



The Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) Training and Technical Assistance program developed the PSN Research in Brief series to provide a summary report of scholarly articles, studies, and publications relevant to the PSN program. This second issue of the PSN Research in Brief series summarizes the following study by Davis Shelfer, Christi L. Gullion, Chris Guerra, Yan Zhang, and Jason R. Ingram published in the *Justice Evaluation Journal*: ***A Systematic Review of Project Safe Neighborhoods Effects.***¹

BACKGROUND:

- A systematic review is a study that brings together a body of existing research on a particular topic to assess the outcomes overall.
- A systematic review involves searching for literature to find all studies that have been published and that meet the review's eligibility criteria.

THEORY AND PRACTICE:

- "Focused-deterrence responses seek to efficiently channel labor and resources to the highest risk places and offenders through data-driven, strategic methods, tailoring the deterrent efforts of the criminal justice system to target specific crime problems in each unique community context."
- Programs employing focused deterrence strategies were first implemented in the mid to late 1990s, including Operation Ceasefire, also known as the Boston Gun Project.
- Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) was first implemented in 2001, incorporating lessons learned from other focused deterrence strategies.

STUDY OUTCOMES:

- This systemic review of PSN evaluations identified 98 evaluations, of which 21 included an empirical component sufficient to be included in the analysis.
- The 21 studies included in this analysis are not evenly geographically distributed, with the Midwest and the South being overrepresented.
- Of these studies included, 65 major outcomes were identified, of which 57 had a desirable outcome (e.g., crime decline), just over half of which were statistically significant.
- This study suggests that "PSN interventions are more effective than the status quo in addressing high-priority crime problems," and the authors characterize the current literature as "favorable."
- PSN working groups have a greater likelihood of achieving goals when personnel are consistent, formal communication is regular, buy-in from the leadership of involved parties is strong, and priorities are quickly agreed upon.

¹ Shelfer, D., Gullion, C. L., Guerra, C., Zhang, Y., & Ingram, J. R. (2022). A Systematic Review of Project Safe Neighborhoods Effects. *Justice Evaluation Journal*, 1-30.