Abstract

This introductory paper has two objectives. On the one hand, to present the guidelines of the evidence- based perspective on crime prevention as an alternative to the usual criminal policy, which often disregards conclusions based on scientific evidence. On the other hand, to discuss the contemporary situation in Spain regarding crime prevention and particularly the role psychology develops in terms of the utility/effectiveness dichotomy. The evidence-based perspective on crime prevention is guided by the main criteria of collecting the best scientific evidence in relation to what works best in the different areas of crime prevention. In that purpose systematic reviews and meta-analyses are strongly recommended. The Campbell Collaboration in Crime and Justice is a scientific endeavour oriented to prepare rigorous and systematic reviews of high-quality evidence about what works. Regarding crime prevention in Spain it is argued that psychology and other disciplines must make society and its rulers see that intervention based on evidence-based policy is essential for crime prevention.