Improving The Management of Rental Properties With Drug Problems

Courtney Hegwald

Longwood University

 The question proposed in the chosen article is that rental properties infested with drugs have poor management skills and tactics. Within the introduction the research question was made very clear to readers, for example researchers stated their question and how they were going to test this hypothesis. The theory the authors have announced is that the people who do manage these properties help prevent these illicit activities and the tactic designed to study this theory is pressuring landlords with drug problems in their rental properties to improve their management practices (Eck, & Wartell, 1998. p. 162). While the quality of this research question is very put together, it could have been simplified for readers to fully understand the study.

The method used for this study was a randomized quantitative experiment. The researchers were joined by the Narcotics Unit and other section of the San Diego Police department, along with the assistant Wartell, who was based in the Crime Analysist Unit (Eck, & Wartell, 1998. p. 170-171). These individuals conducted screenings to gather data on where drug enforcement had taken place at rental properties. With this information, the researchers then used a computer generated random number assignment to divide the location of rental properties into control and two treatment groups. After the study was conducted, researchers then sent letters to the one out of two treatment properties acknowledging the drug problem and announcing that police were willing to help eliminate drug dealers living in the properties. The second treatment group received letter stating the legal action police officer could enforce if the drug problem was not addressed and that they should contact the Drug Abatement Response Team (DART) to schedule interviews with the property. Lastly the control group received no letters or no further involvement with the police department (Eck, & Wartell, 1998. p. 170-171).

 In this specific research, researchers accomplished eliminating bias by using the computer generated random assignment of the rental properties in the proper experimental groups. Although sending out letter was an efficient to gather research, other steps could have been followed to gain more information on the drug problem throughout the rental properties. Researcher could have followed up with second letter or a phone call to further their research.

 The sample size in this research study was a hundred and twenty one rental properties located in San Diego, California (Eck, & Wartell, 1998. p. 161). The control group consisted of forty-two rental properties, as well as forty-two in the first treatment group, with the second treatment group having thirty-seven rental properties. 96% of the sample size was brought into the study by the Narcotics unit and their previous law enforcement actions (Eck, & Wartell, 1998. p. 164).

 The overall findings in this research was that the two treatment groups reported having fewer crime over the next five month periods than the control group. The mean of the crimes reported during this period were 3.31 from the letter group, 3.03 from the letter and meeting group, and lastly 5.05 out of the control group. On average during the thirty month post-treatment period, the control group had an average of two or more crimes reported over the meeting group, and one and two-thirds more than just the letter group. Results of this study suggest to researchers that letters and meeting groups reduced the drug crime at rental properties in comparison to the control group. In the findings, researchers also listed that this experiment was designed to find the p valve of .10 or less, but the collected data proves a p value being greater than .10, which resulted in researchers not rejecting the hypothesis and are stating that the result were due to chance. Researcher concluded that the chance does not mean that no treatment is effective, but they are not confident that the treatment cause the observed results in this study (Eck & Wartell, 1998, p. 174-175). Finally, the researcher conclude that even if the treatment did cause the observed results between the two treatment and control groups, the substantive effect is rather small.

In this research study, the main focus was on rental properties with drug problems who were not in good financial standings, but another research opportunity could have been those rental properties with good financial standing. This could have expanded the research viewing more than one socioeconomic status, and changed how much crime was reported and resolved or not reported and ignored. It would have also been beneficial to the study to use rentals properties in other areas beside San Diego California to possibly expand on drug types or usage in other surrounding areas. Another key factor that could have played a role with enhancing the research could have been race and ethnicity. With that, readers currently do not know the background of these resident in the rental properties and expanding on race could have brought up new research ideas or questions. Questions such as, does race or ethnicity play a role in the drug problem, does race or ethnicity have a part in residents picking the specific rental property the reside in, or is there no factor at all.

 The researchers design and tested hypothesis could contribute to the criminal justice system for finding and improving of drug problems in rental properties. With this study, law enforcement officers, narcotics units, and landlords could use tactics given throughout to improve the living situation and crime prevention in the future and continuously be able to monitor the activities happening. Monitoring these areas could benefit the law enforcement agencies by having those letter being sent and the units receiving feedback on drug issues where they are controllable and not infesting the rest of the residents who reside in that unit. Not only does this help the criminal justice system, the landlord of these properties can benefit from this study as well with learning new skills to improve the living spaces they own, keeping them drug free and appealing to residents who might live there currently or for future residents.

REFERENCE

Eck, J. E., & Wartell, J. (1998). Improving The Management Of Rental Properties With Drug Problems: A Randomized Experiment. *Crime Prevention Studies* 9:161-185.