Abstract
The main aim of this paper is to assess the effectiveness of drug treatment programs in reducing criminal behavior. The research is based on a systematic review and meta-analysis of evaluations of drug treatment programs. The research investigated various drug treatment programs including methadone treatment, therapeutic communities, post-release supervision for drug-misusing offenders, and drug courts, and focused on drug treatment programs that were primarily concerned with heroin, crack and cocaine misuse. The main outcome variable analyzed was reoffending following treatment as measured by self-reports or official records. The study was based on a meta-analysis of 28 evaluations of drug treatment programs. The meta-analysis involved calculating individual effect sizes for each study and weighted mean effect sizes for groups of studies. The mean odds of offending following treatment were significantly lower among clients of the drug treatment programs than among the comparison groups. However, the results varied by type of program, type of evaluation methods used, and characteristics of clients.