

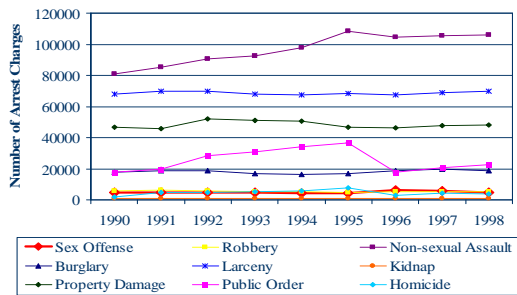
Understanding the Passage and Use of Sex Offender Laws: Assumptions vs. Reality

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Sex Offender Legislation

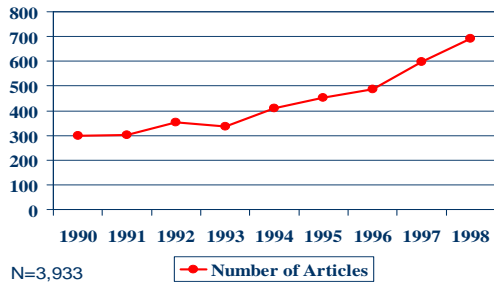
- 1990 Washington's Community Protection Act (Sexual Predator/Civil Commitment Law)
- 1994 Jacob Wetterling Crimes Against Children and Sexually Violent Offender Registration Act
- 1995 Louisiana's Execution Statute
- 1996 Megan's Law
- 1996 California's Chemical Castration Legislation
- 1998 Illinois Prohibits Sex Offenders from School Zones
- 2000 Illinois Prohibits Sex Offenders from Public Parks
- 2005 Florida's Jessica Lunsford Act
- 2006 Adam Walsh Child Protection & Safety Act

Crime Rates in Illinois in the 1990s

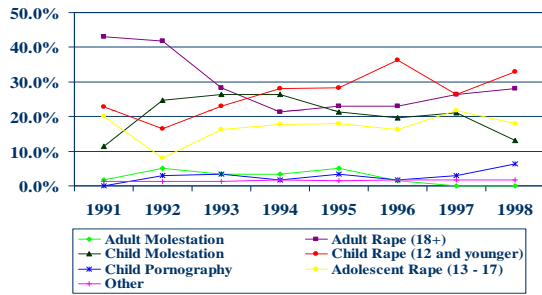


N=2,491,166; Source: Dr. Lisa Sample

Media Accounts of Sex Offenders and Offending



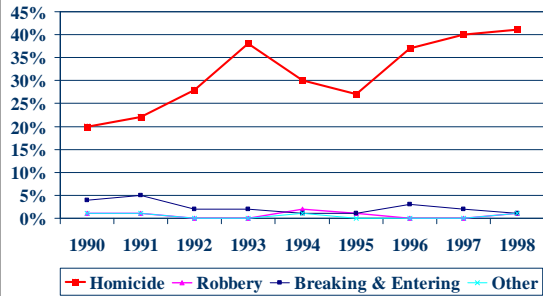
Types of Sex Crimes by Age of Victim and Year in the Media



Portrayals of Sex Offenders

- Little Demographic Information
 - Gender
 - Age
- Little Etiological Information
- Persistence of Offenders
- Murderers

Other Crimes Involved in Media Accounts of Sex Crimes



N= 150 ; Source: Dr. Lisa Sample

Policy Makers' Perceptions of Sex Offenders and Offending

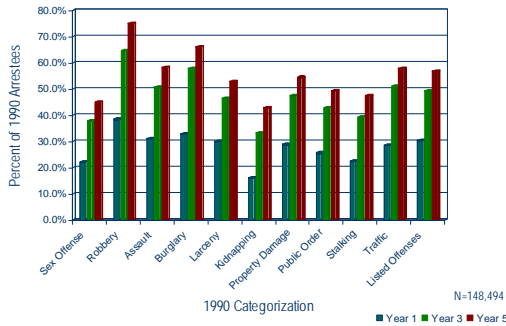
- Increasing problem
- Men responsible for the problem
- Psychological problems are the cause
- Once a sex offender, always a sex offender
- "Raped and Killed"
- Where did they get their information?

N= 25 ; Source: Dr. Lisa Sample

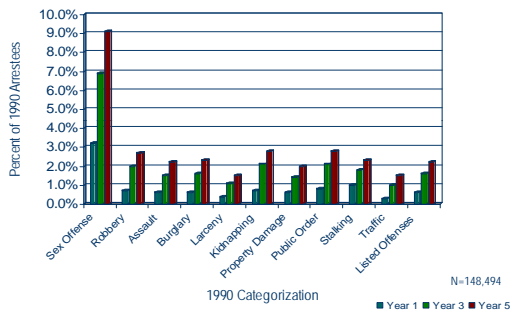
Assumptions Underlying Sex Offender Legislation

- Sexual victimization is often against children
- Sex offenders often kill their victims
- Laws will deter their behaviors, and without intervention recidivism is inevitable
- What does the data suggest?

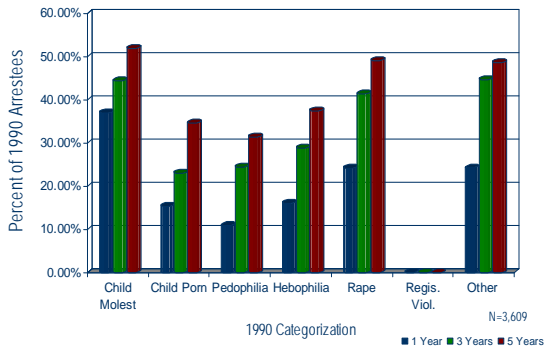
Percent of Offenders Re-Arrested For Any Charge



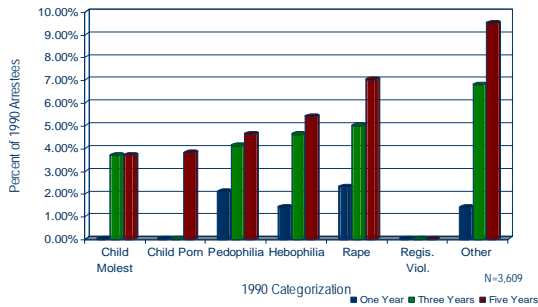
Percent of Offenders Re-Arrested for a Sex Crime



Percent of Sex Offenders Re-Arrested for Any Crime



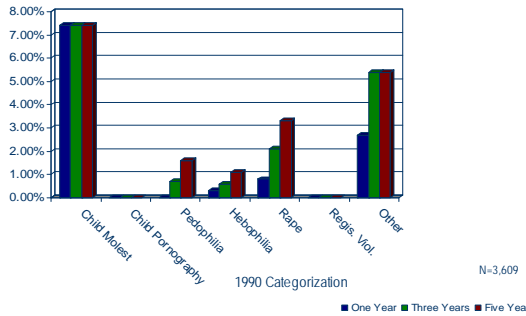
Percent of Sex Offenders Re-Arrested for a Sex Crime



The Clustering of Criminal Offenses (Crimes Charged Simultaneously)

	Ass.	Burg	Kidn.	Larc.	Robb.	Sex off.	Homicide
Assault		16%	39%	19%	30%	33%	22%
Burglary	4%		8%	14%	10%	11%	9%
Kidnap	2%	1%		0%	3%	12%	1%
Larceny	10%	26%	4%		12%	4%	3%
Robbery	2%	3%	5%	2%		6%	18%
Sex crime	1%	2%	11%	0%	3%		1%
Homicide	1%	1%	2%	0%	5%	2%	
Total	26331	7078	1026	12937	1830	952	1805

Percent of 1990 Sex Offense Arrestees Rearrested for a Homicide



Sex Offenders as a Group

- Commit crimes of a non-sexual nature
- Do not re-offend in greater proportions than other types of offenders
- Majority are not re-arrested for another sex crime or homicide within 5 years

What about the demographic characteristics of sex offenders?

Portrait of Sex Offenders

	Rapist	Pedophile	Hebophile	Child Molester	Child Porn	Other
Male	98%	98%	98%	44%	85%	77%
White	34%	61%	69%	37%	96%	38%
Non-White	66%	39%	31%	63%	4%	62%
Average Age	30.5	33.96	31.7	34	39	32.8

Media & Legislator Perceptions

- Similarities between legislators' perceptions and media accounts
 - Growing offender problem
 - Increasing sexual threat to children
 - High recidivism
 - Sexually motivated murders increasing
- Need to be aware of the potential effects of media frames on fear of victimization
- Need to offset sensational events with empirically-driven information about rates of offending

Utility and Efficacy of Laws: Citizen Awareness and Action

- 1996 “Megan’s Law” – made it mandatory for states to disclose information about registered sex offenders to the public.
- Further facilitated by passage of “PROTECT” Act of 2003, requiring all states to provide registration information on the Internet.
- Duty of the public to check the registry.
 - Little is known

Nebraska SOR and NASIS

- Nebraska SOR: only lists Level 3 offenders, or those deemed most dangerous with the highest risk of re-offending
- Nebraska Annual Social Indicators Survey (NASIS)
- Asked 6 questions about citizen awareness and actions regarding the Nebraska SOR

Information about Nebraska SOR

	Yes	No	Unsure	Valid N
Aware of Registry	1609 (89.8%)	18 (1.0%)	164 (9.2%)	1791
Accessed Registry	558 (34.8%)	1046 (65.2%)		1605
Feel Family is Safer	478 (87.6%)	68 (12.4%)		546
Personally Feel Safer	484 (88.0%)	66 (12.0%)		551
Taken Preventative Action	209 (37.6%)	346 (62.4%)		555
	One time	2-5 times	5 or more	
Times Accessed the Registry	119 (21.3%)	278 (49.8%)	161 (28.9%)	558

Anderson, Amy L. and Lisa L. Sample. "Public Awareness and Action Resulting from Sex Offender Notification Laws." *Criminal Justice Policy Review*.

Why Check the Nebraska SOR?

Reasons for Checking NSOR	Percent
Personal Safety	10.6%
Safety of Family or Friends	46.0%
Job Obligation	10.4%
Curiosity or Personal Interest	28.7%
Other	4.3%
(n = 541; 30%)	

Dr. Amy Anderson, Currently Unpublished Data

Why Did Not Check the NSOR?

Reasons for Not Checking NSOR	Percent
Heard it from Someone Else	4.6%
No Access to the Internet	10.7%
Got Info from Another Source	15.9%
No Interest	59.4%
Other	9.4%
(n = 1253; 70%)	

Dr. Amy Anderson, Currently Unpublished Data

Citizen Awareness and Action: Summary

- While many were aware, few used the online registry
 - Checking for protection versus for fun or interest
- More information needed about preventative actions taken
- Evidence-based education of the public is necessary, including what to do with information from sex offender registry

Thank You!

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