

Case Study

The Effectiveness of Drug Courts

Listwan et al.'s (2003) study of the effectiveness of a drug court on recidivism illustrates a quasi-experimental non-equivalent control group design. Their quasi-experimental design is diagrammed in Exhibit 6.8. Reflecting the priority that policy makers place on controlling drug use and drug-related crime, drug courts have become extremely popular in the United States. They emerged as an alternative to correctional prison and jail-based responses to addicted offenders and generally rely on community-based treatment models. The assumption behind the drug court movement is that drug users and their drug-related crimes will increasingly clog the courts and fill our jails and prisons if their addictions are not remedied. Although drug court programs vary tremendously across jurisdictions, they generally integrate alcohol and drug treatment services with justice system case processing. In addition, they are designed to decrease case-processing time, alleviate the demand of drug-related cases on the court, and decrease jail and prison commitments to drug-related offenders, all of which are supposed to decrease the cost of controlling drug offenders.