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TITLE: Negligent-Operator Treatment Evaluation System - Program Effectiveness Report S4
(Detailed Findings)

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DATE: December 1988

REPORT NUMBER: 117.1

NTIS NUMBER: PB89-230569

FUNDING SOURCE (all): Departmental Budget

PROTECT OBTECTIVE:

To implement and maintain an automated on-line evaluation system for monitoring the effectiveness of the negligent-operator (neg-op) program and to issue periodic reports which present program cost and impact data for this program.

SUMMARY:

This is one of series of reports that provides periodic cost-effectiveness analyses of the neg-op program. The evaluation is based on a comparison of the driver records of neg-ops (drivers with multiple traffic conviction and 1 or accident points) who were randomly assigned to a treatment or to a no-contact control group. Three levels of progressively more severe neg-op treatments were evaluated in this manner-warning letter (W/L), notice of intent to suspend (N/I) and probation hearing (P/H). Beginning with Report #4, probation violation suspensions (the fourth and most severe level of neg-op treatment) were evaluated indirectly, using data from level-3 recidivists. Drivers at each level were eligible to receive either a standard or an alcohol-tailored treatment.

When the results of warning letters and notices of intent (levels 1 and 2) were combined they revealed a statistically significant reduction in total accidents. The standard probation hearing (level 3) was the only treatment which produced a statistically significant reduction in total accidents when analyzed by itself. Regarding injury accidents, both the alcohol warning letter and alcohol notice of intent were significantly more effective than the corresponding standard treatments at levels 1 and 2, while at level 3 the data showed the opposite trend, with the standard probation hearing treatment appearing to be more effective than the alcohol treatment. Although the latter result was not statistically significant, it was suggestive of a differential effect ($p < .11$). At each of the first three levels the standard treatment was significantly more effective in reducing citations than the corresponding alcohol treatment. Regarding alcohol- and drug-related incidents, only the level 3 standard treatment produced a statistically significant reduction. At level 4, the data showed strong indirect evidence that probation-violator sanctions were very effective in reducing accidents and citations.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

This report generally supported the continuation of the neg-op program, except that the inconsistent accident results for the level 1 treatment in Report #2 supported a decision to discontinue sending level 1 W/Ls in May 1987. However, more positive findings in Reports #3 and #4 led to a reversal of that decision, and DMV resumed sending level 1 W/Ls in September 1989. A recommendation in Reports #2 and #3 that the use of license suspensions be increased in the regular level-3 treatments was adopted and implemented in the fall of 1988. Reports #2 and #4 recommended the elimination of the alcohol treatment at level 3 (because of negative directional results). These results plus questions about the legal authority for this treatment led to its discontinuance in September 1989.

Report #6 evaluated the adoption of telephone hearings (versus in-person hearings) and showed no negative safety impact related to the change in policy. This result tended to support the continued

use of the new hearing format.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

See Marsh, 1985 (Report #94) Negligent-Operator Treatment Evaluation System: Progress Report. A paper containing results of Report #4 was presented at the Conference on Driver Competency Assessment, San Diego, October 1990.