

Miramar Landing, Do You Know?

Improved street lighting can reduce crime

Improved street lighting can contribute to significantly reduce crime, according to a review published by the Campbell Collaboration.

Improvements in street lighting are not always made with crime prevention in mind – traffic and pedestrian safety are often more important to city planners. However, while the notion that lighting streets deters lurking criminals seems simplistic, its relevance to crime problems has been suggested in both urban and residential public spaces.



Photo: the contended/www.flickr.com

Review findings

This review of 13 studies of street lighting interventions in the United Kingdom and United States, spanning four decades, finds that crime decreased by 21% in areas that experienced street lighting improvements compared to similar areas that did not. The review also notes that street lighting appears more effective at reducing crime in the United Kingdom compared to the United States – a 38% reduction compared to 7%. In general, the American studies were older and several reported just nighttime crime, rather than both nighttime and daytime crime.

The role of community pride

Improved street lighting is thought to affect crime in two ways: by increasing surveillance, thus deterring potential offenders, and by signifying community investment and pride in an area. This review found that, when street lighting was improved, nighttime crimes did not decrease more than daytime crimes, suggesting that community pride may play a crucial role. Increased pride leads to community cohesion and 'informal social control,' which may be protective against crime.

This article is based on the systematic review (access full text version):
Welsh BC, Farrington DP: [Effects of Improved Street Lighting on Crime](#)

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