

# Crim-PORT 1.0:

## *Criminological Protocol for Operating Randomized Trials*

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**INSTRUCTIONS:** Please use this form to enter information directly into the WORD document as the protocol for your registration on the Cambridge Criminology Registry of EXperiments in Policing Strategy and Tactics (REX-POST) or the Registry of EXperiments in Correctional Strategy and Tactics (REX-COST).

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### **1. Name and Hypotheses**

A. **Name of Experiment** Legitimacy and Restorative Justice: An Experimental Analysis of Economic Sanctions and Recidivism

B. Principal Investigator (Name) R. Barry Ruback  
(Employer) Penn State University

E. **General Hypothesis:** Probationers who get information about the restitution imposed on them (how much they have paid and how much they owe) will be more likely to pay the restitution they owe and less likely to commit new crimes than will probationers who do not receive this information or who receive only a rationale for why they should pay.

### **F. Specific Hypotheses:**

1. List all variations of treatment delivery to be tested.
  - A. Information-feedback about economic sanctions owed and amounts paid to date
  - B. Rationale for why restitution should be paid
  - C. Both information-feedback and rationale
  - D. Neither information-feedback nor rationale

2. List all variations of outcome measures to be tested.

- A. Amount and proportion of money paid toward the court-ordered economic sanctions
- B. Number of missed payments
- C. Number of warning letters received from the probation office
- D. Arrest for a new crime (and time to arrest)
- E. Violation of probation (and time to violation)
- F. Revocation of probation (and time to revocation)

3. List all subgroups to be tested for all varieties of outcome measures.

A. Men vs. women

It is expected that women will be more responsive than men to the rationale manipulation.

B. Level of current supervision

It is expected that individuals who are under current supervision will be more likely to pay the restitution they owe.

C. Those with other convictions vs. those with only one conviction

It is expected that probationers who owe money for only one conviction will be more likely to pay than will probationers who owe money for multiple convictions.

D. Age

There are no specific hypotheses regarding age. On the one hand, older individuals should be more likely than younger individuals to be employed and therefore to be able to pay. On the other hand, younger individuals are probably less likely to have competing debts (e.g., child support) and, especially for DUI, more likely to have parents who will pay the owed amounts.

**2. Organizational Framework:** Check only one from a, b, c, or d

A. **In-House** delivery of treatments, data collection and analysis X

**3. Unit of Analysis**

X A. People: Probationers

#### **4. Eligibility Criteria**

##### **A. Criteria Required**

1. Convicted of a criminal offense in Centre County, Pennsylvania
2. Owe restitution

##### **B. Criteria for Exclusion (list all)**

1. Under 18 years of age
2. Already paid off restitution, even if other economic sanctions are owed
3. No valid address

#### **5. Pipeline: Recruitment or Extraction of Cases (answer all questions)**

A. Where will cases come from? Current cases are on the list of individuals who owe restitution maintained by the Centre County Probation Office. New cases will come from a list of new convictions sent by the District Attorney to the Probation Office.

B. Who will obtain them? Centre County Probation Office

C. How will they be identified? By conviction offense and economic sanctions owed

D. How will each case be screened for eligibility? Penn State University Graduate Research Assistants

E. Who will register the case identifiers prior to random assignment? Penn State University Graduate Research Assistants

F. What social relationships must be maintained to keep cases coming?

1. Monthly meetings between Penn State University research team and Probation Office staff
2. Weekly or bi-weekly communication with the Probation Office staff

G. Has a Phase I (no-control, “dry-run”) test of the pipeline and treatment process been conducted? No

#### **6. Timing: Cases come into the experiment in (check only one)**

Repeated batch assignments X

An initial batch of cases, followed by a batch of additional new cases added every month

## **7. Random Assignment**

A. How is random assignment sequence to be generated?

Random number table. Cases assigned to condition randomly within replicates within gender of probationers. Because randomization will be conducted only within gender, the process is blind to conviction offense, prior record, and prior payments.

B. Who is entitled to issue random assignments of treatments?

Role: Graduate Research Assistants

Organization: Penn State University

C. How will random assignments be recorded in relation to case registration?

Name of data base: Master Data Base

Location of data entry: Password-protected site at Penn State University

Persons performing data entry: Andrew Gladfelter, Brendan Lantz

## **8. Treatment and Comparison Elements**

### **A. Experimental or Primary Treatment**

1. What elements must happen, with dosage level (if measured) indicated.

Element A: In three of the four conditions of the experiment, a letter will be sent to probationers once a month for six months

2. What elements must *not* happen, with dosage level (if measured) indicated.

Element A: In the control condition, probationers must not receive a letter

## **9. Measuring and Managing Treatments**

A. Measuring

1. How will treatments be measured?

Letters will be mailed. Copies of all letters will be kept.

2. Who will measure them?

Graduate research assistants will monitor the letters.

3. How will data be collected?

Data regarding payment, violation, revocation, and arrest will be coded after the experiment is completed

4. How will data be stored?

Payment, violation, revocation, and arrest records are maintained by the Centre County Probation office

5. Will data be audited?

No

6. If audited, who will do it? Not applicable

7. How will data collection reliability be estimated?

A subset of cases will be coded twice and reliability will be assessed

8. Will data collection vary by treatment type?

No

## **B. Managing**

1. Who will see the treatment measurement data?

Research staff

2. How often will treatment measures be circulated to key leaders?

Barry Ruback will review letters monthly

3. If treatment integrity is challenged, whose responsibility is correction?

Barry Ruback

## **10. Measuring and Monitoring Outcomes**

### **A. Measuring**

1. How will outcomes be measured?

Amount of money paid

2. Who will measure them?

Research staff

3. How will data be collected?

Research staff will code data from Probation records

4. How will data be stored?

Data will be stored on password-protected files

5. Will data be audited?

No

6. If audited, who will do it?

Not applicable

7. How will data collection reliability be estimated?

A subset of cases will be coded twice and reliability will be assessed

9. Will data collection vary by treatment type?

No

### **B. Monitoring**

1. How often will outcome data be monitored?

Payment data will be collected monthly. Other data (e.g., violations, arrests) will not be coded until the experiment has been completed

2. Who will see the outcome monitoring data?

Graduate research assistants.

3. When will outcome measures be circulated to key leaders?

Not until the experiment and a subsequent survey have been completed

4. If experiment finds early significant differences, what procedure is to be followed?

Not applicable

## **11. Analysis Plan**

A. Which outcome measure is considered to be the primary indicator of a difference between experimental treatment and comparison group?

Amount and proportion of payment of restitution owed

B. What is the minimum sample size to be used to analyze outcomes?

225 per cell x 4 cells

C. Will all analyses employ an intention-to-treat framework?

Yes

D. What is the threshold below which the percent Treatment-as-Delivered would be so low as to bar any analysis of outcomes?

Should not be applicable. All letters will be sent.

E. Who will do the data analysis?

Penn State University Graduate Research Assistants

F. What statistic will be used to estimate effect size?

Eta squared

G. What statistic will be used to calculate P values?

Analysis of variance

- H. What is the magnitude of effect needed for a  $P = .05$  difference to have an 80% chance of detection with the projected sample size (optional but recommended calculation of power curve) for the primary outcome measure.

Small for the main effects. Medium for the interaction of treatment and gender.

## 12. Dissemination Plan

- A. What is the date by which the project agrees to file its first report on CCR-RCT?

April 1, 2013

- B. Does the project agree to file an update every six months from date of first report until date of final report?

Yes

- C. Will preliminary and final results be published, in a 250-word abstract, on CCR-RCT as soon as available?

Yes

- D. Will CONSORT requirements be met in the final report for the project? (See <http://www.consort-statement.org/>)

Yes

- E. What organizations will need to approve the final report? (include any funders or sponsors).

Centre County Probation Department, National Science Foundation

- F. Do all organizations involved agree that a final report shall be published after a maximum review period of six months from the principal investigator's certification of the report as final?

Yes

- G. Does principal investigator agree to post any changes in agreements affecting items 12A to 12F above?

Yes

H. Does principal investigator agree to file a final report within two years of cessation of experimental operations, no matter what happened to the experiment? (e.g., “random assignment broke down after 3 weeks and the experiment was cancelled” or “only 15 cases were referred in the first 12 months and experiment was suspended”).

Yes