

# Review

## The effect of conditional registration on the criminal records of young offenders

### *Background and objectives:*

- In 2011, an amendment to the Executive Order on Criminal Records came into force. Subsequently, the first conviction of offenders below the age of 18 at the time of the crime is not included in their criminal records unless the first sentence is imprisonment or a similar severe sanction. However, if a new crime is committed within the following three years, the first conviction will be entered in the criminal record.
- The aim of the study is to examine the effect of this amendment on reoffending.

### *Research design:*

- The study has a natural experimental design as the treatment group consists of young offenders whose first conviction was not included in their criminal records (n=1,832), while a group of historical controls had their first conviction included (n=2,618).
- The study applies regression analysis and propensity score matching.

### *Findings:*

- The study findings are inconclusive.
- Recidivism rates tend to be lower among offenders in the treatment group within one, two and three years of observation, but none of the comparisons show significant differences between the two groups.
- When the amendment was introduced, some people expected it to prevent recidivism as it would encourage young offenders to stay out of crime and also that it would prevent the blocking of job opportunities due to a foul record. Others expected the amendment to cause more crime as the young offenders would no longer learn the severe consequences for their future that committing a crime could have. None of these expectations appear to have been met.
- However, because the police's charge ratio increased during the study period, the study might underestimate the crime prevention effect of the amendment.

