



Australian Government

Australian Institute of Criminology

# Trends & issues in crime and criminal justice

No. 632 August 2021

**Abstract** | A rapid evidence assessment was conducted to provide an updated review of reoffending research on child sexual offenders from January 2010 to March 2020. Thirty-three studies examining 55 independent samples of adult and juvenile child sexual offenders were reviewed.

Across most studies, rates of sexual reoffending were 15 percent or less, and rates of general reoffending were between 20 and 54 percent. The evidence suggests that the cumulative likelihood of both general and sexual reoffending increases until about two to four years after contact with the criminal justice system, then stabilises. Escalation from non-contact to contact sexual offending is not common. Finally, the evidence suggests that juveniles are more likely to reoffend sexually and generally than adults.

## Patterns and predictors of reoffending among child sexual offenders: A rapid evidence assessment

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There is a vast body of literature examining reoffending among child sexual offenders, including a number of systematic reviews and meta-analyses (Hanson & Bussière 1998; Hanson & Morton-Bourgon 2005; McCann & Lussier 2008; McPhail, Hermann & Nunes 2013; Seto, Hanson & Babchishin 2011; Seto & Lalumière 2010). This reflects the academic, clinical and policy interest in how often, and under what circumstances, child sexual offenders go on to commit further sexual offences after contact with the criminal justice system, and in the effectiveness of treatment and intervention measures.

Sexual offences against children have historically been characterised as compulsive and pathological behaviours driven by ingrained deviant sexual interests. Implied in this view is the assumption that child sexual offenders will sexually reoffend unless they are removed from the community or treated. However, research has shown that child sexual offenders and other offender groups have similar levels of antisocial traits (eg impulsivity, recklessness, aggression, lack of empathy; Lussier & Mathesius 2018; Seto & Lalumière 2010). Relatedly, prior reviews report substantially lower rates of sexual reoffending than non-sexual reoffending among child sex offenders; this suggests that, for many, child sexual offending is but one component of a broader pattern of criminal behaviour (Hanson & Bussière 1998; Hanson & Morton-Bourgon 2005; McCann & Lussier 2008).

Importantly, these reviews have also examined the psychological and behavioural predictors of reoffending among child sexual offenders. In general, psychological markers of both antisociality and sexual deviance (ie sexual preferences for children, an abnormal preoccupation with sex) are associated with an increased risk of sexual reoffending. Other markers, many of which likely reflect these two core risk factors, include histories of sexual and non-sexual offending, sexual offences against non-related or unknown (ie extra-familial) children, and greater diversity in sexual offences (eg offences with and without physical contact, offences against male and female children, offences against children and adults).

In terms of demographic factors, age has emerged as one of the most important predictors of reoffending, with younger and juvenile offenders being more likely to sexually (and non-sexually) reoffend. While this may be underpinned by burgeoning deviant sexual interests, research suggests that, in most cases, it reflects a combination of pubertally-intensified sexual preoccupations; similar pubertal increases in impulsivity, recklessness and aggression; and increased opportunities for contact with children by virtue of their youth (eg Martinson & Ryan 2010). Critically, in contrast to the widely accepted age–crime curve, which shows that general offending tends to peak around 17 to 20 years of age, researchers have noted a bi-modal age distribution for child sexual offending, with separate peaks in adolescence and mid-adulthood (Smallbone, Marshall & Wortley 2008). Additionally, studies have shown that juveniles have higher rates of sexual reoffending but rarely go on to sexually reoffend as adults (eg Caldwell 2002). Previous studies have also drawn attention to the different treatment needs of these two offender groups (eg Veneziano & Veneziano 2002). Taken together, these findings highlight the importance of distinguishing between adult and juvenile child sexual offenders when examining risk profiles and rates of reoffending.

Despite research highlighting the variation in risk profiles and reoffending rates among child sexual offenders, the pathological view, which assumes a high likelihood of sexual reoffending, continues to underpin a number of criminal justice and treatment measures, including indeterminate sentencing regimes, sexual offender specific treatment programs and post-sentence community management schemes (eg sexual offender registers, community orders). Indeed, Bartels and colleagues (2019) have noted a recent ‘net-widening’ trend in the sentencing and post-sentence management of sexual offenders across Australia, whereby such schemes are being applied more indiscriminately to a wider range of offenders and offences. An updated review of reoffending research on child sexual offenders is therefore timely, and important for informing the scale and tailoring of these measures. Relatedly, an understanding of the characteristics associated with an increased likelihood of reoffending can aid in targeting these measures at higher risk child sexual offenders.

Finally, an updated review is also well placed to incorporate the growing number of studies examining sexual offenders in the online environment, most notably those who produce, distribute or use child sexual abuse material (CSAM), but also those who use this environment to solicit and 'groom' children for sexual contact. Research on these emerging populations has only recently increased to a point where the review and synthesis of findings is possible (see Babchishin, Hanson & VanZuylen 2015; Babchishin et al. 2018; Brown & Bricknell 2019; Garrington et al. 2018).

## Methodology

A rapid evidence assessment was conducted to address the following questions:

- What proportion of child sexual offenders have a prior history of general and sexual offending?
- How prevalent is general and sexual reoffending among child sexual offenders?
- What is the nature of general and sexual reoffending among child sexual offenders?
- What factors are associated with an increased risk of general and sexual reoffending among child sexual offenders?
- Are there any differences between juvenile and adult sex offenders in their likelihood of reoffending and reoffending risk profile?

## Search strategy

Rapid evidence assessments are systematic reviews of research undertaken in an accelerated manner within a restrictive time frame (ie four weeks to six months; Booth, Sutton & Papaioannou 2016). English language studies were included if they were peer reviewed, published between January 2010 and March 2020, and conducted in Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Europe (including the UK) or the United States.

Included studies report on contact (fondling/touching, masturbation, and penetrative sex) and non-contact (voyeurism and exhibitionism; procurement; and the possession, distribution and/or production of CSAM) sexual offences committed against children by adult or juvenile offenders who were subsequently processed through the criminal justice system. To account for variation in ages by study and jurisdiction, studies must have examined individuals who offended sexually against a person under 18 years of age (or viewed sexually explicit material depicting persons under 18 years of age). Adult offenders were 18 years or over at their index sexual offences.

Studies must have retrospectively and/or prospectively followed offenders for any period of time after contact with some element of the criminal justice system for their index child sexual offences, and included at least one quantitative measure of general and/or sexual reoffending. General offending was broadly defined as including any criminal offence, including both non-sexual and sexual offences. Importantly, sexual reoffending was not limited to further sexual offences against children, but included all crimes of a sexual nature, including those against adults. Data on offences recorded by the criminal justice system are typically used to examine reoffending. These datasets classify offences based on legal definitions and codes that combine most sexual offences against children and adults, preventing the analysis of sexual reoffending against children specifically. The exception to this is CSAM offences, which are often recorded separately from other sexual offences, and as a result a number of studies do examine rates of CSAM reoffending. However, for the purposes of this study, rates of CSAM reoffending provide an incomplete, and potentially misleading, picture of sexual reoffending against children, and for this reason discussion is limited to sexual reoffending broadly.

Prior offending was defined as at least one instance of contact with the criminal justice system for sexual or general offending before contact for the index child sexual offence. Only recorded offending was examined, although offences could have progressed to any stage of the criminal justice system (report, arrest, charge, conviction or incarceration). Validation studies of risk assessment tools, systematic reviews and meta-analyses were also included.

Studies were excluded if they:

- only measured reoffending as a treatment or intervention effect (ie no reoffending rates were presented);
- examined non-criminal problematic sexual behaviours; or
- did not differentiate between child and adult sexual offending.

The decision was made to exclude studies that involved the direct evaluation or assessment of treatment programs targeted at child sexual offenders because of concerns that they would introduce bias into the sample and skew the results. For example, offenders who participate in treatment programs may be less likely to reoffend because of the impact of the intervention, and because of other factors related to their involvement in treatment in the first place. Because this study aggregates the findings from studies involving both treatment and non-treatment populations, the overall figures may not be representative of either cohort.

Staff from the Australian Institute of Criminology's JV Barry Library searched 15 databases: the JV Barry Library catalogue; Campbell Collaboration, Cochrane Library, CINCH, Criminal Justice Abstracts, eBooks, E-Journals, Google Scholar, Informit, National Criminal Justice Reference Service Abstracts, OpenDissertations, ProQuest, Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Collection, SocINDEX, and Violence and Abuse Abstracts. Searches were conducted using the following search terms:

- Target: child\* AND
- Index offence: (sex offen\* OR sexual offen\* OR sex abus\* OR sexual abu\* OR exploit\* OR porn\* OR molest\*) OR p?edophil\* AND
- Reoffence: recidiv\* OR reoffend\* OR repeat\* OR history\* OR prior OR trajector\*

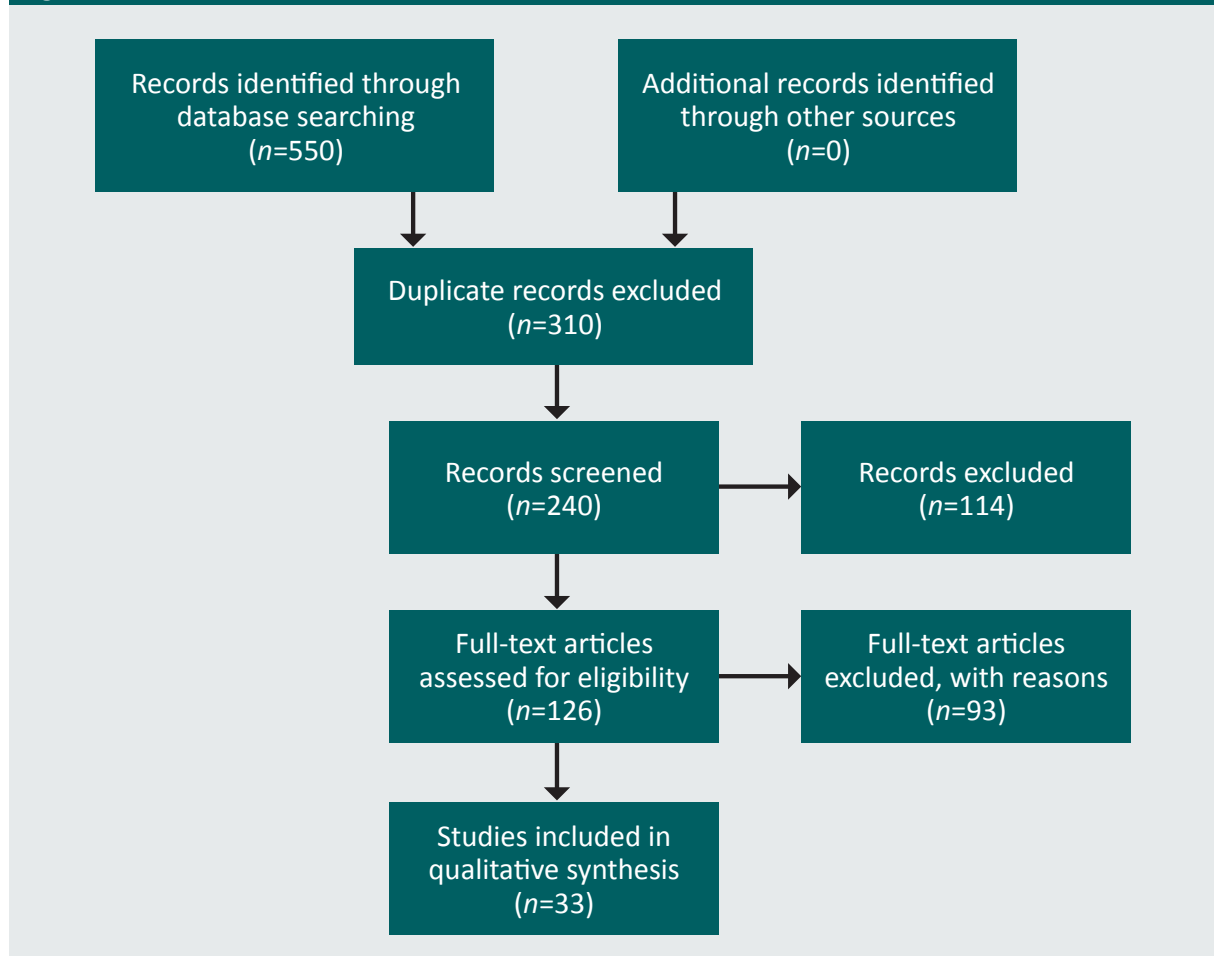
Search terms were identified and refined through a series of initial scoping searches undertaken by the researchers. In particular, these searches identified that the inclusion of generic terms such as 'juvenile', 'minor' and 'under-age' resulted in a large number of results that did not focus on child sexual offending as a subcategory of crime. As such, the victim-related search terms were limited to 'child' and 'children'.

## Study selection and analysis

A total of 550 studies were initially identified for further screening (Figure 1). Duplicates ( $n=310$ ) were removed. The researchers reviewed the abstracts of the remaining sources ( $n=240$ ), and full-text copies of 126 studies were sourced. A further 93 studies were excluded after secondary screening, leaving 33 studies for inclusion in the review. These 33 studies are indicated by an asterisk in the references.

Many of the studies included in the review provide information about more than one sample of child sexual offenders. For example, in a number of studies the authors compared the reoffending rates of different child sexual offenders, classified by the nature of their index offence or criminal histories. As such, two units of analysis are used in this report—studies, and samples of child sexual offenders. Across the 33 studies, there were 55 samples of child sexual offenders.

**Figure 1: Search results**



## Limitations

Despite facilitating a systematic and transparent review of research on a given topic, rapid evidence assessments do not provide the same exhaustive depth or detail as a full systematic review (Ganann, Ciliska & Thomas 2010). The limitations of reviewing studies that analyse recorded offence data—namely the omission of offences that do not come to police attention or result in the laying of charges, prosecution, conviction or imprisonment—should also be acknowledged (Blackley & Bartels 2018; Cossins 2011). Finally, there is likely some slight variation in the definition of key terms across studies, including, most notably, the age distinction between adults and juveniles, producing some overlap between groups of offenders.

## Results

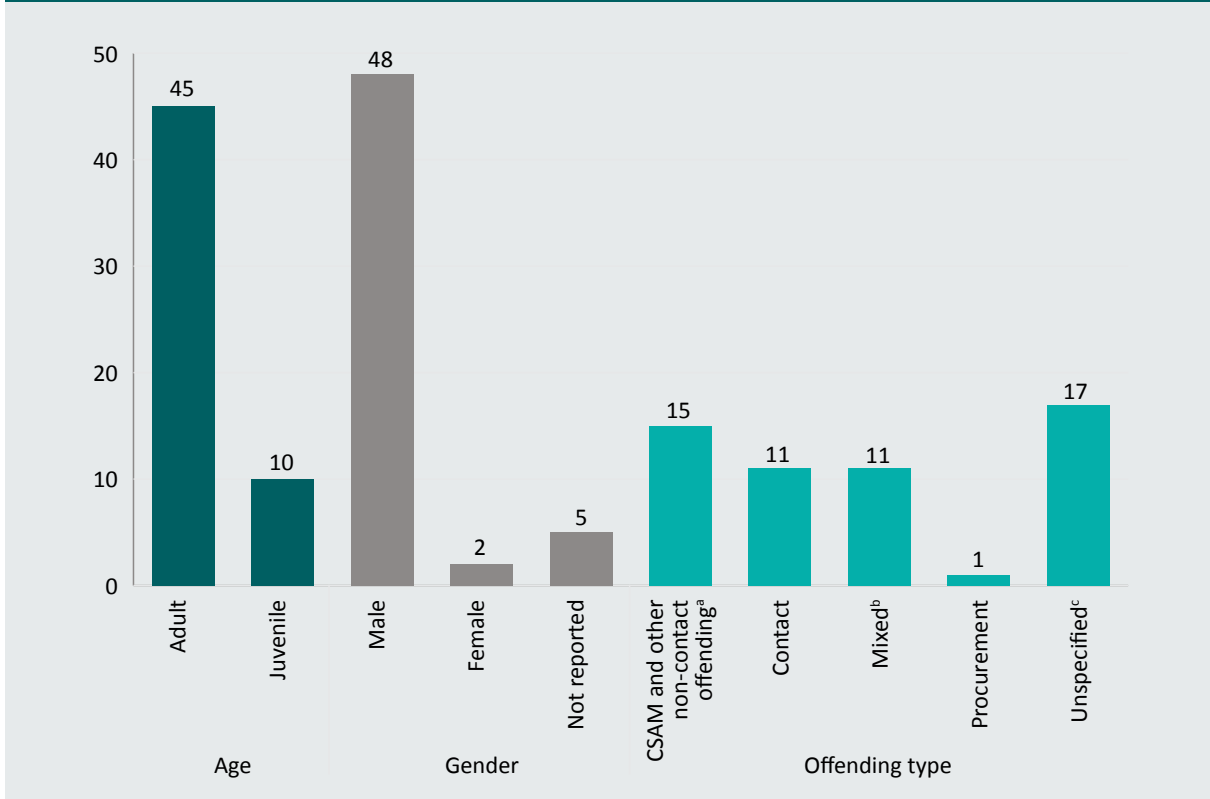
### Study and sample characteristics

The majority of studies were conducted in Europe (36%) or North America (ie Canada or the United States; 42%). Six studies (18%) were conducted in Australia or New Zealand. Seventeen (52%) studies operationalised reoffending as any new conviction while 14 studies used a new report (6%), arrest (12%) or charge (24%). Only one study measured reoffending using incarceration data.

Most child sexual offender samples comprised adult (82%,  $n=45$ ) male (96%,  $n=48$ ) offenders (Figure 2). Based on their index offence or criminal offending histories, offenders had been detected for:

- CSAM and other non-contact offences (27%,  $n=15$ );
- contact offences (20%,  $n=11$ );
- mixed offences (both CSAM and other contact or non-contact offending; 20%,  $n=11$ );
- procurement offences (2%,  $n=1$ ); and
- other unspecified sexual offences against children (31%,  $n=17$ ).

**Figure 2: Sample characteristics (n)**



a: Mixed refers to the co-occurrence of CSAM and other forms of child sexual abuse (contact or non-contact)

b: The nature of offences committed by individuals in these samples were not specified. Rather, they were referred to globally as child sexual offenders

Source: Child sexual offender studies database [computer file]

## Prevalence of prior offending

Nineteen studies reported on prior general offending among 33 samples of child sexual offenders (Table 1). The studies using prior conviction or incarceration data found that between 78 and 84 percent of adult offenders had a prior offence recorded ( $n=13$  samples; Elliott et al. 2019; Howard, Barnett & Mann 2014; Jung et al. 2013; Krone et al. 2017; Laajasalo et al. 2020; Nadesu 2011; Turner et al. 2016). Among studies using report, arrest or charge data, prior offending ranged between 26 and 84 percent in all but two of the 15 samples of adult child sexual offenders (Bader, Welsh & Scalora 2010; Brouillette-Alarie & Proulx 2013; Eke, Helmus & Seto 2019; Eke, Seto & Williams 2011; Faust et al. 2015; Goodman-Delahunty & O'Brien 2014; Lussier, Deslauriers-Varin & Râtel 2010; Seto & Eke 2015; Soldino, Carbonell-Vayá & Seigfried-Spellar 2019).

A small number of studies examined prior offending among juvenile offenders, finding between 37 and 100 percent had prior convictions ( $n=2$  samples; Stevens et al. 2013), and between six and 35 percent had prior reports/arrests/charges ( $n=3$  samples; Aebi et al. 2014; Fanniff & Kolko 2012).

Sixteen studies reported on prior sexual offending among 25 samples of child sexual offenders. Rates of prior offending varied significantly, primarily due to differences in samples and observation periods. Between five and 37 percent of adult child sexual offenders had previously been convicted of a sexual offence (Craissati, Bierer & South 2011; Elliott et al. 2019; Jung et al. 2013; Krone et al. 2017; Laajasalo et al. 2020; Nadesu 2011; Turner et al. 2016). Meanwhile, five to 61 percent had previously been reported, arrested or charged with a sexual offence (Bader, Welsh & Scalora 2010; Brouillette-Alarie & Proulx 2013; Eke, Seto & Williams 2011; Goodman-Delahunty & O'Brien 2014; Lussier, Deslauriers-Varin & Râtel 2010; Soldino, Carbonell-Vayá & Seigfried-Spellar 2019).

In two studies, four samples of juvenile offenders were found to have very low rates of prior contact with the criminal justice system for sexual offending (0–3%; Aebi et al. 2014; Stevens et al. 2013).

**Table 1: Summary of prior offending rates among juvenile and adult offenders, by prior offence type**

	Juveniles		Adults	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
<b>General</b>				
Prior report/arrest/charge	3	6–35	15	2–84
Prior conviction/sentence	2	37–100	13	8–78
Overall	5	6–100	28	2–84
<b>Sexual</b>				
Prior report/arrest/charge	2	0	8	5–61
Prior conviction/sentence	2	0–3	12	5–37
Overall	4	0–3	21 <sup>a</sup>	5–61

a: Includes one sample where the definition of prior offending was not provided

Source: Child sexual offender studies database [computer file]

## Rates of reoffending

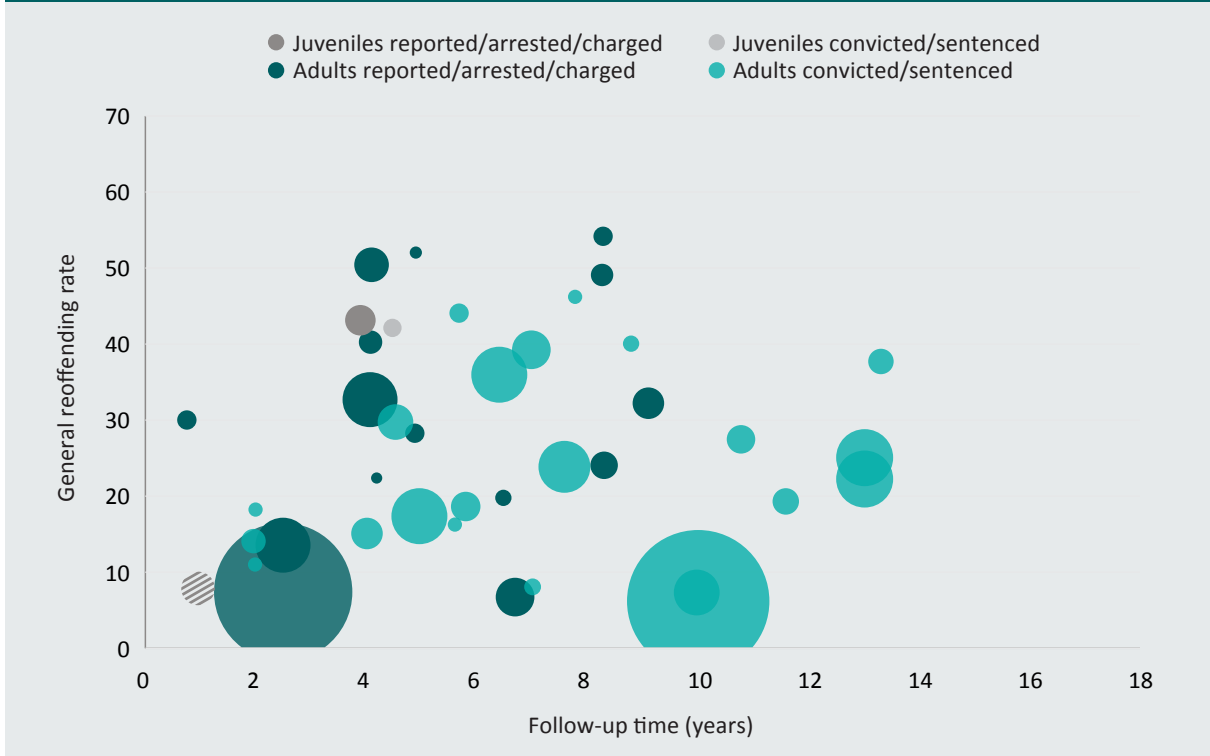
### General reoffending

Twenty-four studies reported on general reoffending among 45 samples of child sexual offenders. Figure 3 displays rates of general reoffending (y-axis) by the time offenders were followed from the index offence (x-axis), population and reoffending measure (bubble colour), and sample size (bubble size; see also Table 2). The review found that:

- reoffending rates were between zero and 54 percent, with follow-up periods ranging from 10 to 160 months (follow-up periods missing for 3 samples);
- reoffending rates were lower than 20 percent for all but one of the samples that were followed for two years or less ( $n=5$ );
- reoffending rates were between 20 and 54 percent in most samples that were followed for periods of four years or more ( $n=34$ ); and
- the cumulative likelihood of reoffending appeared to increase until around two to four years from the index offence, then stabilised, albeit with significant variation across samples.
- The highest reoffending rates were observed in studies of adults that used rearrest/recharge measures.



**Figure 3: Rates of general reoffending among child sexual offenders (%)**



Note: Samples composed of offenders who were followed for different periods of time are plotted based on the mean or median follow-up time. Smallest sample:  $n=6$ . Largest sample:  $n=6,719$ . Sample size was unavailable for striped bubbles

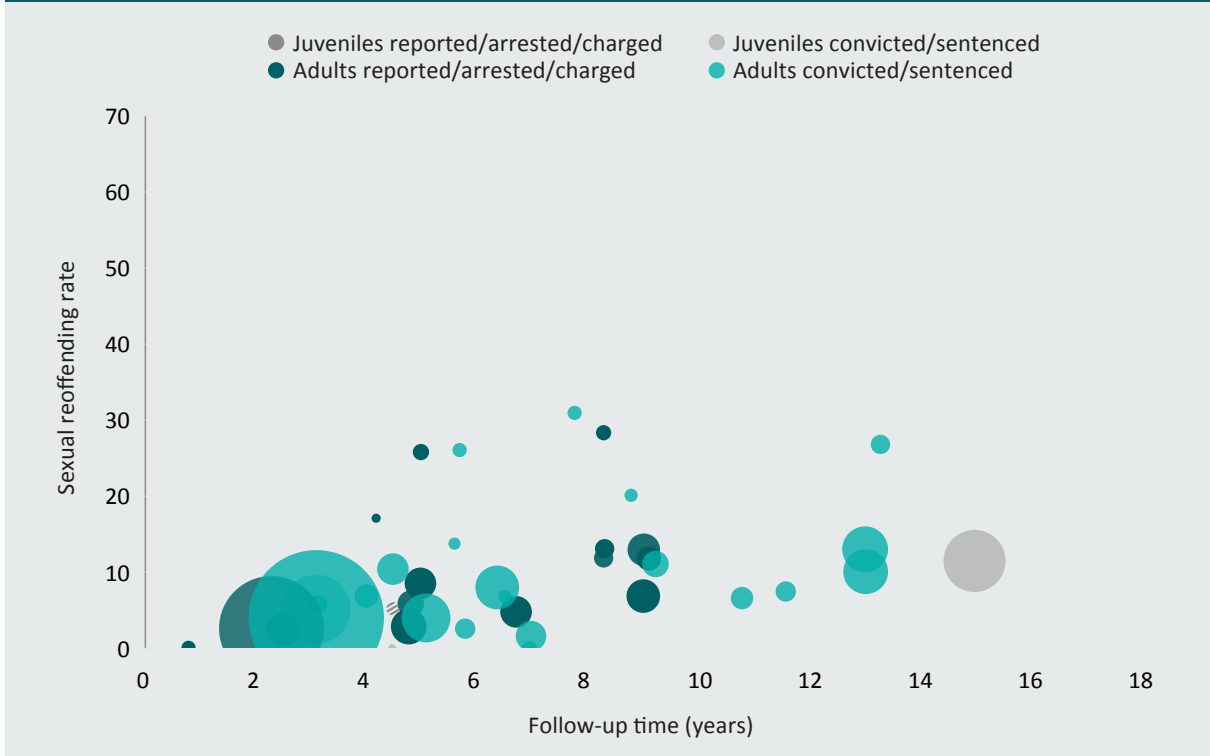
Source: Child sexual offender studies database [computer file]

### Sexual reoffending

Figure 4 displays rates of sexual reoffending for 39 child sexual offender samples, as measured in 23 studies (see also Table 2). The review found that:

- reoffending rates were between zero and 31 percent, with follow-up times ranging between 10 and 160 months;
- most samples ( $n=33$ ) recorded reoffending rates of 15 percent or less; and
- the cumulative likelihood of reoffending increased slightly about two to four years from index offence, then stabilised, again with significant variation across samples.

**Figure 4: Rates of sexual reoffending among child sexual offenders (%)**



Note: Samples composed of offenders who were followed for different periods of time are plotted based on the mean or median follow-up time. Smallest sample:  $n=6$ . Largest sample:  $n=4,249$ . Sample size was unavailable for striped bubbles

Source: Child sexual offender studies database [computer file]

**Table 2: Summary of reoffending rates among juvenile and adult offenders, by reoffence type**

	Juveniles				Adults			
	Report/arrest/charge		Conviction/sentence		Report/arrest/charge		Conviction/sentence	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
<b>General</b>								
2 years or less	4	8–21	3	19–21	35	6–54	4	11–18
4 years or more	2	0–42	2	0–42	7	8–30	16	8–46
Overall	7	0–43	5	0–42	27	7–54	21	6–46
<b>Sexual</b>								
2 years or less	1	0	–	–	35	0–31	1	3
4 years or more	3	0–31	3	0–11	4	0–3	16	0–31
Overall	4	0–11	3	0–11	29	0–11	19	0–31

Source: Child sexual offender studies database [computer file]

## Characteristics of reoffending

### *Time to first reoffence*

Seven studies reported on the average time to first reoffence, measured in months. Despite variations in study methodologies, sample sizes and definitions of reoffending, the findings were relatively consistent:

- time to first general reoffence was consistently shorter than time to first sexual reoffence among studies that measured both types of reoffending (Craissati, Bierer & South 2011; Elliott et al. 2019; Goodman-Delahunty & O'Brien 2014);
- time to first contact sexual offence was shorter than time to first non-contact sexual offence in those studies that measured both types of sexual reoffending (Elliott et al. 2019; Jung et al. 2013); and
- time to first general reoffence was shorter among offenders who had a prior history of offending when compared to 'first-time' offenders (Daly et al. 2013).

### *Transition from non-contact to contact offending*

Ten studies reported on the transition to contact child sexual offending among 12 samples of non-contact offenders. Six of these samples demonstrated very low levels of escalation from non-contact to contact offending (less than one percent), finding that sexual reoffenders committed the same type of offence as their index offence (Goller et al. 2016; Howard, Barnett & Mann 2014; Krone et al. 2017; Seto, Hanson & Babchishin 2011; Soldino, Carbonell-Vayá & Seigfried-Spellar 2019). Among the other six samples, one to eight percent of non-contact offenders escalated to contact offending (Aebi et al. 2014; Black 2018; Eke, Seto & Williams 2011; Elliott et al. 2019).

## Predictors of reoffending

### *Age*

Seven studies reported on the relationship between the age of the offender and reoffending in adult and juvenile populations. Five studies found that offenders who were younger at the time of their first sexual offence were significantly more likely to reoffend generally and sexually (Eke, Seto & Williams 2011; Lussier, Deslauriers-Varin & Râtel 2010; Nadesu 2011; Nilsson et al. 2014; van der Put et al. 2012). Nilsson et al. (2014) further identified that age at first conviction was a strong predictor of non-sexual reoffending but only a modest predictor of sexual reoffending.

Two studies examined the relationship between age at index offence and reoffending in adult populations (Rettenberger et al. 2015; Seto & Eke 2015). Although both studies identified that younger adults were at higher risk of reoffending, they showed different relationships between age and reoffending, with Rettenberger and colleagues (2015) finding evidence of a curvilinear trend. Here, higher rates of sexual reoffending were observed in adults aged under 25 years and between 40 and 60 years. Rates were lower for adults aged 26 to 39 years and over 61 years (Rettenberger et al. 2015).

### *Indigenous status*

Only two studies reported on the relationship between the Indigenous status of the offender and reoffending—one examining Indigenous Australians (Daly et al. 2013) and one examining New Zealand Maori (Nadesu 2011). Both found an increased likelihood of general reoffending among Indigenous offenders compared with non-Indigenous offenders, although Daly and colleagues (2013) noted that this association disappeared when prior offending was controlled for in their analysis.

### *Socio-economic status*

Four studies reported on the relationship between the socio-economic status (SES) of offenders and reoffending. These studies found that child sexual offenders were more likely to commit general or contact sexual reoffences if they experienced relative socio-economic disadvantage, and this was consistent across different measures (Aebi et al. 2014; Daly et al. 2013; Krone et al. 2017). However, Daly et al. (2013) found that the relationship between SES and reoffending was moderated by prior offending (ie offenders from low SES backgrounds were only more likely to reoffend if they had histories of prior offending), while Aebi et al. (2014) identified that juvenile child sexual offenders were more likely to come from higher SES backgrounds than juvenile perpetrators of peer/adult sex offending.

### *Offence type*

Twelve studies reported on the differences in reoffending among the various types of child sexual offenders. Findings were mixed in terms of whether CSAM and contact offenders differed in their rates of general and sexual reoffending. Three studies found no difference (Aebi et al. 2014; Jung et al. 2013; Lussier, Deslauriers-Varin & Râtel 2010), while two studies found that contact offenders were more likely to reoffend generally and sexually than CSAM offenders (Laajasalo et al. 2020; Seto & Eke 2015). These studies also found:

- mixed offenders were more likely to sexually reoffend than CSAM offenders (Eke, Helmus & Seto 2019; Elliott et al. 2019; Goller et al. 2016; Soldino, Carbonell-Vayá & Seigfried-Spellar 2019);
- producers of CSAM and those who participated in CSAM networks were more likely to sexually reoffend than other CSAM offenders (Krone et al. 2017);
- offenders who had a history of breaching their conditional release orders were more likely to generally and sexually reoffend than those who did not (Eke, Seto & Williams 2011; Seto & Eke 2015); and
- extra-familial contact offenders were more likely to reoffend generally and sexually than intra-familial contact offenders, but both were more likely to commit non-contact than contact reoffences (Nilsson et al. 2014; Turner et al. 2016).

## Prior offending

Seventeen studies reported on the association between prior offending and reoffending. Most of the evidence suggests that prior offending increased the likelihood of general and sexual reoffending, even after controlling for other factors such as age, Indigenous status and SES (Bader, Welsh & Scalora 2010; Black 2018; Eke, Seto & Williams 2011, Eke, Helmus & Seto 2019; Elliott et al. 2019; Nadesu 2011; Rettenberger et al. 2015; Seto & Eke 2015; Stevens et al. 2013). However, some studies found that the relationship between prior offending and reoffending differed by type of reoffending. Daly and colleagues (2013) found that prior offending was correlated with general reoffending but not sexual reoffending, while Krone and colleagues (2017) found that prior offending was associated with contact reoffending but not non-contact reoffending. CSAM offenders were less likely to have a criminal history than contact and mixed offenders (Cohen 2018; Laajasalo et al. 2020; Soldino, Carbonell-Vayá & Seigfried-Spellar 2019). This may go some way to explaining why CSAM offenders are less likely than contact offenders to reoffend.

One study found evidence that CSAM offenders with a history of offending were more likely to commit contact reoffences than CSAM offenders with no history of offending (Seto, Hanson & Babchishin 2011).

## Discussion

A review of the most recent evidence on child sexual offenders suggests that the cumulative likelihood of both general and sexual reoffending increases in the first few years after the index offence, then stabilises. However, sexual reoffending among child sexual offenders is rare compared with general reoffending. Across most studies, rates of sexual reoffending were 15 percent or less, and rates of general reoffending were between 20 and 54 percent. Additionally, many more child sexual offenders have histories of general than sexual offending. This is consistent with research showing that child sexual offences are often committed as part of broader patterns of offending, and are usually underpinned by more general antisocial inclinations as well as deviant sexual inclinations (Lussier & Mathesius 2018; Seto & Lalumière 2010). There is also little evidence of escalation in reoffending—neither adult nor juvenile offenders typically escalate from non-contact to contact child sexual offences.

A number of high-level implications for policy and practice can be drawn from these conclusions. Findings highlight the importance of concentrating responses to child sexual offending in the first few years after criminal justice system contact, when re-exposure to the original stressors or facilitators underpinning the behaviour, or exposure to new stressors resulting from criminal justice system contact, are most likely. Critically, findings also reinforce the utility of interventions addressing criminal and antisocial behaviour broadly, rather than just sexual offending specifically, for child sexual offenders. The low rates of sexual reoffending mean that targeted treatment, sentencing and post-sentence measures which use empirically supported risk factors to identify and prioritise high-risk offenders are likely to be more effective and cost-efficient than indiscriminately intensive responses.

Building on this, the current review also highlights the characteristics of those who are more likely to sexually reoffend. Those who commit contact sexual offences, who breach their conditional release orders, and who have extra-familial victims are more likely to reoffend generally and sexually. Extra-familial offenders are also more likely to have histories of non-sexual offending. These factors could indicate a greater willingness to overcome legal and practical obstacles in order to offend, including sexually, and may reflect stronger sexual deviance and/or antisociality. Indigenous status and low SES were predictive of reoffending in some studies, although these risk factors may be less important for juvenile offenders and those with histories of general offending.

Consistent with prior research (Hanson & Bussière 1998; Hanson & Morton-Bourgon 2005; McCann & Lussier 2008), juvenile offenders were more likely to reoffend sexually and generally than adult offenders, although they were less likely to have histories of sexual and general offending, probably because of their age. These findings add to the now considerable body of evidence for adolescence as a high-risk period for various forms of criminal and antisocial behaviour, including sexual offending. Among adult offenders, youth generally predicted sexual reoffending as well, although there may be greater variation in risk across adulthood than many existing studies reveal. Critically, while risk factors for reoffending were largely consistent across juvenile and adult offenders, this review does not examine psychological or clinical risk factors, which may differ starkly between adult and juvenile offenders.

## Acknowledgements

The authors would like to acknowledge Megan Whittle, the AIC's Reference Librarian, for conducting the database searches as part of this study.

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General editor, *Trends & issues in crime and criminal justice* series: Dr Rick Brown, Deputy Director, Australian Institute of Criminology. Note: *Trends & issues in crime and criminal justice* papers are peer reviewed. For a complete list and the full text of the papers in the *Trends & issues in crime and criminal justice* series, visit the AIC website at: [aic.gov.au](http://aic.gov.au)

ISSN 1836-2206 (Online) ISBN 978 1 922478 30 6 (Online)

<https://doi.org/10.52922/ti78306>

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