

Preventing Juveniles from a Life of Crime

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`Who are YOU?' said the Caterpillar.

This was not an encouraging opening for a conversation. Alice replied, rather shyly, `I--I hardly know, sir, just at present-- at least I know who I WAS when I got up this morning, but I think I must have been changed several times since then.'

`What do you mean by that?' said the Caterpillar sternly. `Explain yourself!'

`I can't explain MYSELF, I'm afraid, sir' said Alice, `because I'm not myself, you see.'

`I don't see,' said the Caterpillar.

`I'm afraid I can't put it more clearly,' Alice replied very politely, `for I can't understand it myself to begin with; and being so many different sizes in a day is very confusing.'



“I am tomorrow, or some future day, what I establish today.
I am today what I established yesterday or some previous
day” – James Joyce



The Glimmer Twins...



Background Issues

- Long interest in charting the life course of criminal activity.
 - Kobner (1893): “correct statistics of offenders can be developed only by a study of the total life history of individuals.”
 - Von Mayr (1917): “deeper insight into the statistics of criminality is made possible by the disclosure of developmental regularities in which criminality develops in the course of a human lifetime.”

Longitudinal Patterning of Crime Over the Life Course

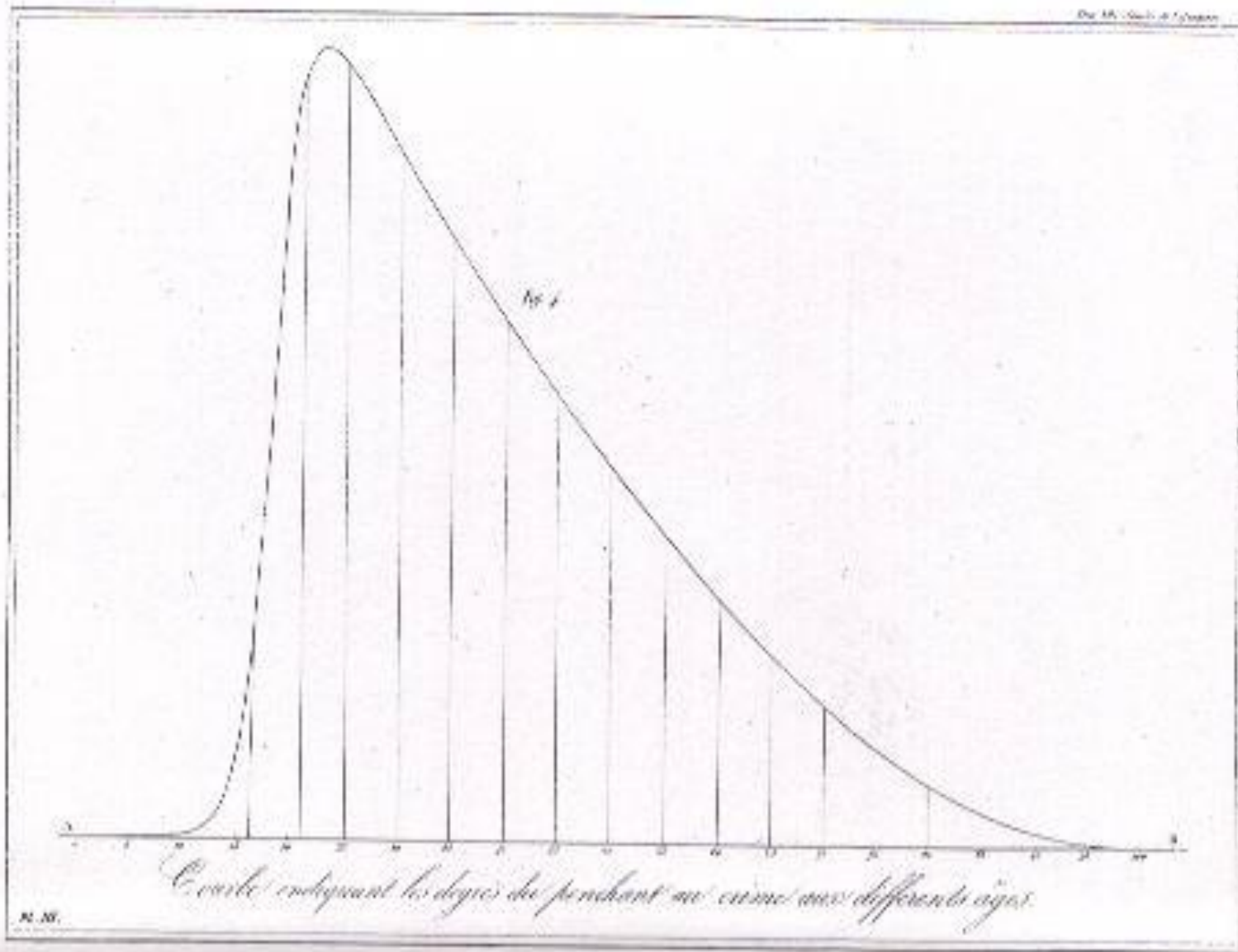
- Researchers have relied on longitudinal studies that follow individuals for lengthy periods of time.
- Allows for the study of continuity & change in offending over the life course.
- Necessary for making proper inferences about individual trajectories of stability and change and how life events alter crime trajectories.
- Offer the promise of increased knowledge about criminals and their crimes.

Findings from longitudinal studies show that...

- Misbehavior starts early in life.
- Careers are marked by intermittency.
- Correlates of onset, persistence, desistance may vary.
- New methodological techniques, such as the trajectory method, have allowed for unique insights into crime over the life course.

Age & Crime

- Very contentious issue
- Few deny its existence
- Most disagree about why it looks the way it does
- Brings up several issues
 - Past behavior is best predictor of future behavior.
 - Continuity...but change also.



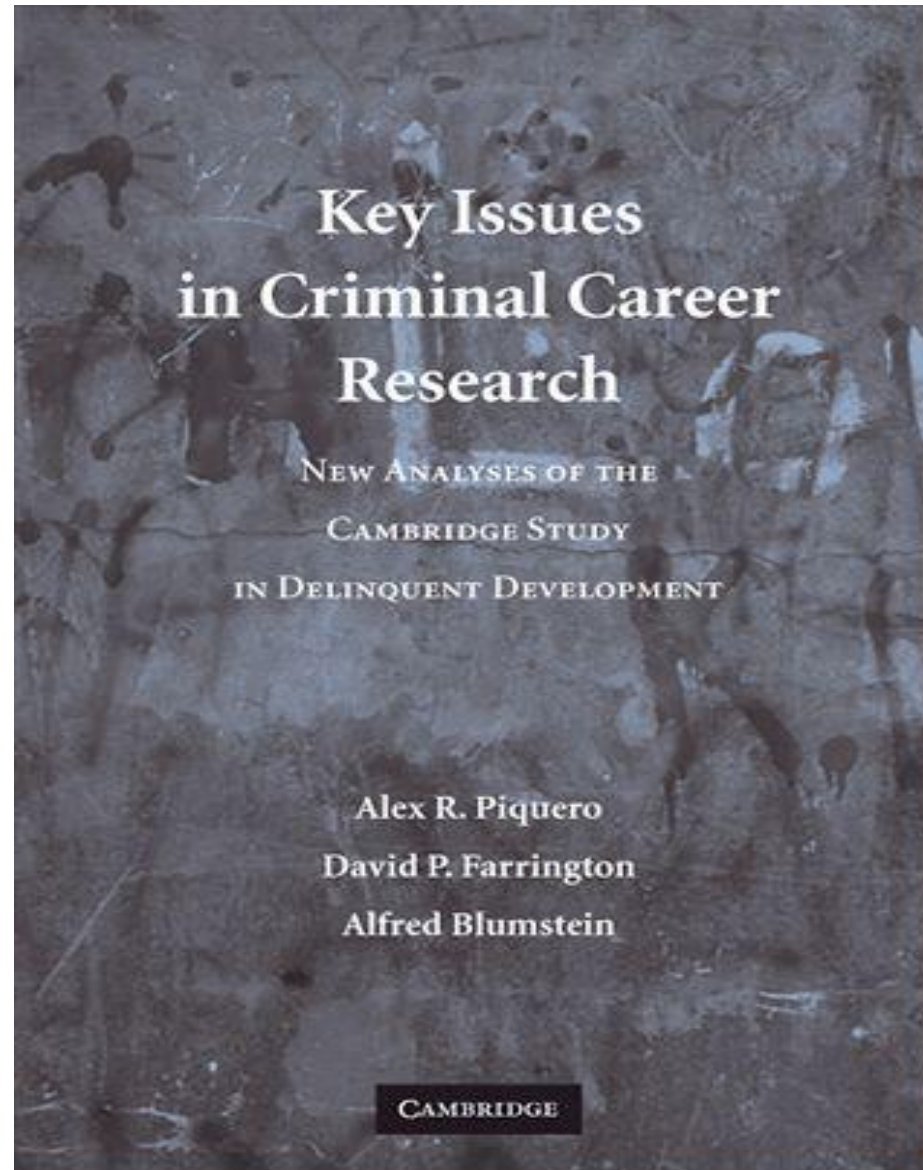
Developmental/Life-Course Criminology

- The development of offending and antisocial behavior
 - Researchers have found that involvement and change in crime is common in adolescence and early adulthood, but few studies to late adulthood.
- Risk factors at different ages
 - Individual and environmental risk factors have different effects in different life-course stages.
- Effects of life events on the course of development
 - Marriage and employment can reduce crime and foster desistance, while other events such as incarceration can encourage more crime and reduce the chances of legitimate employment.

Criminal Career Facts

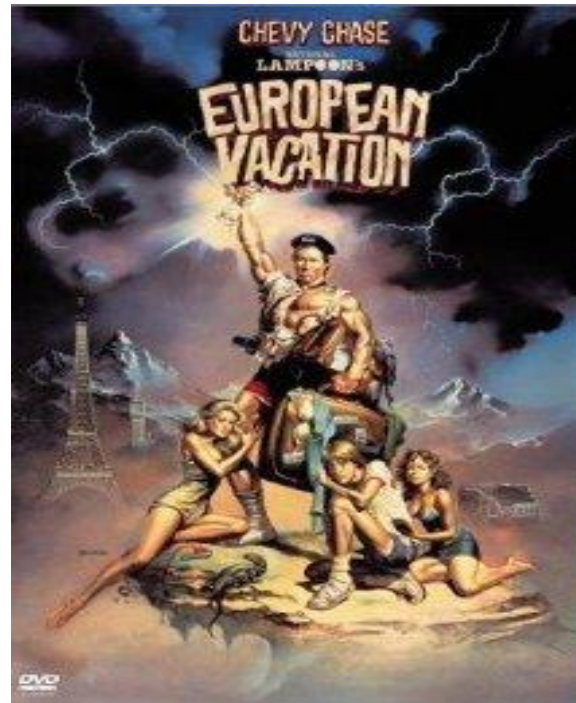
- Age of onset is typically between ages 8-14.
- Age of desistance is typically between 20-29; a few offenders continue well into adulthood.
- Prevalence peaks between ages 15-19.
- Early onset predicts a relatively long criminal career duration and the commission of more offenses.
- Continuity in offending and antisocial behavior from childhood to teenage years and to adulthood.
- A few people commit a large fraction of all crimes; chronic offenders tend to have an early onset, a high individual offending frequency, and a long criminal career.

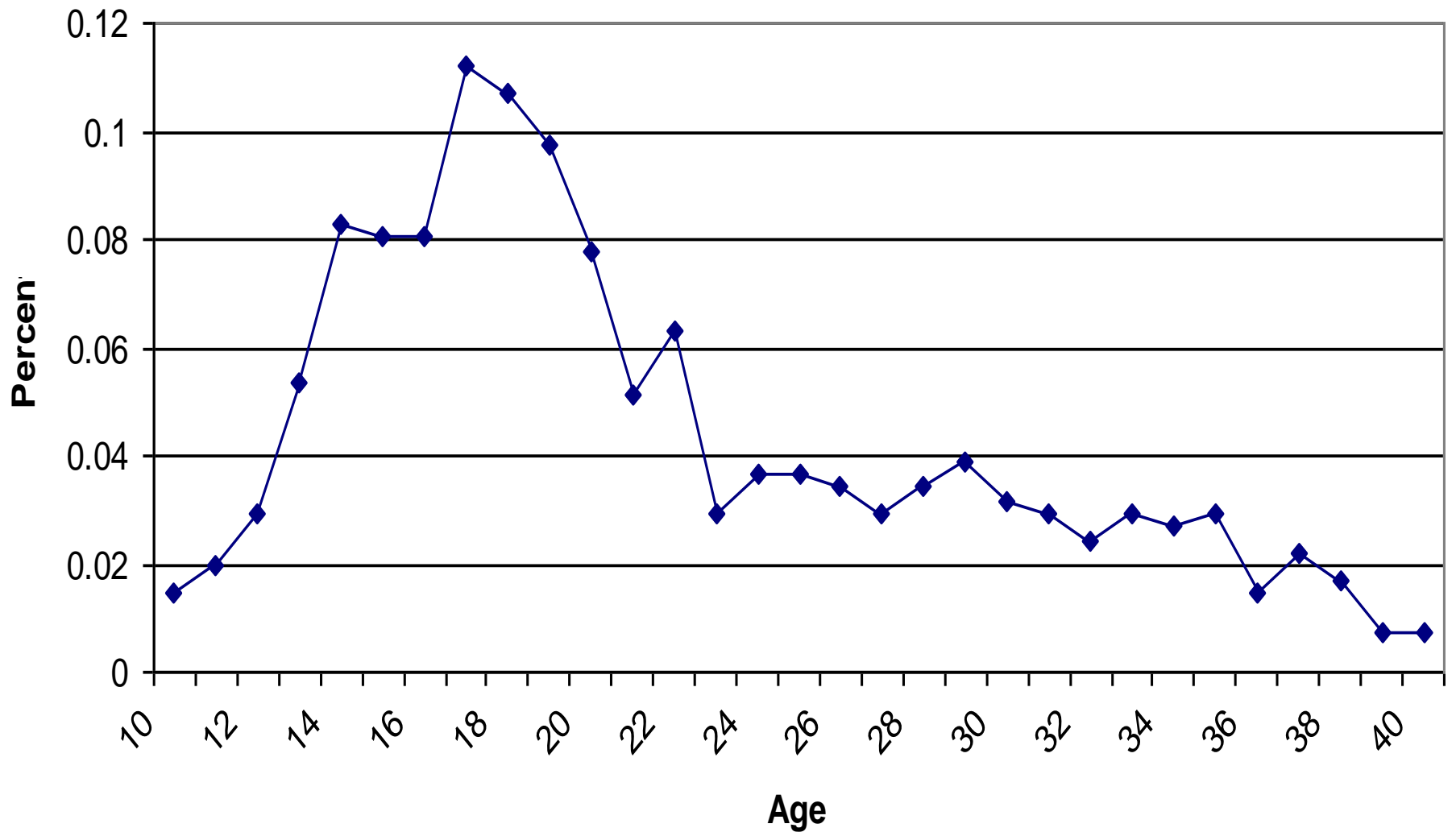
- Offending is more versatile than specialized.
- Offending is part of a larger syndrome of antisocial behavior that includes heavy drinking, reckless driving, and promiscuous sex.
- Most crime to late teens are committed with others; crimes after age 20 are committed alone.
- Reasons for offending up to late teens include excitement/enjoyment and boredom, while from age 20+, utilitarian motives become dominant.
- Different types of offenses tend to be first committed at distinctively different ages.
- Diversification increases up to age 20, but after age 20, specialization increases.

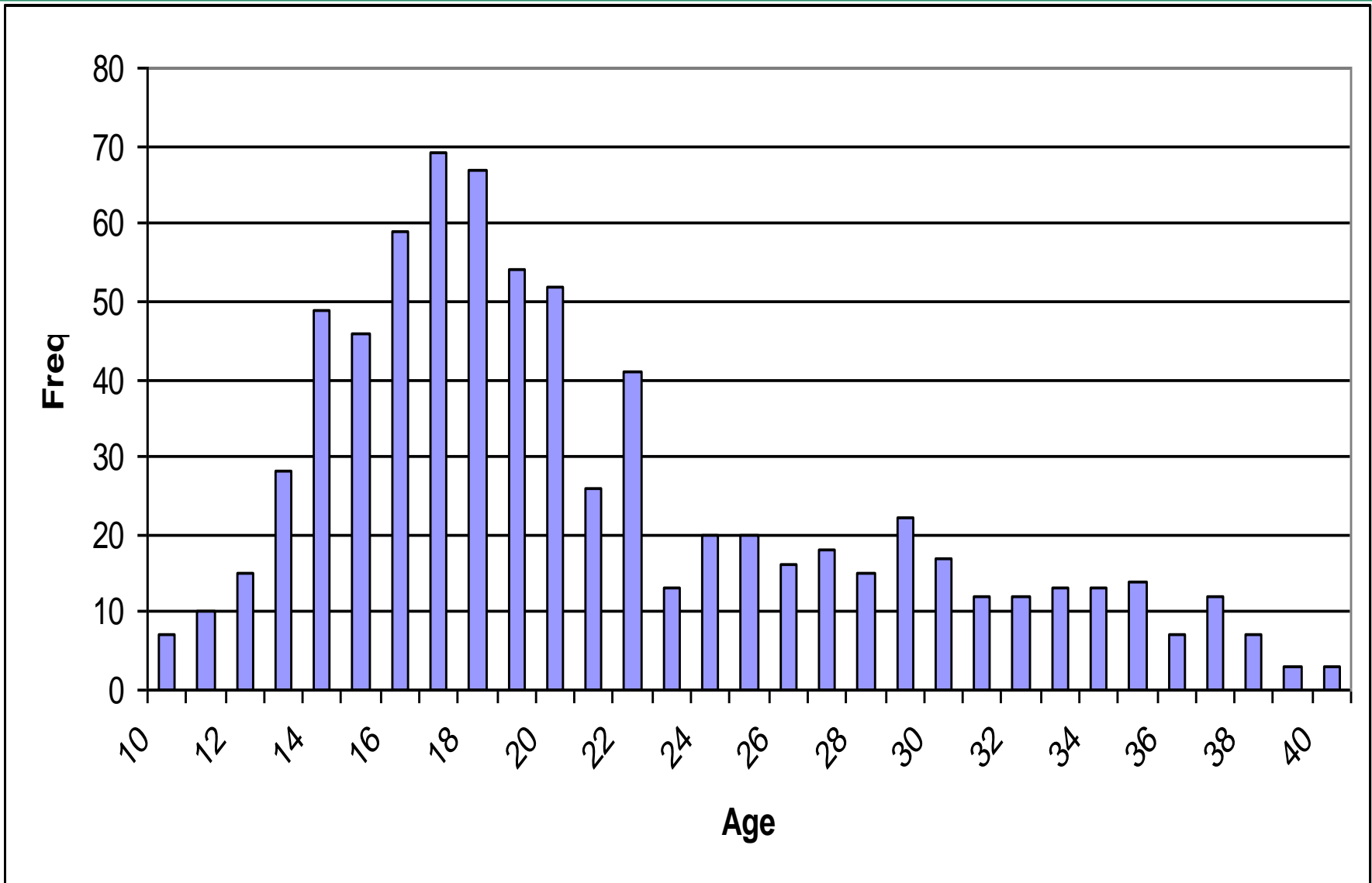


Cambridge Study in Delinquent Development (CSDD)

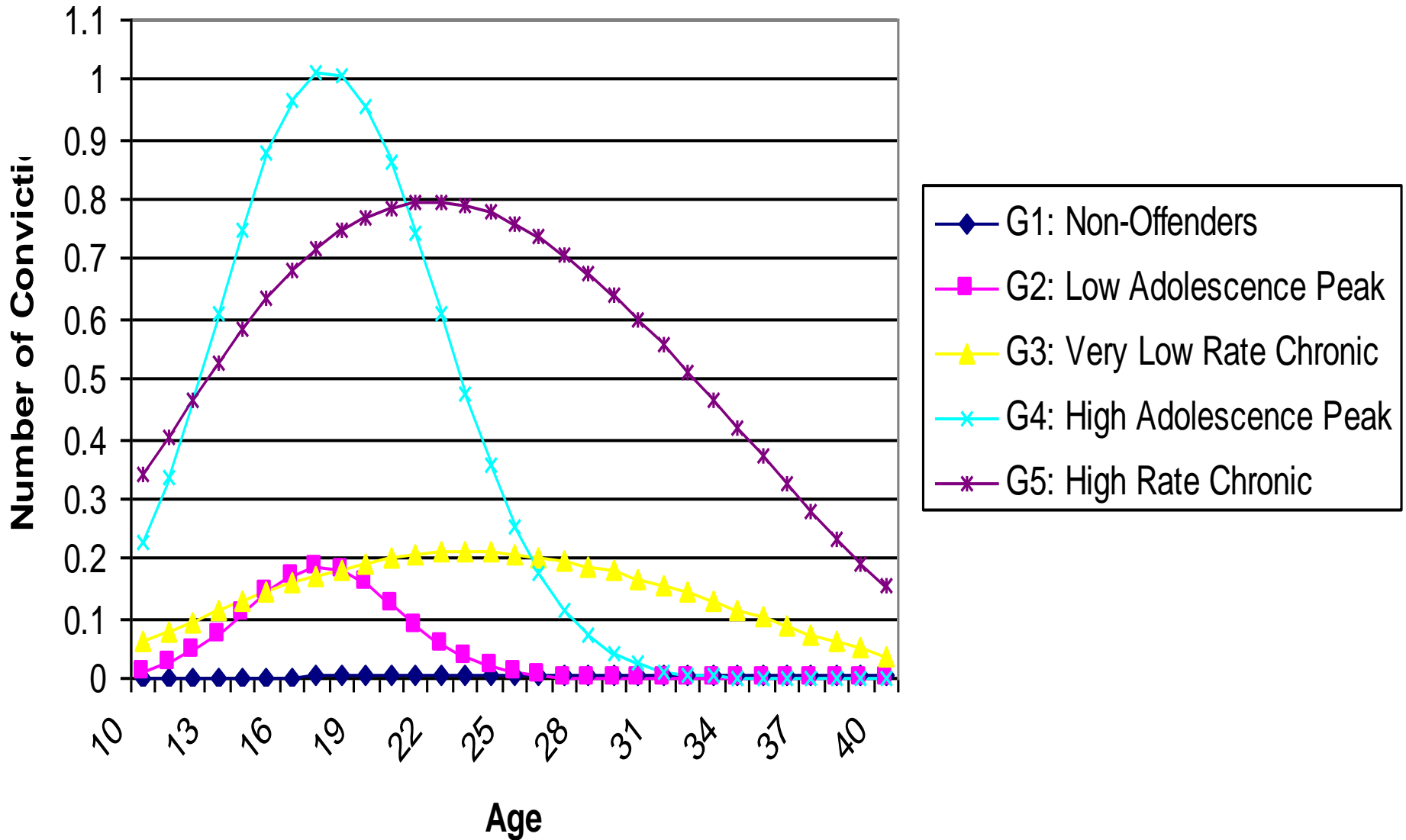
- Prospective longitudinal survey of the development of offending and antisocial behavior.
- 411 South London boys, mostly white, working-class, born in 1953.
- Conviction records searched and coded, ages 10-40, and now age-56.



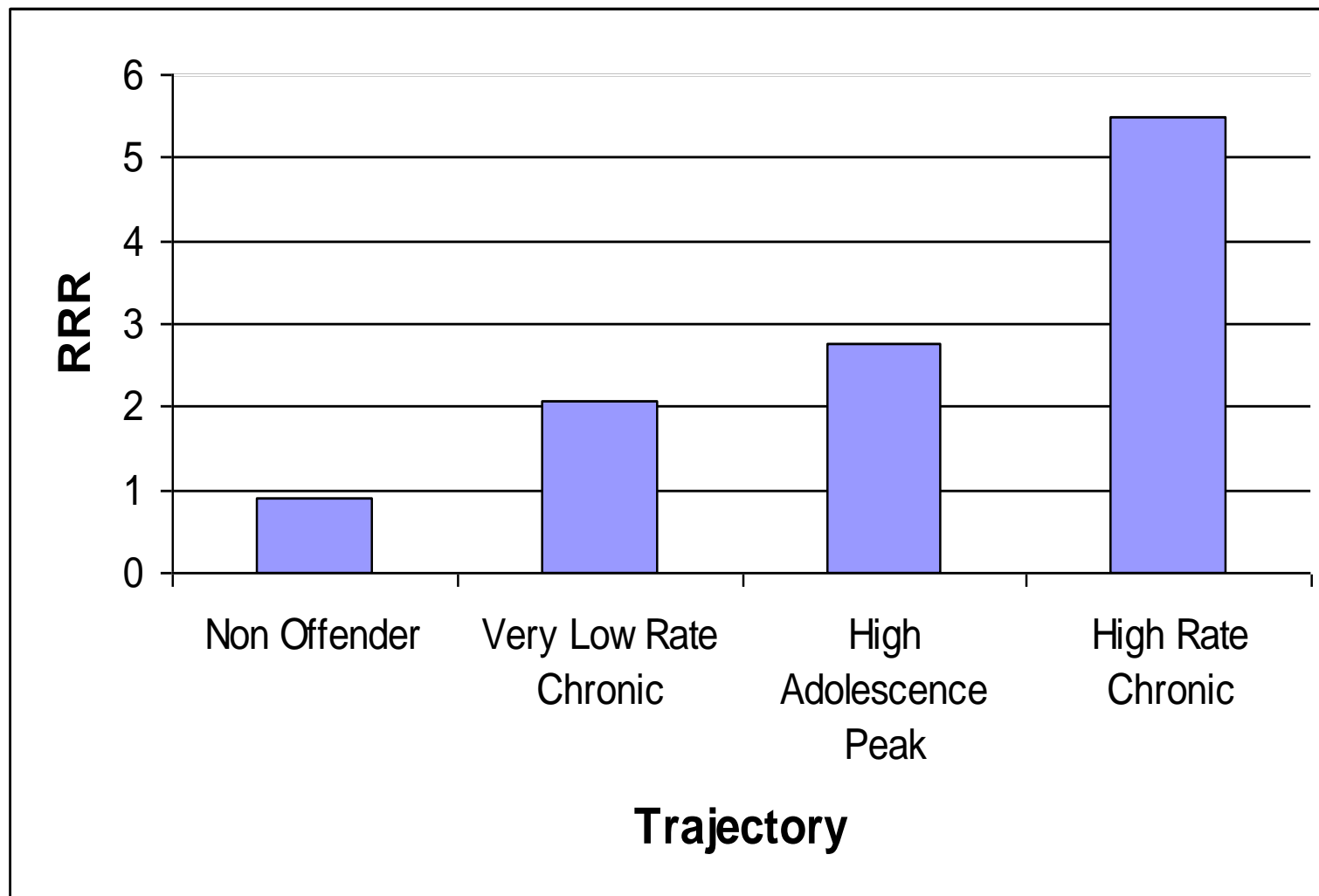




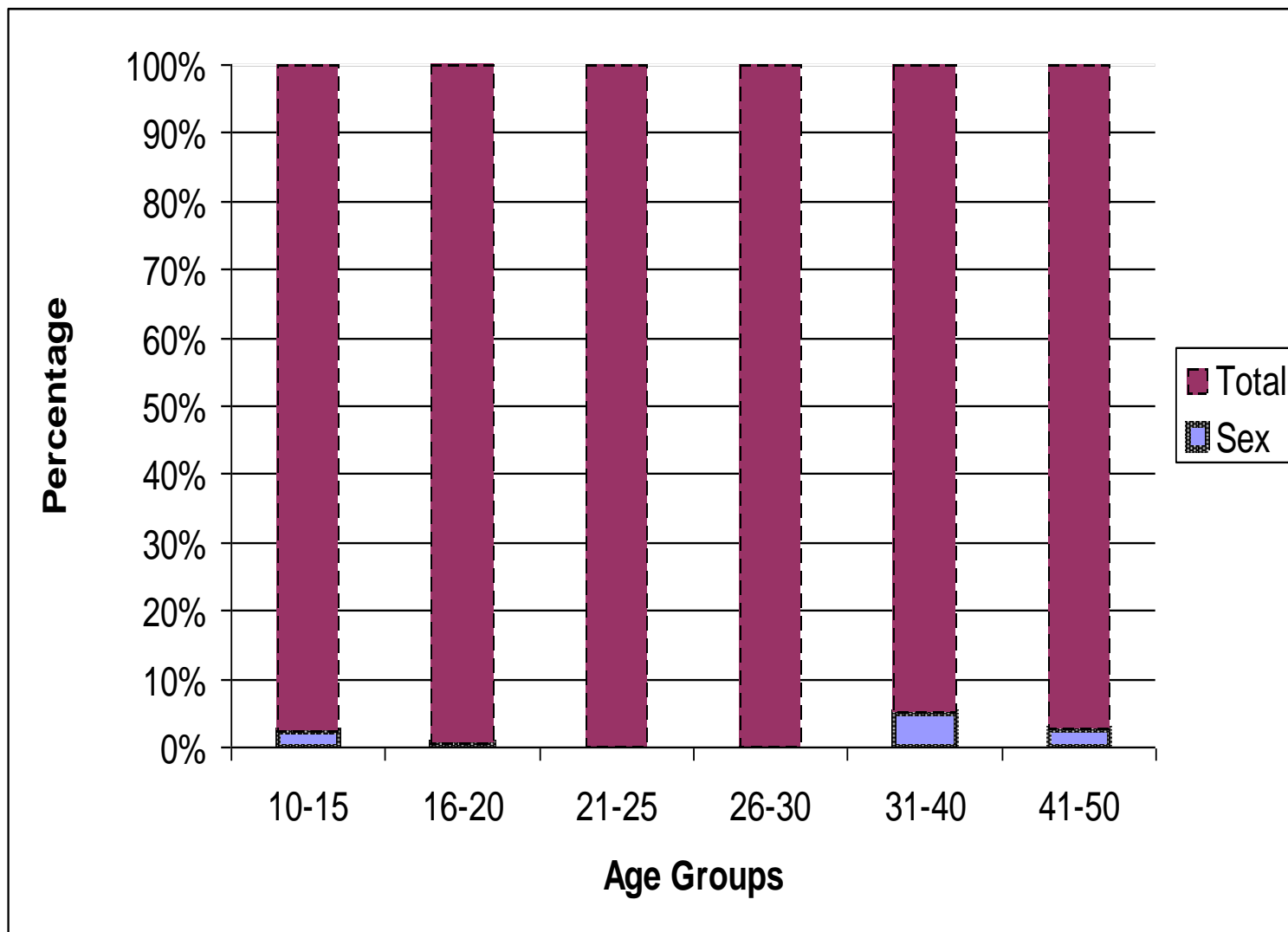




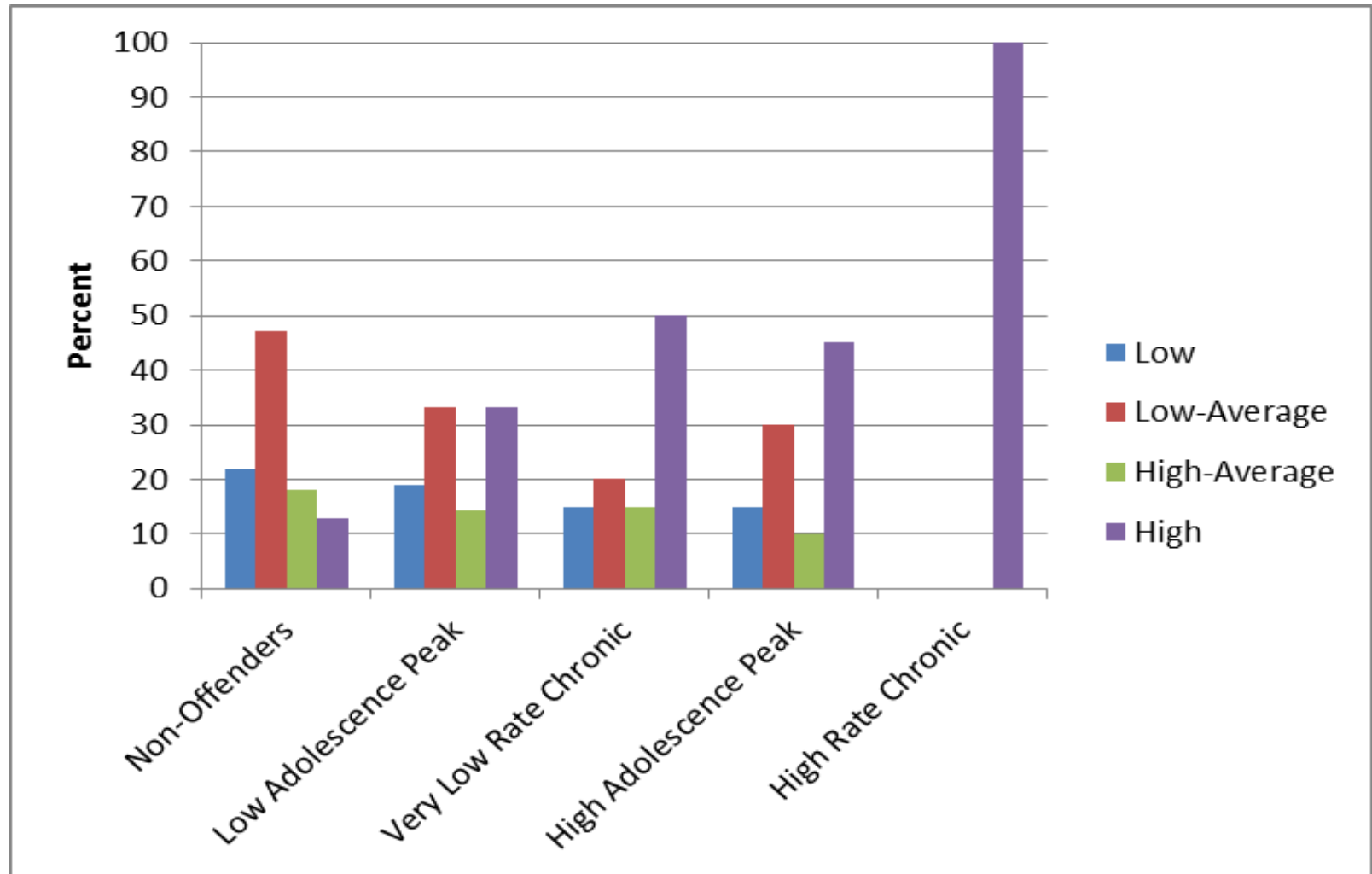
Bullying Age-14 & Offending Age-40

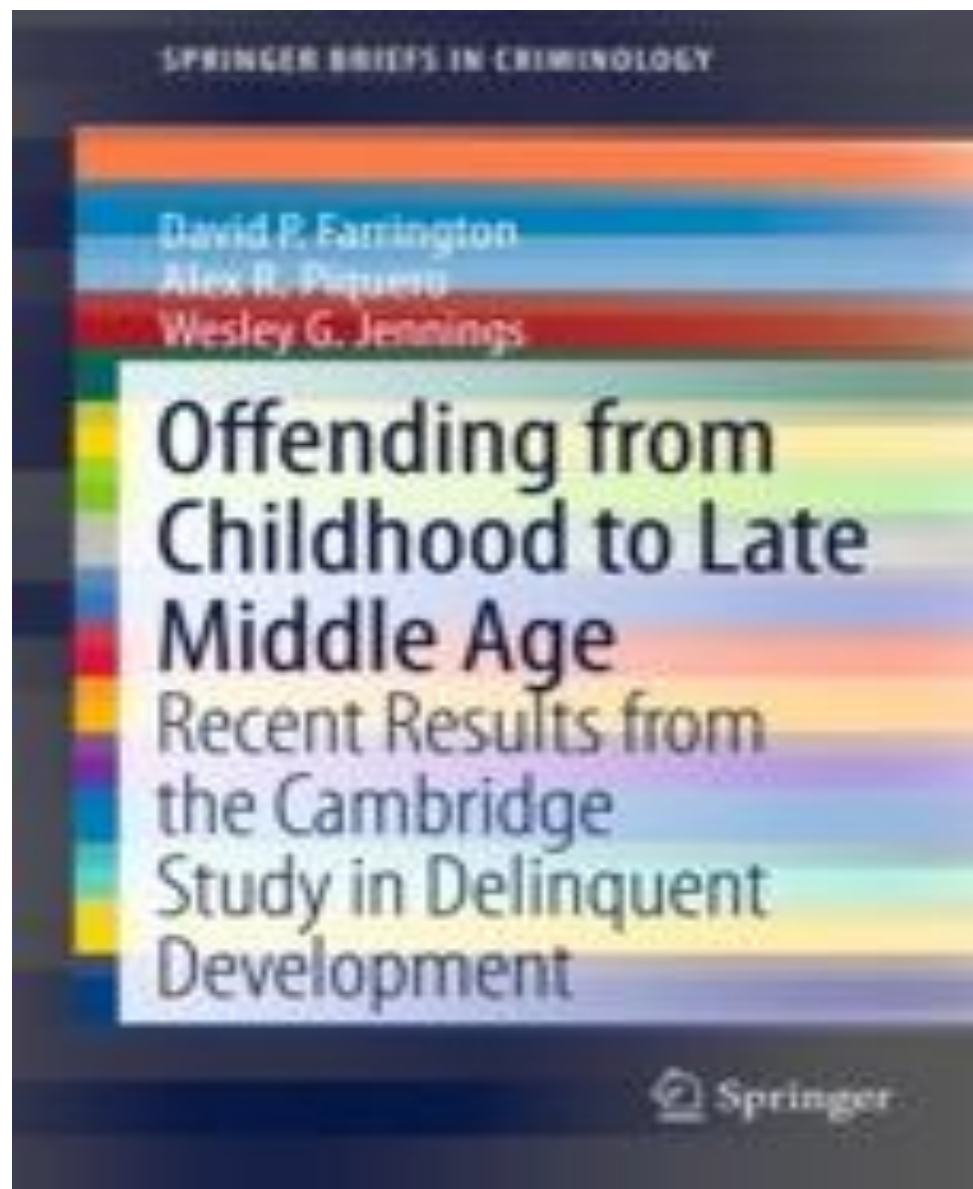


Sex Offenders & Offending



Teacher-rated aggression-14 & age-40 trajectories

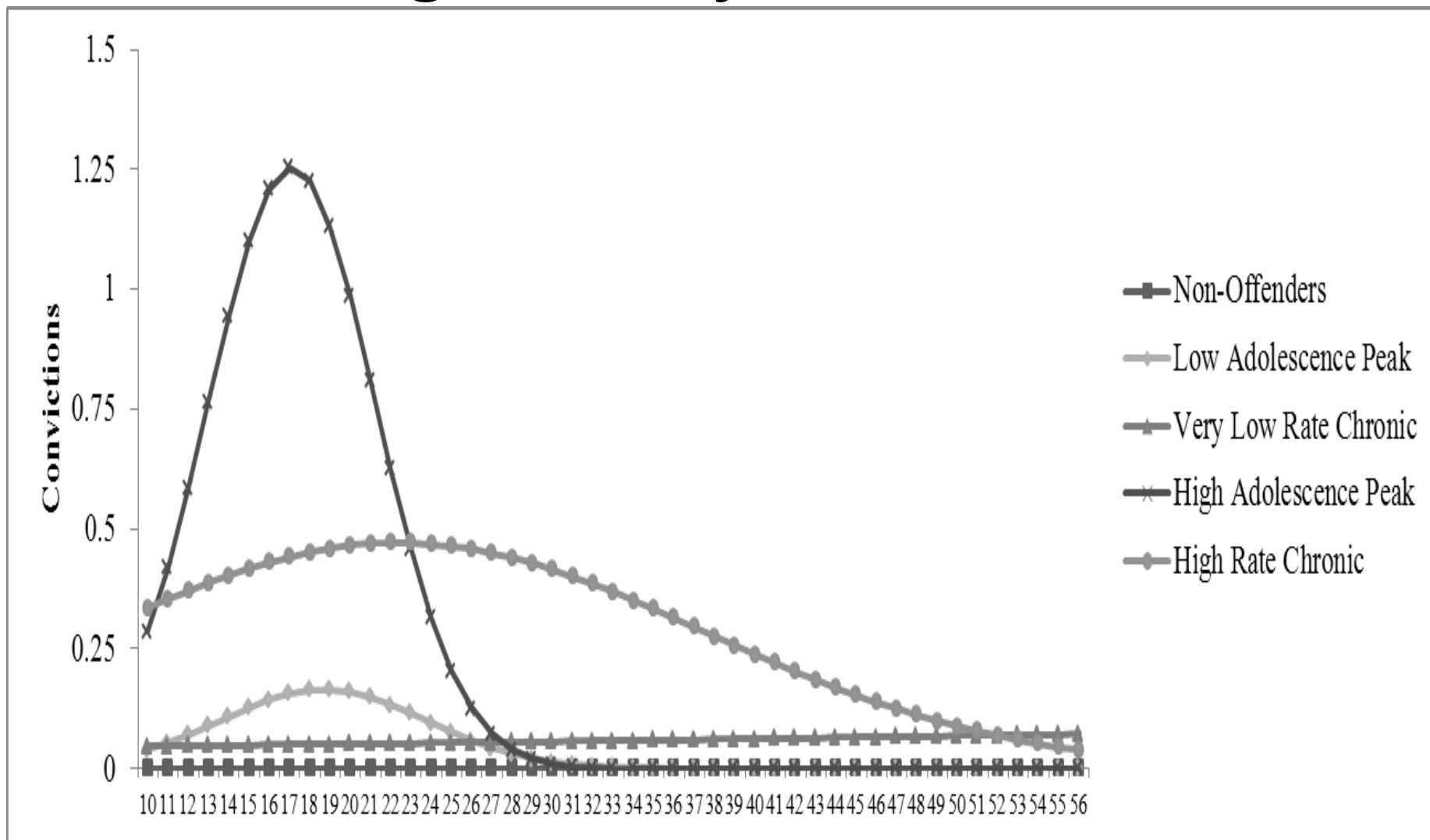




Main Findings To Age-56

- 42% convicted.
- Average 10-year career.
- 7% accounted for half of all convictions.
- 93% self-reported committing an offense in four age ranges.
- Average of 39 self-reported offenses per conviction.
- Trajectory analyses indicated that 5 groups best characterized the criminal careers, with 2 groups, high adolescence peak and high rate chronic, exhibiting the most offending.
- Offending trajectories were predicted by individual and environmental childhood risk factors, with the most chronic offenders (to age 56) having the most extreme scores on childhood risk.

Age-56 Trajectories

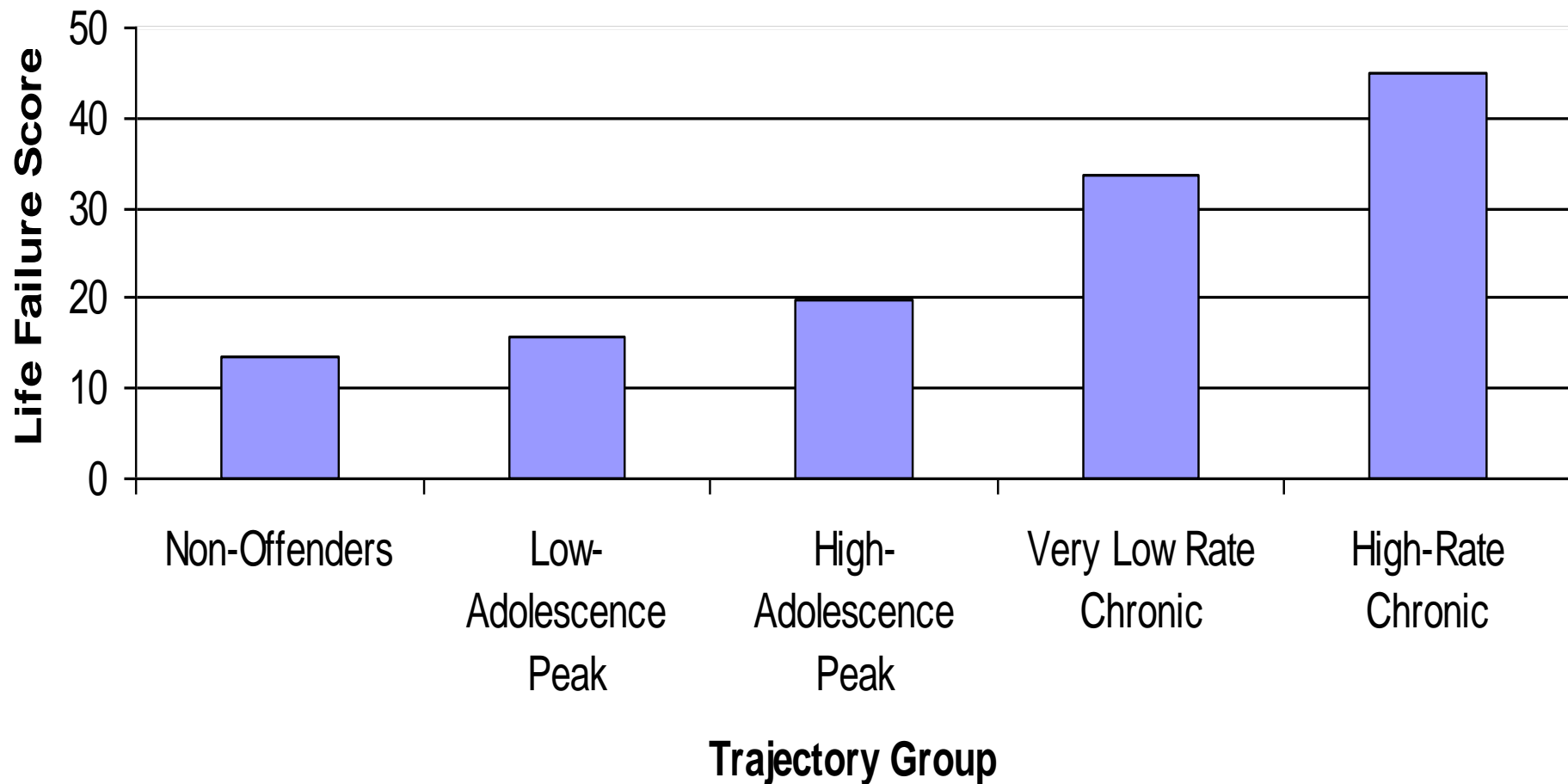


How Do Trajectories Relate to Life Success?

- Life Success measure (age-48 interview):
 - (1) satisfactory accommodation history
 - (2) satisfactory cohabitation history
 - (3) satisfactory employment history
 - (4) not involved in fights in last five years
 - (5) no substance use in last five years
 - (6) no self-reported offenses in last five years
 - (7) satisfactory mental health (score four or less on the General Health Questionnaire)
 - (8) no convictions in last five years

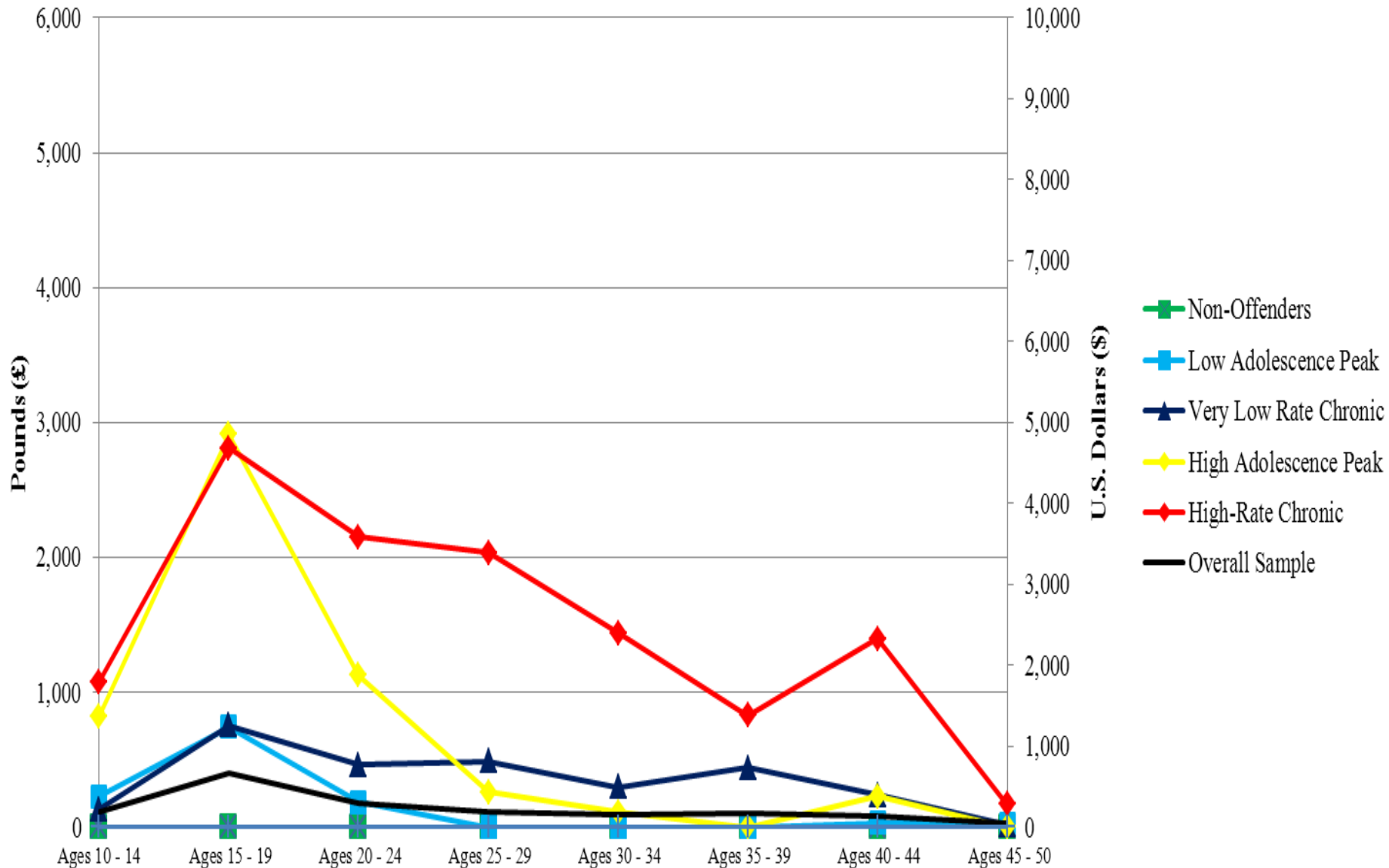
- Each man was scored according to the percentage of the criteria listed on which he was considered unsuccessful, with higher scores indicating worse life success, or unsuccessful lives.
- 42 males were living unsuccessful lives (defined as the top 10-12% on unsuccessful life).
- The vast majority of men were considered to be living successful lives.

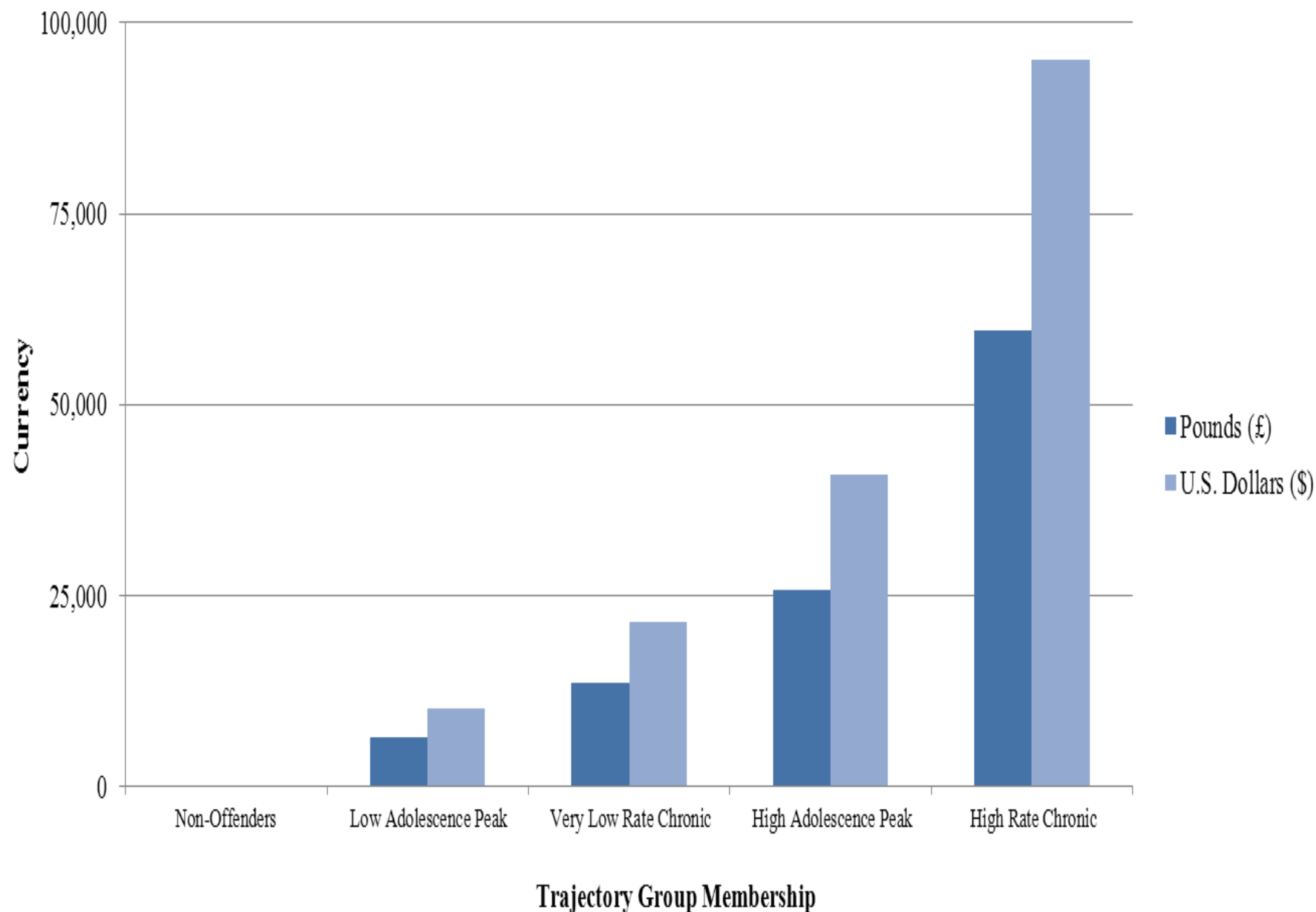
Life Failure Age 48



How Much Does Crime Cost?

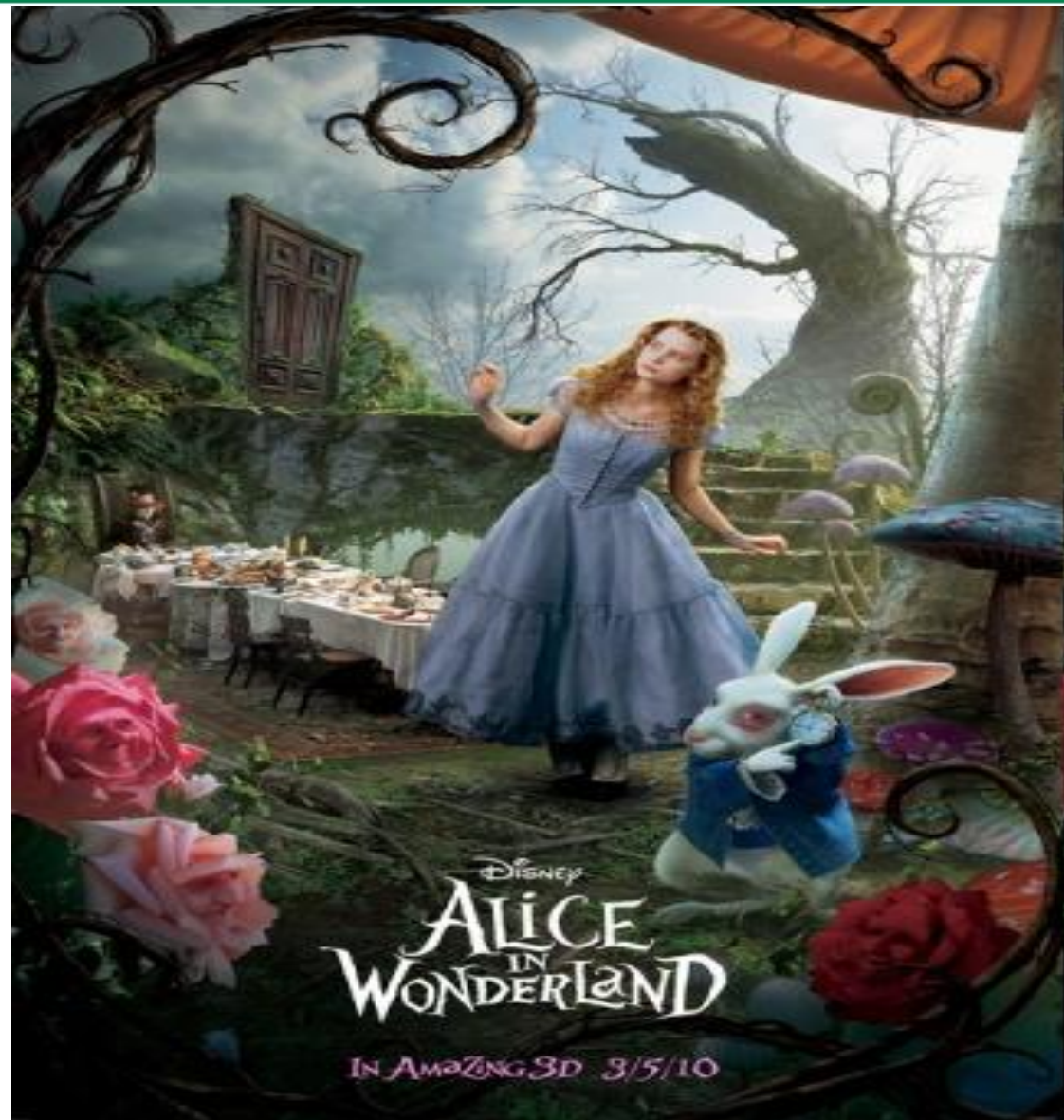
- Derive costs-of-crime estimates from childhood to middle adulthood.
- Offending incurs a considerable amount of economic and social costs and these costs are differentially distributed across trajectories.
- The costs of high rate chronic offending is nearly two and a half to ten times greater than the costs of high adolescence peaked offending, very low rate chronic offending, and low adolescence peaked offending, respectively.
- A high rate chronic offender, on average, exerts a crime tax of £1,494 (\$2,381) per U.K. citizen.





Implications

- Because some trajectory groups impose higher costs in their juvenile years whereas others impose higher costs in their adult years, policies that target particular (high-rate chronic) trajectory groups as opposed to all at-risk youth have the potential to provide significantly greater benefits at lower costs.
- Allocation of prevention/intervention efforts should be targeted differentially across the offender population, with those individuals exhibiting early, frequent, and chronic offending deserving the most attention.



Policy I: Early Family/Parent Training Programs

- Focused on antisocial behavior & delinquency.
- Early antisocial behavior is a key risk factor for continued delinquency and crime throughout the life course.
- Early family/parent training (EFPT) has been advanced as an important prevention effort.
- Relevance of EFPT to the prevention of crime has been suggested in developmentally-based criminological and psychological literatures.

2 Types of EFPT

- 1. Home visitation, with/without additional services.
 - Work with at-risk mothers to improve their prenatal health status, reduce birth complications, and provide guidance and support in caring for the infant and improving the quality of their own lives.
- 2. Combine parent training, daycare, and preschool for parents with preschool children.
 - Advance cognitive and social development of the children, as well as the parenting skills of their caregivers, so that participants will be better prepared and more successful when they enter regular school.

Why EFPT May Reduce Behavior Problems & Have Non-Crime Benefits

- Quality of parent-child relations facilitates learning of control over impulsive, oppositional, and aggressive behavior, thus reducing disruptive behavior and its long-term negative impact on social integration.
- Attempt to change the social contingencies in the family context and provide guidance to parents on raising their children or general parent education.

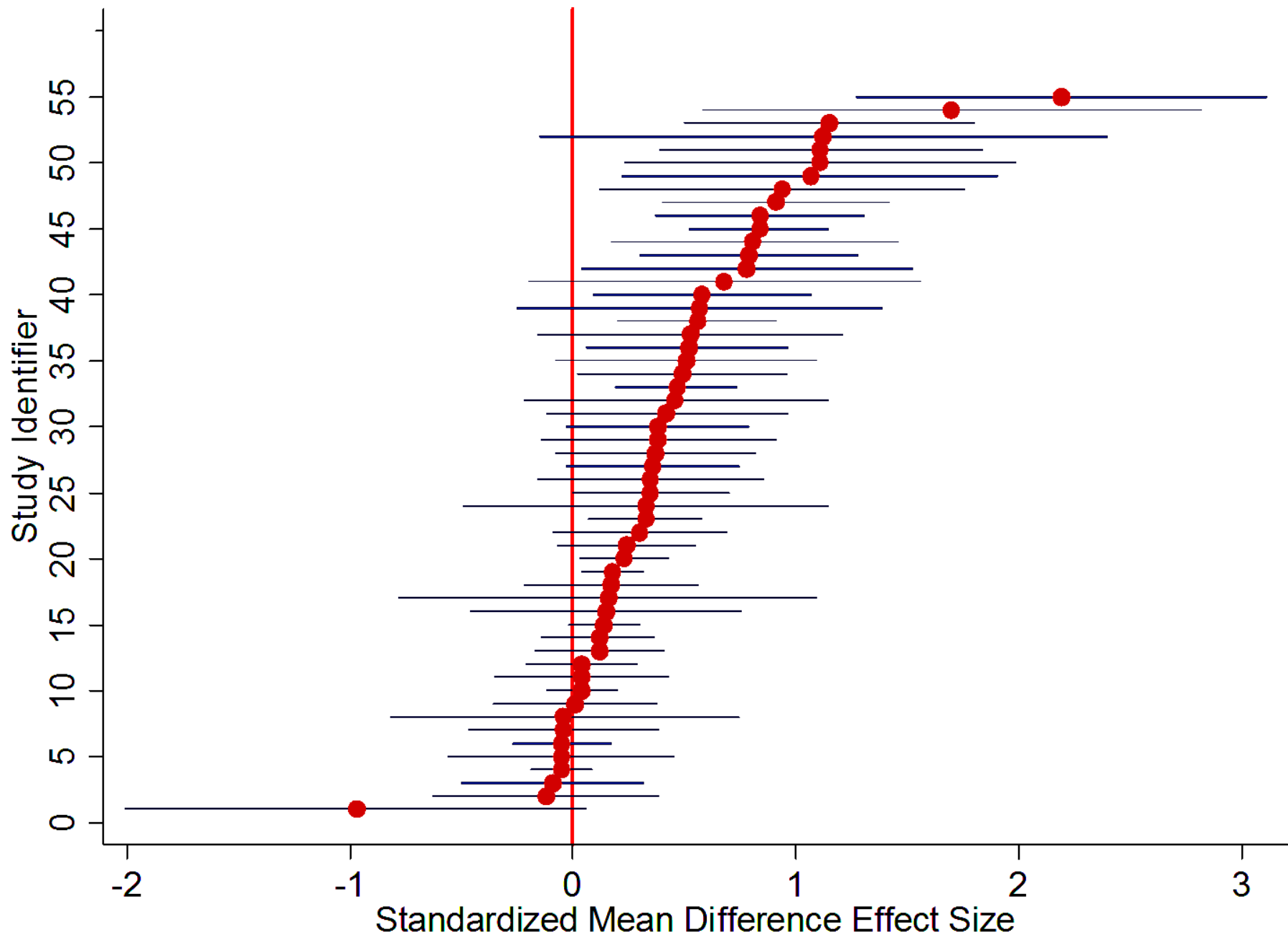
Policy Relevance

- Growth in the use of EFPT in many Western nations as a method of crime prevention.
- Province of Quebec has taken on family prevention as a key social policy.
- Expansion to Dublin and Paris.
- Our own research finds that the public believes in prevention efforts (such as early-child/nurse-home intervention programs), and funding such efforts at an increase to taxes.

- Piquero et al. (2009, *Journal of Experimental Criminology*); meta-analysis of EFPT programs.
- Focused on effectiveness of EFPT programs implemented in early childhood for reducing child behavior (antisocial) problems.
- Investigated the settings and conditions that make it most effective.
- Focused on programs through age 5 (of the child) in preventing child behavior problems.
- Example programs: Head Start, Perry Preschool, Triple P Parenting.
- Exhaustive search, ultimately 55 eligible studies.

Main Findings

- EFPT is an effective intervention for reducing antisocial problems and delinquency.
- EFPT is effective in reducing delinquency and crime in later adolescence and adulthood.
- EFPT effect is robust across various weighting procedures, and across context, time period, sample size, outcome source, and based on both published and unpublished data.



Policy II. Self-Control Modification

- Gottfredson & Hirschi's general theory of crime is one of criminology's most tested theories.
- Focus on self-control, or the inability to delay gratification.
- Little research has been paid to the malleability of self-control.
- Different views on whether self-control is malleable.
- G&H believe self control is malleable for the first decade of life, but likely unresponsive to external intervention after this point.



- Piquero et al. (2010, Justice Quarterly); investigated the effects of self-control improvement programs on childhood behavior were included in the meta-analyses.
- Two questions are investigated:
 - 1. What are the effects of self control improvement programs up to age 10 for improving self-control among children/adolescents?
 - 2. What are the effects of self-control improvement programs on delinquency?

- Most were group- (67.6%) or school-based (79.4%) interventions.
- Most were characterized as social skills development programs (32.4%), while others focused on cognitive coping strategies (26.5%), video tape training/role playing (20.6%), immediate/delayed rewards clinical interventions (11.8%), and relaxation training (8.8%).
- Many different types of programs but all focus on improving self-control/self-regulation. As one example:
 - Reid and Borkowski's (1987) versions of cognitive coping strategies focuses on using psychoeducational tasks where an instructor verbalizes correct self-control statements ("find out what I am supposed to do," "consider all answers," "stop and think," "mark my answer," and "check my answer") while performing various tasks, and then has the child repeat these steps and verbalize these statements while performing similar tasks.

Findings

- Exhaustive search procedure went from over 5,000 hits to 247 potentially relevant studies, to 43 eligible studies for self-control and 28 eligible studies for delinquency.
- Figure 1- Standardized Mean Difference Effect Sizes for Effects on Self Control.
- Figure 2- Standardized Mean Difference Effect Sizes for Effects on Delinquency.

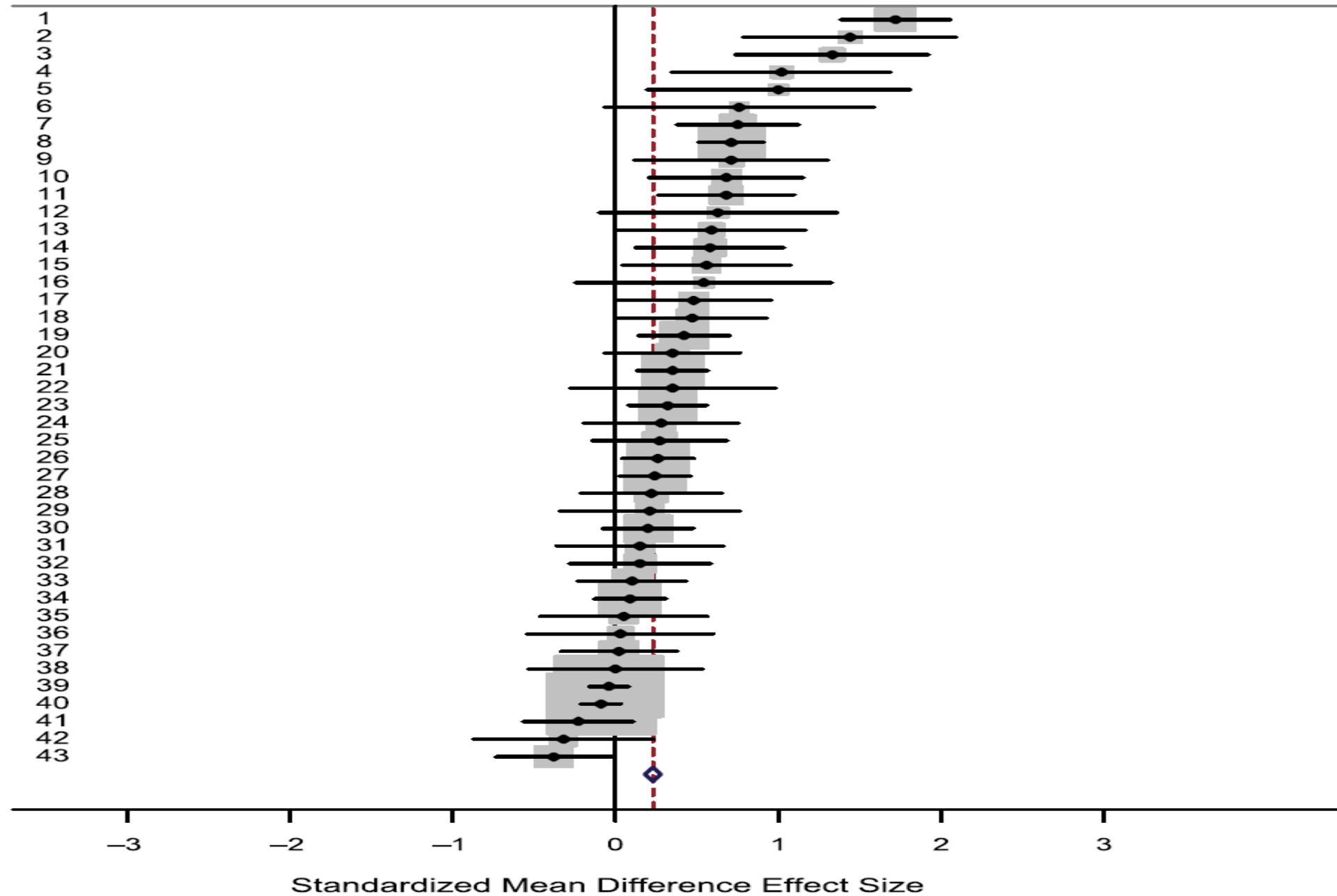
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Standardized Mean Difference Effect Size

Figure 1 Forest plot of the distribution of total number of self-control effect sizes.



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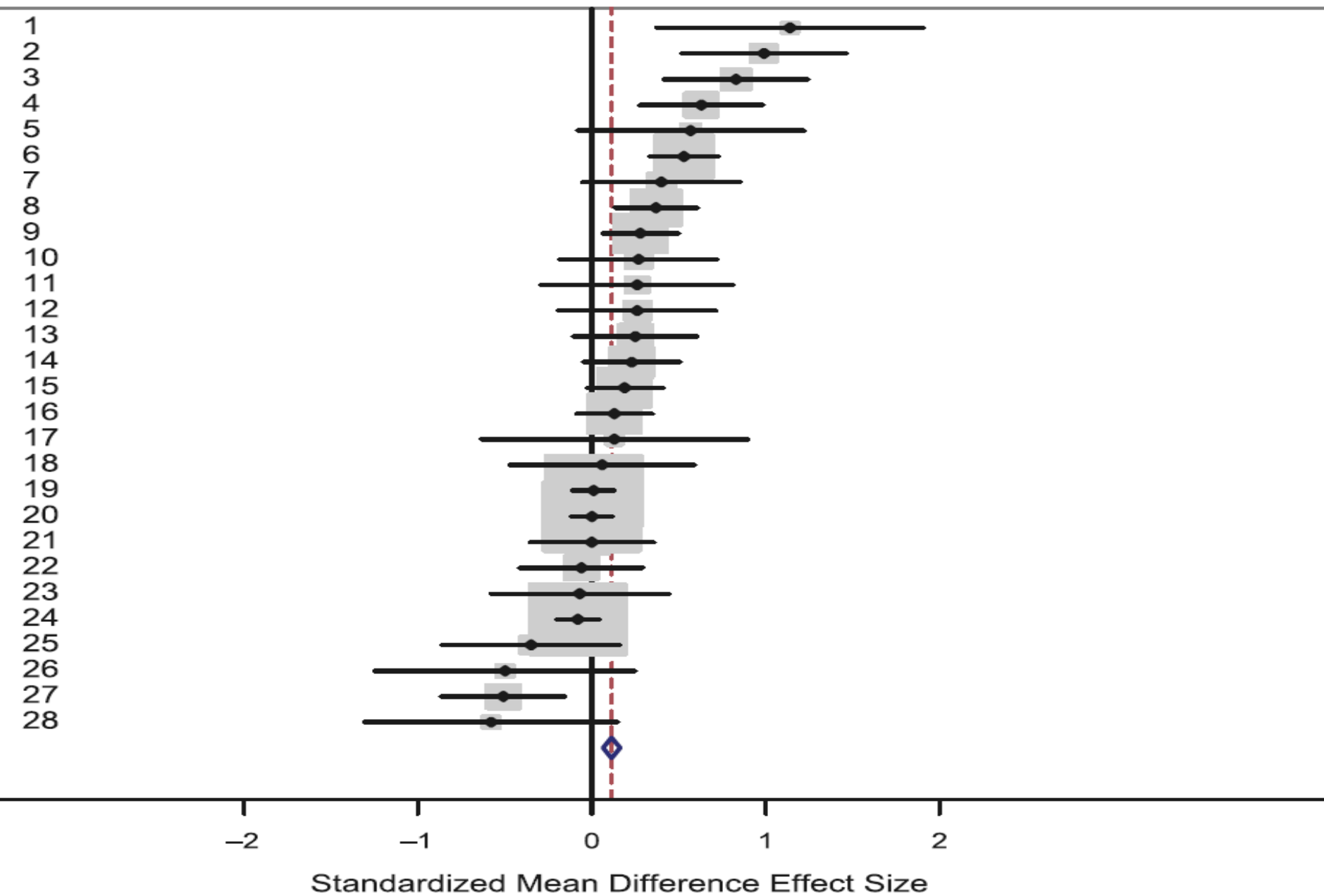


Figure 2 Forest plot of the distribution of total number of delinquency effect sizes.

- Conclusions
 - 1. Self-control improvement programs improve a child's/adolescent's self-control.
 - 2. Interventions reduce delinquency.
 - 3. Positive effects hold across numerous moderator variables.

Policy III. S.N.A.P.

- SNAP (Stop Now And Plan) is a cognitive-behavioral self-control and problem-solving technique that helps children and their parents interrupt negative behavior patterns and replace them with more positive options.
- Target youth 6-11 years of age with serious behavioral issues.
- It is a community-based, cognitive-behavioral strategy.

- Through a structured curriculum, facilitated discussion and role plays, program participants learn to solve problems in provoking situations so that they are able to generate feasible, personalized alternative options that lead them away from further trouble (e.g. aggression).
- Program for youth teaches impulse control and problem-solving skills through SNAP.
- Program for parents teaches effective child management strategies.

- Children attend SNAP 1x/week for 1.5 hours for 12 weeks and receive self-control and problem-solving skills.
- SNAP parent program reinforces these skills and helps to promote effective child management strategies, i.e., monitoring skills.
- Other components use family counseling, as well as an 8-session mother-daughter group focused on enhancing relationship capacity.
- Average cost of the program is \$1,370 (4-6 month program) for a low-risk child, \$3,300 for a moderate-risk child (12-18 month program) and \$6,700 for a high-risk child (12-18 month program).
- Cost-Benefit Analysis showed that for every dollar spent on the program, between 3-5 dollars are saved in terms of official convictions and between 26-47 dollars are saved when undetected crimes are included.
- Total cost savings between \$14,000-\$219,000 per child, on average up to age 21.

Effective Program

- RCT's show that SNAP-treated children improve significantly more than control group in impulse control.
- SNAP-treated children offend significantly less than control group.
- Neuroscience research shows changes in brain regions responsible for cognitive control and self-regulation in SNAP-treated children vs. control group.
- Positive benefits for parents as well, such as better parenting skills, less yelling, etc.

Current S.N.A.P. Evaluation in Florida

- Piloting in Hillsborough County (Tampa), Alachua County (Gainesville), and Leon County (Tallahassee).
- Youth (4th-6th grade) in diversion programs and shelters.
- Randomized design, ½ into S.N.A.P. and the other ½ on waiting list to get S.N.A.P. later on.
- All youth will get a risk assessment pre- and post-test. (Post-test for the S.N.A.P. waitlist kids will become their pre-test if they enter the next S.N.A.P. group).

Overall Policy Implications

- Early childhood family/parent training programs and self-control modification programs:
 - Improve parental socialization efforts and child's self-control
 - Reduce antisocial behavior/delinquency
 - Improve outcomes across life domains
 - Are cost-effective with benefits outweighing costs; for every \$1 spent, there are about \$2 - \$4 in returns
 - Evidence-based (almost no ill effects and many more positive effects across wide range of data/studies)
 - Well-supported by wide range of public and political officials

Return to James & Alice

- There is some continuity to growing older.
- As Jules Feiffer observed: “At sixteen I was stupid, confused and indecisive. At twenty-five I was wise, self-confident, prepossessing and assertive. At forty-five I am stupid, confused, insecure and indecisive. Who would have supposed that maturity is only a short break in adolescence?”

But there is also some change

- In growing older. As L.S. McCandless pointed out: “The best thing about getting old is that all those things you couldn't have when you were young you no longer want.”
- I wonder if Mick and Keith would agree.

THE SEVEN STAGES OF MALE LIFE

- | | | |
|---|-------|------------------|
| 1 | 0-1 | Infancy |
| 2 | 2-4 | Toddlerhood |
| 3 | 5-12 | Childhood |
| 4 | 13-19 | Adolescence |
| 5 | 20-34 | Adolescence |
| 6 | 35-49 | Adolescence |
| 7 | 50+ | Late Adolescence |