

“Highlighted Article”

Effects of Multisystemic Therapy on Caregivers of Serious Juvenile Offenders: A 20-Year Follow-Up to a Randomized Clinical Trial

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Caregivers of Serious Juvenile Offenders

- ▣ Favorable attitudes toward criminality
- ▣ Histories of involvement in antisocial behavior
- ▣ Cognitive and interpersonal deficits that interfere with caregiver control strategies
- ▣ Criminal behavior of offspring tied to weak caregiver-youth affective bonds

Effects of MST on Caregivers

- ▣ Changes in parenting practices have benefits for caregivers' own functioning
 - Decreased psychiatric symptomatology (Mann et al., 1990)
 - Increased caregiver-youth emotional warmth (Mann et al., 1990)
 - Improved marital relations (Henggeler et al., 1986)
- ▣ Do the positive effects of MST on caregivers extend to criminal and noncriminal outcomes?
 - Felony and Misdemeanor Arrests
 - Years Sentenced to Incarceration and Probation
 - Civil Suits Reflecting Family Instability

Current Study

- ▣ Examines the long-term (i.e., 20.7 years) effects of MST on caregivers of serious juvenile offenders
 - Criminal Outcomes
 - ▣ Arrests: Misdemeanors and Felonies
 - ▣ Punitive Sentencing: Incarceration and Probation
 - Civil Outcomes
 - ▣ Suits: Family Instability

Participants

- ▣ 276 caregivers from families ($N = 176$) of serious and violent juvenile offenders
- ▣ Caregivers lived in same home as juvenile offenders
- ▣ Families randomized to MST ($n = 92$) or individual therapy (IT; $n = 84$) in original clinical trial (Borduin et al., 1995)
- ▣ Caregivers were 40.48 years old at time of treatment and 66.71 years old at time of follow-up
- ▣ 70% of caregivers in MST and individual therapy (IT) conditions had an arrest history

Treatment Conditions

- ▣ MST
 - Targets causes and correlates of serious juvenile offending
 - Present-focused, action-oriented treatment delivered in natural environment
 - Empower caregiver to effectively address youth problem behaviors
- ▣ IT
 - Focused on personal, family, and academic issues
 - Eclectic blend of psychodynamic, client-centered, and behavioral approaches
 - Treatment-as-usual for juvenile offenders
 - Focus on intervening with individual youth rather than social ecology

Measures

- ▣ Public records for arrests, sentencing, and civil suits obtained in Missouri
- ▣ To confirm residency:
 1. State records of criminal convictions
 2. Driver's license records
 3. Property ownership
 4. Marital records

Measures (continued)

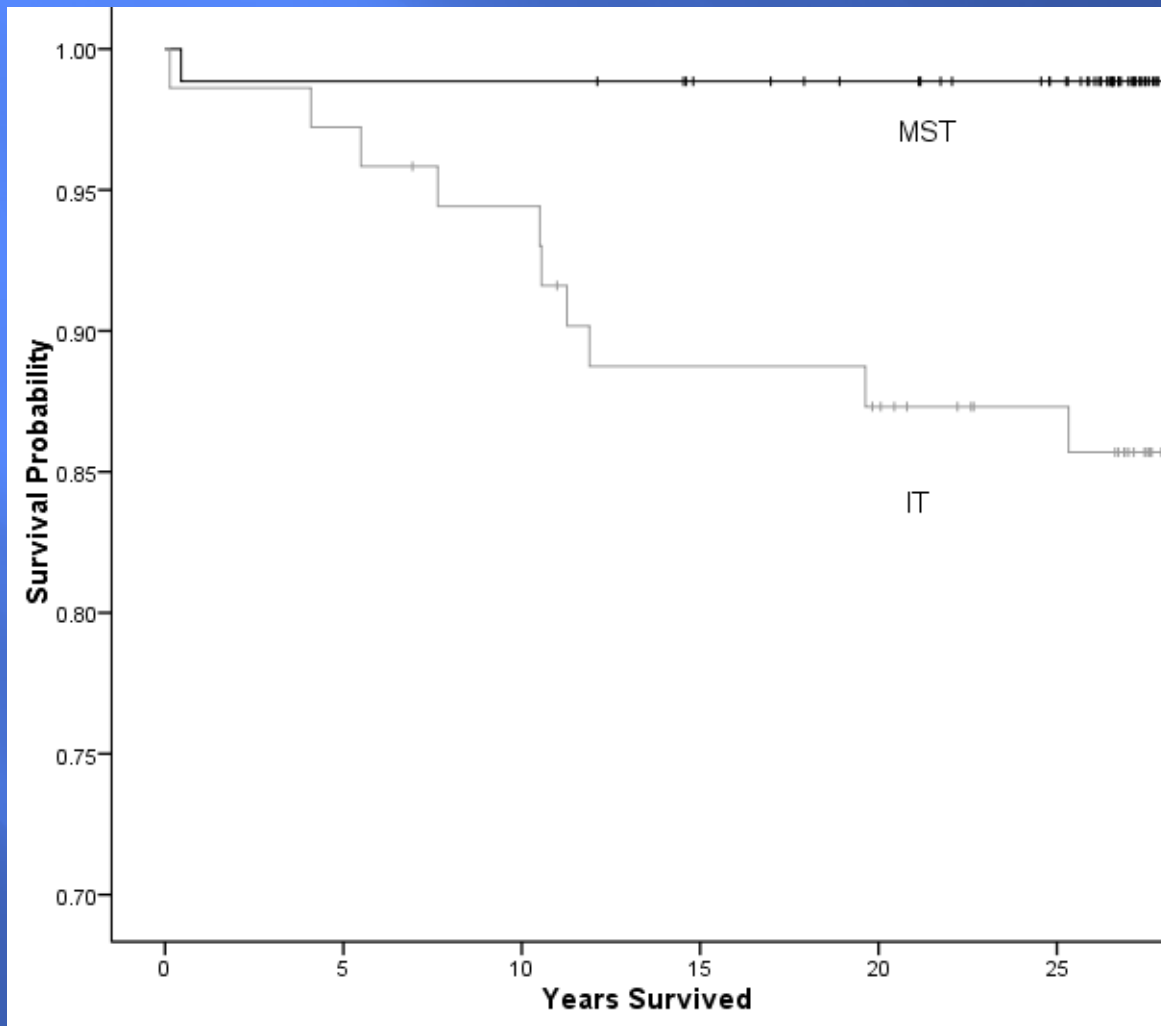
▣ Criminal Outcomes:

- Criminal record data coded as felony or misdemeanor
- Years sentenced to (a) incarceration or (b) probation
- Only criminal arrests that resulted in conviction

▣ Noncriminal Outcomes:

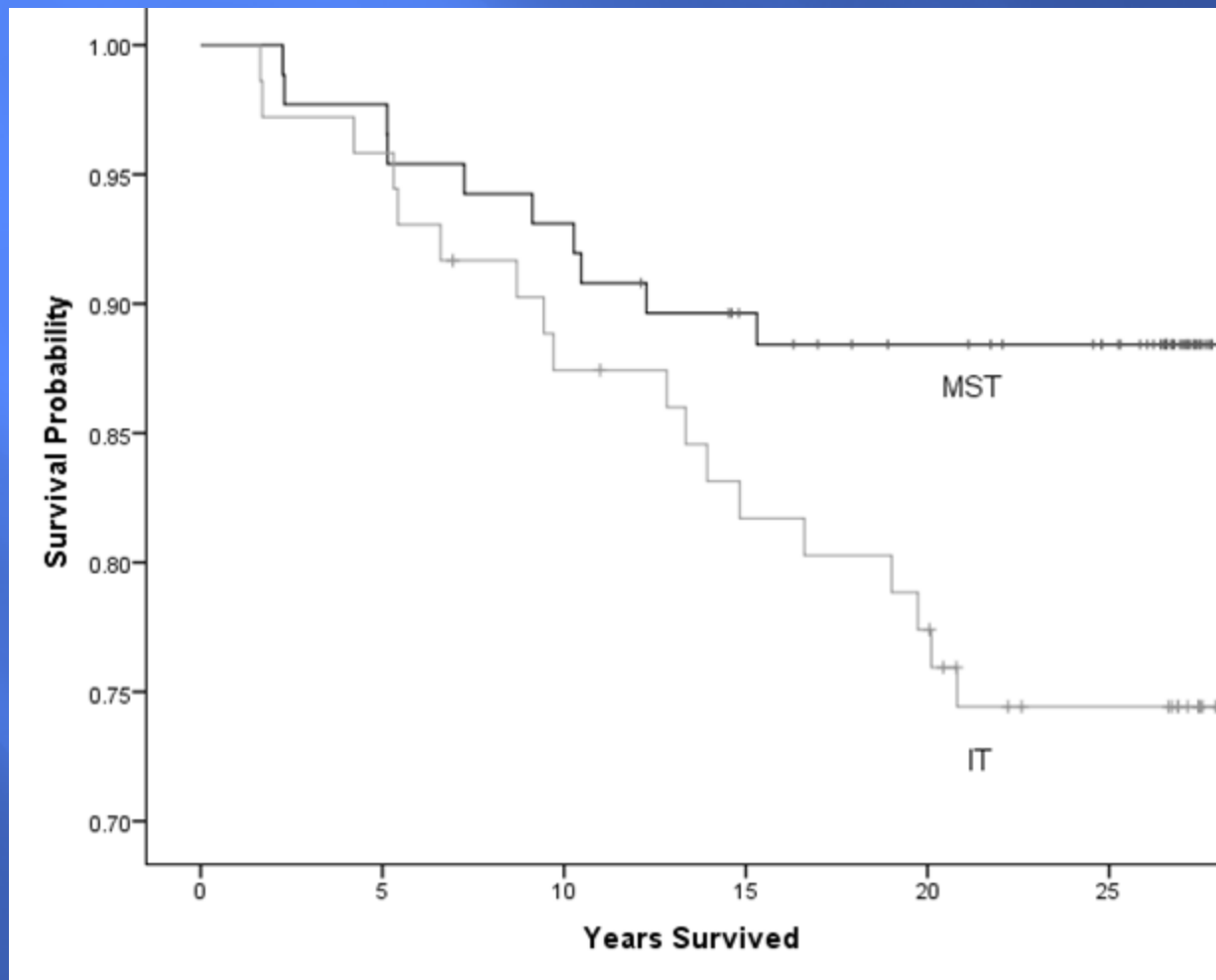
- Civil suit record data coded as family instability (divorce, child support)

Survival functions for caregivers in multisystemic therapy (MST) and individual therapy (IT) households on time to first felony arrest following treatment.



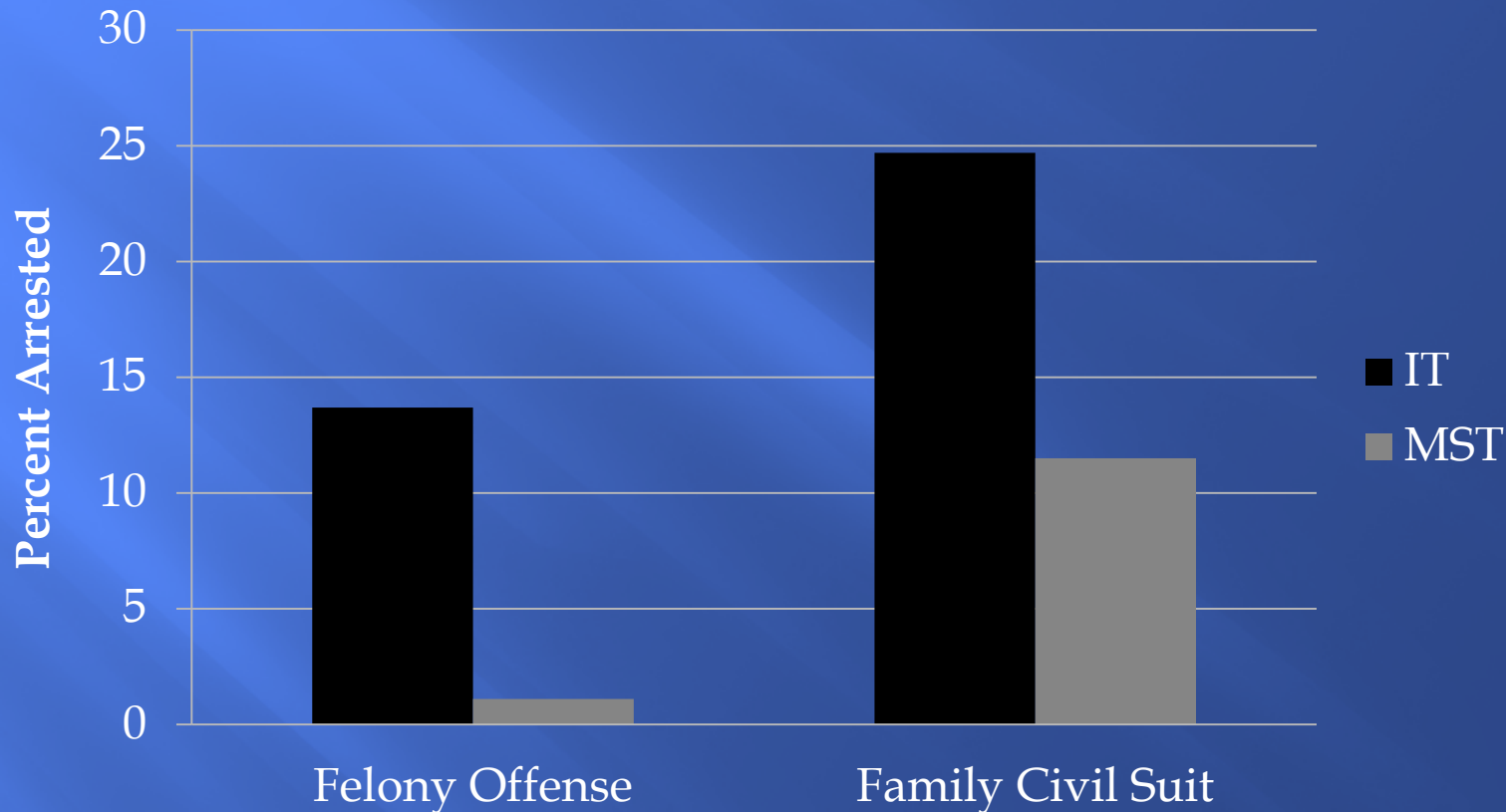
$$\chi^2 (1, N = 160) = 9.76, p = 0.002$$

Survival functions for caregivers in multisystemic therapy (MST) and individual therapy (IT) households on time to first civil suit related to family instability following treatment



$$\chi^2 (1, N = 160) = 4.57, p = 0.03$$

Likelihood of Arrests/Suits



- IT 13.65 times more likely to commit felony
- IT 2.52 times more likely to be involved in family civil suit

Negative Binomial Regression Analyses

Estimated relative rates of outcomes:

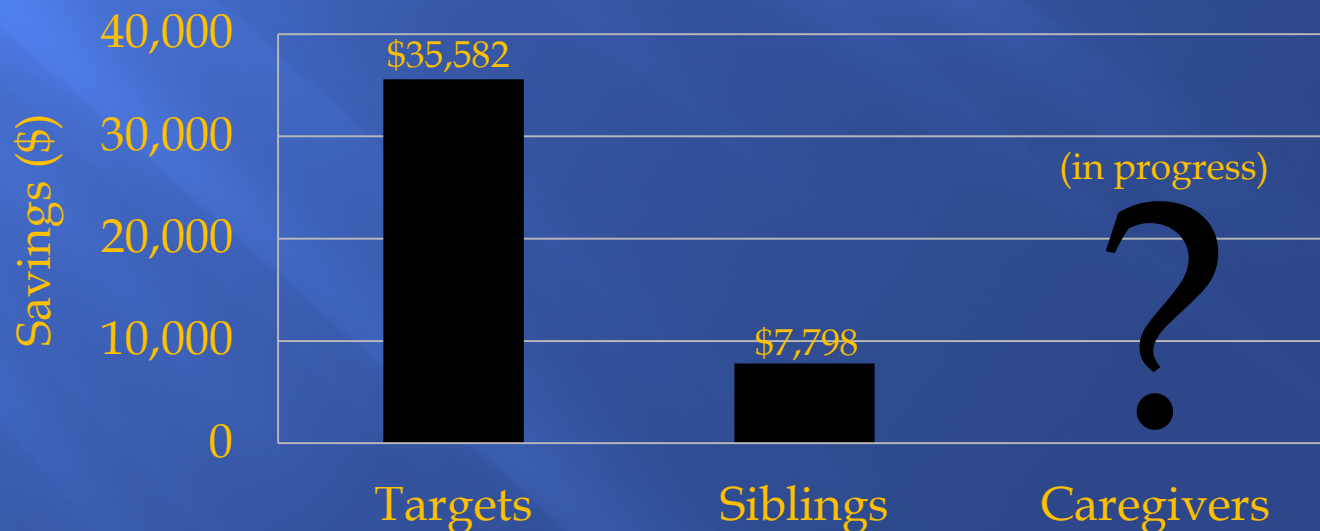
Outcome	IT rate relative to MST rate
Felony arrest	3.41 times greater for IT
Misdemeanor arrest	1.55 times greater for IT
Incarceration (years)	1.40 times greater for IT
Probation (years)	1.17 times greater for IT
Family instability suits	4.29 times greater for IT

Causal Mediation Analyses

- ▣ Criminal Arrests mediated by:
 - Increased cohesion
 - Decreased defensive communication
- ▣ Punitive Sentencing mediated by:
 - Increased cohesion
 - Decreased defensive communication
 - Decreased conflict
- ▣ Family Civil Suits mediated by:
 - Increased adaptability
 - Decreased defensive communication
 - Decreased conflict

Conclusions

- ▣ Results showed long-lasting effects of MST in reducing caregiver criminal activity (arrests, incarceration)
- ▣ Results indicated fewer suits related to family instability
- ▣ Results suggest that favorable effects of MST on caregiver outcomes were mediated by positive changes in family relations during treatment
- ▣ Cost-benefits of MST (Dopp, Borduin, Wagner, & Sawyer, 2014)



Limitations

- ▣ Public records likely underestimate actual number of crimes committed (although they accurately estimate serious crimes)
- ▣ Design did not allow for examination of whether results were due to specific effects of MST or more general effects of family-based tx
- ▣ Unable to confirm continuous residency in Missouri

Future Directions

- ▣ Examine the broader effects of evidence-based family treatment on caregivers and siblings of youths with internalizing and externalizing problems
- ▣ Calculate additional cost effectiveness of MST including results on caregivers

Thank you!

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