Researching EM: Asking the Right Questions

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My background

- Prison psychologist late 1960s, college professor 1977-2009
- Doctoral dissertation (late 70s) studied transition prison to parole
- Founded JOURNAL OF OFFENDER MONITORING 1987
- Approximately 90 articles and presentations, mainly on EM
- Campbell Collaboration since 2001

Today's objectives

- Research objectives
  - Recidivism
  - Cost/capacity issues
  - Redundant research
  - Under-investigated variables
- Research strategies
- 2 good studies
  - EM as element in randomized DUI in Oregon
  - EM as element in Sweden's early release

In the land of the blind, the one-eyed man is king.

[In regione caecorum rex est luscus.]

Desiderius Erasmus, *Adagia (III, IV, 96)*

Dutch author, philosopher, & scholar (1466 - 1536)

The obvious questions

1. Does EM affect recidivism while the offender is being monitored?
2. Does EM affect recidivism after the monitoring period is over?

- If the answer to either (1) or (2) is yes, then additional questions follow on what types of offenders and in what conditions impact is achieved.

What if #1 and #2 = "no"?

- Until recently, the bulk of studies said, "no significant differences" yet EM grew. Why?
- Not primary:
  - Rehabilitation
  - Punishment
  - Community corrections ideology or evidence of impact

Prison construction avoidance claim

- we can avoid building prisons if we use EM.
  - What was the projected need for prisons?
  - How many were actually built?
  - What is the EM population?
  - How many are genuine prison divertees?

  Hint: much easier to measure with "back end" solutions!

Correctional budget theory

- Example:
  - Prison costs 100 Euros a day
  - EM costs 40 Euros a day
  - You have 1000 people on EM so you are saving 60,000 Euros a day or almost 22,000,000 Euros a year.

Testing the correctional budget theory-1

- What is the number of monitorees who would otherwise REALLY be in prison?
  - HINT: early release is much more certain than front end diversion assessment
- What percentage of monitorees are imprisoned during monitoring? How long do they stay?
  - HINT: In California, over half of prison admissions are parole revocations. Does time in community toll toward completion of sentence if revoked?

Bogus savings (hypothetical)

- Status quo: 100 offenders spend 2 years in prison
- Objective: initiate EM to reduce prison population by 100 by suspending 2 year sentences and replacing with EM
  - 200 offenders x 50% genuine diversion for 2 years community sentence
  - 100 offenders fail, 2 years imposed
- Prison savings: 0, Added cost: EM program

Testing the correctional budget theory-2

- What is the incremental cost for each prisoner?
  - If a 500 person prison operates for 50,000 Euros/day, reducing population by 100 will NOT reduce cost to 40,000.
  - If a 500 person prison is forced to house 600 prisoners, its costs will not be rise 60,000 Euros/day.

Redundant research

- Well established in most jurisdictions that more studies NOT needed to establish:
  - Offenders can tolerate EM
  - EM does not destroy families
  - Offenders do not become significantly depressed
  - People receiving EM as a sanction above probation feel burdened
  - People released from prison early because of EM welcome it
  - The equipment works—in general
  - In most applications, agency workload increases

Caveat on "redundant" research

- With tracking, pilots needed to establish practicality in your terrain
- Pilots may be needed for special populations
  - Ethnic groups with different family traditions
  - Younger offenders
  - Particular psychiatric conditions e.g. FAS
  - Gang affiliated offenders
  - Combined treatment modalities (n.b. Lapham)

Is Everything Surveillance?

Kirstie Ball

Presented at "Surveillance and Society in the 21st Century"

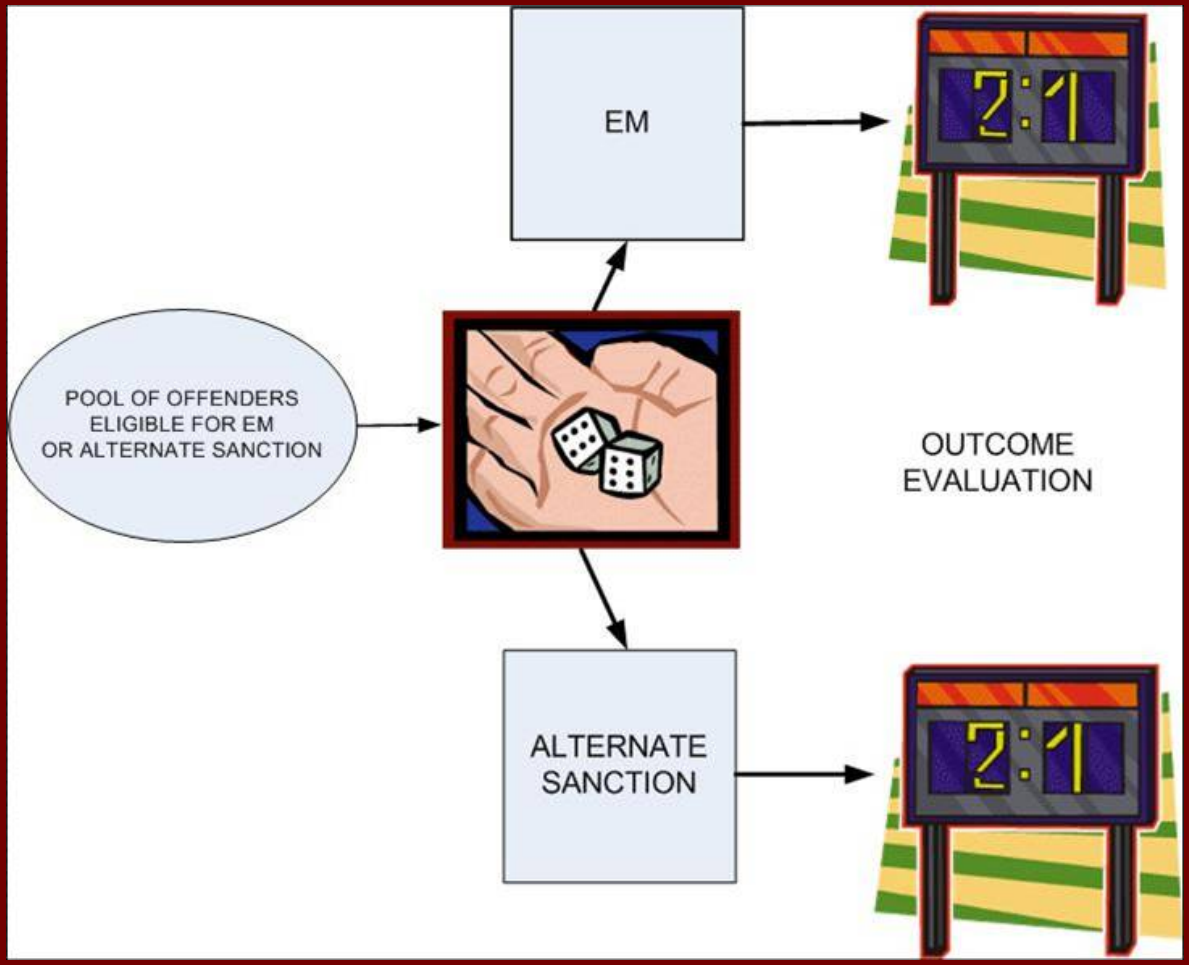
Institute of Advanced Studies
University of Strathclyde

27 April 2009

Ball's slide #8
A large number of observable outcomes [of industrial monitoring]

- Social sorting
- Life chances
- Function creep
- Multispeed lives
- Social suicide
- Digital discrimination
- Individual exposure
- Privacy protection
- Pre-emption practices
- Militarization of everyday life
- Cultures of fear
- Elevated profit
- Risk management
- Eradication of threat

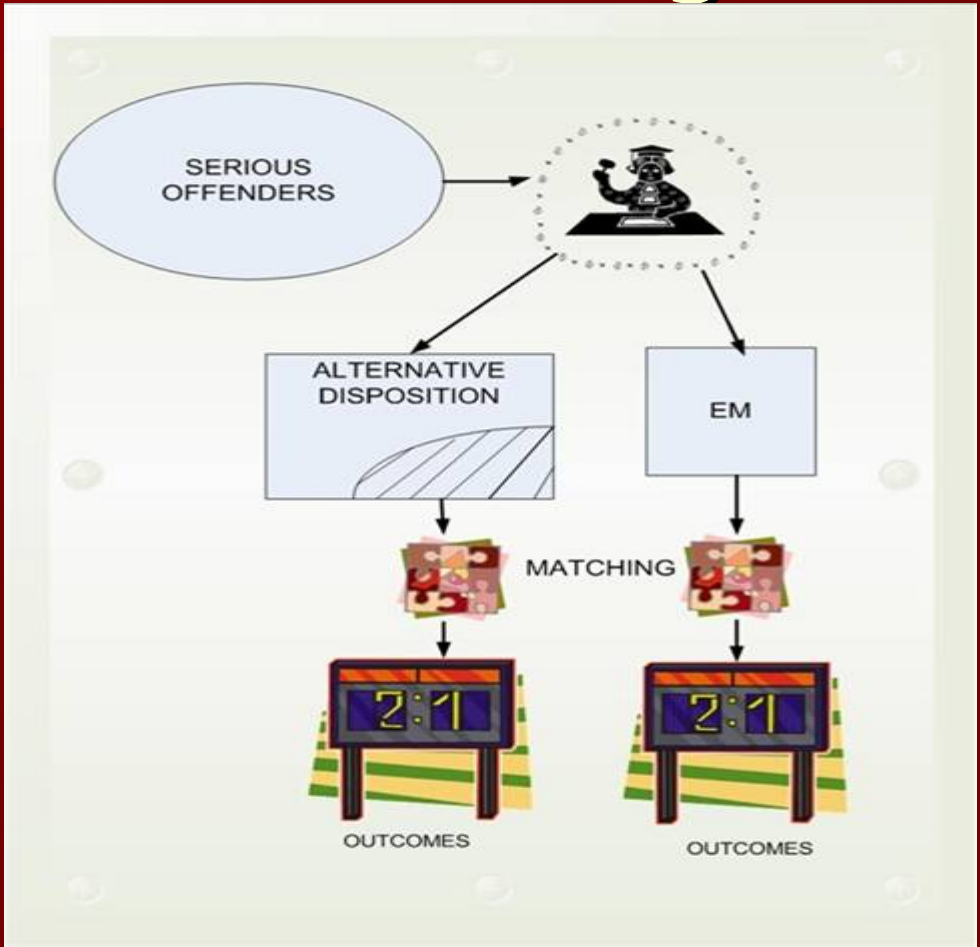
Basic research strategies: posttestonly control group



Posttest only

- Least controversial in validity, most controversial in ethics
- Rarely practical
- Can be done, e.g. Lapham

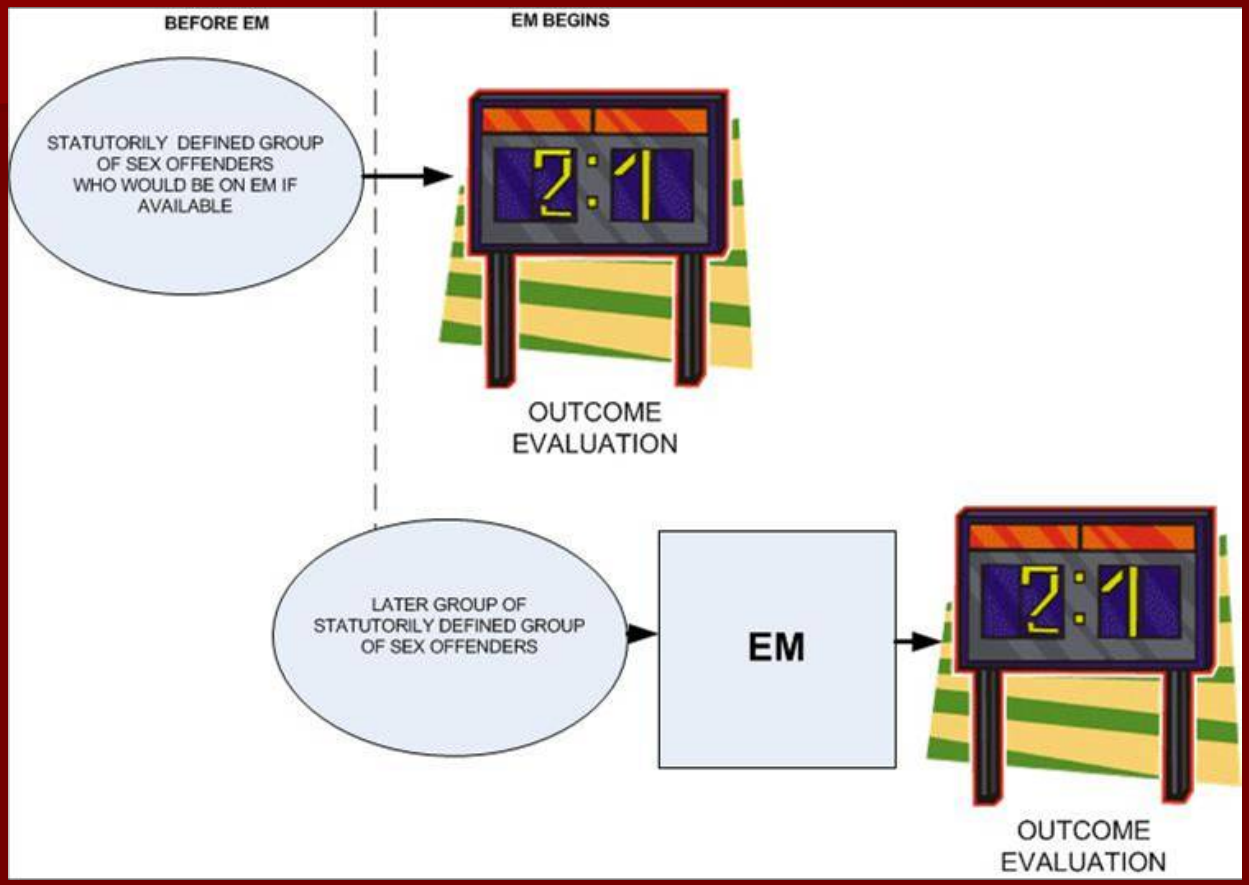
matching


SERIOUS OFFENDERS
ALTERNATIVE DISPOSITION
EM
MATCHING
2:1
2:1
OUTCOMES
OUTCOMES

Matching traps

- Volunteering
  - Self selection before volunteering based on known criteria
  - Motivation for change
- Human selection
  - Manual inspection of files
  - Interviewing subjects for selection

Static group comparison



Static group

- Generally despised
- Can be made powerful by:
  - Eliminating sampling issues
  - Reducing the impact of history
- Very powerful if EM phased in by regions over time
- Weakened by policy, practice, and budget shifts

Best research of last 2 years: randomized

- Recidivist drunk drivers with 4 combinations of treatment/sanction elements
- BHCRS study (Lapham et al., 2007) randomized 477 repeat DUI offenders in Oregon into:
  1. "total push": ISP (alcohol treatment, polygraph testing, supervision), EM (ankle+breath), vehicle sales
  2. ISP, sales, – EM
  3. ISP, EM – sales
  4. ISP – (EM & sales)

BHRCS hazard ratios: risk of arrest (rounded)

	ISP + EM +sales	ISP + sales (no EM)	ISP + EM (no sales)	ISP (no sales, no EM
3 months	1	4	2	3.3
1 year	1	1.9	2	1.5
3 years	1	1	2	.8

Best research of last 2 years: matching design

Best design

em group xxxxx (100% em)

START

control group xxxxx (0% em)

Swedish design

em group xxxxx (volunteers)

START

control group xxxxxxxxx (couldn't vol, non-vols, rejects)

Swedish design
(Marklund & Holmberg, 2009)

- Authors recognize weaknesses
- Authors "chipped away" at challenges to validity
  - Compared overlap group with non-overlap group
  - Detailed explanation of matching process and comparison of groups showed close match
  - Could not eliminate:
    - 10% missing program completion data
    - Volunteer bias

Other strengths

- Excellent process delineation
- Breakdowns of outcomes by age, offense history, risk levels
- Long follow-up (3 years)
- Similar package of services for EM & Control
- Fairly large (260 E, 260 C)

Swedish early release results (stratified by risk)

RISK	TOTAL EM	RECONV. EM %	TOTAL CONTRL.	RECONV. CONT.%
LOW	94	10	96	24*
MEDIUM	82	27	76	42*
HIGH	84	44	88	49

Swedish early release results (stratified by prior convictions)

PRIORS	TOTAL EM	RECONV. EM %	TOTAL CONTRL.	RECONV. CONT.%
0	116	12	123	21
1-2	89	24	79	43**
>2	55	60	58	66

Swedish early release results (stratified by age)

age	TOTAL EM	RECONV. EM %	TOTAL CONTRL.	RECONV. CONT.%
≤37	124	36	130	44
>37	136	17	130	32**

Swedish early release results (desistance)

GROUP	# CONVICT 3-YRS BEFORE	# CONVICT 3-YRS AFTER	CHANGE
EM	269	129	-140
CONTROL	276	201	-75

CONCLUSIONS

- Recidivism is one of many issues
- Some variables are of immediate, practical significance; research should be funded by operating agencies, vendors, NGOs
- Other variables relate to the society we live in and should draw wider interest, funding
- Good research is essential, possible, but rare
- Survival of EM eventually will depend on research (n.b. U.S. boot camps)