

CORRECTIONS AND SANCTIONS

PEER REVIEW PANEL

January 16, 1997

APPLICATION NO.: 7-7402-CO-IJ
FUNDING REQUEST: \$263,333
PROPOSED PROJECT TIME: 24 months
TITLE: Use of Polygraphs with Sex Abuse in the Community
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APPLICANT: Colorado Division of Criminal Justice
APP. CITY, STATE: Denver, CO

ABSTRACT:

We propose exploring the value of using polygraph data--for monitoring and treatment purposes--to disclose high risk and sometimes life threatening behaviors by offenders under the supervision of the criminal justice system. Further, we hope to shed light on important legal and ethical questions regarding the use of the polygraph that are being pondered and litigated as we submit this proposal; questions that will likely have an important impact on the use of this promising monitoring tool. We propose a three-phase research approach:

- (1) Conduct a review of the literature (including research in progress) that focuses on the instrument itself. How is accuracy determined? Will its use withstand court scrutiny? Are there ethnic variations in accuracy rates? Does the tool's use impinge on fifth amendment rights? How do we use the data obtained through the use of the polygraph?
- (2) Explore the use of the polygraph by practitioners by conducting (a) a follow-up, national survey of 178 probation/parole supervisors who used polygraph data in the management of adult sex offenders in 1994, and (b) field research in 3 jurisdictions that use and 2 that are in varying stages of using the polygraph with sex offenders and to understand barriers and possible solutions to implementing its use.
- (3) Analyze data from at least 900 polygraph examinations to document the range, frequency, and number of victims self-reported by each offender before and after the polygraph, and in 300 cases to determine the number and type of community placement violations detected through the use of the polygraph.

We plan to disseminate the information in a way that is useful to practitioners, including a comprehensive handbook, professional presentations, and an *NIJ Research In Brief*.

SUMMARY OF NOTES: