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Juvenile Prostitution Topic of New UNH Report

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DURHAM, N.H. -- Police are less likely to make an arrest when they encounter an incident of juvenile prostitution than in incidents involving adult prostitution, according to a new report authored by researchers at the University of New Hampshire's Crimes against Children Research Center.

"Prostitution of Juveniles: Patterns from NIBRS" is the latest in a series published by the U.S. Department of Justice. According to authors David Finkelhor and Richard Ormrod, disappointingly little statistical and research information exists about the prostitution of juveniles, in part because their social and legal status is somewhat ambiguous.

"There is not a consensus among law enforcement and social agencies about whether juvenile prostitutes are offenders involved in illegal and delinquent behavior or children who are being victimized by unscrupulous adults." The UNH researchers also found that the prostitution of juveniles differs from that of adults in that it is less likely to be engaged in alone, and more likely to be engaged in indoors and in big cities.

The study also reveals that unexpected gender patterns occur in the prostitution of juveniles. A majority (61 percent) of juvenile prostitution encountered by police involves males, unlike adult prostitution, which is more evenly spread between men and women. Moreover, male juvenile prostitutes are older, more likely to operate outdoors, more likely to be arrested and less likely to be treated by the police as victims.

In the report, Finkelhor and Ormrod call for law enforcement agencies and policy makers to work together in finding better ways to respond to and record incidents of juvenile prostitution.

The report is available online at <http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/publications/PubAbstract.asp?pubi=11663>.

For the purposes of compliance with Section 511 of PL 101-166 (the "Stevens Amendment"), readers are advised that 100 percent of the funds for this project are derived from federal sources. The total amount of federal funding involved is \$113,263.