FAMILY-BASED TREATMENTS FOR SERIOUS JUVENILE OFFENDERS: A MULTILEVEL META-ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

Researchers have identified several family-based treatments that hold promise in reducing serious juvenile offending, yet these treatments remain underutilized. The present study used multilevel meta-analysis to (a) characterize existing research on family-based treatments for serious juvenile offenders, (b) summarize the findings of this research by estimating an average effect size, and (c) examine the influence of moderators (e.g., characteristics of participants, treatments, and methods) on treatment outcomes. Results from 31 studies revealed several methodological strengths, including frequent use of random assignment and comparison to usual treatment conditions. In addition, the meta-analysis synthesized 325 effect sizes from 29 of these studies and revealed that family-based treatments produced small but meaningful treatment effects (mean $d = 0.26$) relative to comparison conditions. Furthermore, moderator analyses revealed that several characteristics influenced the size of treatment effects. Overall, the results of the present study have implications for decisions about the dissemination and implementation of family-based treatments for serious juvenile offenders as well as the continued development and study of these treatments.