While the reduction in reoffending may be small, the effect is persistent in all of the comparisons carried out in this study. When the effects of other factors are controlled for, it appears that both the risk of reoffending and the rate of reappearances per year in the follow-up period are about 15 to 20 percent lower for those who had a conference than for those who went to court” (p. 13). The differences held true across different offence types and regardless of the gender, criminal history, age and Aboriginality of the offenders.

Authors discuss the rather robust difference found in their results as compared to many other studies. Both sample size and the length of the follow-up period likely contributed to the differences found. Two re-analyses were conducted to test this hypothesis. A re-analysis with only half the sample, and a re-analysis using only a one-year follow up did not demonstrate any significant difference between the two groups.

GROUP CONFERENCING
JUVENILE
MIXED CRIME TYPES
RECIDIVISM
OFFENDER DATA
RECORD DATA
AUS