

Crim-PORT 1.0:

Criminological Protocol for Operating Randomized Trials

@ 2009 by Lawrence W. Sherman and Heather Strang

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** Do offenders discover the harm of their offences? A multi-site randomised controlled trial evaluation of the Sycamore Tree Programme

B. Principal Investigator (Name) Margaret Wilson

(Employer) University of Cambridge Doctoral candidate

C. 1st Co-Principal Investigator (Name) N/A

(Employer) N/A

D. 2d Co-Principal Investigator (Name) N/A

(Employer) N/A

E. **General Hypothesis:** The Sycamore Tree victim awareness Programme causes less recidivism than no treatment (control) up to 24 months from the release of prisoners.

F. **Specific Hypotheses:**

1. List all variations of treatment delivery to be tested The Sycamore Tree Programme in eight prisons.

2. List all variations of outcome measures to be tested

Re-arrest.

Reconviction – yes/no

If yes, Seriousness (more, less, or the same) in terms of prior offending history with maximum statutory punishment as the indicator of degree; eg. life imprisonment, up to 14 years, up to 10 years, etc.

If yes, Time to failure, days when offending is possible until the offence leading to reconviction is committed (if no date of commission, then date of arrest)

If yes, number of reconvictions/offences dealt with

Adjudications – any adjudications for offences committed after completing the Sycamore Tree Programme and before release

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

Category of prison

Public or privately run prison

Distance of prison from offender's address/family address

Visits received by prisoner

Size of prison (number of inmates)

Index offence of individual offenders

Length of sentence served

Other programmes completed (if any)

Proximity to release (from completion of Sycamore Tree Programme)

Early release – yes/no

Tagged on release – yes/no

Any period of licence on release – if yes, how long and any conditions

Direct, identifiable victim for individual offenders

Demographic data for individual offenders (ethnicity, age etc.)

Consistency of programme delivery (from observations and questionnaires for tutors and small group leaders)

Homogeneity of participants (eg. type of offences committed by prisoners present on the course)

Attendance record and pass/fail the course

Number of tutors and small group leaders present

Gender of tutors and small group leaders present

Physical conditions of venue (from observations)

Offence the invited victim had suffered

Number of offenders eligible for research

Number of offenders invited to attend recruiting session

Number of offenders attending recruiting session

Number of offenders agreeing to participate in research at each recruiting session

Attrition (caused by transfers or early releases)
Criteria used at prison for prisoners being recommended for the Sycamore Tree Programme

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

- A. **In-House** delivery of treatments, data collection and analysis __
- B. **Dual Partnership:** Operating agency delivers treatments with independent research organization providing random assignment, data collection, analysis__

Name of Operating Agency N/A

Name of Research Organization N/A

- C. **Multi-Agency Partnership:** Operating agencies delivers treatments with independent research organization providing random assignment, data collection, analysis__

Name of Operating Agency 1 Prison Fellowship England and Wales

Name of Operating Agency 2 Her Majesty's Prison Service, Sodexo Justice Services, Serco, G4S

Name of Operating Agency 3 Hampshire Constabulary, PNC data

Name of Research Organization University of Cambridge, Institute of Criminology and Jerry Lee Centre of Experimental Criminology

- D. **Other Framework** (describe in detail). N/A

3. Unit of Analysis

Check only one

A. People (describe role: offenders, victims, etc.) convicted offenders who admit their guilt

B. Places (describe category: school, corner, face-block, etc) N/A

C. Situations (describe: police-citizen encounters, fights, etc.) N/A

D. Other (describe) N/A

4. Eligibility Criteria

A. Criteria Required

Prison Fellowship requirements – Admission of guilt

Sufficient literacy and language ability

At least six weeks of sentence left to serve after completing a Sycamore Tree Programme

Research requirements – On the waiting list for the Sycamore Tree Programme

Adult men

Determinate release date

Within a maximum of 18 months of release from time of recruiting sample

B. Criteria for Exclusion

Prison Fellowship exclusions - No sex offenders or domestic violence offenders

Research exclusions – No foreign nationals

No women

No young offenders

No indeterminate sentenced offenders

Not on the waiting list for the Sycamore Tree Programme

More than 18 months left to serve at time of recruitment

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

A. Where will cases come from? Prison waiting lists for the Sycamore Tree Programme

B. Who will obtain them? Chaplains and Sycamore Tree co-ordinators plus Offender Managers in some establishments

C. How will they be identified? By release date

D. How will each case be screened for eligibility? Offender Managers, Chaplains and Sycamore Tree co-ordinators will check the waiting list and eliminate any prisoner with no determinate release date, who has more than 18 months sentence left to serve, or who is a foreign national liable to be deported upon release

E. Who will register the case identifiers prior to random assignment? Researcher

F. What social relationships must be maintained to keep cases coming? Prison Governors and Chaplains within prisons and their Sycamore Tree Programme administrators, Offender Managers within the prisons, prison IT managers, Police PNC access managers, Prison Fellowship Operations managers and Sycamore Tree Programme administrators

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

- how many cases were attempted to be treated
- how many treatments were successfully delivered

- how many cases were lost during treatment delivery

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

- A trickle-flow process, one case at a time N/A
- A single batch assignment N/A
- Repeated batch assignments ✓ variable volume at each recruiting session
- Other (describe below) N/A

7. Random Assignment

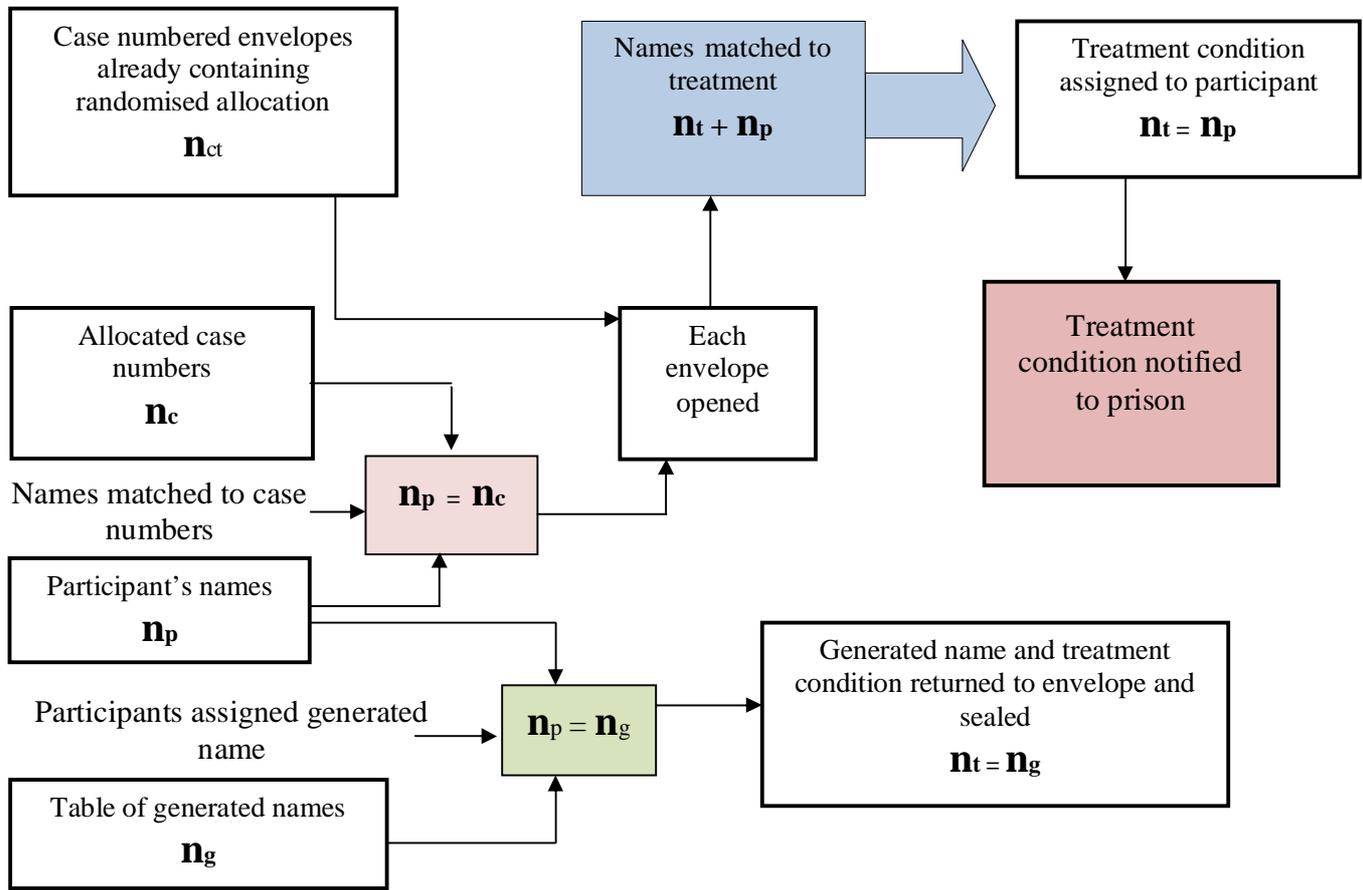
A. How is random assignment sequence to be generated?
(coin-toss, every Nth case, and other non-random tools are banned from CCR-RCT).

Check one from 1, 2 or 3 below

1. Random numbers table → case number sequence → sealed envelopes with case numbers outside and treatment assignment inside, with 2-sheet paper surrounding treatment ✓

- Waiting list of men wishing to complete a Sycamore Tree Programme is assembled in prison Chaplaincies
- Source for waiting list is Offender Managers, Sentence Planners and self-referral by prisoners (criteria used are ill defined and generally reflect a perceived need to address “victim issues”)
- Chaplains and Sycamore Tree co-ordinators (sometimes Offender managers) identify from the waiting list which men want to complete a Sycamore Tree Programme and who fit the research criteria (determinate release date and sentence left to serve plus no foreign nationals)
- Chaplains and Sycamore Tree co-ordinators invite eligible men to watch a recruiting DVD and ask volunteers to sign consent form
- Names of volunteers are sent to researcher for random assignment to the Sycamore Tree Programme or a non-treatment control group
- Each prison is allocated its own random number sequence which is itself randomly assigned
- Depending on the number of places available on the next Sycamore Tree Programme for research participants, the Chaplains will be given that number of men assigned to treatment and a matching number for a control group. Any remaining men in that cohort will be not randomised until the next Sycamore Tree Programme with places available
- Each man is assigned a case number which is matched to the numbered envelopes
- Sealed envelopes are opened and the treatment condition matched to the research participant (figure X below)

- x. Each man is then assigned a generated name for anonymity purposes, this name, together with the treatment condition is placed in the envelope and it is resealed



n = number of cases per batch
 p = real names
 c = case number
 t = condition assigned (T or C)
 g = generated anonymous names

Fig. X Randomised allocation of cases original method

2. Random numbers case-treatment generator program in secure computer

✓ Following the initial recruitment of research participants this method of randomisation was adopted. See figure Y below

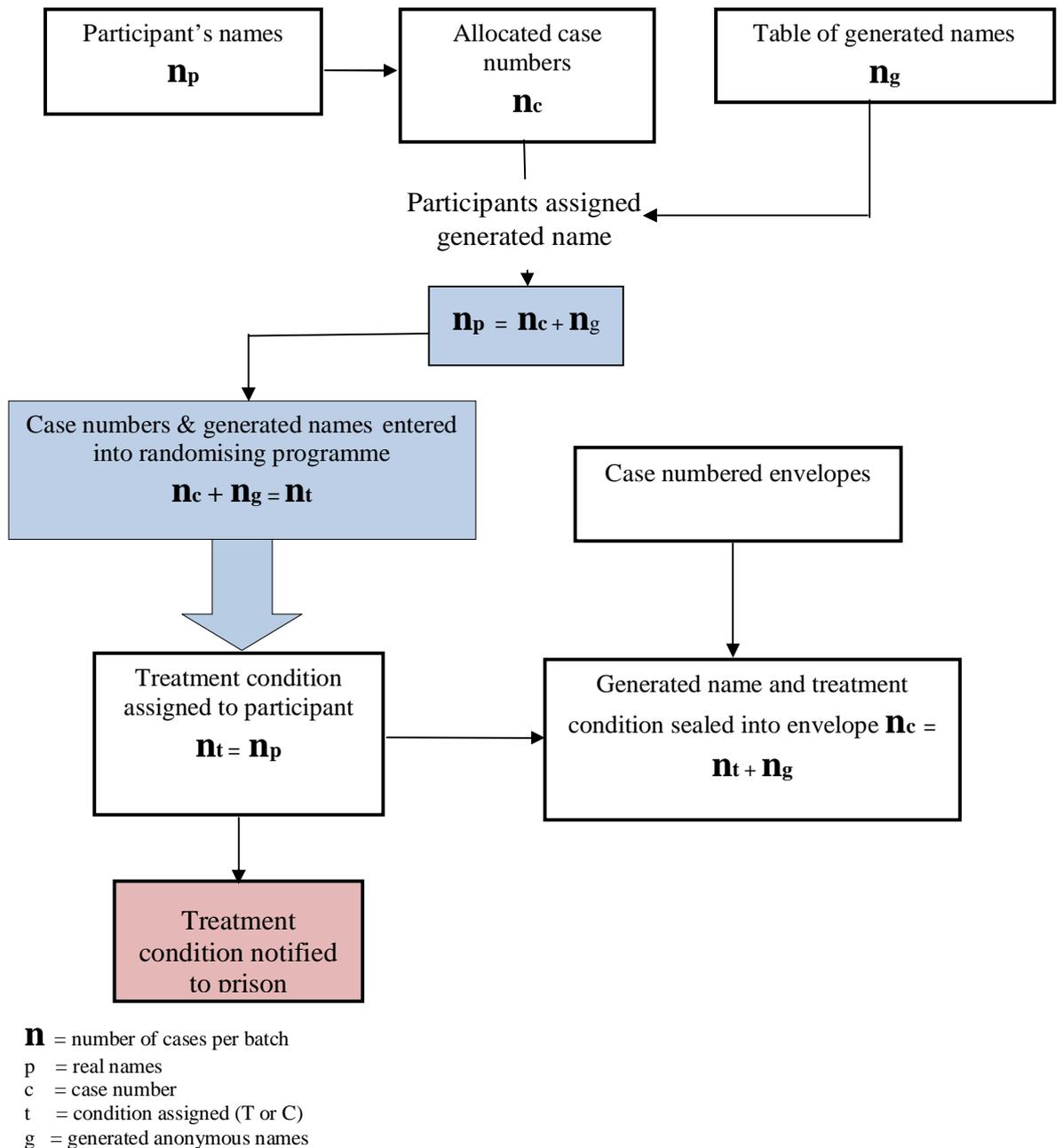


Fig. Y Randomised allocation of cases

3. Other (please describe below) N/A

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

Role: researcher only

Organization: Institute of Criminology, University of Cambridge

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

Name of data base: Sycamore Tree Programme

Location of data entry: Institute of Criminology

Persons performing data entry: Researcher

8. Treatment and Comparison Elements

A. Experimental or Primary Treatment

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

Element A:

- a. Complete all six sessions of the Sycamore Tree Programme
- b. Meet a victim of crime in session 3
- c. Engage with other Sycamore Tree Programme participants in role-play and small group discussions
- d. Watch visual aid material which is integral to the Sycamore Tree Programme supplied routinely by Prison Fellowship
- e. Make an act of reparation in session 6 (usually a letter to their own victim or a piece of artwork, poem etc)

Element B:

Complete workbook (supplied by Prison Fellowship and returned to them for marking) and pass/fail the course

Element C: N/A

Other Elements: N/A

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

Element A: Any infringement of prison rules that lead to exclusion from the Sycamore Tree Programme

Element B: Any other programmes where research participants meet a victim of crime

Element C: N/A

Other Elements: N/A

B. Control or Secondary Comparison Treatment

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

Element A: No alternative treatment/treatment as usual

Element B: N/A

Element C: N/A

Other Elements:

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

Element A: Any other programmes where research participants meet a victim of crime

Element B: N/A

Element C: N/A

Other Elements:

9. Measuring and Managing Treatments

A. Measuring

1. How will treatments be measured? Workbook completed by prisoner during programme
2. Who will measure them? Prison Fellowship tutors following current practice
3. How will data be collected? Researcher
4. How will data be stored? Institute of Criminology by researcher
5. Will data be audited? yes
6. If audited, who will do it? By researcher and routine external moderating system
7. How will data collection reliability be estimated? Researcher and supervisor
8. Will data collection vary by treatment type? No

If so, how?

B. Managing

1. Who will see the treatment measurement data? [Prison Fellowship tutors following current practice, researcher](#)
2. How often will treatment measures be circulated to key leaders? [N/A](#)
3. If treatment integrity is challenged, whose responsibility is correction? [Researcher](#)

10. Measuring and Monitoring Outcomes

A. Measuring

1. How will outcomes be measured? [Reconvictions via Police National Computer database](#)
2. Who will measure them? [Researcher](#)
3. How will data be collected? [Researcher](#)
4. How will data be stored? [Database at the Institute of Criminology](#)
5. Will data be audited? [yes](#)
6. If audited, who will do it? [Researcher and supervisor](#)
7. How will data collection reliability be estimated? [Researcher and supervisor](#)
8. Will data collection vary by treatment type? [No](#)

If so, how?

B. Monitoring

1. How often will outcome data be monitored? [Six Monthly \(more frequently if required\)](#)
2. Who will see the outcome monitoring data? [Researcher](#)
3. When will outcome measures be circulated to key leaders? [End of research](#)
4. If experiment finds early significant differences, what procedure is to be followed? [Stop experiment](#)

11. Analysis Plan

- A. Which outcome measure is considered to be the primary indicator of a difference between experimental treatment and comparison group? [Means of reconviction](#)
- B. What is the minimum sample size to be used to analyze outcomes? [200 ratio 1:1 with target size of 800](#)
- 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? [25%](#)
- E. Who will do the data analysis? [Researcher](#)
- F. What statistic will be used to estimate effect size? [Cohen's d standardised mean difference of reconviction](#)

- G. What statistic will be used to calculate P values? *t test*
- 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. *Medium*

12. Dissemination Plan

- A. What is the date by which the project agrees to file its first report on CCR-RCT? (report of delay, preliminary findings, or final result). *30th September 2013 (thesis on setting up RCT)*
- 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). *Institute of Criminology*
- 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*