



Prevention: Effects of early and middle childhood prevention programs on adult crime
door Jessica Asscher, onderzoeker aan de Universiteit van Amsterdam

In this presentation the results of a systematic review of empirical studies on effectiveness of early prevention on adult crime are presented. The main questions were: What are the long-term effects of prevention programs conducted during early and middle childhood on adult crime? What are the characteristics of effective prevention programs?

Seven programs met the selection criteria (i.e. the program was administrated before the end of primary school; the outcomes – delinquency or crime - were assessed when participants were at least 20 years old; the study had a high quality research design). No Dutch study was found. Per program, we present briefly the program model (i.e. the context in which the program takes place and the risk and protective factors the program focuses on), research design, methods and major findings.

In general, it appears that these programs had some beneficial effects. However, the effects should not be overestimated. Positive effects were found only for some groups, for some outcomes or for some of the program components. Moreover, the absolute rate of offending in the program group at follow up was still quite high.

The results suggest that following aspects might increase the effectiveness of these programs: combination of focus on both family and child (instead of a sole focus on the child); more tight focus on specific risk factors for antisocial behavior; selection of children who are at-risk, early timing, and good quality of implementation.

The implications of these findings for research, policy and clinical practice are discussed.