

MEMORANDUM

From: University of Maryland Center for Health and Homeland Security
To: Drew Bumbak, IAEM Children in Disasters Caucus
Date: April 4, 2016
Re: Sex Offenders and Statistics on Recidivism

Statistics on sex offenders residing in the United States and moreover statistics regarding the particular offenses committed are neither easily accessible nor easily found. Several organizations focus on their state specific issues and attempt to keep track of the sex offenders that reside in their home state. The U.S. Department of Justice's (DOJ) Office of Justice has compiled several statistics about sex offenses and the offenders in the United States. The DOJ's Sex Offender Management Assessment and Planning Initiative provides a multitude of articles dedicated to recidivism of sexual offenders¹. Two of their recent articles from July 2015 touch upon the topics regarding recidivism of adult sexual offenders and recidivism of juveniles who commit sexual offenses.

Recidivism of Adult Sexual Offenders written by Roger Przybylski initially discusses the difficulty in capturing statistics of sex offenders who re-offend because of the "surreptitious nature of sex crimes." The vast majority of sex offenses are not reported and to have a report of an offender who has already offended is difficult to gather since different researchers have different methods of accounting for recidivism. However, the article reviews a few studies and quickly summarizes the findings of each.

Patrick A. Langan, Erica L. Schmitt, and Matthew Durose conducted one of the more relevant studies from the article. This study explored recidivism patterns of 9,691 male sex offenders released from prison in 1994 from 15 different states. The study concluded that three years after release, there was a 5.3% sexual recidivism rate for the entire sample. It found that of the entire sample, there was a 17.1% recidivism rate for "violent arrests" and with overall arrests there was a 43% recidivism rate². 38.6% of the released sex offenders returned to prison because of a new crime or for a violation of their probation within 3 years of their release. The same study compared sex offender recidivism versus non-sex offender recidivism³ and found that the overall re-arrest was lower with sex offenders. The overall re-arrest for sex offenders was 43% compared to the 68% re-arrest for non-sex offenders. The article, in addition, discusses a few other studies that were based on a single state's prison releases as well as a study analyzing several other studies.⁴

¹ PDFs of the articles are provided as attachments to the email. Additionally, other various studies regarding sex offenders can be found here:

<https://www.ncjrs.gov/sexoffenders/statistics.html>

² The article does not make it obvious as to the reason for the difference between "violent arrests" and the overall arrests.

³ The non-sex offender statistics were not mentioned in the particular study being summarized, however it is likely Langan, Schmitt, and Durose compared the statistics from the 9,691 male sex offenders study with statistics from a non-sex offender study.

⁴ The other studies discussed in the article were done by Lisa L. Sample and Timothy M. Bray (2003) and J.R. Harris and R. Karl Hanson (2004).

Recidivism of Juveniles Who Commit Sexual Offenses written by Christopher Lobanov-Rostovsky focuses on the youth who commit sexual offenses and re-offend as youths or as adults. The article discusses the National Youth Survey, which is an ongoing longitudinal study that started in 1976. The study follows 1,725 youths chosen randomly from around the nation between the ages of 11 and 17 in 1976. The data includes surveys about the youths' behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs regarding several subjects including violence and offending. In 1992, the study revealed that 6% of the sample had reported having committed a sexual assault. Sexual assault is defined as a youth who reported a singular instance of sexual assault during the first "three waves of data collection." 2% of the sample reported having committed a serious sexual assault. A serious sexual assault is defined as a youth who reported two or more sexual assaults during the first "three waves of data collection." 70% of those who acknowledge the sexual offense admitted that the start of offending was before they turned 18 years old. 58% of those reporting a sexual assault sexually re-offended and 78% of those reporting a serious sexual assault sexually re-offended. Additionally, the study showed that 10% who committed a sexual assault sexually re-offended as adults and 17% who committed a serious sexual assault sexually re-offended as adults. The article continues to provide various graphs and charts that may be of use.

In terms of sexual offenses that occurred during Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita, a report from July 2006 provides some data. The article titled *Hurricanes Katrina/Rita and Sexual Violence*⁵ noted that 83.3% of the documented sexual assaults that occurred during that time took place in Louisiana. The sexual assaults that occurred took place in these respective areas: 30.8% at evacuation sites or other shelters; 10.3% at the victim's home; 12.8% at the host home; 12.8% in the street or open area; 10.3% in a public building that was not a shelter; and, 23.1% in other locations such a hotel, perpetrator's home, and cars.

Although data regarding sex offenders and the frequency of recidivism is difficult to find, studies that focus on particular traits or particular populations exist. Many studies only show a glimpse of an entire population and other studies focus on particular pool of offenders or a particular state or region. Some of the studies discussed above only give a glimpse into the studies of sex offenders and recidivism rates.

⁵ A PDF of the article can be found at:

http://www.nsvrc.org/sites/default/files/Publications_NSVRC_Reports_Report-on-Database-of-Sexual-Violence-Prevalence-and-Incidence-Related-to-Hurricane-Katrina-and-Rita.pdf