

Sexual Abuse:

**Who are the offenders
and how do we assess them?**

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Who Are the
Offenders?

Persons who are victimized

- ❖ As many as 90% of persons reporting sexual victimization know their offender
- ❖ 2/3 or more of known offenses occur in the person's own home
- ❖ As many as 90% of persons who are victimized fail to report their abuse to authorities or others in a position to help

Persons who offend

- ❖ 90% – 95% of offenders are male
- ❖ Most do not meet diagnostic criteria for paraphilia.
- ❖ Most are not particularly antisocial.
- ❖ Most have jobs and families.
- ❖ Most will not reoffend.

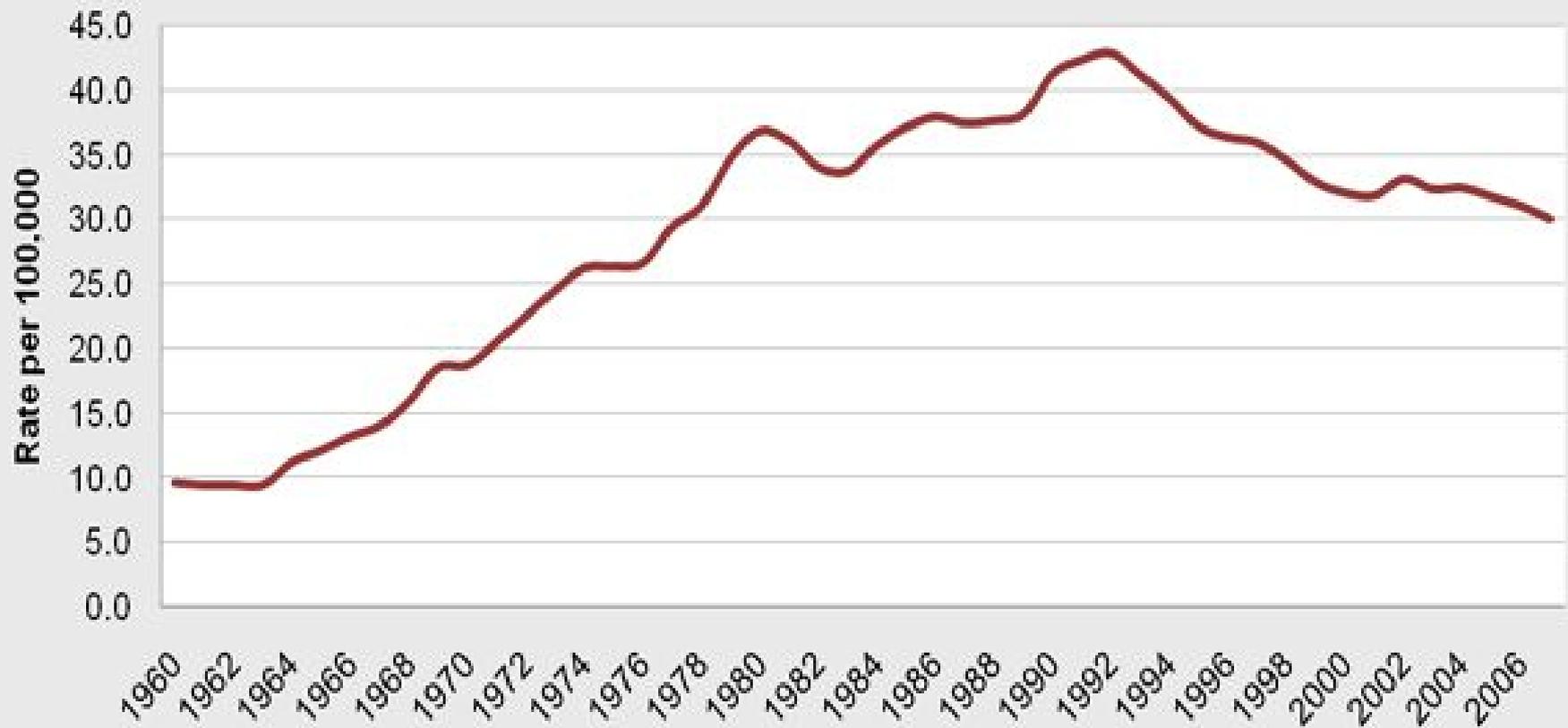
Persons who offend

- ❖ Community perspectives on sexual offending are based more on media interpretations than scientific reality.
- ❖ The media tends to over-report sexual reoffending by a factor of almost 14 times over actual rates.
- ❖ There are definitely some dangerous people out there, but they are surprisingly rare.

Principles of Effective Interventions

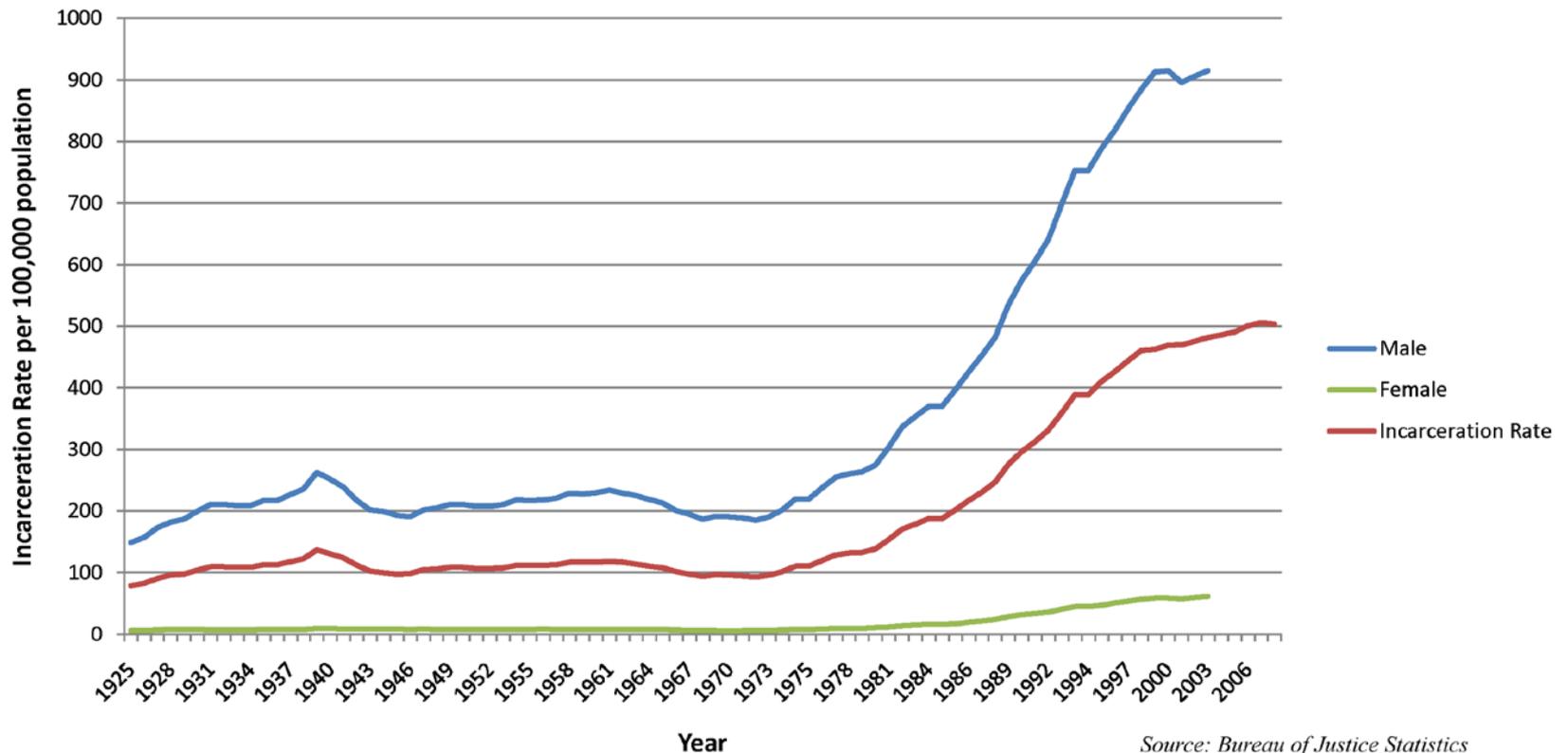
Sex Crime Rate

Overall Rate of Sexual Assault



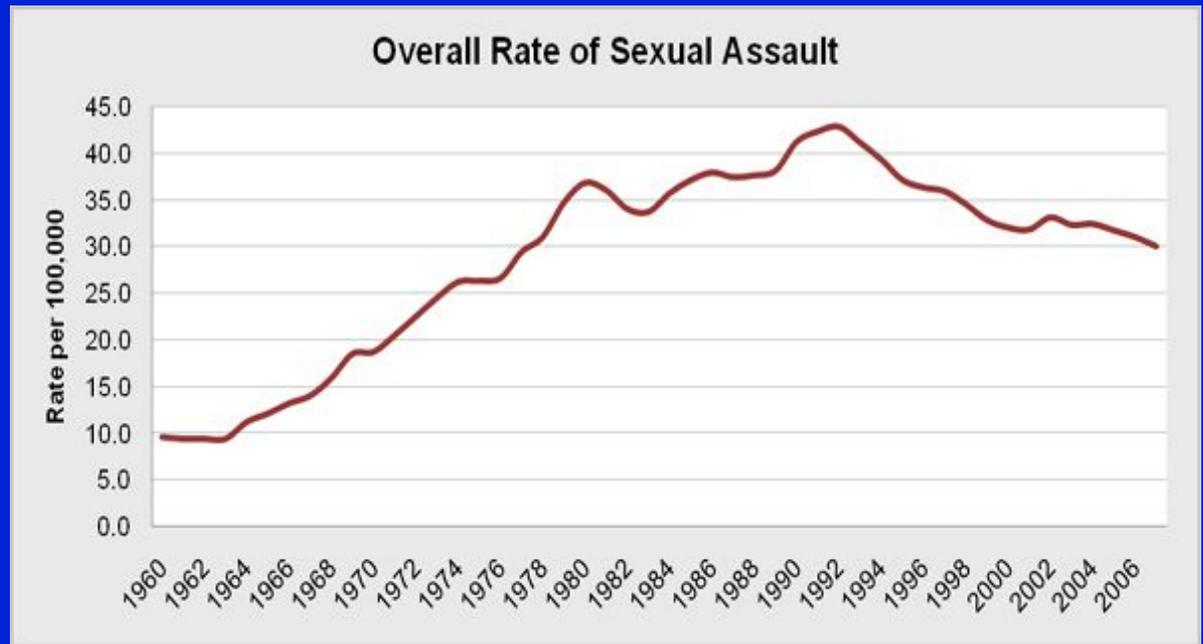
Incarceration Rates

Incarceration rate of inmates incarcerated under state and federal jurisdiction per 100,000 population 1925-2008

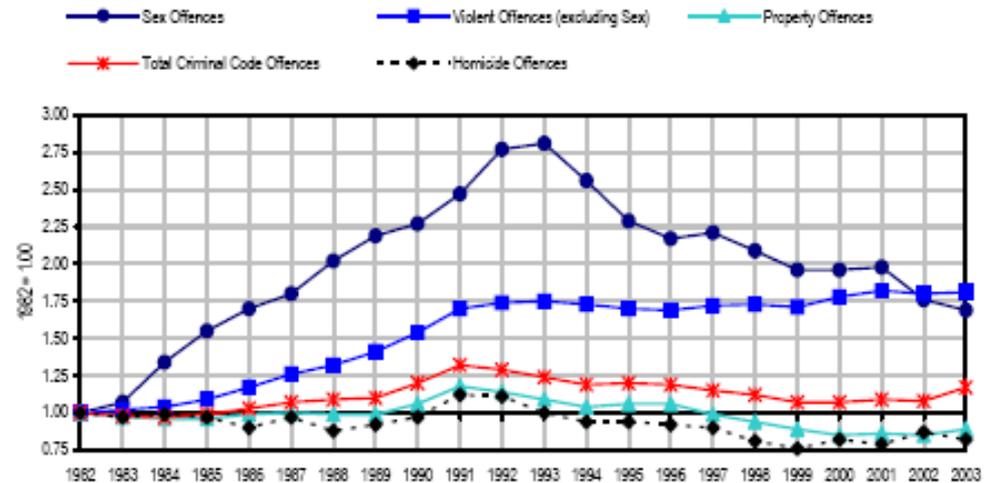


Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics

USA



Canada



Source: Statistics Canada. (2004). "Crime Statistics in Canada, 2003." Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics. Juristat, Vol.24 No. 6.

Agents of Change

As concerned practitioners, our goal is to ensure that all clients who have offended build a

balanced, self-determined lifestyle

Contemporary research in our field suggests that learning to live a “good life” is inconsistent with antisocial behavior.

What can we do?

Martinson (1974)

- ❖ Large-scale study of correctional treatment outcomes
- ❖ Found no clear evidence that efforts to rehabilitate offenders were “working”
- ❖ Led to considerable research into aspects of treatment/counseling/interventions that would lead to lower recidivism

Sanction vs. Human Service

Several very large-scale meta-analyses

- ❖ Smith, Goggin, & Gendreau (2002)
- ❖ Aos, Miller, & Drake (2006)
- ❖ Lipsey & Cullen (2007)

All arrived at the same conclusion:

Punishment alone will not reduce bad behavior.

An answered question?

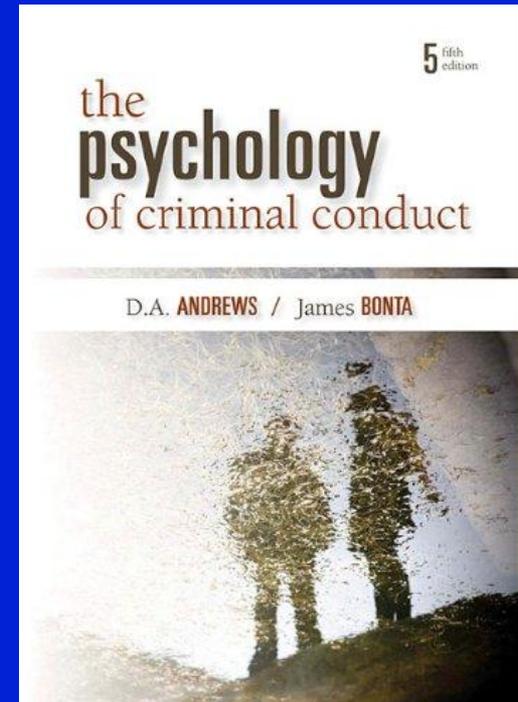
We are confident that, no matter how many studies are subsequently found, sanction studies will not produce results indicative of even modest suppression effects or results remotely approximating outcomes reported for certain types of treatment programs.

(Smith et al. 2002, p.19)

Andrews & Bonta (2010)

Three Principles:

- ❖ Risk
- ❖ Need
- ❖ Responsivity



From The Psychology of Criminal Conduct, 5th ed.

RNR Principles

(Andrews & Bonta, 2010)



Risk Assessment

Why Assess Risk?

1. Importance of promoting public safety
2. Need to determine who receives routine interventions and who needs exceptional measures
3. Strategic use of scarce resources
 - ❖ Incarceration and community supervision
 - ❖ Treatment

Three Generations of Risk Assessment

First Generation = Clinical Judgment

- ❖ Unstructured, not able to be replicated by others
- ❖ Based on the evaluator's experience and knowledge
- ❖ Non-standard with much personal discretion
- ❖ Level of prediction little better than chance, no different than otherwise intelligent "non-experts"

Second Generation = Actuarial Assessment

- ❖ Static, actuarial, structured, replicable, less open to interpretation
- ❖ Based on factors empirically related to recidivism
- ❖ Standardized assessment
- ❖ Unable to measure change
- ❖ Generates moderate predictive accuracy

Third Generation = Dynamic Assessment

- ❖ Based on factors empirically related to recidivism
- ❖ Actuarial measure combined with dynamic factors
- ❖ Able to measure change
- ❖ Generates moderate predictive accuracy, but better than actuarial alone

Fourth Generation? = Considering Protective Factors

Meta-Analysis

- ❖ Essentially, a study of studies
- ❖ Systematic review of what we know on specific topics, from the macro perspective
- ❖ Takes many individual studies from the primary literature and looks for similar approaches to evaluating the same ideas
- ❖ Similar studies can each contribute subjects to a larger study with a more representative sample (i.e., larger N from various sources)

Static Risk Factors

- ❖ Don't change (on the whole)
- ❖ Allow you to gauge the long-term level of risk for sexual recidivism
- ❖ Allows you to determine an appropriate level of supervision and treatment for the individual (Andrews & Bonta, 2006)

Static, Stable, & Acute Risk Factors

Definitions

- ❖ **Static** – Non-changeable life factors that relate to risk for sexual reoffending, generally historical in nature
- ❖ **Stable** – Personality characteristics, skill deficits, and learned behaviors that relate to risk for sexual reoffending that may be changed through intervention
- ❖ **Acute** – Risk factors of short or unstable duration that can change rapidly, generally as a result of environmental or conditions related to the person

Static Risk Factors

(Static-99R; Hanson & Thornton, 2000)

- ❖ Age at Release
- ❖ Ever Lived with a Lover for Two Consecutive Years
- ❖ Index Nonsexual Violence
- ❖ Prior Nonsexual Violence
- ❖ Prior Sexual Offenses
- ❖ Prior Sentencing Dates
- ❖ Any Convictions for Noncontact Sexual Offenses
- ❖ Any Unrelated Victims
- ❖ Any Stranger Victims
- ❖ Any Male Victims

Dynamic Risk Factors

(Stable-2007/Acute-2007; Hanson et al., 2007)

STABLE

- ❖ Significant Social Influences
- ❖ Intimacy Deficits
- ❖ General Self-regulation
- ❖ Sexual Self-regulation
- ❖ Co-operation with Supervision

ACUTE

- ❖ Victim Access
- ❖ Hostility
- ❖ Sexual Pre-occupation
- ❖ Rejection of Supervision
- ❖ Emotional Collapse
- ❖ Collapse of Social Supports
- ❖ Substance Abuse

Actuarial Scales

Strengths

- ❖ Valid risk factors
- ❖ Explicit rules for combining factors
- ❖ Explicit probability estimates
- ❖ Robust across settings & samples
- ❖ Easily scored

Actuarial Scales

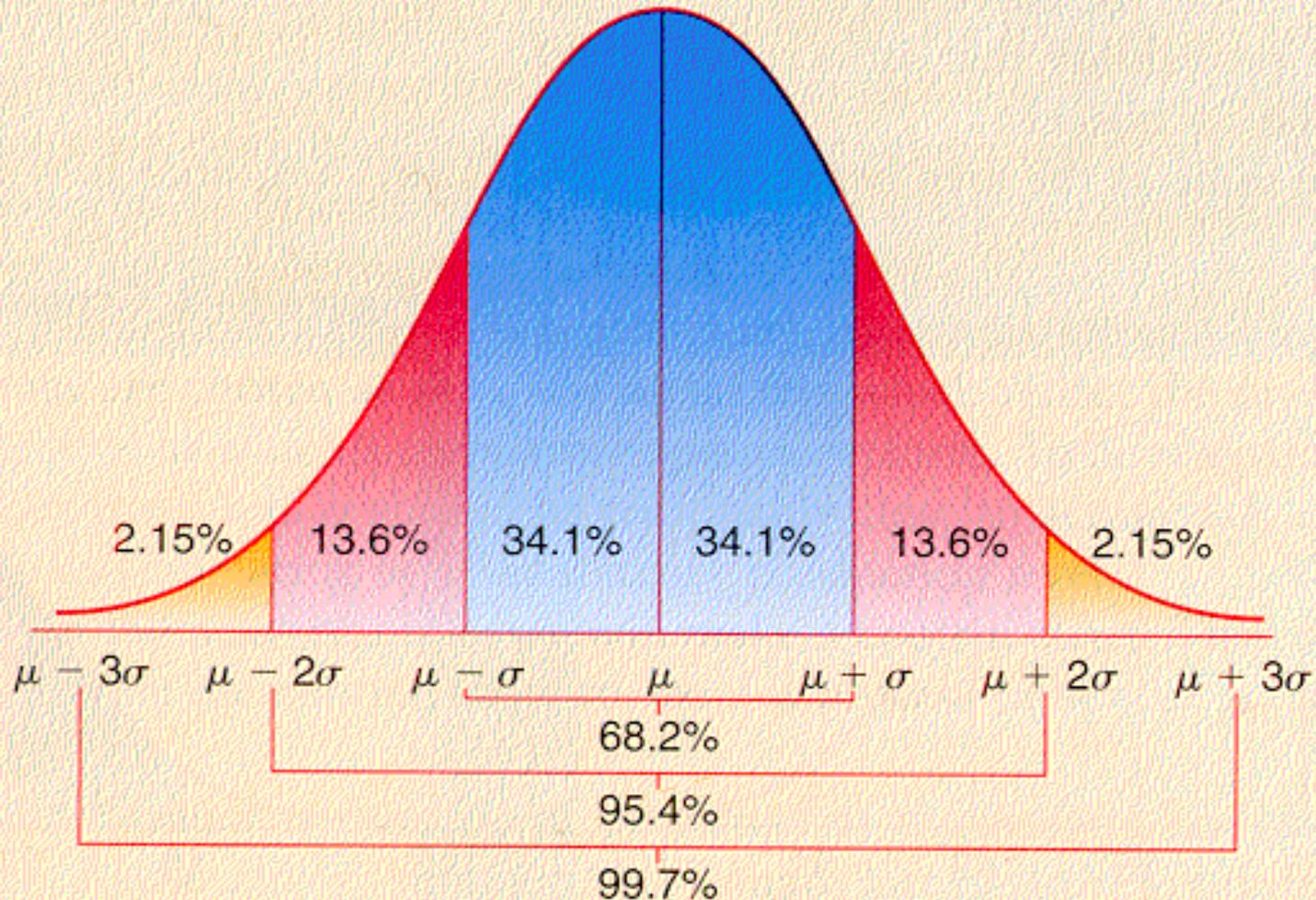
Weaknesses

- ❖ Only moderate predictive accuracy
 - We always want to do better!
 - Coding rules are confusing
 - You need to pay attention to rules
- ❖ Neglects important factors?
 - Scale constructors may exclude some important factors for a variety of reasons

Assumptions for Use of Actuarial Scales

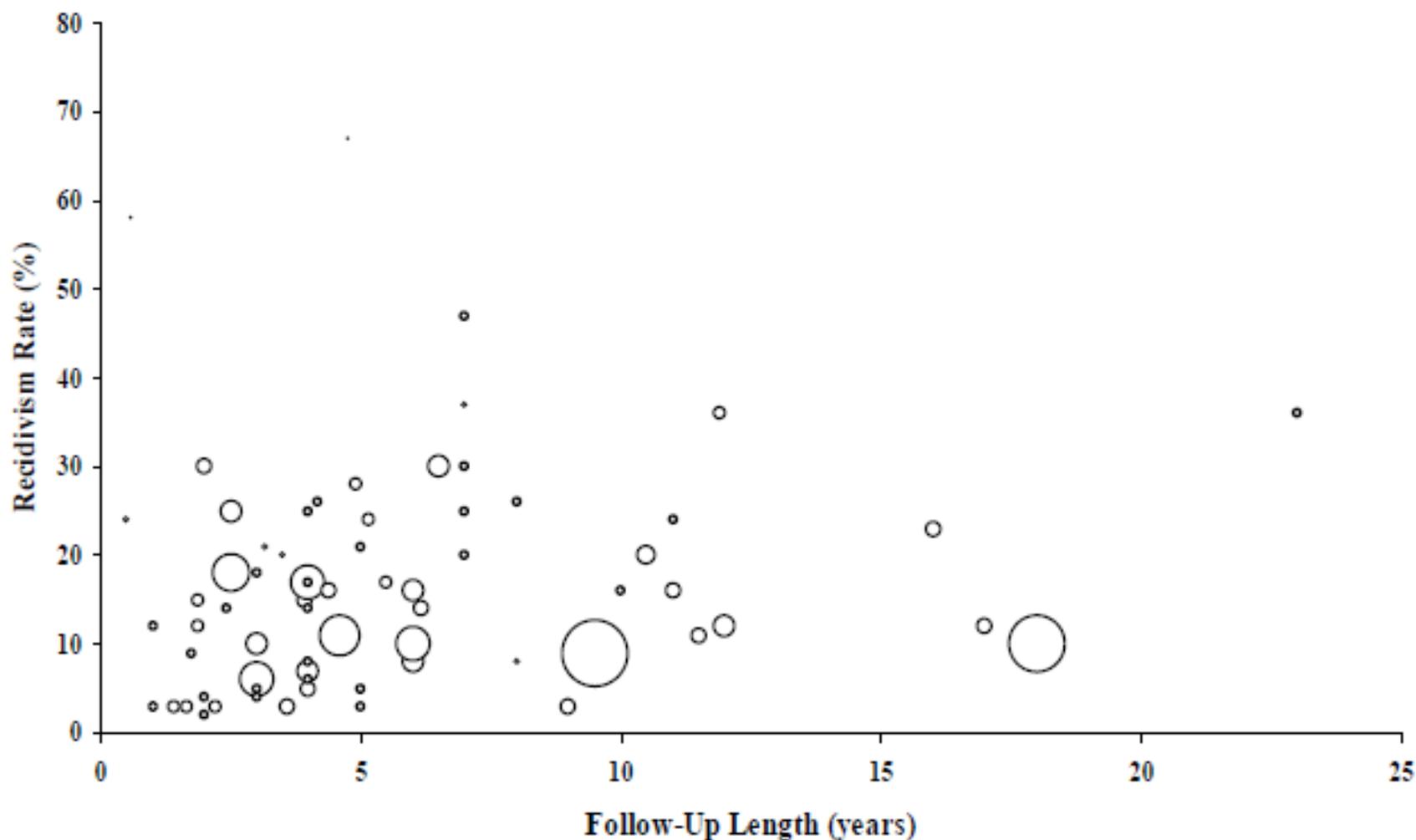
- ❖ All individuals in each category have the same probability of recidivism
- ❖ All relevant risk factors have been measured
- ❖ Behavior will be similar between the group and the assessed individual

Normal Curve

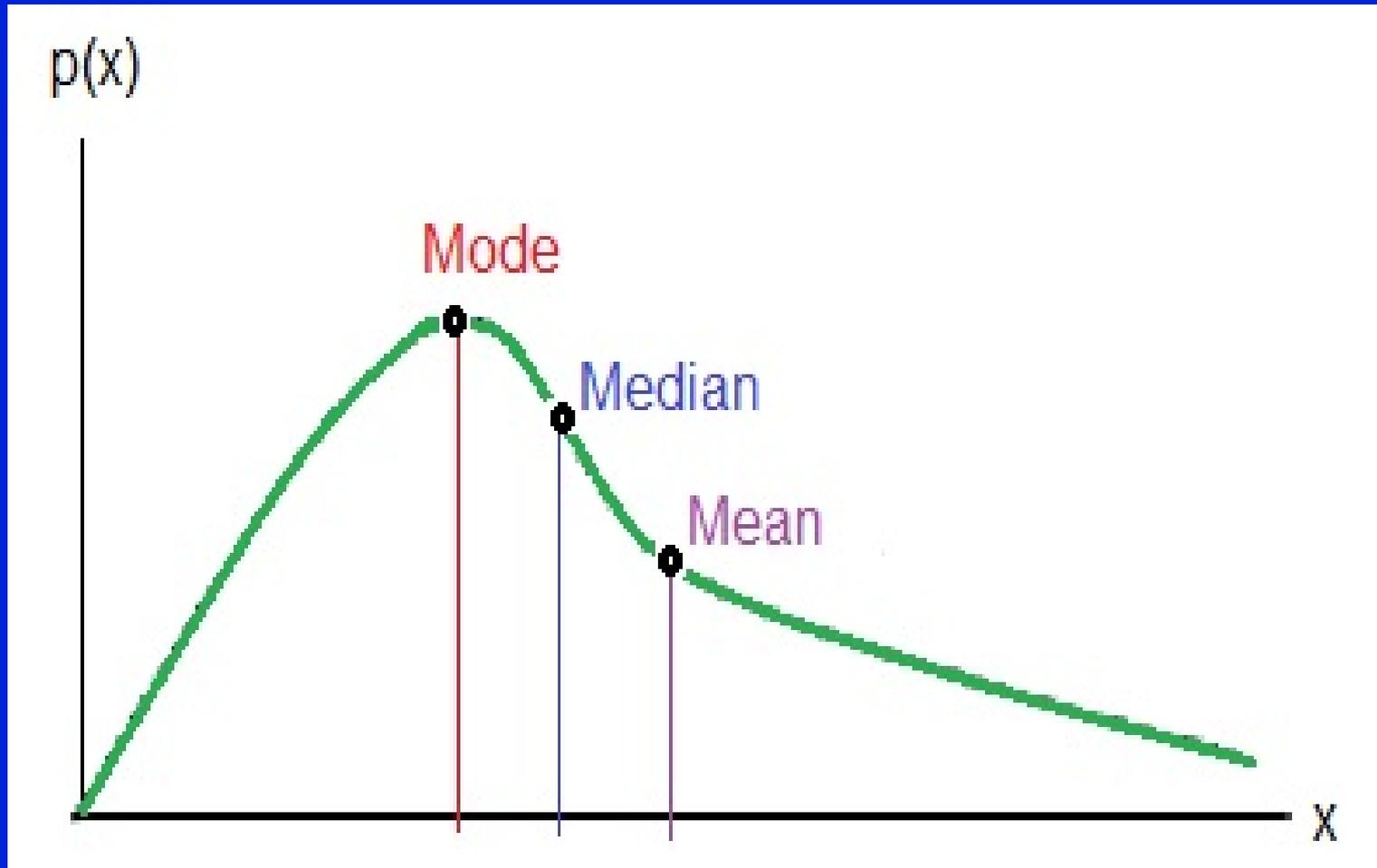


Distribution: Meta-Analytic Findings

from Helmus, 2009 (k = 73)



Positively Skewed Distribution



Rates of Reoffending

- ❖ Two influential meta-analyses (Hanson et al., 1998, 2005) suggest that approximately 15% of released sexual offenders will commit another sexual offense within 5-7 years.
- ❖ However, rates of sexual reoffending are declining, with most states now reporting 5-year rates of less than 5% recidivism.
- ❖ US Bureau of Justice Statistics suggests a 10-year sexual reoffense rate of approximately 11%.
- ❖ Non-sexual recidivism is typically 3X as much.

Are high risk offenders high risk forever?

(Hanson et al., in press)

- ❖ Approximately 70% of sexual offenders are at low to low-moderate risk to reoffend.
- ❖ Approximately 10% are at high risk to reoffend.

Are high risk offenders high risk forever?

(Hanson et al., in press)

- ❖ If they are going to, most sexual offenders will reoffend within 5 years post-release.
- ❖ The longer they remain offense-free in the community, the more likely it is that they will continue to be offense-free.
- ❖ The effect is most pronounced with higher risk offenders.

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Additional Resources

- ❖ www.csc-scc.gc.ca
- ❖ www.csom.org
- ❖ www.ojp.gov
- ❖ www.publicsafety.gc.ca
- ❖ www.static99.org
- ❖ www.wsipp.wa.gov

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