



More Than One Third Of Child Sex Abusers Are Other Juveniles, New UNH Study Finds

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Crimes against Children Research Center

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DURHAM, N.H – More than one third of those who sexually abuse children are other juveniles, according to a new study from the University of New Hampshire Crimes against Children Research Center.

UNH researchers found that juveniles account for more than one-third (35.6 percent) of those known to police to have committed sex offenses against minors. And juveniles who commit sex offense against other children are more likely than adult sex offenders to offend in groups, at schools, and to have more male and younger victims.

The new research is presented in a US Department of Justice bulletin "Juveniles Who Commit Sex Offenses Against Minors."

"With all the anxiety about predators and pedophiles, we don't orient enough of our prevention thinking to reducing the risk of sexual abuse at the hands of other children. We have good evidence-based programs known to reduce sexually aggressive behavior in children. More communities ought to make these programs available," said David Finkelhor, director of the UNH Crimes against Children Research Center and the study director.

The UNH researchers also found:

- The number of youth coming to the attention of police for sex offenses increases sharply at age 12 and plateaus after age 14. Early adolescence is the peak age for offenses against younger children. Offenses against teenagers surge during mid to late adolescence, while offenses against victims under age 12 decline.
- A small number of juvenile offenders — 1 out of 8— are actually younger than age 12.
- Females constitute 7 percent of juveniles who commit sex offenses.
- Jurisdictions vary enormously in their concentration of reported juvenile sex offenders, far more so than they vary in their concentration of adult sex offenders. This may mean that some jurisdictions are much more active than others in uncovering such offenses and reporting them to police

The UNH Crimes against Children Research Center (CCRC) works to combat crimes against children by providing high-quality research and statistics to the public, policy makers, law

enforcement personnel, and other child welfare practitioners. CCRC is concerned with research about the nature of crimes including child abduction, homicide, rape, assault, and physical and sexual abuse as well as their impact. Visit the center online at <http://www.unh.edu/ccrc/index.html>.

The University of New Hampshire, founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea, and space-grant university, UNH is the state's flagship public institution, enrolling more than 12,200 undergraduate and 2,200 graduate students.

Copies of DOJ Bulletin

The Department of Justice bulletin about the research is available at <http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojjdp/227763.pdf>.

Photo

<http://www.unh.edu/news/img/finkelhor.jpg>

David Finkelhor, director of the UNH Crimes against Children Research Center.

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