

SMART POLICING INITIATIVE

Support Webinar on Measuring SPI Performance

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Agenda



- Progress in SPI: Timelines and Introduction (Chip)
- Goals of the SPI: Research-Practitioner Engagement (Cynthia)
- Common problems and pitfalls to address (Cynthia)
- Agency Troubleshooting (Cynthia and Chip)



Introductory statements

Reminder: the Overarching goal of SPI

Webinar goal: Common concerns across sites

“What is my intervention?”

- Issue #1: Too many interventions
- Issue #2: Intervention is too vague.
- Issue #3: Intervention on shaky foundation.
- Issue #4: Multiple interventions all rolled into one.
- Issue #5: When the intervention is not the intervention.

“How do I know my intervention is working?”

- Issue #1: Current assessment will not be able to assess intervention with even moderate confidence.
- Issue #2: Bias towards positive effects.
- Issue #3: Difficulty identifying the mechanism of prevention in POP.
- Issue #4: Lack of a comparable place or group of people who didn't get the intervention.

“What if we already started without a plan for appropriate assessment?”

- Future note: POP demands a plan for assessment using proper rules of assessment.

- Some ideas to fix the problem now:
 - ▣ Retroactive comparison group identification
 - ▣ Strong time series design with many data points
 - ▣ Consider this the “pilot” and try elsewhere.

“It’s too risky to experiment.”

□ Examples:

- ▣ Targeting all 100 top offenders
- ▣ Targeting all hot spots
- ▣ Targeting entire neighborhood or city

□ Ideas and Suggestions

- ▣ You can’t target everyone simultaneously
- ▣ Interventions often doing more than “business as usual”
- ▣ If paying officers overtime, have much more control over deployment

Implementation vs. Evaluation

- Assessment matters
 - ▣ POP requires both “R” and “A”, and “A” has specific rules.
 - ▣ The Core of SPI is the evaluation component – distinguishes it from other projects.
 - ▣ Cannot isolate the effects of treatment without proper evaluation.

- Justifications for practice
 - ▣ Need to know if it reduced crime – if it worked
 - ▣ Need to know if this is cost effective in times of austerity
 - ▣ Need to know if intervention HARMS people

Data used to measure effectiveness

- Issue #1: Only outcomes in “experimental” areas reported.
- Issue #2: Arrest is not the best performance measure.
- Issue #3: Separate outcome versus implementation data
- Issue #4: Some data cannot measure certain crimes.
- Issue #5: Following from #3, may need to think creatively about data use.
- Issue #6: Next topic: Qualitative Measures

Qualitative Performance Measures: Some Cautions

- Both qualitative or quantitative methods must be rigorous.

- Some notes about community surveys
 - ▣ Instrument precision – what exactly are you measuring?
 - ▣ Representative sampling
 - ▣ The “highly satisfied fallacy”

- Research strategically
 - ▣ Building capacity for future assessment of community
 - ▣ Goldstein’s final paragraph: Office motivation and the scientific process.

Getting back to SPI's core idea

Questions you might consider when measuring the performance of the SPI itself (the research-practitioner interaction)

Questions for Police Agencies

- What is your agency's exact role in the assessment of this intervention or project?
- Do your key command understand the problems or prospects of the assessment (not the intervention)
- In what ways has your agency facilitated or impeded the researchers conducting a rigorous evaluation?
- Can you identify tangible nodes of institutional capacity that have been strengthened because of interaction with researchers?
- Can you identify tangible agency infrastructure that institutionalizes the capacity of police and researchers to work together?
- Can you identify specific skills that you have acquired from engaging with researchers?
- Can you identify ways in which practical knowledge is institutionalized into the researcher's agency?

Questions for Researchers

- How are you measuring your effectiveness in SPI?
 - ▣ A suggestion about performance measurement
- What exact role are you playing in the intervention? Is it passive or active?
- Can you identify tangible nodes in which research is now *institutionalized* into agency's practice?
- Can you identify tangible nodes in which practice is now more integrated into your academic units?
- In what specific ways were your skills sharpened?
- Another performance measure: + or – effect on tenure?

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