

Juvenile Female and Male Sex Offenders

A Comparison of Offender, Victim, and Judicial Processing Characteristics

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This research examines 61 juvenile female sex offenders in terms of their offending patterns, demographics, and victim characteristics; these findings are compared to 122 juvenile male sex offenders. Relying on sex offender registration data and criminal history records, bivariate analyses are conducted to assess male-female differences. Logistic regression is also employed to further assess group membership (male and female). Females were typically younger than males at the time of their arrest for a sex offense. Female offenders also chose male and female victims proportionately, whereas males were more likely to choose female victims. Logistic regression analysis revealed two significant predictors of the offender's sex: victim's sex and length of sentence. This research, therefore, indicates different modalities of offense characteristics for males and females, which predicates different management strategies in terms of identification for these groups of offenders.

Keywords: *juvenile female sex offender; juvenile male sex offender; sexual abuse*

Although a substantial amount of research has focused on adult sex offenders, research exploring the characteristics and offending patterns of juvenile sex offenders is relatively limited. At the same time, based on the number of juveniles arrested nationwide for sexual offenses, excluding prostitution, there is a relatively large number of juvenile sex offenders.¹ Based on arrest numbers, nationwide,

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recorded during 2001, a total of 12,032 juveniles were arrested for forcible rape (2,342) or other sex offenses (9,690), excluding arrests for prostitution (U.S. Department of Justice, 2002). Even though females accounted for a relatively small proportion of the juveniles arrested for forcible rape and other sex offenses (751 arrests or 6.6% of the total), it has been speculated that many sex offenses committed by females often go unnoticed, undetected, or even ignored by law enforcement officials (Denov, 2004; Scavo, 1989; Vandiver & Kercher, 2004); hence, those arrested for sex offenses are likely to represent only a small portion of all sex offenders, which indicates this area of study is only in its infancy. Additionally, prior research has shown that many adult sex offenders began offending at a young age (Groth, Longo, & McFadin, 1982). Much can be gained, therefore, from examining this young population of sex offenders. Young sex offenders are also a diverse group of offenders (van Wijk, van Horne, Bullens, Biglevel, & Doreleijers, 2005). The principal purpose of this research is to add to the body of knowledge regarding female juvenile sex offenders. This was accomplished through an analysis of the demographic characteristics of juvenile sex offenders, the specific types of sex offenses for which they were convicted, the characteristics of the victims, and judicial processing of their cases. Although the principal focus of this research is to add to the body of knowledge regarding juvenile female sex offenders, a matched sample of juvenile male sex offenders was included for comparison purposes. This was deemed important, as the literature examining differences between the characteristics of female and male juvenile sex offenders is also limited.

Literature Review

Much of the prior literature regarding sexual abuse has focused on adult males who have abused children, which has led to well-developed and well-tested typologies (Abel, Barlow, Blanchard, & Guild, 1977; Barnard, Fuller, Robbins, & Shaw, 1989; Freund, 1967; Knight, Rosenberg, & Schneider, 1985; Kuznestov & Pierson, 1992; Prentky, Cohen, & Seghorn, 1985; Quinsey, Steinman, Bergersen, & Holmes, 1975; Rosenberg, Knight, Prentky, & Lee, 1988) that have been useful in the identification and treatment of male sex offenders. It has been questioned whether such research findings apply to female sex offenders (Mayer, 1992). Research and typologies developed specifically for adult female sex offenders do exist; however, the research is limited, using primarily clinical or judicial populations (or a combination of both; see Brown, Drucker, Hull, & Panesis, 1984; Faller, 1987; 1995; Lewis & Stanley, 2000; O'Connor, 1987; Peluso & Putnam, 1996; Rowan, Rowan, & Langelier, 1990; Sarrel & Masters, 1982). With the exception of one recent research project (Vandiver & Kercher, 2004), none of the studies cited relied on a sample of more than 100 individuals. Thus, a great deal of information is known about adult male sex offenders, and recently, information has appeared in the literature regarding female sex offenders. The literature regarding juvenile male sex offenders is developing, and the literature regarding juvenile female sex offenders is slowly emerging.

The focus on young female sex offenders is relatively new (Miller, Trapani, Fejes-Mendoza, Eggleston, & Dwiggins, 1995), and much of the research is also limited by

relatively small samples (e.g., Bumby & Bumby, 1993, $n = 12$; Fehrenbach & Monastersky, 1988, $n = 28$; Fehrenbach, Smith, Monastersky, & Deisher, 1986, $n = 8$; Fromuth & Conn, 1997; $n = 22$; Hunter, Lexier, Goodwin, Browne, & Dennis, 1993, $n = 10$; Johnson, 1989, $n = 13$). All of these studies included juvenile female offenders, with the exception of Johnson's study, which focused on offenders who had participated in a California sex offender program for children; this study included 13 offenders who were between the ages of 4 and 13. The average age of the offenders used in these studies was 15 (Hunter et al., 1993), 12 (Fromuth & Conn, 1997), 13.7 (Fehrenbach et al., 1986), and in Johnson's (1989) research of young children offenders, the average age of the offender was 7.5. Thus, juvenile female sex offenders were typically 12 or 13 years old. Race was examined in Hunter et al.'s (1993) study, which found that 80% were Caucasian and 20% were African American. Johnson's study, however, found that 62% of the sample were Caucasian, 31% were African American, and 7% were Hispanic.

Many female sex offenders have reported being victims of either physical or sexual abuse or, in some instances, both. For instance, in Fromuth and Conn's (1997) analysis of 22 female college students who molested others during their childhood and/or adolescence, it was found that approximately 70% had been sexually abused. It was also noted that sex offenders were much more likely to have been abused themselves as compared to nonperpetrators. In another study, 50% ($n = 14$) of juvenile female offenders who were being treated for sexually offending had also been victims of sexual abuse (Fehrenbach & Monastersky, 1988). Most notable, all of the 10 females in Hunter et al.'s (1993) research and 13 child perpetrators in Johnson's (1989) research reported such abuse. Physical abuse was also reported in 21% ($n = 6$) of the females in Fehrenbach and Monastersky's (1988) research. Past physical and/or sexual abuse appears to be a common theme in examinations of juvenile female sex offenders.

The overwhelming majority of the victims in these studies of juvenile female sex offenders were younger than 12 years old (Fehrenbach et al., 1986; Fehrenbach & Monastersky, 1988; Fromuth & Conn, 1997; Johnson, 1989). In regard to the victim's sex, no distinctive pattern has emerged. Some researchers found that males were more likely to be victims (Fromuth & Conn, 1997; Johnson, 1989), yet one study (Fehrenbach & Monastersky, 1988) found slightly more female victims as compared to male victims. Two research projects that evaluated all past incidents of abuse found that 60% (Hunter et al., 1993) and 33% (Bumby & Bumby, 1993) of the samples victimized males and females.

Juvenile female sex offenders were also highly likely to victimize relatives or acquaintances. For instance, in Fehrenbach and Monastersky's (1988) study, all of the offenders knew their victim. Moreover, 43% ($n = 12$) of the offenders were either siblings of or related in some way (including step relationships) to their victim. The majority of the offenders were baby-sitting the victim at the time of the abuse. In Fromuth and Conn's (1997) research, 70% of the offenders were related in some way to their victim. Even more notable, in Johnson's (1989) assessment of younger female sex offenders, only three of the girls abused a nonrelative, and those offenders had no siblings. High rates of intrafamilial abuse were also noted in Hunter et al.'s (1993) and

Bumby and Bumby's (1993) research. Approximately half (49%) of the incidents reported by the juvenile females in Hunter et al.'s research involved a victim who was related to the offender, whereas 75% of the reported incidents in Bumby and Bumby's research involved a family member.

Prior descriptive studies of juvenile female sex offenders, therefore, have found that the majority of this population were victims of physical and/or sexual abuse themselves. Additionally, their victim is usually younger than the abuser, and the victim is an acquaintance or a relative. Despite the small sample size of these studies, much information has been gained that can serve as a foundation for additional research.

Although prior research efforts have focused on descriptives of juvenile female sex offenders, only a few studies have compared juvenile females to juvenile males. One of those studies compared 18 females to 18 male sex offenders; both groups were participants in an inpatient psychiatric facility who were being treated for emotional and/or behavior disorders (Bumby, Halstenson, & Bumby, 1997). The females had an average age of 14.9, and the males had an average age of 13.2. An examination of school performance indicated females were significantly more likely to be retained at least one grade in school. Females also had a significantly higher rate of drug abuse and promiscuity than the males. Male and female juvenile sex offenders, however, did not significantly differ in regard to psychological symptoms, past delinquency, or physical and sexual victimization.

Another study, which employed a relatively large sample size, compared 67 juvenile female sex offenders to 70 juvenile male sex offenders and also found differences between these two groups (Mathews, Hunter, & Vuz, 1997). The participants were juveniles from sex offender treatment programs. The most notable differences included past victimization experiences. Females had a higher average number of molesters when compared to males (4.5, compared to 1.4) and a younger age at first victimization; 64% of the females, compared to 26% of the males, reported that they were victimized before they reached 6 years of age. Additionally, females and males chose victims of the opposite sex proportionately (i.e., 45% of females chose male victims; 47% of males chose female victims). Also, although both groups were likely to choose young victims, females were more likely than males to choose those in infancy to 5 years of age (52%, compared to 38%).

More recently, Miccio-Fonseca (2000) compared juvenile female sex offenders to juvenile male sex offenders; their sample, however, also included adults. Information about the juveniles was not separated from the adults. Based on a sample of 18 juvenile and adult female sex offenders and 332 juvenile and adult male sex offenders, males were significantly more likely to have legal problems (68%, compared to 63%). Males also reported more sexual partners when compared to females. Females, however, were more likely to report being a victim of incest when compared to males (33%, compared to 13%) and being a victim of rape (39%, compared to 4%). In regard to past sexual victimization, 54% of the females, compared to 33% of the males, were sexually abused by 6 years of age. Males and females, however, did not significantly differ on self-reported reasons for therapy (i.e., anxiety, depression, relationship difficulty).

These findings, however, may not be generalized to the adolescent population because of the inclusion of adults and small number of females included in the sample.

Juvenile Sex Offender Typology

Although the focus of this research is not to create a typology, an examination of the current typologies can provide substantial details about this population of offenders. One of the first typologies developed for juvenile sex offenders was developed by O'Brien and Bera (1986). This typology identified seven categories of such offenders: (a) naive experimenters, (b) undersocialized child exploiters, (c) sexual aggressives, (d) sexual compulsives, (e) disturbed impulsives, (f) group influenced, and (g) pseudosocialized. These categories included both offense characteristics and psychological components.

Another typology was identified by Graves (as cited in Weinrott, 1996). Graves conducted a meta-analysis that used 16,000 juvenile sex offenders from 140 samples. From this, Graves identified three classifications of juvenile sex offenders: (a) pedophilic, (b) sexual assault, and (c) undifferentiated. Each of these three groups had distinctive sociopsychological characteristics. For instance, the pedophilic group exhibited social deficiencies, such as isolation and a lack of confidence. The victim tended to be very young, at least 3 years younger than the abuser. The victim was more likely to be a female. Those in the sexual assault group tended to assault females, as well, but were either the same age as the victim or slightly older. The undifferentiated group varied the most in its characteristics, including a wide range of hands-off and hands-on offenses, with no clear delineation of the victim's age. This group, as compared to the other two groups, exhibited the most severe psychological and social problems. The offenders in this group were more likely to come from dysfunctional families and began their assaultive behaviors at a much younger age than those in the other two groups.

A third typology was developed by Prentky, Harris, Frizzell, and Righthand (2000). In an assessment of 96 male juveniles, Prentky et al. categorized the males into six groups: (a) child molesters, (b) rapists, (c) sexually reactive children, (d) fondlers, (e) paraphilic offenders, and (f) unclassifiable. The child molester group was made up of 66 of the youths. These juveniles molested victims who were younger than the age of 11 and at least 5 years younger than the perpetrator. Twelve juveniles were identified as rapists; all of the victims were older than the age of 12, and there was no more than a 5-year age difference between the victim and the offender. There were 11 sexually reactive children. These juveniles, as well as their victims, were all younger than the age of 11. Three of the juveniles met the criteria for fondler, which included the same age criterion as the rapists, that is, victims and perpetrators older than the age of 12, but which limited their assaultive behavior to caressing and fondling. Also, three of the juveniles were considered paraphilic offenders, who engaged in exhibitionism and obscene phone calling. Six of the juveniles were unclassifiable, not meeting the criteria for any of the other five typologies.

To summarize, based on the extant literature, there is no empirical evidence to determine whether juvenile males and juvenile females are similar enough in their characteristics and offending patterns that they can be grouped together. The recent development of typologies focused specifically on juvenile offenders indicates that juvenile and adult sex offenders vary in their characteristics. At the same time, the typologies that currently exist are not specific to the types of sexual offenses that juvenile females commit. This, then, supports the need for empirical research focusing on this population of offenders as well as on comparison with juvenile male offenders.

Method

Data

The study relied on two sources of data provided by the Texas Department of Public Safety (n.d.): (a) sex offender registration records and (b) criminal history records. The sex offender registry includes information on each person who is legally required to register as a convicted sex offender in Texas. It includes the offender's demographic information, current living address, information about the offense, and victim information. The latter includes the victim's age at the time of the offense, sex, and relationship to the offender (i.e., relative, acquaintance, or stranger). The criminal history records provided additional information, including all arrests recorded after the offender reached the age of 17.² Whereas the sex offender registration information was not always complete, the criminal history files were used to fill in missing information, such as the race of the offender. The criminal history records also include dates of arrests (including subsequent arrests), conviction status, and the sentence imposed.

Because the population of registered offenders was juveniles at the time of arrest, the extent of the information provided in the sex offender registry alone concerning their criminal history varied widely.³ For some offenders, much of the arrest information was available, whereas for others, it was only noted that the person was "required to register as a sex offender." By using both criminal history records and sex registry records, the study provided a much more comprehensive overview of the characteristics of juvenile sex offenders and their respective offenses. This comprehensive overview far exceeds information available from aggregate Uniform Crime Reporting arrest data.

In addition to federal laws that mandate sex offender registration (i.e., the Jacob Wetterling Act, Megan's Law, and the Pam Lychner Act), Texas has established guidelines for sex offender registration (Texas Code of Criminal Procedure, 2005). The guidelines contain the definitions of what is considered a sexual offense, and those who meet the definition of a sex offender are required to register with the local law enforcement agency within 7 days.⁴ The law enforcement agency is required to provide the Texas Department of Public Safety, the Texas Youth Commission, or the Juvenile Probation Commission with the following information for each registered sex offender: name, aliases, date of birth, sex, race, height, weight, eye color, hair color, social security number, driver's license number, shoe size, home address, photo-

graph, fingerprints, and status (discharged, paroled, released on juvenile probation, under community supervision, under mandatory supervision). This information must be provided within 3 days after the individual has registered with the local law enforcement agency. Failure to register as a sex offender is a felony in Texas. Sex offenders are required to register for 10 years; however, violent sex offenders are required to register until their death, unless a petition is filed. The petition would include a psychiatrist's statement that the person is not likely to commit another sexual offense and that there is reason to believe the offender is no longer a threat to the community.

Participants: Juvenile Females

The data used for analysis were based on all individuals entered on the Texas state registry as sex offenders as of April 27, 2001. The registry contained a total of 29,376 offenders. Adult and female juveniles made up slightly fewer than 2% of the total. Sixty-one juvenile females, ranging in age from 12 to 17 at the time of arrest for the sex offense, were included in the registry. Of these, 31 (51%) were Caucasian or Hispanic, and 30 (49%) were African American. None of the juvenile females was classified as Asian, Native American, or another racial or ethnic category. The registry does not distinguish between Caucasians and Hispanics.

In Texas, risk levels are assigned to all sex offenders who were required to register on or after January 1, 2000 (Texas Department of Public Safety, n.d.). The Texas Department of Criminal Justice, the Texas Youth Commission, or a court assigns the risk level in accordance with standards established by the Risk Assessment Review Committee, which is established by the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. The risk levels include four categories: Level 1, Level 2, Level 3, and civil commitment. Those who are considered to have low risk are assigned to Level 1. Moderate-risk individuals are assigned to Level 2, and those at high risk are assigned to Level 3. Those who are civilly committed have been mandated for outpatient treatment because of their likelihood to engage in predatory sexual offenses. The individual is considered to have a behavioral abnormality, and close supervision is required. Risk levels were included for only 9 of the juvenile females; all 9 had a risk level of 2, indicating a moderate risk for recidivating.

Participants: Juvenile Males

To develop a sample of male juvenile offenders for comparison, each of the juvenile females was randomly matched with two juvenile males ($N = 122$). The 122 juvenile males were selected from a total population of 1,879 registered juvenile male sex offenders. The comparison group was matched on two characteristics, year of birth and race. It should be noted that because this comparison group was matched on year of birth instead of age at arrest, it is possible that some of the males in this sample were adults at the time of their arrest. For instance, if a male and female were born in 1980, the female could have committed the sex offense in 1996, making her a juvenile (16 years of age) at the time of her offense. Her matched male, also born in 1980, may have

been arrested for a sex offense in 1998, making him an adult (18 years of age) at the time of his sex arrest. Or he may have committed the offense when he was 16 years of age, making him a juvenile, whereas the date of arrest may have been 2 years later, when he was 18 years of age. Thus, some of the matched males in the juvenile sample were adults at the time of arrest. This occurred in 10 cases; 8 males were 18 years of age and 2 were 19 years of age at the time of arrest. Ten of the juveniles, therefore, were processed as adults.

Sixty-two (51%) of the juvenile males were Caucasian and 60 (49%) were African American. Ages ranged from 11 to 19 at the time of arrest, with an average age of 14.82 ($SD = 1.9$). Risk levels were available for 24 of the juveniles. Three were assessed as a Level 1 risk, the least likely to recidivate, and 23 were assessed as a Level 2 risk, indicating a moderate risk for recidivating.

Operationalization of Variables

The offender's age was classified by the researchers into one of three categories: 11 to 13, 14 to 16, and 17 to 19. The victim's age was classified into one of four categories: infancy to 5, 6 to 11, 12 to 17, and 18 years old and older. Similar age categories have been previously used (Awad & Saunders, 1991; Smith, Monastersky, & Deisher, 1987; Vandiver & Kercher, 2004; Worling, 1995, 2001).

The relationship between the offender and victim included relative, acquaintance, and stranger. *Relative* includes those who are legally related, including step relationships. *Acquaintance* indicates that the victim and the offender knew each other prior to the abuse and had an established rapport. *Stranger* describes offenders who sexually abused a victim who was neither a relative nor an acquaintance.

The victim's sex was also assessed as male or female and as "same as offender" or "different than offender." The type of sex offense committed was defined as the crime listed on the arrest. For some of the analysis, this was collapsed into the variable sexual assault (yes or no).

Analysis

Initially, demographic, offense, and judicial processing characteristics were examined for females and then for males. Offense characteristics included the number and type of arrests. Victim characteristics included the number of victims and their age and sex. Judicial processing characteristics included the type and length of sentence.

Chi-square analyses were used to test for statistically significant differences between male and female offenders. Analysis included age at arrest, arrest offense, victim's sex, victim's age, type of sentence, and length of sentence.

An additional analysis, binomial logistic regression, was employed to identify predictors that would distinguish between female and male juvenile sex offenders. Binomial logistic regression is typically used with dichotomous dependent variables and with both categorical and noncategorical independent variables. Logistic regression relies on maximum likelihood estimates rather than ordinary least squares; it is therefore more robust and does not require the usual assumptions that are needed for ordi-

Table 1
Demographics of Offender and Primary Victims

	Female (<i>N</i> = 61)		Male (<i>N</i> = 122)	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Offender's age				
11 to 13	30	49.2	39	32.0
14 to 16	27	44.3	61	50.0
17 to 19	4	6.6	22	18.0
Primary victim's age				
Very young (infancy to 5)	21	34.4	27	22.1
Young (6 to 11)	30	49.2	63	51.6
Adolescent (12 to 17)	9	14.8	31	25.4
Adult (17 and older)	1	1.6	0	0.0
Missing	0	0	1	.8
Primary victim's sex				
Female	36	59.0	85	69.7
Male	25	41.0	37	30.3
Primary victim-offender sex				
Same as offender	36	59.0	37	30.3
Different from offender	25	41.0	85	69.7

Note: Because of rounding, some of the percentage totals do not equal 100.

nary least squares (i.e., normality). It relies on an iterative process of estimating the population parameters that created the dependent variable. The dependent variable is transformed by calculating the natural log of odds of the dependent variable occurring (or not occurring). For this analysis, this involves correctly predicting each offender as either male or female based on demographic and arrest characteristics. It therefore indicates which variables are different when females and males are compared. The dependent variable was the offender's sex, whereas the independent variables were the offender's age, crime of conviction, victim's sex, victim's age, sentence length, and type of sentence. Multicollinearity was assessed a priori for the purpose of eliminating any variable that may overlap in its explanation with another variable.

Results

Juvenile Females: Demographic, Offense, and Judicial Processing Characteristics

The female offenders ranged in age at the time of arrest from 12 to 17, with an average age of 14.16 ($SD = 1.8$). Age categories and other sociodemographic data are summarized in Table 1. The 61 females had 66 sexual offenses recorded in the sex offender registry; 5 of the females had 2 offenses. For the analysis, only the primary offense is included. The primary offenses included aggravated sexual assault (51%), sexual assault (7%), and indecency with a child (43%).

Table 2
Victim Characteristics of Juvenile Female Sex Offenders
With More Than One Incident

Offender	Age		Sex	
	Victim 1	Victim 2	Victim 1	Victim 2
Juvenile 1	5	5	Female	Female
Juvenile 2	6	7	Female	Female
Juvenile 3	7	8	Female	Female
Juvenile 4	5	8	Female	Female
Juvenile 5	9	10	Male	Male

Forty (61%) of the victims of female sex offenders were female, and 26 (39%) were male. The ages of the victims ranged from 2 to 16, in addition to one 73-year-old adult. Excluding the outlier, the average victim's age was 7.7 years ($SD = 3.6$). The most frequently occurring victim age was 5, which accounted for 10 of the victims. Each of the 5 multiple-victim female offenders molested victims who were the same sex. Moreover, each pair of victims was within 3 years of age of each other (see Table 2).

Forty-five (74%) of the female offenders received a sentence of probation, and 14 (24%) received a sentence requiring residential treatment.⁵ Sentencing information was missing for 2 of the offenders. The average sentence was 2.8 years ($SD = 2.5$). Forty-nine (83%) received a sentence of less than 5 years, 7 (12%) received a sentence from 5 to 9 years, and 3 (5%) received a sentence of 10 years or more. Sentence refers to length of time sentenced to probation or time to be spent in a residential treatment center (see Table 3).

Information on the relationship between the juvenile female offender and her victim was available for only 11 (18%) cases. Five of the victims were acquaintances, and 5 were related to the offender. Only 1 of the female juveniles victimized a stranger.

Juvenile Males: Demographic, Offense, and Judicial Processing Characteristics

As noted previously, the juvenile male sex offenders ranged in age at the time of arrest from 11 to 19, with an average age of 14.8 ($SD = 1.9$). The 122 juvenile males were arrested for a total of 144 sex offenses. Slightly more than 100 ($n = 102$, 84%) of these juveniles were arrested for only 1 offense, and 20 (16%) were arrested for more than 1 offense. The number of arrests for sex offenses ranged from 1 to 4. Again, only the primary offense is included in the analysis. Males as compared to the females had a record of a slightly wider range of offenses in the sex offender registry. The primary offenses included aggravated sexual assault (49%), sexual assault (15%), indecency with a child (35%), and court or board ordered to register⁶ (1%). Also noteworthy, 1 of

Table 3
Judicial Processing Characteristics

	Female (<i>N</i> = 61)		Male (<i>N</i> = 122)	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Type of arrest				
Aggravated sexual assault				
Aggravated sexual assault on a child	20	32.8	43	35.2
Aggravated sexual assault	11	18.0	17	13.9
Sexual assault				
Sexual assault	4	6.6	17	13.9
Burglary with intention of sexual offense	0	0.0	1	0.8
Indecency with a child				
Contact	25	41.0	37	30.3
Exposure	1	1.6	6	4.9
Court or board ordered	0	0.0	1	0.8
Summary of arrest categories				
Aggravated sexual assault	31	50.8	60	49.2
Sexual assault	4	6.6	18	14.8
Indecency with a child	26	42.6	43	35.2
Court or board ordered	0	0.0	1	0.8
Sentence				
Probation	45	74.0	94	77.0
Residential treatment (TYC)	14	23.0	27	22.1
Unknown	2	2.0	1	0.8
Sentence length				
Less than 5 years	49	80.3	61	50.0
5 to 9 years	7	11.5	27	22.1
10 years or more	3	4.9	33	27.0
Unknown	2	3.3	1	0.8

Note: Because of rounding, some of the percentage totals do not equal 100. TYC = Texas Youth Commission.

the males committed a type of sexual assault (burglary with intention of a sexual offense) that none of the females committed.

Eighty-five (70%) of the victims were female and 37 (30%) were male. The ages of the victims ranged from infancy to 17. The average age of the victims was 8.4 ($SD = 3.8$). The relationship between the male offenders and their victim was available for 105 cases (65%). Of the 105, 51 (48%) were related to their victim, 49 (46%) were acquaintances, and 5 (5%) were strangers.

Ninety-four (77%) of the male offenders received a sentence of probation, and 27 (22%) received a sentence requiring residential treatment. Sentencing information was missing for 1 offender (1%). Sixty-one (50%) received a sentence of less than 5 years, 27 (22%) received a sentence between 5 and 9 years, and 33 (27%) received a sentence of more than 10 years (missing = 1, 1%). The average sentence length, including probation and incarceration, was 5.5 years ($SD = 4.5$).

Table 4
Summary of Chi-Square Analysis of Male-Female Offender Differences

Variable	χ^2	Sample size	df
Offender age at arrest*	7.65	183	2
Arrest offense	3.38	183	3
Victim's sex**	13.97	183	1
Victim's age*	11.99	182	5
Type of sentence	.05	180	1
Length of sentence**	21.33	180	2

* $p \leq .05$. ** $p \leq .001$.

Female-Male Comparison

Male and female offenders were significantly different in terms of their age at arrest ($\chi^2 = 7.65, p < .001$). Juveniles were classified into three age categories (11 to 13, 14 to 16, 17 to 19). The largest proportion of males (50%) was in the 14 to 16 age category, whereas the largest proportion of females (49%) was in the 11 to 13 age range. Females, therefore, began offending earlier than males. A summary of the chi-square analysis is presented in Table 4.

Males and females, however, did not significantly differ in terms of the type of sex offense ($\chi^2 = 3.382, p > .05$). Males, however, were arrested for burglary of a habitation with intent to commit sexual assault, whereas none of the females was arrested for this crime. There were no crimes that females were arrested for that males were not.

Males and females were significantly different with respect to the victim's age ($\chi^2 = 11.99, p < .05$).⁷ The average age of males' victims was 8.4 ($SD = 3.8$), whereas the average age of females' victims was 7.6 ($SD = 3.6$). Additionally, it should be noted that 24% of males, compared to 14% of females, victimized those in the 12 to 17 age range. Females were more likely than males (33%, compared to 22%) to victimize those in the age range of infancy to 5 years old. Males and females varied minimally with respect to victimizing those in the 6 to 11 age range (54%, compared to 52%). Only 1 female victimized someone older than 17. The age difference is expected, given that it would be difficult for a juvenile female to assault a male who is older and presumably physically larger than herself.

Significant differences were found between the juvenile male and female offenders in regard to the sex of their victims ($\chi^2 = 13.97, p < .001$). Males were significantly more likely to have victimized someone of the opposite sex (females), whereas females had male and female victims proportionately. Seventy percent ($n = 85$) of the males had female victims (opposite sex), and 30% had male victims (same sex). Forty-one percent of females had male victims (opposite sex), and 59% had female victims (same sex).

An assessment of judicial processing characteristics of males and females yielded no significant differences ($\chi^2 = .045, p > .05$) in the outcome (probation or adjudica-

Table 5
Logistic Regression Predicting Offender's Sex

Measure	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	Wald	Exp(<i>B</i>)
Victim's age (in years)	-.004	.056	.004	.996
Offender age (in years)	-.059	.110	.284	.943
Sexual assault (yes or no)	-.287	.385	.555	1.332
Offender-victim sex (same or different)**	1.597	.407	15.384	4.939
Sentence type (probation or residential treatment)	.030	.460	.004	1.039
Length of sentence (in years)**	-.312	.076	16.970	.732
Constant	-.480	1.646	.085	1.616

Note: Model chi-square = 43.044, $df = 6$, $p < .001$, $-2 \log$ likelihood = 76.360.

** $p \leq .001$.

tion to a residential facility); however, males were significantly more likely to receive longer sentences ($\chi^2 = 21.33$, $p < .001$) as compared to females. More specifically, 50% of males and 83% of females received sentences between 1 and 4 years. In terms of the lengthier sentences, 10 years or more, 27% of males and only 5% of females received such sentences. The remaining 22% of males and 12% of females received sentences between 5 and 9 years.

Logistic Regression

The results of logistic regression yielded several significant findings; however, it should be noted that preliminary analysis did not indicate multicollinearity among the variables.⁸ The final model, therefore, included the following independent variables: offender age (in years), sexual assault (no = 0, yes = 1),⁹ victim's age (in years), victim's sex (same = 0, different = 1), sentence type (probation = 0, residential treatment = 1), and sentence length (in years). The dependent variable was the offender's sex (male = 0, female = 1).

As illustrated in Table 5, two variables, victim's sex and length of sentence, were significant predictors of the offender's sex. As noted previously, males were more likely than females to victimize those of the opposite sex. More specifically, 70% of males victimized females, whereas only 41% of females victimized males.

The analysis also indicated that males had an increased probability of receiving lengthier sentences as compared to females. This finding, however, is likely mitigated by variables not included in the model, such as seriousness of offense and other aggravating circumstances. Thus, conclusions from this finding should be explored in future research.

The model chi-square was significant ($p < .001$), indicating that the two variables increased the ability to predict whether the juvenile sex offender was male or female. The overall hit ratio indicated that the model correctly identified 75% of the cases.

Discussion

Research on sex offenders has relied primarily on samples of adult males, and findings from such research may not apply to sex offenders who are young, female, or both. Moreover, research on juvenile female sex offenders and juvenile male sex offenders is both limited and bifurcated. Few studies have compared juvenile female and male sex offenders. At the same time, the need for current research on all groups of sex offenders is needed to enhance the body of knowledge and our understanding of all sex offenders in general.

The research revealed that as of April 27, 2001, 61 of the 29,376 (.02%) registered sex offenders in Texas were juvenile females and that 1,879 (6.4%) were juvenile males. Overall, offenders classified as juveniles at the time of arrest accounted for 7% of the registered sex offenders. Approximately one half of the population of juvenile female sex offenders in the registry were African American and one half were Caucasian. Hispanics were classified as Caucasian. Prior research has found slightly fewer (i.e., 20% to 30%) African Americans in its sample as compared to these findings (Hunter et al., 1993; Johnson, 1989). Again, it should be noted that this study relied on a slightly more representative sample of sex offenders; much of the prior research has relied on clinical samples, which may not include the full extent of the racial variations.

This analysis also found a significant difference between juvenile female and juvenile male sex offenders in terms of their age. Although the average age of females (14.16) and males (14.82) does not reveal a substantial difference, the overall distribution of ages by categories did differ. For example, approximately one half of the females were in the 11 to 13 age range at the time of arrest, whereas approximately one half of males were in the 14- to 16-year-old age range. This indicates that females may be earlier starters than males;¹⁰ these findings, however, would require additional exploration into other populations of similar offenders before the results could be generalized to all juvenile sex offenders.

Statistically significant differences were also found in terms of the victims' age. The average age of the victims of females was 7.6, whereas the average age of the victims of males was 8.4. Furthermore, the distribution also revealed differences; females were more likely than males (33%, compared to 22%) to victimize those in the constructed category from the ages of infancy to 5. Additionally, only 14% of the females, as compared to 24% of the males, victimized those in the 12 to 17 age range. In other words, female juvenile sex offenders tend to victimize younger children than do male juvenile sex offenders.

Juvenile female and male sex offenders also differed significantly with respect to the sex of the victim. Males were more likely to victimize someone of the opposite sex (female victims), whereas females were less discriminate regarding the sex of their victims. At the same time, independent of the sex of the offender, juvenile sex offenders were more likely overall to victimize females. Fifty-nine percent of the females and 70% of the males victimized females. Prior research including female juvenile sex

offenders found no distinctive pattern of gender preference among this population (cf. Fehrenbach & Monastersky, 1988; Fromuth & Conn, 1997; Johnson, 1989). A high degree of intrafamilial abuse was found, however, which may explain the lack of a distinctive characteristic. These young offenders may be selecting victims of convenience rather than displaying genuine preference for one gender. Additionally, research on adult female sex offenders has also found many reports of females acting with male accomplices (Faller, 1987, 1995; Lewis & Stanley, 2000; O'Connor, 1987; Rosencrans, 1997; Wolfe, 1985), which may also be true of juvenile female sex offenders. Although these data did not include such information, future research should attempt to examine this possibility.

In summary, this research included a broad range of offenders in that it includes all of those who were arrested and required to register in Texas;¹¹ thus, a broader scope of offenders is included when compared to prior research, which includes primarily clinical or incarcerated samples. The findings indicate that juvenile female sex offenders registered in Texas have salient characteristics when compared to their male counterparts. The females in this population were slightly younger than the males and offended against younger victims. Although these results may not be applicable to all juvenile sex offenders, given the small sample size, these unique characteristics found in this population warrant further research in this area.

Notes

1. The definition of juvenile varies from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. The U.S. government, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation, defines a juvenile as a person 17 years of age or younger at the time the crime was committed. The state of Texas defines a juvenile as someone between the ages of 10 and 16. An accused person as young as the age of 14 may be certified to stand trial as an adult. The sex offender registry does include individuals as young as age 10.

2. An accused person as young as the age of 14 may be certified to stand trial as an adult. An accused person who commits specified offenses, including all offenses covered in the sex offender registration file, who commits an offense while younger than 17, but who is arrested and/or is charged at the age of 17 or older, is automatically prosecuted as an adult.

3. The age of individuals included in the sex offender registry relies on date and information at the time of the arrest, not at the time of the offense.

4. Those who have been convicted of the following crimes are required to register as a sex offender: indecency with a child; sexual assault; aggravated sexual assault; prohibited sexual conduct; compelling prostitution; sexual performance by a child; possession or promotion of child pornography; aggravated kidnapping if the defendant committed the offense with intent to violate or abuse the victim sexually; burglary if the defendant committed the offense with intent to commit indecency with a child, sexual assault, aggravated sexual assault, prohibited sexual conduct, or aggravated kidnapping; second conviction of indecent exposure; a conviction for an attempt, conspiracy, or soliciting any of the above listed crimes; a deferred adjudication for any of the above listed crimes (as of 1992); conviction under the laws of another state or Uniform Code of Military Justice for any of the above crimes; and second conviction under the law of another state or Uniform Code of Military Justice for an offense containing elements similar to the elements of indecent exposure (Texas Code of Criminal Procedure, 2005). Article 62.01(5h) of the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure, in general, requires registration for "an adjudication of delinquent conduct" for any of the offenses listed, except for indecent exposure. Indecent exposure is applicable for inclusion in the sex offender registry in an adjudication of delinquent conduct if the intended victim is younger than 17 years of age.

5. Residential treatment refers to an offender who was sentenced to the Texas Youth Commission. In principal, this is equivalent to stating that an adult was sentenced to the Texas Department of Criminal Justice–Institutional Division (i.e., prison).

6. Those who are court or board ordered to register typically include individuals who were required to register as part of a parole or probation condition.

7. The victims' ages were collapsed into six categories (0 to 2, 3 to 5, 6 to 8, 9 to 11, 12 to 14, 15 and older) to avoid violating the assumption that the majority of the cells must not have values of less than 5.

8. The results of the Pearson's correlation coefficients indicated a significant correlation between victim's age and victim's sex ($p < .001$) and between victim's age and offender's age ($p < .001$); the degree of correlation, however, was rather weak (.294 and .304, respectively). Thus, the variables were included in the logistic regression model.

9. Sexual assault included all forms of sexual assault (aggravated sexual assault, sexual assault, burglary with intent to commit to sexual assault).

10. Other explanations (i.e., females are treated more leniently by law enforcement officials) were found to not apply. In accordance with the Texas Family Code (2005), once evidence is found indicating a juvenile has committed a sex offense, the juvenile is referred to the appropriate agency and included in the sex offender registry. Even those who are not "convicted" but rather are considered a "child in need of supervision" are included in these data.

11. It should be noted that as of 1992, Texas also requires convicted sex offenders who receive deferred adjudication to register as sex offenders, thereby expanding the scope of who is included in the registry.

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