CHAPTER 11

PREVENTING REPEAT RESIDENTIAL BURGLARY VICTIMIZATION*

Graham Farrell and Ken Pease
Midlands Centre for Criminology and Criminal Justice
Loughborough University

INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews evaluations of the prevention of repeat residential burglary. These evaluations are a subset of the evaluations relating to the prevention of repeat victimization. The review methodology aims to follow that of the systematic review process proposed by the Campbell Collaboration, which has produced a series of recent reviews including, Farrington and Welsh (2002) and the set of reviews edited by Farrington and Welsh (2001). In keeping with that format, the authors acknowledge a possible interest: We have both previously worked on repeat victimization prevention efforts and elsewhere contended that preventing repeat victimization is a potentially attractive crime prevention strategy.

BACKGROUND

A general definition of repeat victimization is that it is the repeated criminal victimization of a person, household, business, other place or target however defined. The prevention of repeat victimization has gained prominence in the crime prevention literature in recent years in the wake of the Kirkholt burglary prevention project (reviewed below). Although repeat victimization had been recognized as an important component of crime, the Kirkholt project sparked recognition of its potential importance for policy and practice, spurring a range of empirical studies of repeat victimization for different crime types (see Farrell, 1992, 1995; Farrell and Pease, 1993, 1997; Pease, 1998). Efforts to prevent repeat residential burglary to date have been undertaken disproportionately in Britain where repeat victimization has permeated crime policy at the national level.

* Thanks go to Brandon Webster for assistance with preliminary literature searches and data extraction. The first author would like to thank Brandon Welsh and David Farrington for their remarkable patience and friendly encouragement during the preparation of this chapter.

Repeat victimization was identified as a potential performance indicator for policing (Tilley, 1995) and by 2000, all police forces in England and Wales had a policy for the prevention of repeat residential burglary, with many having policies to prevent the repetition of other types of crime (Farrell et al., 2001). Readers wishing for an overview of the “repeat victimization story” and the development of the research program in the U.K. since the mid-1980s to the present are referred to Laycock (2001, 2002) and Laycock and Farrell (2003).

Evaluations relating to repeat residential burglary form a prominent part of the evaluation literature relating to the prevention of repeat victimization more generally. However, there is some justification for undertaking a preliminary review for a particular crime type rather than all crime types, as this approach may facilitate the identification of crime-specific aspects of repeat victimization prevention strategies that could go unnoticed if all crime types were reviewed together.

**SUMMARY OF RESEARCH METHODS**

*Criteria for Inclusion of Evaluation Studies*

Evaluation studies relating to repeat victimization for all crime types were first identified, and those relating to repeat residential burglary were selected. Both published and unpublished reports were included where identified. Many of the evaluations reviewed herein were familiar to the authors due to previous research on repeat victimization and were also due to contacts with other academics and practitioners working on repeat victimization in Australia, the U.K., and the U.S.

Evaluations with comparison-group designs were included in the review where the comparison groups sometimes had varying degrees of comparability – and in keeping with the keystone notion of methodological transparency, the research designs are assessed.

*Search Strategies*


Key search terms and combinations of terms were entered into each database. Truncation and ‘wildcards’ were used where possible. In particular, victim* (where * is the wildcard symbol) was used since it is inclusive of victim, victims,