

accountable for the future criminality of the populations they serve creates a threshold barrier to any program designed to use them to bring about crime reduction. So even if criminal justice operations turn out not to hold the best opportunities for shrinking victimization and incarceration, they may hold the opportunities easiest to take advantage of.

All of that said, here are some specific instances in which agencies not centered on crime control might still serve the crime-control cause, in addition to the Nurse-Family Partnership, the Good Behavior Game, and the lead-and alcohol-reduction programs mentioned above. Their variety will, I hope, suggest the large range of possible generalization. How to choose, manage, pay for, and evaluate such efforts is a hard problem, but I submit that it is a problem well worth wrestling with.

VIOLENCE PREVENTION IN SHOCK-TRAUMA UNITS

Improved shock-trauma treatment has reduced the homicide rate by keeping a larger share of gunshot victims breathing. But often enough the victim in one shooting is the perpetrator in the next. It might be said that gunshot wounds are infectious: receiving one can lead to giving one. In the case of sexually-transmitted disease, a diligent physician would not be satisfied merely to have treated the current infection, without doing something to reduce the risk of both re-infection and re-transmission. The surgeon who has saved someone's life might be expected to enjoy a certain prestige in the eyes of his patient, and there is some evidence that making violence prevention part of shock-trauma care can help "prevent the next shooting." Yet that approach has not yet become part of the effective standard of care.

ASSERTIVE COMMUNITY THERAPY (ACT)

Several mental-health conditions increase the rate of interactions between those who suffer from them and the criminal-justice system. While it is not the case that de-institutionalization led to a mass transfer of mental-hospital patients to the prisons, it is the case that the mentally ill (especially the mentally ill homeless) constitute a significant fraction of the "career misdemeanants" whose frequent arrests on low-level charges keep the police busy and the lock-ups and jails crowded. A mental health services system that passively waits for those people to show up for treatment, and then merely hopes that they will take their medications regularly, makes a smaller contribution to public

safety and order than a more aggressive approach that finds patients and nudges them toward adherence with medication regimes. (Simply having a nurse appear every day to ask "Have you taken your meds?" can be highly effective.) ACT programs are widespread, but there seems to be a strong case that increasing their scope (and perhaps their intensity) would yield benefits in excess of costs, especially if crime-reduction and enforcement-reduction benefits are figured in.

SHIFTING THE SCHOOL DAY

The standard American school day starts sometime between 7:30 and 9 a.m. and ends around 2:30 or 3 p.m. That lets students out when workers are still on the job and many homes unoccupied and therefore tempting burglary targets. Unsurprisingly, juvenile burglaries seem to peak in the hours just after school. (So does juvenile sexual activity.) Starting the school day later and ending it later could shrink or eliminate those peaks. It might also provide educational and health benefits by increasing sleep time, and thus attentiveness in class, and reducing absenteeism. (This assumes that teenagers would choose to sleep in rather than getting up early, which seems a safe assumption.)

Such a shift in the school day would impose various costs on grown-ups, especially school employees who would have to come home at, rather than before, the afternoon rush hour. Truancy might increase because working parents would no longer be able to get their kids out the door before heading to work. Extra-curricular activities might become much less popular if scheduled before the school day rather than after it. How those costs would balance out against the crime-reduction and other benefits of a later school-day remains an open question, but it seems unlikely that the burglary rate will figure largely in the decision-making of school departments in the absence of outside political pressure.

CONCLUSION

Crime and punishment are both great evils. We can have less of both if we approach the question of crime control strategy by asking James Q. Wilson's questions with something like James Q. Wilson's clear-headedness in distinguishing helpful from unhelpful answers. But Wilson never wrote down an agenda for crime control. He left that as an exercise for his students.