



Secure Detention and Community-Based Alternatives: Impact on Youth Outcomes



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Background

- Juvenile justice agencies have sought to limit the utilization of restrictive placements such as secure detention follow an arrest
- Prior research has found that placement in secure facilities is associated with a host of adverse effects on educational achievement, physical and mental health, case outcomes, and future criminal offending
- However, outcome associated with community-based alternatives such as supervised release for high-risk youth have not been explored
- Study Goals
 - Assess the impact the three pretrial placement types (release without conditions, supervised release, and secure detention) on pretrial offending within 60 days

Methods

- Data sources
 - Florida Department of Juvenile Justice: Youth case processing, delinquency history, and social risk factors
 - Contextual data: American Community Survey (ACS)
- Sample
 - All juveniles referred for misdemeanors or felonies from 2015 to 2019 (randomly select one referral if youth has multiple)
 - N = 71,893 referrals nested in 3,971 neighborhoods nested in 67 counties
- Analytical Strategy
 - Assess the Average Treatment Effect on the Treated (ATT) on New Charges, Failure to Appear Charges (FTA), or any New Offense following Propensity Score Matching (PSM) based on delinquency history and social risk factors
 - Examine the youth, neighborhood, and county characteristics associated with pretrial offending with three level logistic regression and PSM

Table 1: Select Descriptive Statistics by Placement

	Release N=47,897	Sup. Release N=11,223	Secure Detention N=12,837
Variables	mean/%	mean/%	mean/%
Offending 60 Days	8.50%	13.12%	16.45%
FTA 60 Days	3.01%	4.60%	3.39%
Any Offense 60 Days	8.81%	13.55%	15.17%
Age	15.21	14.95	15.18
Race			
White	42.60%	30.05%	33.57%
Hispanic	18.07%	18.17%	18.25%
Black	38.64%	51.27%	47.81%
Other	.70%	0.51%	0.37%
Male	65.99	77.31	80.22
Current Offense			
Against Person Fel.	3.78%	40.45%	43.55%
Against Person Misd.	24.90%	4.14%	14.26%
Property Fel.	21.51%	40.63%	26.95%
Property Misd.	17.95%	4.00%	2.71%
Drugs/Alcohol	19.27%	4.39%	4.95%
Public Order	9.55%	4.70%	6.32%
Obstruction	3.04%	1.68%	1.27%
Gun Offense	.53%	2.30%	22.19%
Number of Prior Offense	.26	.55	.65
School Risk Factors			
Low	38.5	30.93	32.04
Medium	36.65	40.35	39.39
High	24.86	28.72	28.57

Table 2: PSM Balancing Statistics

	% Mean Bias	
	Unmatched	Matched
Release vs. Sup. Release	16.7	3
Sec. Detention vs. Sup Release	8.3	1.2
Release vs. Sec. Detention	18.7	3.9

Table 3: ATTs for Three Placement Options

	Release (Control) vs. Sup. Release (Treatment)		
	Release (%)	Sup. Release (%)	ATT
New Charge	16.3	15.4	-0.9
FTA	3.8	4.8	1.0**
Any Offense	18.4	18.5	0.0
	Sec. Detention (Control) vs. Sup. Release (Treatment)		
	Sec. Detention (%)	Sup. Release (%)	ATT
New Charge	17.7	14.8	-2.9***
FTA	4.2	5.3	1.1***
Any Offense	20.1	18.3	-1.8**
	Release (Control) vs. Sec. Detention (Treatment)		
	Release (%)	Sec. Detention (%)	ATT
New Charge	18.25	17.7	-0.6
FTA	3.9	3.5	-0.4
Any Offense	20.5	19.7	-0.8

Abbreviation. ATT = Average Treatment Effect on the Treated
*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001 (two-tailed tests)

Results: PSM and ATT

- PSM effectively balances the comparison groups for all analyses (Table 2)
- Supervised release youth do not significantly differ from released youth for new charges or any offending, but they have higher rates of FTAs (Table 3)
- Supervised release youth have significantly fewer new charges or any offending compared to secure detention youth, but they have higher rates of FTAs (Table 3)
- Released youth outcomes do not significantly differ from secure detention youth (Table 3)

Table 4: Post-PSM Three Level Multinomial Logistic Regression

Variable	New Charge	FTA	Any Offense
	O.R. (95% C.I.)	O.R. (95% C.I.)	O.R. (95% C.I.)
Release (Ref) vs. Sec. Detention	1.055 (0.941-1.182)	0.941 (0.761-1.164)	1.038 (0.931-1.157)
Sup. Release (Ref) vs. Sec. Detention	1.190 (1.083-1.307)***	0.773 (0.660-0.905)***	1.072 (0.981-1.171)
Release (Ref) vs. Sup. Release	1.052 (0.952-1.162)	1.229 (1.036-1.457)*	1.097 (0.999-1.205)

Sample produced from PSM using 1 nearest neighbor match without replacement and a caliper distance of .02
*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001 (two-tailed tests)

Conclusions and Future Directions

- Youth with community-based pretrial supervision differed significantly from youth that were released without supervision and youth that were placed in a secure detention facility
- Differences in presenting offense type and gun offenses were especially pronounced
- PSM matching effectively balanced these differences and created comparable samples to facilitate outcome analysis
- Compared to similar detained youth, youth with supervised release were less likely receive a new charge, but more likely to receive an FTA compared to both placement types
- Supervised release appears to be a viable alternative to secure detention, however, it may increase failure FTA risk
- Future research should consider additional outcomes such as case processing, disposition, long-term recidivism, and educational attainment/achievement
- Additionally, future research will examine the degree to which placement's impact on youth outcomes is moderated by neighborhood context
- The dataset compiled for this project will be leveraged to secure funding from external source