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► [Drug law enforcement: a review of the evaluation literature.](#)

Mazerolle L., Soole D., Rombouts S. [Request reprint](#)

Police Quarterly: 2007, 10, p. 115–153.

Rare review of enforcement tactics concludes that proactive interventions involving partnerships between the police and third parties and/or community entities have the greatest research backing, but also that the evidence base is poor and sparse.

Abstract This article describes the results of a systematic review of evaluations of the impact of drug law enforcement on drug problems including drug use, dealing, supply, demand, and associated problems in drug dealing areas. The review divides the interventions in to five main categories.

1 International and national interventions such as eradicating crops being grown for drug production and interdicting and seizing drug shipments, neither of which have been shown to be effective. **2** Reactive/directed interventions such as crackdowns, raids, buy-busts, and saturation patrolling. These traditional tactics which respond to problems coming to the attention of the police generally have mixed evidence of effectiveness, in the case of raids, also short-term, and in the case of crackdowns, dependent on the circumstances. Intelligence-led search and seizure targeting domestic manufacturing has been found effective in two US studies. **3** Proactive/partnership interventions initiated on the basis of an analysis of the underlying problem, forming part of a more strategic response involving partnerships with community bodies and local people intended to have a lasting impact. Among these are third-party policing, problem-oriented policing, community policing, changing the physical environment, and drug nuisance abatement. Apart from 'drug-free' zones which exclude drug offenders and cross-jurisdiction task forces, these have some evidence of effectiveness. **4** Interventions targeting identified individuals such as arrest referral of suspects and diverting offenders from prosecution through the use of cautions, both of which have some evidence of effectiveness. **5** Interventions deploying a combination of reactive/directed and proactive/partnership strategies, for which there is some evidence of effectiveness.

The authors concluded that proactive interventions involving partnerships between the police and third parties and/or community entities appear to be more effective at reducing both drug and non-drug problems in areas with drug problems than reactive/

directed approaches. However, they cautioned that the general quality of research in drug law enforcement is poor and only a limited range of interventions have been evaluated.

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