
NOT AVAILABLE ON LINE

ANNOTATION:

DESIGN: In 1985, legislation in New Zealand established a preference for reparation in sentencing property offenders. The researchers examined six data bases to explore the extent to which reparation sentences were being utilized, the completion of reparation agreements, the extent to which victims were involved in establishing the amounts of reparation, and the utilization of victim-offender mediation in working out reparation agreements. Data sets included records of crimes against property, reparation records, interviews with judges, postal questionnaires of probation officers, interviews with probation officers, and postal questionnaires of crime victims.

RESTITUTION: Reparation was utilized in 58% of cases in which court records indicated a victim loss. In only 22% of cases was reparation the sole sentence; these tended to be first time offenders and relatively minor offenses. Additional data is reported on reparation compliance and the attitudes of key players about reparation and its purposes.

CONTEXT: Regarding VOM, the survey explored attitudes of judges and probation officers about victim-offender meetings. All groups surveyed agreed that such meetings are “a good way to secure victim-offender agreement”. Probation officers gave nearly equal importance to three major reasons for such meetings: to secure a victim-offender agreement, to provide opportunities for victims, and to provide opportunities for offenders.

PARTICIPATION RATES: In 4% of cases, the offender declined to meet the victim. Victim-offender meetings were not attempted in 47% of cases, and in 34% of cases, probation officers perceived that the victim did not want to meet the offender. Six percent of victims lived so far away that a meeting was not considered feasible.

In contrast, of the victims surveyed who were not invited to meet with offenders, 43% said they would have been likely to agree to meet, 33% thought they might have requested more information before deciding whether or not to meet, and only 24% reported that they would have been unlikely to have agreed to meet.