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TITLE: The Long-Term Traffic Safety Impact of Pilot Alcohol Abuse Treatment as an Alternative to License Suspensions (Volume 2 of "An Evaluation of the California Drunk Driving Countermeasure System")

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PROTECT OBJECTIVE:

To evaluate the long-term traffic safety effects of participating in a Senate Bill (SB) 330 drunk driver program in lieu of receiving a mandatory license suspension or revocation.

SUMMARY:

In 1975, new legislation (SB 330, Gregorio) permitted motorists arrested for a repeat driving-under-the-influence (DUI) offense to participate in a 12-month pilot treatment program in lieu of the usual license action (12-month suspension or 3-year revocation). In an earlier study, the first-year effectiveness of the pilot SB 330 programs versus license actions was assessed (Hagen, Williams, McConnell, & Fleming, 1978). This study was a replication, using the same subjects and a longer (four years) follow-up period.

The evaluation design involved four demonstration counties and four comparison counties. In the demonstration counties, 2,534 repeat DUI offenders entered SB 330 programs, and thus avoided mandatory license actions. The remaining 2,420 offenders in the demonstration counties received license actions. In the comparison counties, 2,866 repeat DUI offenders all received license actions.

Among the license-action recipients, those who received 3-year revocations had fewer subsequent nonalcohol-involved accidents and convictions than did those who received 12-month suspensions. This was especially true among subjects under 36 years old. The lower rates for the revoked drivers were expected since the non-recidivating subjects who had received suspensions were eligible for license reinstatement 12 months after their DUI conviction. However, although their rates showed some elevation, the recipients of 12-month suspensions continued to have fewer nonalcohol-involved accidents and convictions than the SB 330 participants beyond the period of suspension. This result appeared to be attributable to a low rate of license reinstatement (50%) among the eligible subjects with 12-month suspensions. About four out of five eligible subjects who were not reinstated did not execute the proof of insurance requirement for license reinstatement at any time during the three years following the termination of their suspension.

A different pattern of results was obtained for alcohol-involved accidents and convictions. The SB 330 participants were found to have 9% fewer alcohol-related convictions than the license-action recipients.

No significant differences were found between SB 330 participants and license-action recipients on alcohol-involved accidents. Thus, the results of the analyses of alcohol-related accidents and convictions, as a whole, suggested that alcohol rehabilitation and license action had essentially the same impact on these traffic safety measures.

The findings of this study suggested that the original SB 330 sentencing strategy sacrificed traffic safety when license actions were waived as an incentive to participation in an alcohol rehabilitation program. The hoped-for reductions in alcohol-related accidents and convictions among SB 330 program participants did not occur. The report notes that these findings indicate that some other alternative besides license-action waivers should be used as an inducement for repeat DUI offenders to participate in treatment.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Although the SB 330 concept was implemented statewide through SB 38 (Gregorio, 1977), some of its weaknesses were corrected through subsequent legislation (SB 1458, Gregorio, 1978) which limited participation in lieu of license action to second offenders only. Legislation (AB 541, Moorhead, 1981) also required that SB 38 participants have their driving privilege restricted. This license-restriction approach was evaluated by the DMV, and findings will be presented in Tashima and Peck, Report #95. Finally, legislation enacted in 1982 (SB 1601, Sieroty) required that SB 38 participants conform to the state's proof-of-insurance requirement in order to avoid continuance of the license restriction.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

See Tashima and Peck, Report #95, and Peck, Report #112.

A summary version of this report, entitled the long-term safety impact of a pilot alcohol abuse treatment as an alternative to license suspension was published in *Accident Analysis and Prevention*, 23(4), 203-224, 1991.

Some of the data also appear in a related paper by Peck, R. C., Sadler, D. D. & Perrine M. W. (1985), The comparative effectiveness of alcohol rehabilitation and licensing control actions for drunk driving offenders: A review of the literature. *Alcohol, Drugs and Driving*, 1(4), 15-39.