Delinquent behaviour between the ages of 11-16 years: A secondary analysis of the Belfast Youth Development Study

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The Belfast Youth Development Study (BYDS)  
(Funded by RDO DHSSPSNI)

• Longitudinal study examining the onset and development of adolescent drug use
• Annual Questionnaire Survey
• Approximately 4,000 participants each year (43 schools)
• Belfast, Ballymena and Downpatrick
• This analysis will focus on Year 5 of the study n= 3,834 (47% boys, 53% girls aged 15-16)
Belfast Youth Development Study: Sampling Features

6 Schools

28 Schools

6 Schools
BYDS Measurements

- **Demographics**
- Drug use measures
- Problem drug use
- Leisure and recreation
- Mental health screener
- Money/part-time work
- Personality
- **Delinquency**
- **Communication with parents**
- School Factors
- Neighbourhood factors
Aim of Presentation

To investigate the Effects of Parenting Relationships and Family Structure on Delinquent Behaviour of 15-16 year olds in Northern Ireland
Context of the Research

• Adolescent crime and delinquency has become a high profile social issue in recent years.
• Negative impact upon society generally as well as the health and social well-being of young people.
• It is widely accepted in delinquency research that families are of central importance in the prevention of delinquent behaviour
• Parenting practices are one of the most powerful predictors of future problem behaviour.
Family Structure

• Family type
• Number of siblings
How do types of offences vary by family type?

- Minor Offences:
  - Two Biological Parents: 90%
  - Single Parent: 80%
  - Reconstituted Family: 70%

- Serious Offences:
  - Two Biological Parents: 10%
  - Single Parent: 20%
  - Reconstituted Family: 30%
How does family type affect the variety of offending?

- Two Biological Parents
- Single parent
- Reconstituted Family
How do types of offences vary by number of siblings?
How do number of siblings affect the variety of offending?

Cumulative %

Number of Different Delinquent Offences

- Only Child
- 1-2 siblings
- 3-5 siblings
- 6 or more siblings
Parent/Child Relationships

- Parental monitoring
- Child disclosure
- Parental solicitation
- Parental control
How do types of offences vary with parental monitoring?
How does variety of offending change with parental monitoring?

Number of Different Delinquent Offences

Cumulative %

Low Parental Monitoring
High Parental Monitoring
How do types of offences vary with child disclosure?
How does variety of offending change with child disclosure?

Number of Different Delinquent Offences

Cumulative %

Low Child Disclosure
High Child Disclosure
Summary of Findings

• Children from a reconstituted family or a single parent family more likely to be involved in delinquent behaviour

• Those with a larger number of siblings committed the majority of serious offences

• Lower levels of parental monitoring, child disclosure, parental solicitation and control lead to a greater variety in offending behaviours
The Belfast Youth Development Study is Funded by the Research and Development Office (DHSSPSNI)

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