

INTEGRATED CORRECTIONS RESEARCH MODEL

CHALLENGES TO PRACTITIONER-RESEARCHER COLLABORATION

Challenges facing practitioner-researcher partnerships include differing goals, inadequate funding, poor communication, and limited access to data and correctional staff.

Researchers and practitioners often have different priorities. If there is a lack of communication leading to agreement on a shared goal, researchers may define a study that does not meet the practitioners' needs. This can create a trust gap whereby practitioners are unmotivated to collaborate, and may view the findings as irrelevant. Another problem may be lack of funding. If practitioners lack the resources to complete a project, researchers may choose to invest in better-funded projects with greater likelihood of succeeding.

Other problems have to do with access to correctional decision-makers and data. Most criminal justice research is confined to historical data and small sample sizes. Randomized controlled trials (RCT) are the gold standard for scientific validation, but they are difficult and costly to complete because they require strict regulation and frequent monitoring. In correctional settings, high levels of attrition and data contamination result in only a small percentage of RCTs being completed.

THREE-WAY COLLABORATION

Marquis Software has developed a collaborative model to alleviate such challenges. As the third member of the practitioner-researcher collaboration, we offer a dedicated research team that:

- facilitates communication between practitioners and researchers
- spearheads the RCT from beginning to end, ensuring its successful completion
- significantly reduces the cost of RCTs by automating treatments and collecting results
- draws from a network of researchers in various fields
- has long-term, established relationships with practitioners at decision-making levels
- formats and decodes data from the largest correctional database in the world

Our purpose is to pave the way for substantive research in the form of RCTs, with the goal of providing actionable results to practitioners and clean, comprehensive data to researchers. Finally, as part of the mission of the Integrated Justice Information Systems (IJIS) Institute, we are able to format our data to NIEM standards to increase data-sharing among correctional organizations.

ROLE OF EACH PARTNER

Practitioner

- defines areas of research and questions to be answered
- determines parameters of the experiment
 - sample size
 - duration
 - timing
- implements the experiment through staff training and participation
- makes policy changes based on results

Marquis Software

- connects practitioners and researchers with similar research interests
- helps negotiate the parameters to satisfy both practitioner and researcher needs
- automates the experiment based on capabilities of the database
- ensures the completion of the experiment
- protects data from contamination
- follows up with researchers to present their findings

Researcher

- provides expertise in criminal justice research methods
- designs the experiment according to own areas of interest and practitioner's questions
- analyzes data from the experiment
- delivers summary of findings to practitioners
- publishes findings