



JDiBrief - Analysis

Repeat victimisation: SUMMARY (1 of 5)

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PURPOSE: The purpose of performing repeat and near-repeat victimisation analysis is to identify those people, properties and places that are at a disproportionate risk of victimisation. Pure *repeat victims* (RVs) are targets that are victimised multiple times (e.g., a domestic violence victim or a school that is burgled three times in one year). *Near-repeat victims* (NRV) are targets that are situated in close proximity to an original target, and that get victimised soon after the original target. Previous (near) victimisation has been shown to be the best predictor of future victimisation, for many crime types and in a variety of contexts.

THEORY: RV and NRV is believed to happen for two main reasons. These are known as the *boost* and *flag* accounts. The boost explanation relates to repeat offenders who return to a victim once learning it is suitable (either in terms of low risk or high reward). Hence, an initial incident 'boosts' the likelihood of re-victimisation. In contrast, the flag explanation is concerned with the target. The characteristics that contribute to the target's risk of victimisation (sometimes referred to as risk factors) are assumed to be constant over time and appeal to many offenders. These targets therefore 'flag' their own suitability to multiple offenders.

METHOD: The first step in reducing victimisation involves establishing the impact that RV and NRV has on local crime levels. The preferred way of analysing RV is to establish a set assessment period (usually twelve months), then identify initial victimisation of each unique target and determine whether the target was re-victimised in the assessment period following that initial victimisation.

We advise using the free Near Repeat Calculator to measure near repeats (see Resources section on this topic for information on where to download the NR calculator). This tool identifies if there is a statistically significant NRV (and RV) problem, and within which space and time metric (e.g., within two days and 100m).

Reducing RV and NRV relies on the disruption of offenders' perceptions and activities. Once the extent of the problem is established through analysis, particular areas or targets need to be better protected so that their risk of victimisation is reduced following an initial incident. The profile of the targets, or the identification of a particular area can help to focus attention on the target characteristics that are encouraging victimisation.

APPLICATION: Knowledge relating to reducing RV and NRV has been widely applied in many industrialised countries. The case study section on this topic documents an example of where the Trafford Borough of Greater Manchester Police systematically integrated such principles into their burglary dwelling reduction activities.

First, they created 'risk maps' which captured the heightened risk of victimisation of burglary dwelling following an initial incident. They then used these maps to focus crime prevention activities at key times and places that were highlighted. This included performing security audits at burgled properties to reduce the likelihood of re-victimisation, and Police Community Support Officers verbally delivering crime prevention messages to residents in areas identified as being at a greater risk of NRV. Post-activity analysis of crime data showed that burglaries had reduced by 27% in the first year of following this approach. This was a continuation of an already decreasing trend in burglary dwellings in Trafford.