

Study Estimates Average Cost of Murder at Over \$17M

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Oct. 12: Jessie Dotson closes his eyes as he is sentenced to death for each of six charges of first degree murder in the deaths of killed six people in a bloody rampage in a Memphis home two years ago, including his brother and two young nephews, in a Memphis, Tenn. courtroom.

Convicted murderers are costing taxpayers a pretty penny.

According to a study published recently in the [Journal of Forensic Psychiatry and Psychology](#), the average cost per murder tops \$17 million -- when factoring in a variety economic impacts.

"The original work in this area looks at victim cost, the cost of arrest and adjudication, the cost of incarceration, the opportunity costs of offenders' time, productivity," study author Matt DeLisi told [SmartPlanet.com](#), but he also considered another variable, known as "willingness to pay," which estimates how much the community is willing to invest in crime prevention.

The study calculated the costs from 654 convicted and incarcerated murderers. In the most severe murder case, involving nine murders, the study put the ultimate cost as high as \$160 million in terms of victim and criminal justice costs, lost offender productivity and public willingness-to-pay costs.

DeLisi hopes this study will make people focus more on crime prevention with at-risk youths and families.

"My hope is that this information -- because no one wants to pay for these costs, let alone endure all the victimization -- provides an incentive to continue to invest in prevention," DeLisi told the website.