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## **RESEARCHERS EVALUATE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PITTSBURGH'S VIOLENCE REDUCTION PROGRAM**

TALLAHASSEE, FLA—In a recent study published in *Criminology & Public Policy* (CPP) [Volume 10, Issue 4], researchers found that the Pittsburgh One Vision One Life program does not lead to decreases in homicide. Professors Jeremy M. Wilson and Steven Chermak, both of Michigan State University, assessed the effect of the program on violence by comparing target areas with similar comparison areas. The authors discovered that while the program was not associated with changes in homicide rates, it was associated with increases in aggravated and gun assaults. The authors note that other similar programs have led to a decrease in violent crime, and therefore highlight the need for more rigorous evaluation of the Pittsburgh program.

Senior Editor for this segment, Wesley G. Skogan, of Northwestern University, believes it is important to continue examining violence reduction programs because they provide a nonenforcement, community-level alternative to violence reduction and prevention. Policy essayist, David Kennedy, of the John Jay College of Criminal Justice, argues that the most successful violence reduction programs use a “mixed-mode” approach in which there is direct coordination between community workers and the police. Similarly, policy essayist Malcolm Klein, of the University of Southern California, believes that violence intervention programs should vary by location and be tailored to the specific problems of the given area.

Policy essayist Andrew Papachristos, of Harvard University and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, strongly cautions against promoting programs without sufficient evidence. Doing so can create a situation where violence prevention initiatives become “too big to fail.” For example, when large sums of political and economic capital have been diverted to programs and if they fail, no one pays attention. Echoing Papachristos, policy essayists Megan Ferrier, of Northwestern University, and Jens Ludwig, of the University of Chicago, urge policymakers and practitioners to continue to pursue various violence reduction programs as trials to determine what works and what does not.