

# Graduated Response Matrix

## *Testing a response/incentive program for juveniles under community supervision*

**Agency:** Monterey County (CA)  
Probation Department —Juvenile  
Division

**Trial Duration:** 03/01/17–06/01/17

**Pracademics\*:** William Sims,  
Robert Reyes, Norma Aceves

### Context

Juvenile supervision aims to reduce the likelihood that youth will reoffend by identifying risk and needs, responding to behavior, and creating opportunities for success. This trial tested a new response/incentive program, the Graduated Response Matrix (GRM), to respond to violations and incentivize positive behavior.

### Key Finding

Although the mean number of violations trended lower for those in the intervention condition, the difference between groups was not statistically significant.

\*BetaGov trains agency personnel to become research-savvy “Pracademics” who lead trials.

### Background

Effective juvenile-justice programs involve multiple aspects of addressing and engaging youth. Graduated responses ensure that sanctions imposed for failing to follow conditions are commensurate with the negative behavior and provide non-detention options that address risk, public/victim safety, and violation severity. Using appropriate rewards frequently, consistently, and effectively has been shown to motivate youth to improve their behavior.

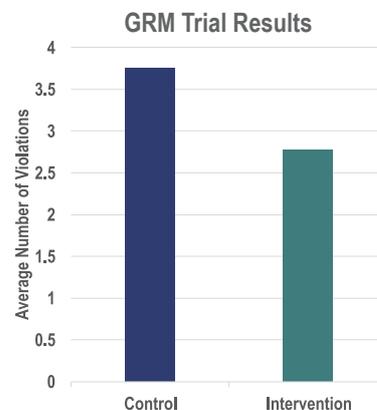
### Trial Design

Monterey Juvenile Probation tested a procedure with community-supervised youth that required a response to each violation within seven days. A grid was used to determine the severity of the violation and the corresponding sanction. Youth were randomly assigned to intervention (n=47) or control (n=59) to test the sanction grid and Graduated Incentives Matrix for youth who reached benchmarks in their probation supervision. Youth reaching a supervision goal received an appropriate reward or accolade.

### Results

A mean of 3.8 violations per control group participant was not statistically different from

the 2.8 mean violations for the intervention group (p=0.24). Similarly, no statistically significant difference was found between groups for the mean number of juvenile-hall placements, with a mean of 1.7 for the control group and 1.0 for the intervention group (p=0.21). Because the intervention diverted court petitions, a marginally significant difference was found in the mean number of petitions filed with the court, 1.5 petitions for the control group and 0.7 for the intervention group (p=0.06). Further research may be helpful to explore predictors of outcomes and whether some youth benefit more from the GRM model.



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