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Use of Research Learning Community
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Andrew Ranson, M.S.
Javier Ramos, M.S.
Thomas C. Blomberg, Ph.D.
George Pesta, Ph.D.

Best Practices
Translational Criminology: Toward Validated Practices

Research Brought to Life.
AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE
COLLEGE OF CRIMINOLOGY
FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY
Presentation Outline

I. Introduction
II. Summary of Prior Literature
III. Problem Formulation
IV. Research Questions
V. Methods
VI. Findings – Barriers
VII. Findings – Facilitators
VIII. Findings – Mechanisms
IX. Recommendations from Interviews
X. Summary
Translational criminology is concerned with how knowledge is created through scientific research and then used to inform criminal justice policy and practice in the criminal justice system. Historically, criminal justice policy has been largely influenced by ideology, public opinion, moral panics, and media coverage of isolated but powerfully stirring incidents of crime. Perhaps more so than other social policy fields, criminal justice policy and practice has a tendency to be crisis-driven and reactive. However, over the past two decades there has been growing recognition of the importance of evidence-based criminal justice policy and practice from local, state, and federal government as well as within the academic discipline of criminology. From this context, former NIJ Director John Laub, recognized in other fields the study of translational research and aspired to apply this field of study to criminology and criminal justice in an effort to better understand the dynamic processes involved in using criminological research to inform criminal justice in the criminal justice system. Translational criminology is concerned with how knowledge is created through scientific research and then used to inform criminal justice policy and practice.
So, we turned to translational research in other fields and academic realm to policy and practice settings.

Importantly, no explanation of how research is translated from the literature has been discussed on whether criminologists should be involved in policy (Blomberg et al., 2013; Tittle, 2004; Wellford, 2009).

Leadership is resistant towards research/researchers uninterested in applied research (Cullen, 2010).

Relationships between researchers and practitioners are nonexistent (Peterson, 1991).

Research is difficult to interpret/use (Cullen, 2005).

Focus on barriers to knowledge translation.

Much of the prior literature is written from the academics' point of view.
Problem Formulation

The result is a lack of knowledge translation. Practitioners and many of the barriers to knowledge translation produces a gap between researchers and practitioners and many of the barriers to knowledge translation. Disturb scientific method vs. policymaking process. Theoretical vs. action oriented. Little contact between both groups with different values, goals, and rewards. Researchers and practitioners operate in separate domains.

Caplan's "Two-Communities Theory" (1979)
Interaction-Exchange Model (Kothari et al., 2009; Lomas, 1997)

Problem Formulation

Increased Knowledge Translation

- Collaborative research process (i.e., bilateral communication, cross-training)
- Trust, confidence, and empathy
- Reciprocity and exchange

Facilitators of Knowledge Translation Created by the Interaction-Exchange Model

- Exchange through conferences, panels, roundtables, symposiums, etc.
- Interaction through professional and informal networks
- Interaction through partnerships and relationships
- Interaction through intermediary groups

Mechanisms of Knowledge Translation

- Practitioner/Policy maker Community
- Criminal Justice Researcher Community

Bartiers to Research Translation

Increased Knowledge Translation

Reciprocity and exchange

Trust, confidence, and empathy

Collaborative research process (i.e., bilateral communication, cross-training)

Research - Policy Gap
1. What factors are determined by researchers, practitioners, and policymakers to be the major barriers to the use of research to inform policy and practice in adult and juvenile corrections? And, to what extent are these barriers explained by the two communities theory?

2. What do respondents cite as the most influential facilitators to knowledge translation? And, how can these facilitators be explained by the interaction-exchange model?

3. What methods or mechanisms are viewed as effective for bridging the knowledge translation gap and increasing the likelihood for research to inform policy and practice?
Data was gathered through interviews with academics, policymakers, and practitioners. Nationally recognized researchers from across the country, and key correctional decision makers in the state of Florida were interviewed. Additional codes were identified through notes taken during interviews. Debriefed after every interview to discuss themes/codes. Codes for the project came from an exhaustive review of the literature. Interviews were transcribed and then coded in NVIVO 10.

Methods

N=20 (8 - academics, 4 - policy makers, 8 - practitioners)

Interviews were transcribed and then coded in NVIVO 10.

Debriefed after every interview to discuss themes/codes.

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Research is Difficult to Use

Vocabulary

Evidence that cannot be applied

Academics’ disinterest in policy research

Leadership: Unsupportive

Different views on what causes crime

Tough on crime, fear, moral panics

Ideology/Politics (53)

Research is Difficult to Use (65)

Trained Differently (42)

Time Constraints

Crisis Driven Event

Budget/Fiscal Concerns

Leadership: Unsupportive

Tough on crime, fear, moral panics

Different views on what causes crime

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Findings – Barriers:

Research Question 1:
Research Question 2:

Findings

- Relationships
  - Formal and informal partnerships
  - Breaks down traditional academic and practitioner roles
  - Trust, credibility, and reciprocity
  - Evidence-based movement
  - Academic leadership supports policy research to drive decision making
  - Agency leadership supports the use of current programs or identify best practices

Leadership: Supportive (60)
- Reliance on academics to evaluate research
- Research is clear, provides recommendations, cost-effectiveness
- Research is informative (46)
  - Relational research
- Formal and informal partnerships

Evidence-based Movement (80)
- Budget relevant concerns

Academic and practitioner roles
- Research is informative (46)
- Reliance on academics to evaluate research
- Research is clear, provides recommendations, cost-effectiveness
- Research is informative

Leadership: Supportive
- Reliance on academics to evaluate research
- Research is clear, provides recommendations, cost-effectiveness
- Research is informative

Leadership: Supportive (60)
- Reliance on academics to evaluate research
- Research is clear, provides recommendations, cost-effectiveness
- Research is informative

Evidence-based Movement
- Budget relevant concerns
- Relational research
- Reliance on academics to evaluate research

Research is informative
- Relational research
- Reliance on academics to evaluate research
- Research is clear, provides recommendations, cost-effectiveness

Cross Training
- Budget relevant concerns
- Relational research
- Reliance on academics to evaluate research

Research is informative
- Relational research
- Reliance on academics to evaluate research
- Research is clear, provides recommendations, cost-effectiveness

Leadership: Supportive
- Reliance on academics to evaluate research
- Research is clear, provides recommendations, cost-effectiveness
- Research is informative

Evidence-based Movement
- Budget relevant concerns
- Relational research
- Reliance on academics to evaluate research

Research is informative
- Relational research
- Reliance on academics to evaluate research
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Leadership: Supportive (60)
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Evidence-based Movement
- Budget relevant concerns
- Relational research
- Reliance on academics to evaluate research

Research is informative
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Evidence-based Movement
- Budget relevant concerns
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Research Question 3: Findings – Mechanisms of Knowledge Translation

- Government Research (53)
- OJJDP’s Blueprints (52)
- Government Research (52)
- Other state practices (52)
- Peer Networking (52)
- Special Interest Groups (34)
- Southern Poverty Law Center (34)
- RAND (24)
- Policy-Research Organizations (24)
- Practitioner conferences (e.g. ACA) (34)
- RAND (53)
- Urban Institute (53)

Frequency Chart: Credited Mechanisms in Interviews

- Expert Testimony: 13
- Traditional Academic Research: 18
- Policy Taskforce-Connels: 23
- Policy-Research Organizations: 24
- Special Interest Groups: 34
- Peer Networking: 52
- Government Research: 53

Research brought to life: College of Criminology and Criminal Justice
This included hiring more staff for internal agency research as well as investing more regularly in research projects. Conducting program evaluations of policies and interventions, including engaging researchers to work with policymakers and practitioners and to graduate students to work with policy makers and practitioners.

Increasing Academics’ Outreach to Practitioners – Academics should attend practitioner conferences, disseminate their research findings more directly and succinctly to practitioners, and generate policy and practice relevant recommendations.

Recommendations from Interviewees

- Conducting Cross Training of Researchers and Practitioners – Training graduate students to work with policymakers and practitioners and to conduct program evaluations of policies and interventions. Including policy research as a factor in tenure decisions. Encouraging researchers to work in policy-making and practitioner environments.

- Increasing Academics’ Outreach to Practitioners – Academics should members of criminal justice agencies, and policymakers.

- Employing Task Forces – More task forces comprised of researchers, practitioners and policymakers.

- Supporting Researcher-Practitioner Partnerships

- Investing in Research – This included hiring more staff for internal agency research as well as investing more regularly in research projects.
The two separate communities produces a gap between researchers and practitioners as evidenced by the barriers. The facilitators produced under the interaction-exchange model may alleviate the gap between researchers and practitioners. The facilitators produced under the interaction-exchange model may alleviate the gap between researchers and practitioners. Mechanisms such as government research, peer networking, and intermediary groups may be more successful in transferring empirical evidence from researchers to decision makers than traditional sources of evidence (i.e., academic journals and expert testimony). Future research needs to test the two communities theory and interaction exchange model using different case studies.
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Thank You