

Characteristics and antisocial behaviours of Juvenile delinquents

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ABSTRACT

This study intends to describe the demographics, social environment and behaviour of juvenile offenders convicted on drug offenses and other misdemeanors. The sample included 564 boys and 123 girls. Half of the sample were indicted on property crime, 23% on drug offenses, and the rest were on other crimes. The sample group age ranged from 8-24 years. Eighty percent were employed at the time of arrest. Some were involved in illicit drug sales and/or theft/robbery. A small number, 16% were students. About half were originally from provincial areas and about 22% resided in Bangkok slum communities. Less than half, 40%, still lived with both parents. However, about 23% of these reported frequent quarrels between parents. Regular drinking of liquor by father and conviction of family members were reported by 60% and 26% of the samples respectively. It is interesting that girls tended to report worry about reprimand from parents while boys tended towards worrying on parents quarrelling. Previous conviction was admitted by 50% of drug offenders and 30% of other convictions. Sentences of less than 1 year in prison were more common in boys, 66%, than girls, 30%. Denying having ever used addictive drugs was found in 5% of boy and 38% of girl drug offenders while about half of other crime admitted ever used. Those who reported having ever used addictive drug started using the most available substance first inhalants, then proceeded to try stronger substances such as ganja and heroin. Age started using drugs varied between 14-16 years. Curiosity was the most common reason for first use. The user group had frequently, 85%, never received treatment for substance abuse. However, 27% and 24% of the boys and girls respectively reported frequent short periods of abstinence. About one third of the sample had experience of drinking liquor. Reason for first drinking was different for boys and girls. About 60% of boys and girls reported having sexual relations. Eighty percent reported first experience occurred at age 14-16 years. Among these, 77% and 43% of boys and girls respectively had more than one partner. Only 8% of the cases reported using condoms on each occasion. Prevalence of sexual relationship among drug users of both sexes was twice as much as those of non-

drug users. Most notable for male drug users age 7-14 years the prevalence was eight times that of non-drug users. In conclusion, experience on sexual relations and substance abuse at an early age in this group apparently stems from multiple causes. This study indicates that causes from the social environment probably form quite a strong bearing on initiating these behaviours.

Key words : Behaviour, drug abuser, Sexual relations, Juvenile, Delinquents

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