**ABSTRACT**

Curfew laws seek to provide general protection to and from youth by restricting the times they may occupy public places or streets. Several systematic literature reviews have examined if curfew laws prevent crime. However, none have included studies examining the broader effects of curfew laws.

This systematic review addressed the question: “What is the impact of juvenile curfew laws on the health, welfare and crime rates of youth?”

Ten studies examined the effectiveness of curfew laws on juvenile crime and victimization; six studies examined the effectiveness of curfew laws on youth health consequences.

The laws are modestly effective at reducing juvenile crime and victimization but do effectively reduce youth health consequences.

**BACKGROUND**

- By 2009, 84 percent of cities with populations over 180,000 had enacted youth curfews.
- Several systematic literature reviews have examined if curfew laws prevent crime.
- None have included studies examining the broader effects of curfew laws on youth health consequences.
- This study conducted a systematic review addressing the question: “What is the impact of juvenile curfew laws on the health, welfare and crime rates of youth?”

**INTRODUCTION**

- Curfew laws seek to provide general protection to and from youth by restricting the times they may occupy public places or streets.
- Curfew laws are enacted to reduce juvenile crime and victimization.
- By 2009, 84 percent of cities with populations over 180,000 had enacted youth curfews.
- Several systematic literature reviews have examined if curfew laws prevent crime.
- None have included studies examining the broader effects of curfew laws on youth health consequences.
- This study conducted a systematic review addressing the question: “What is the impact of juvenile curfew laws on the health, welfare and crime rates of youth?”

**METHODS**

- Used Campbell Collaboration’s 8 steps for conducting a systematic review:
  1. Formulating a research question
  2. Defining inclusion/exclusion criteria
  3. Locating studies
  4. Selecting studies
  5. Analyzing study quality
  6. Extracting data
  7. Analyzing and presenting results
  8. Interpreting results.
- Inclusion criteria were:
  1. Study examined the effect of a nighttime juvenile curfew law in the United States restricting all youth from being out in public
  2. Study made or allowed for statistical comparisons of outcome variables either before and after curfew implementation or between localities with curfews versus those without
  3. Study was published in a peer-reviewed journal.
- A structured search query across 24 databases located 1,482 studies. After applying the exclusion criteria and removing duplicate studies, sixteen studies remained.

**FINDINGS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Study and Basic Research Approach</th>
<th>Gyrohys</th>
<th>Victimization, or Youth Health Consequences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crime and Juvenile Victimization</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multivariate Regression</td>
<td>Mc Dowall, Loftin &amp; Wiersema*; Gius, Kline; Seydlitz &amp; Jenkins*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in Means and Gyrohys Distributions</td>
<td>Frisch, Caei &amp; Taylor; Sutphen &amp; Ford; Cole</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correlations</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Males &amp; Macallair*</td>
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<tr>
<td>No Statistical Tests</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Health Consequences</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multivariate Regression</td>
<td>Levy; Presser, Zador &amp; Williams</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference in Means and Gyrohys Distributions</td>
<td>Presser; Weiss, Cook; Nobile, Elnart &amp; Johnson; Shatz, Zhang &amp; McGrath; Mozegov, Miltman &amp; Haywood</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Studies</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The asterisk indicates that at least one of the analyses conducted found that curfew laws were associated with increases in crime, victimization, or youth health consequences.

**DISCUSSION**

**Juvenile Crime and Victimization**

- Five studies found curfew laws did effectively reduce overall crime, burglary/robbery rates and youth arrests. The other five studies found that curfew laws had no effect on juvenile crime and victimization.
- However, these latter five had weaker methodological approaches than the former five.

**Youth Health Consequences**

- Six studies examined whether curfew laws were effective at reducing youth health consequences.
- Five studies found that curfew laws reduced juvenile traffic injuries, fatalities and pediatric transports. One study found that curfew laws were not effective.

**CONCLUSION**

Although policy-makers may favor enacting curfew laws to reduce juvenile crime and victimization, these laws are only modestly effective at accomplishing this goal. This may be because a youth who would be willing to commit murder or assault would have no problem with also violating a curfew law. Therefore, it might not be the curfew law itself but the interaction of the curfew law with other factors (such as supportive parents, parental monitoring or friends who engage in conventional behaviors) which prevents a youth from engaging in delinquent behavior.

Future research is needed using multivariate approaches and nationally representative databases.

**REFERENCES**


* Studies referenced in the table are available upon request.