

National Institute of Justice

Award Title: Learning From Error In American Criminal Justice

Award Description:

This project will assess whether the criminal justice system, like medicine, can achieve greater reliability by: 1) adopting a systems approach to breakdowns, 2) moving beyond a culture of blame to open the flow of information about vulnerabilities, and 3) building durable partnerships around the shared goals of increased professionalism and reliability by promoting a persistent core learning-from-error process. It will identify a common ground where researchers, policy-makers, and practitioners can regularly challenge each other, enrich each other's work, and improve the criminal justice system. It will provide a foundation for the exploration by system participants of the potential for mobilizing the aviation/medicine model by using the "organizational accident" approach to bridge gaps and create synergies within NIJ's divisions, among those divisions, and between the NIJ's divisions and the field. Mobilizing a systems approach to error opens many new areas of criminal justice research.

It will deliver a work of scholarship that assesses the potential for the adaptation of the aviation/medicine model to criminal justice, and a provisional template for further exploration. It will review the literature of the extant post-exoneration reform efforts in the various states and localities and analyze data regarding the processes of the reform efforts (e.g., participants, formats of process, products). It will supplement that review with targeted surveys of participants. Criminal justice operators and researchers in all fields will be surveyed to assess insights, preferences, and potential objections to participation in regularized learning-from-error processes. A prospectus for future exploration of this field including templates for a Technical Working Group on learning-from-error and an Error Report Clearinghouse will be drafted and disseminated widely throughout the system's operators and disciplines.

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Awardee Name: James M Doyle	Award Number: 2011-IJ-CX-K060
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