

Estimating the costs of criminal careers

Some individuals offend persistently and/or frequently. When evaluating interventions that are aimed at reducing the offending propensity of specific offenders an understanding of likely future offending is essential in order to estimate the benefits from these programmes. There has been a significant amount of research in the criminology literature on offending profiles: (D. S. Nagin),(J. Petersilia *et al.* 1978), (P. W. Greenwood *et al.* 1996),(A. R. Piquero *et al.* 2004;A. R. Piquero *et al.* 2001). Less developed is the application of cost of crime estimates to offending careers. (Cohen 1998) estimated the lifetime costs of a high risk youth from age 14 onward who embarks on a crime career in the U.S. – including the cost of their criminal offending behaviour and heavy drug abuse (as well as lost wages from less than high school education). Cohen and Piquero (2008) updated this analysis with more recent data but also provided year-by-year estimates of costs imposed. (DeLisi and Gatling 2003) estimated the costs imposed by a group of 500 adult prison offenders by analyzing their prior histories. Welsh *et al.* (2008) examined the cost of a juvenile offending career from age 7-17 based on 500 inner-city youth.