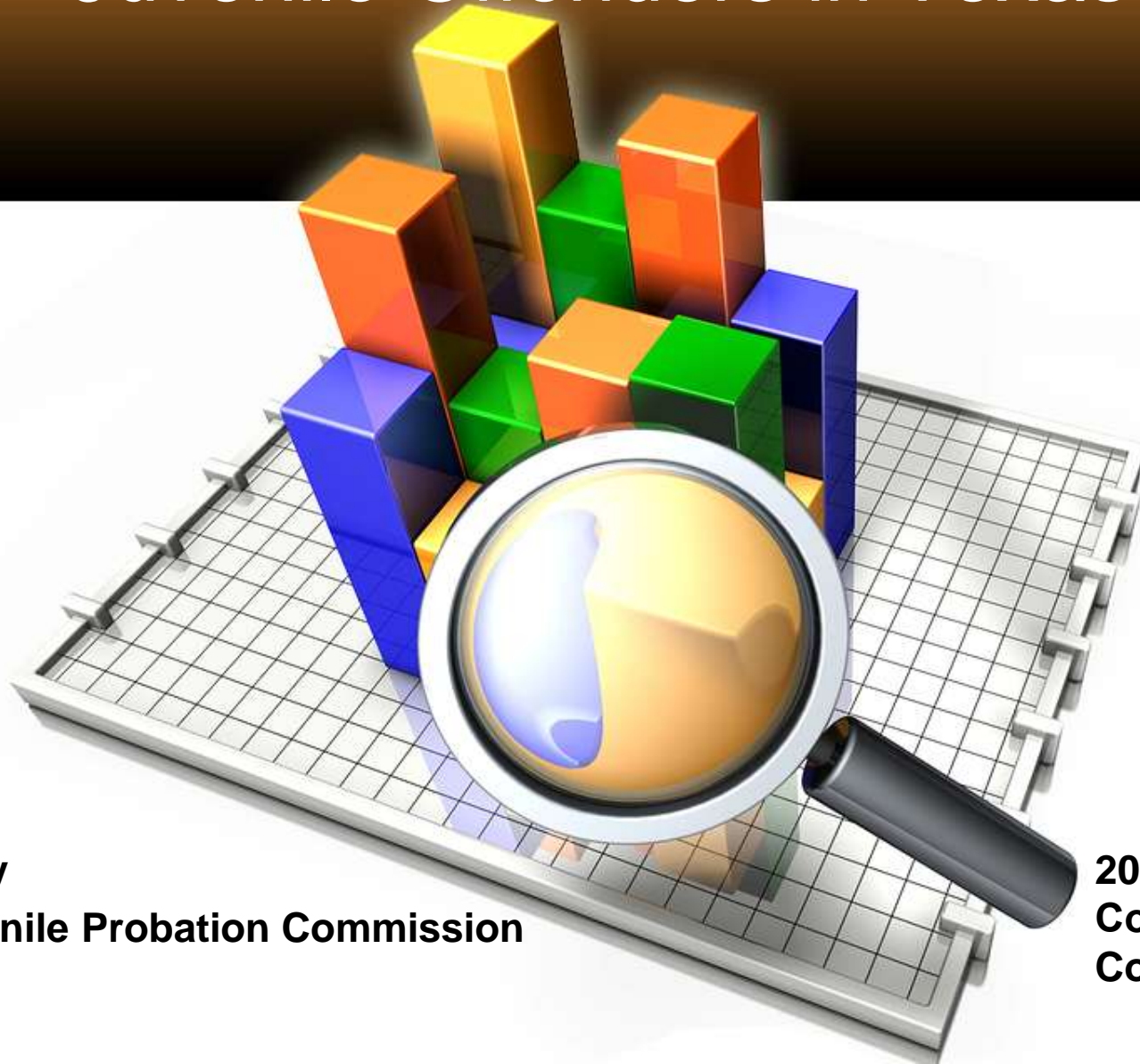# Risk Assessment for Juvenile Offenders in Texas

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2008 Data Coordinators' Conference

Topics Covered

- Goals of the Assessment

- Where we have been

- What we have found

- Where we are going

Goals

- To develop an assessment that identifies which juveniles referred are most at risk for subsequent delinquent behavior.

- To determine which offenders need substantial intervention services and which will likely not re-offend even without many services.

- To determine which factors best predict numerous or severe subsequent offenses.

Where We Have Been

- Other Assessments Examined
- Juveniles Studied for the Assessment
- Initial Sample v. In Depth Sample
- Counties Studied
- Definition of Risk
- Method for Developing the Assessment
- Factors Analyzed

Other Assessments Examined

- Youth Level of Service/ Case Management Inventory (YLS/ CMI)
- Juvenile Assessment & Intervention System (from the National Council on Crime & Delinquency)
- Assessments being used by:
  - Washington State
  - Orange County, CA
  - Oregon
  - Arizona
  - North Carolina

Why Not Use an Existing Assessment?

- Costs associated with copyrighted instruments

- Existing assessments not validated for the Texas population

- Some take lengthy time to administer

- Others are only intended for adjudicated juveniles

Juveniles Studied for the Assessment

- Initial sample was 68,584 juveniles referred to local juvenile probation departments in Texas in CY 2003
- Juveniles were tracked in both the adult and juvenile systems for three years
- Subsequent offense data available
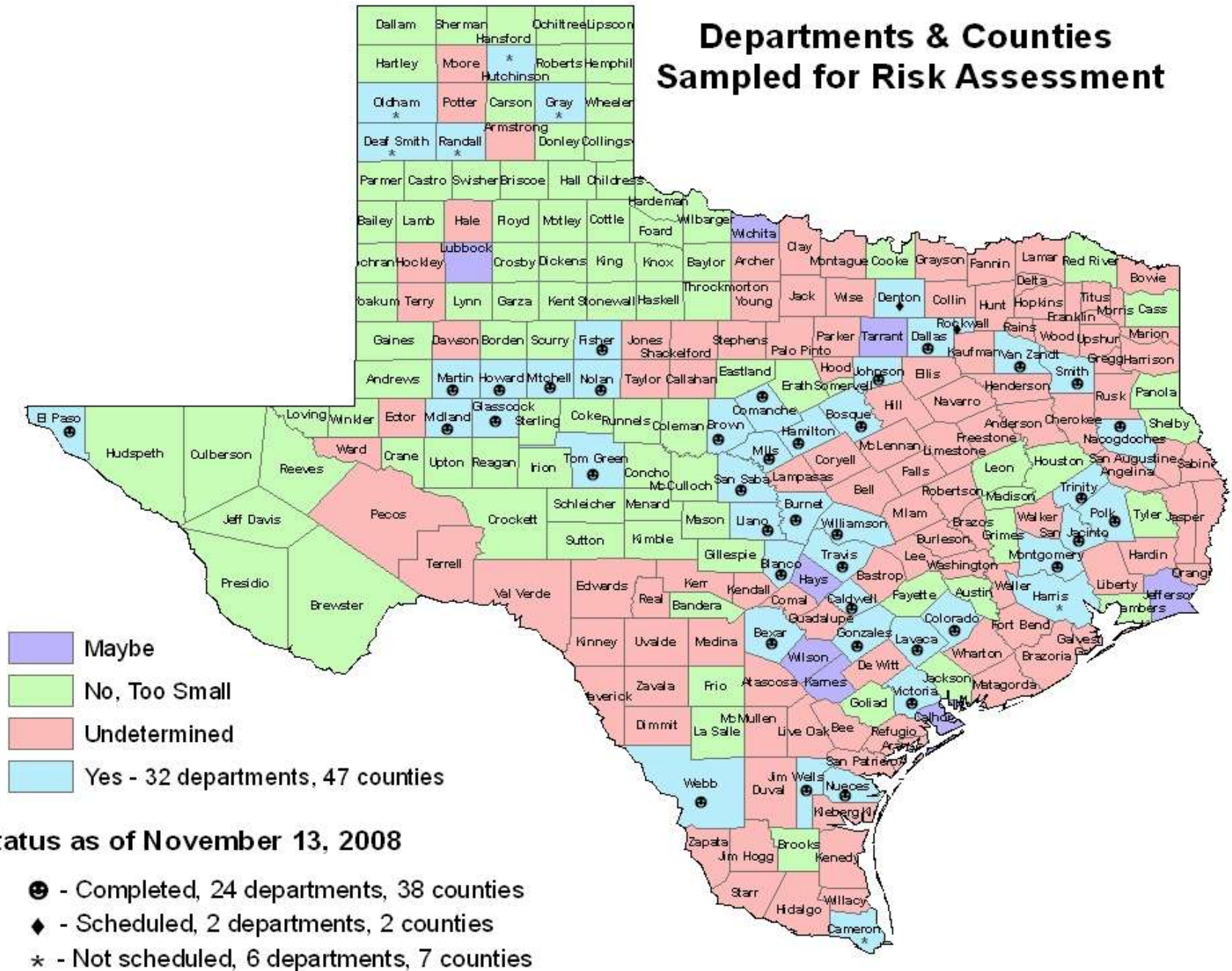- No referrals from out of state

In Depth Sample

- Same parameters as initial sample, but additional information collected from case folders

- Review of case folders provides more in depth information but limits size of sample

- Estimated size is approximately 2,900

Information from Case Folders

- School information
- Substance abuse
- Child abuse
- Mental health
- Family criminal, substance abuse, and mental health history
- Parental supervision
- Victim information
- Risk & protective factors

Departments & Counties Sampled for Risk Assessment

Legend:
- Maybe
- No, Too Small
- Undetermined
- Yes - 32 departments, 47 counties

Status as of November 13, 2008

- ☻ - Completed, 24 departments, 38 counties
- ♦ - Scheduled, 2 departments, 2 counties
- * - Not scheduled, 6 departments, 7 counties

Definition of Risk

- Number of subsequent referrals to a juvenile probation department
- Number of subsequent arrests as an adult
- Any subsequent referral or arrest for a violent felony offense
- Current violent felony offense

Developing the Assessment

- Measuring risk

- Collecting a representative sample

- Gathering data on specific factors that might be related to risk

Measuring Risk

- Examine the number and type of juvenile referrals/ arrests 3 years from date of 1st referral to juvenile probation in 2003

- Include arrests as a juvenile and adult

- Make allowance if juvenile sent to TYC or certified on 1st offense

Measuring Risk

- Arrests for violent felony offenses (murder, attempted murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault) weighted more

- Arrests for runaway, truancy, and class C misdemeanors weighted less

Representative Sample

- Minimum number of cases from small counties; sufficient number from large counties

- Sample initially divided into two risk levels

- Ensure sample adequately accounts for different risk levels and gender

- All regions of the state included

- Both urban and rural departments included

Collecting Data Related to Risk

- Most from electronic data submissions from local juvenile probation departments

- Adult arrest data from the Texas Department of Public Safety

- Some information from other state agencies

- In depth information from case folders

- Determine which factors best predict risk

Factors Analyzed

- Demographics
- Criminal history
- Current offense
- School
- Mental health & Substance abuse
- Family
- Risk & protective factors
- Treatment

Demographic/ Child Factors

- Age at current referral
- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Peer associations
- Aggressive behavior

Criminal History

- Prior referrals
- Severity of offenses
- Prior adjudications
- Prior detentions
- Age at first referral

Offense Factors

- Severity of offense (violent, property, felony, misdemeanor, etc)
- Gang related
- Weapon involved
- School related
- Victim (gender, age, relationship)

School

- Attendance
- Behind grade
- Special education
- At-risk of dropping out of school
- Suspended or expelled
- Disciplinary referrals
- Alternative education program

Mental Health & Substance Abuse

- Contact with public mental health system
- DSM diagnosis
- Suicide ideation and attempts
- Length of services from public mental health system
- Type of services from public mental health system
- MAYSI results
- Alcohol and drug use

Family Factors

- Sexual, physical, or emotional abuse
- Neglect
- Domestic violence
- Family juvenile lives with
- Family criminal history
- Family mental illness or substance abuse
- Deceased family members
- Supervision at home
- Economic status

Risk & Protective Factors

- Chaotic home environment
- Friends use drugs
- Trouble controlling temper
- Good relationship with parents
- Involved with extra curricular activities
- Passing classes at school

Treatment

- Prior department supervision
- Prior rehabilitation programs
- Prior residential placement
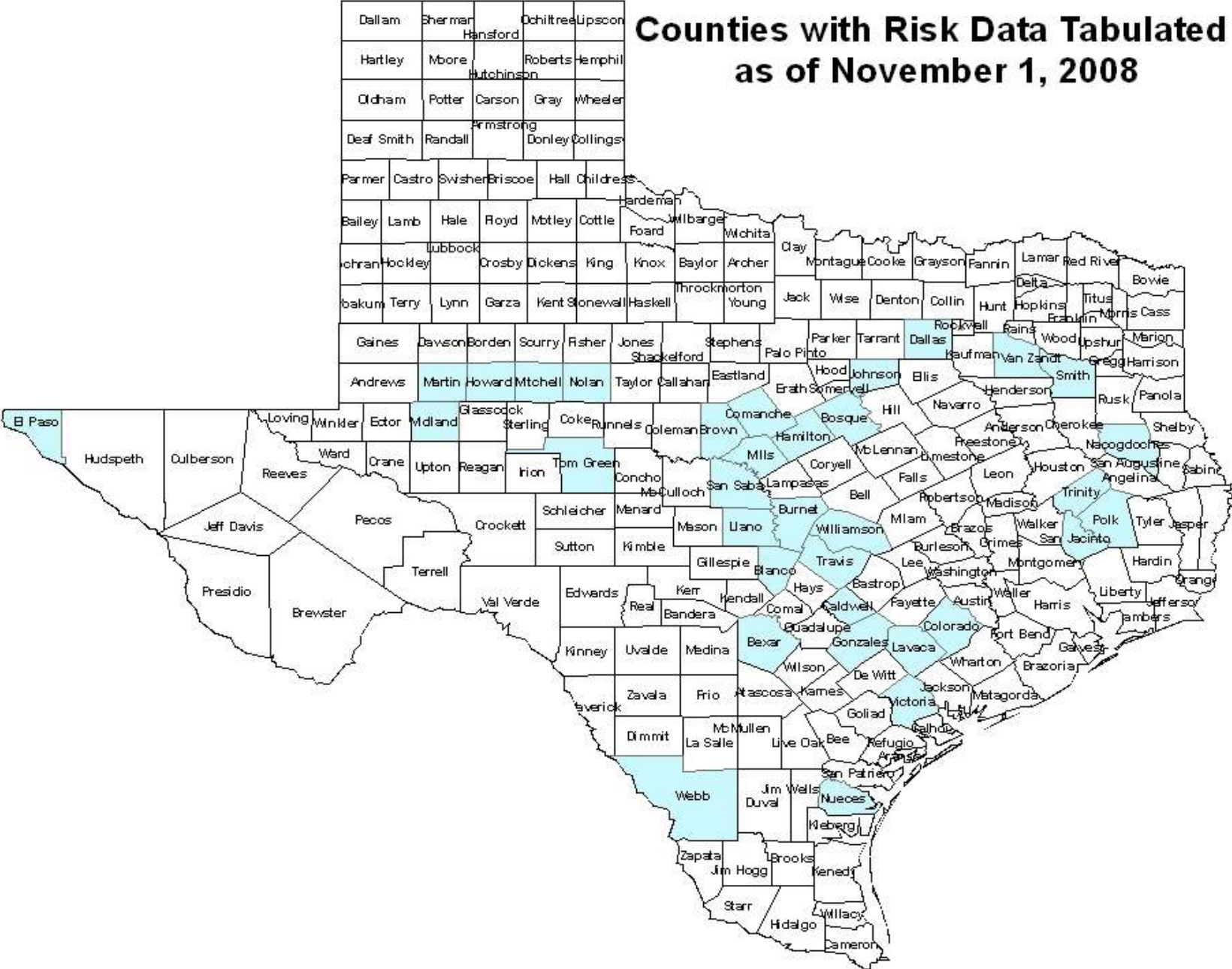
Intervening Variables

- Supervision after referral
- Treatment/ programming for offenses
- Residential placement for offenses
- Incarceration for initial or subsequent offenses
- Change in family status

What We Have Found

- Demographics
- Re-offense
- Criminal history
- Current offense
- School
- Mental health & substance abuse
- Families

Counties with Risk Data Tabulated as of November 1, 2008

Demographics

Age		Ethnicity		Gender	
10 years old	1%	African American	19%	Female	36%
11 years old	2%	Caucasian	33%	Male	64%
12 years old	7%	Hispanic	48%	Total	100%
13 years old	13%	Other	1%		
14 years old	20%	Total	100%		
15 years old	25%				
16 years old	30%				
17 years old	3%				
Total	100%				

Re-Offense

Number of Referrals/ Arrests w/n 3 years	Number	Percent
Zero	558	33%
One	336	20%
Two	236	14%
Three	198	12%
Four	126	7%
Five or more	246	14%
Total	1,700	100%

Violent Re-Offense

Number of Violent Felony Referrals/ Arrests w/n 3 years	Number	Percent
Zero	1,489	88%
One	172	10%
Two or more	39	2%
Total	1,700	100%

Committed to TYC

Committed to TYC w/n 3 years of referral	Number	Percent
No	1,525	90%
Yes	175	10%
Total	1,700	100%

Criminal History

Total Referrals at time of current referral	Number	Percent
One	976	57%
Two	331	19%
Three	141	8%
Four	69	4%
Five or more	183	11%
Total	1,700	100%

33

Criminal History

Total Adjudications at time of current referral	Number	Percent
Zero	1330	78%
One	230	14%
Two	99	6%
Three or more	41	2%
Total	1,700	100%

Current Offense

Current Offense	Number	Percent
Violent Felony	152	9%
Other Felony	327	19%
Class A or B Misd	861	51%
Violation of Probation	172	10%
CINS	188	11%
Total	1,700	100%

Disposition

Initial Disposition	Number	Percent
Dismissed	314	9%
Supervisory Caution	268	16%
Deferred Prosecution	489	29%
Probation	594	35%
Committed to TYC	33	2%
Certified as an Adult	2	0%
Total	1,700	100%

School

- 36% of juveniles were chronically truant or not attending school
- 40% had previously been suspended or expelled
- 35% had previously failed a grade
- 29% were currently or previously in a DAEP or JJAEP
- 21% were identified as special education

Mental Health & Substance Abuse

- 39% had suspected or confirmed mental health needs
- 26% of those with suspected or confirmed mental health needs had a diagnosis of depression or bipolar disorder
- 15% had suicidal ideations; 5% had attempted suicide
- 16% used alcohol frequently
- 33% used illegal drugs frequently

Families

- 23% of records indicated reports of child abuse or neglect
- 39% of juveniles lived with both parents
- 24% of records indicated the parent had no control of the juvenile
- 37% of households received federal financial assistance

Families

- 39% came from households where the mother, father, or caregiver had a criminal record

- 20% had siblings with a criminal record

- 28% came from households where the mother, father, or caregiver had substance abuse

- 7% had siblings with substance abuse

- 8% came from households where the mother, father, or a sibling was deceased

Where We Are Going

- Visit more counties

- Reconcile data from different sources

- Make certain instrument only uses those factors that predict risk

- Conduct regression analysis

- Determine cut off scores for risk levels

Where We Are Going

- Logistic regression to predict which variables matter while controlling for the effect of other variables

- Utilize cluster analysis to determine appropriate score for high, medium, and low risk

- Correlation analysis to measure strength of each factor to recidivism

- Factor analysis to determine if any factors are duplicative

Where We Are Going

- Account for intervening variables such as programs and supervision

- Ensure no race/ gender discrimination

- Pilot the instrument in a few departments

- Create electronic version

- Implement the instrument for all departments in the state that want to use it

Challenges of Sample

- Availability of data at or before 2003
- Difficulty retrieving archived data from other agencies
- Possibility of intervening variables, including treatment and supervision
- Possibility of major changes in juvenile's living situation, peers, and traumatic events over three years

For More Information

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