

Developing Gender-Specific Typologies for Women Who Have Sexually Offended: Ensuring Validity of Treatment Intervention

Presenter:

Associate Prof Tess Patterson



University
of Otago

ŌTĀKOU WHAKAIHU WAKA



Introduction

- Women who have sexually offended (WWSO)
 - commit 4% - 5% of all sexual offences.
- Need to understand pathways/ factors related to offending
- Not valid to merely apply male models of offending to women.
 - Gender-responsive.

Typologies

- Typologies:
 - Classify persons on selected characteristics.
 - Each person in a particular cluster more like those in that cluster but different from a person in another cluster.

Limitations of current typologies for WWSO

- Not detailed enough to guide assessment/ treatment.
- Often lack inclusion of dynamic factors to guide intervention.

Aims

- Consider a broad range of static, dynamic and background psychosocial factors.
- Provide typologies of WWSO.

Method

- Court case reports “sentencing notes” sourced from online databases, NZ, Australia and Canada.
 - Included all cases where a women was sentenced for a sexual offense.
 - Included offences against adults or children.
 - Included cases that involved a co-offender and where women acted alone.

Included cases

- 62 cases of women who had sexually offended
- Offenses - incest, objectionable materials and publication charges, indecent assault, or sexual violation of others, and aiding the sexual exploitation of children (prostitution).
- Sentencing ranged from short periods of home detention through to life imprisonment.

Data extracted

- Demographic details of offender and victim.
- Details of the offense:
 - Co-offender (coerced; freely engaged)
 - Motivation to offend (revenge/gain/love/gratification/to please others)
 - Intrusiveness
 - Use of drugs or alcohol.
- Psychosocial history:
 - Previous offending
 - Experience of sexual abuse
 - Experienced of adverse childhood experiences
 - Mental health difficulties
 - Other life difficulties.

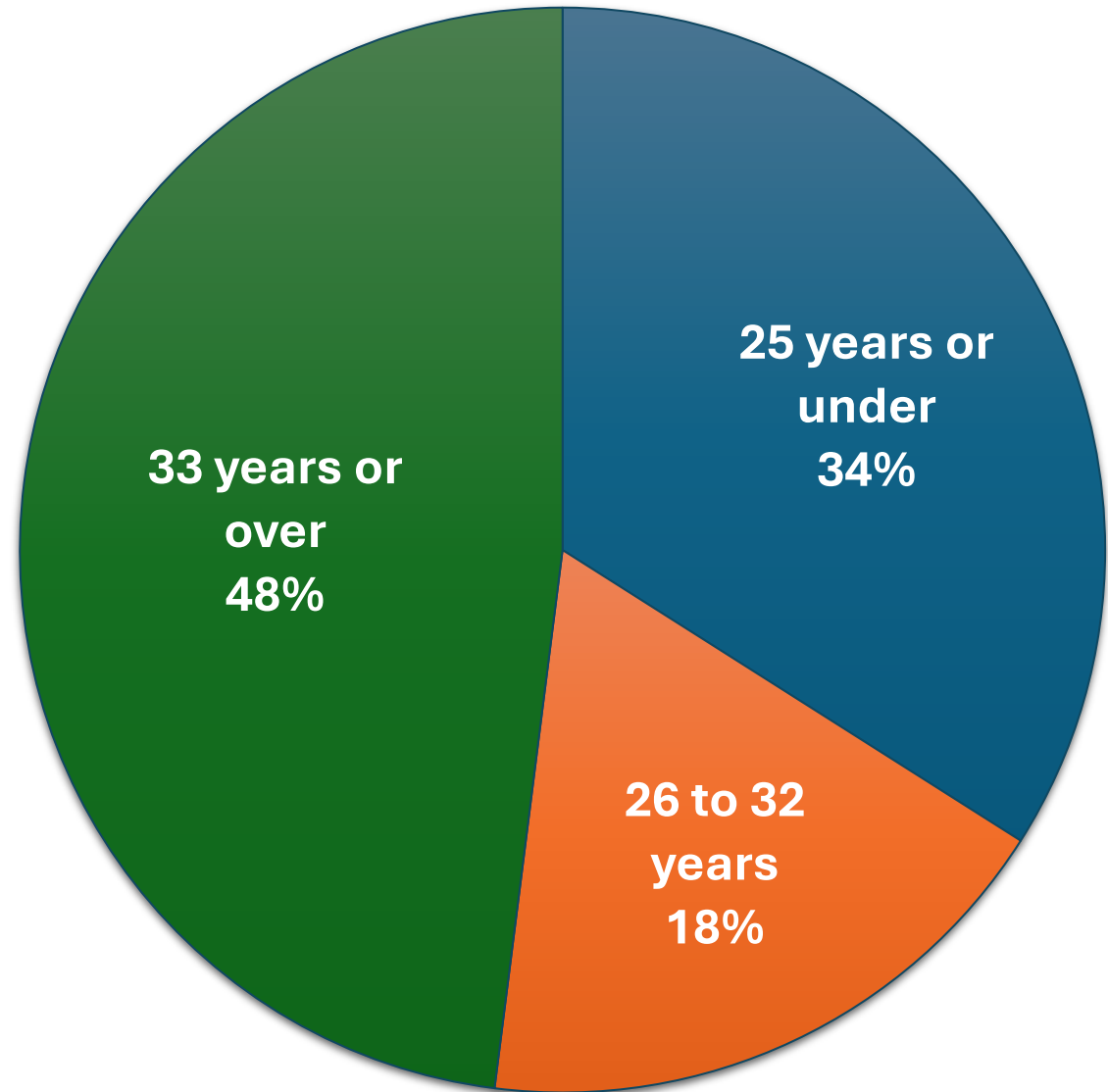
Analysis

- Descriptives.
- Cluster analysis to determine typologies.

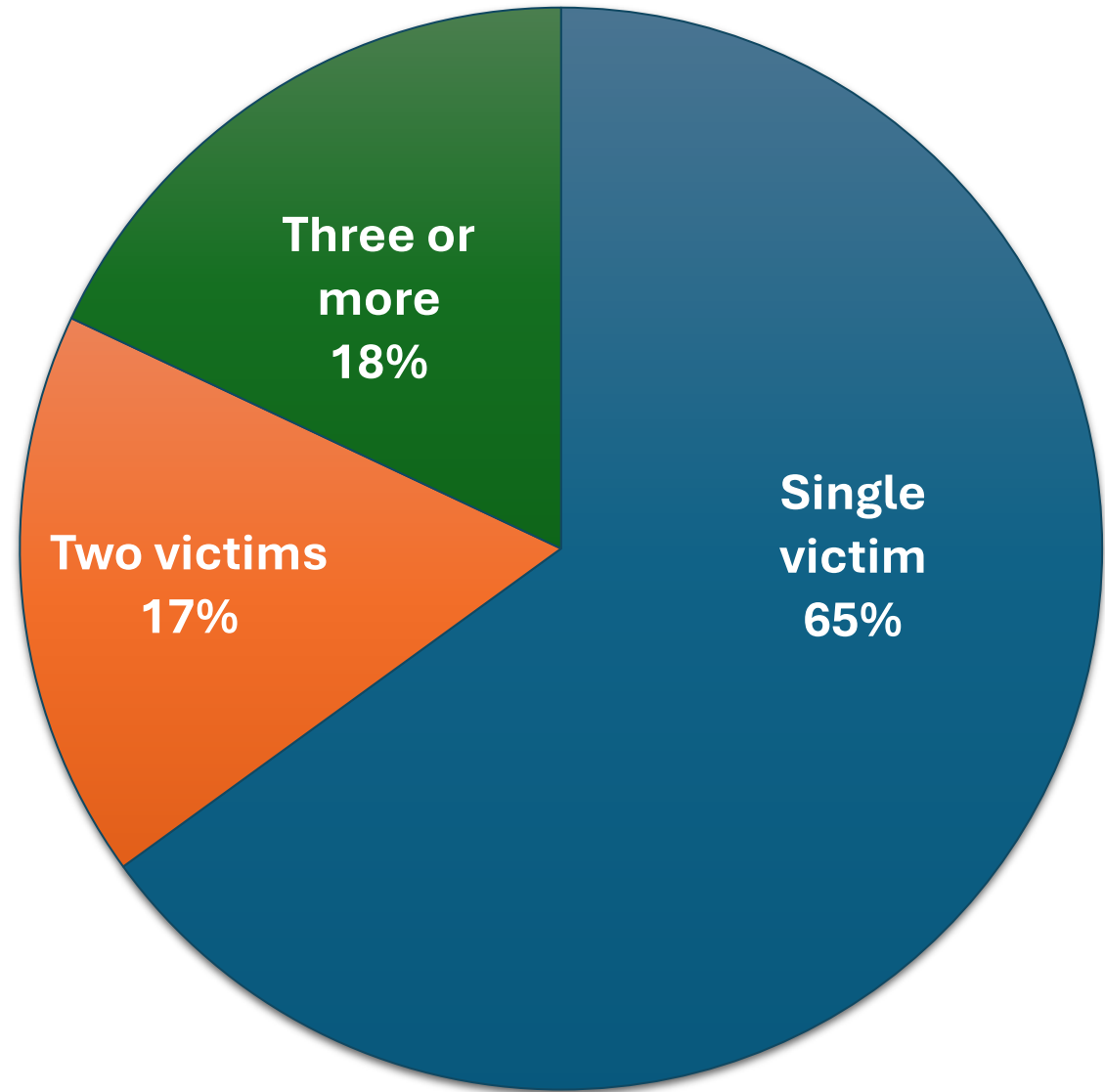
Results - Descriptive

- None had previous conviction for sexual offending; 19% had conviction for previous non-sexual offending.

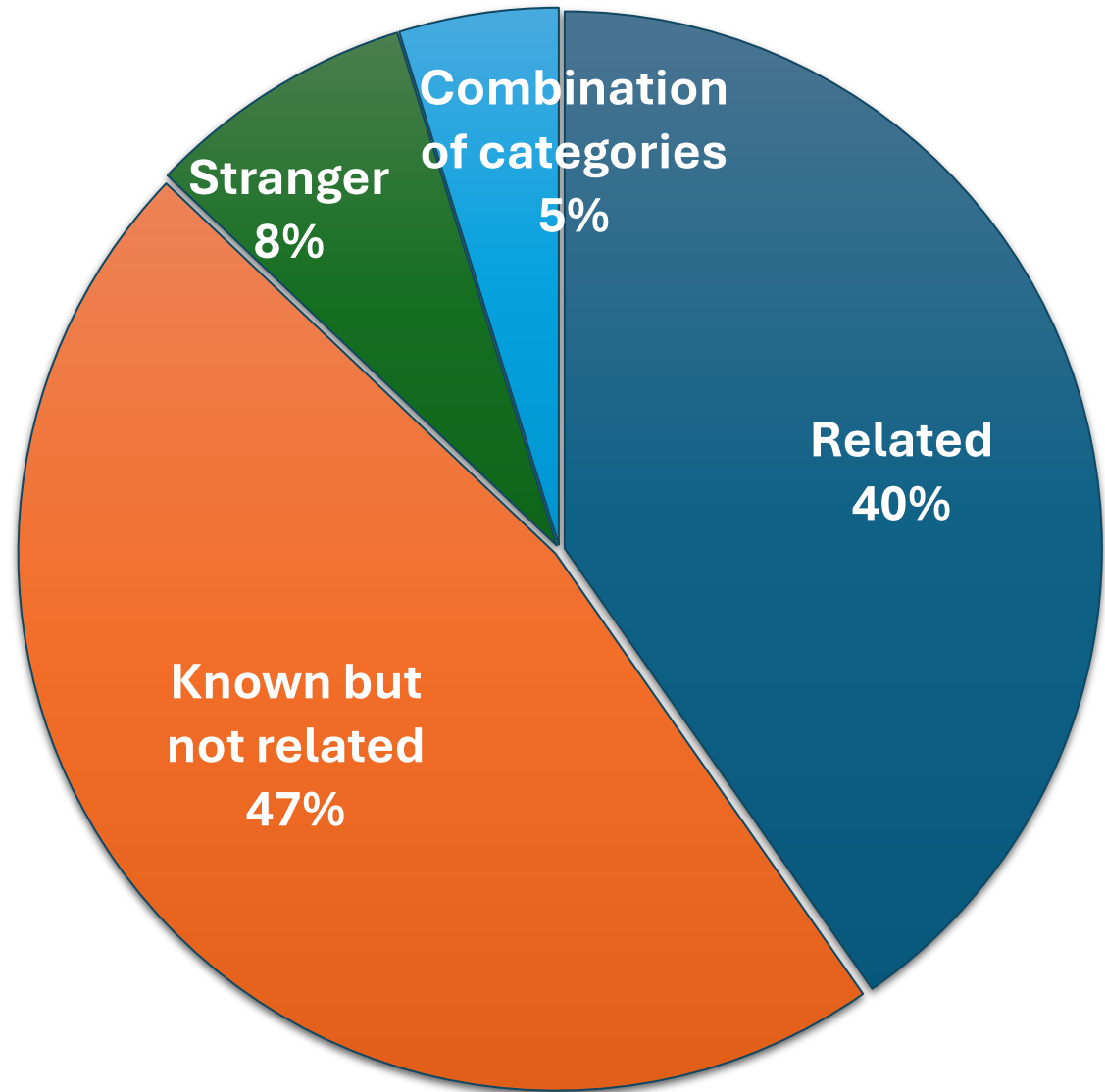
Age at time of offending



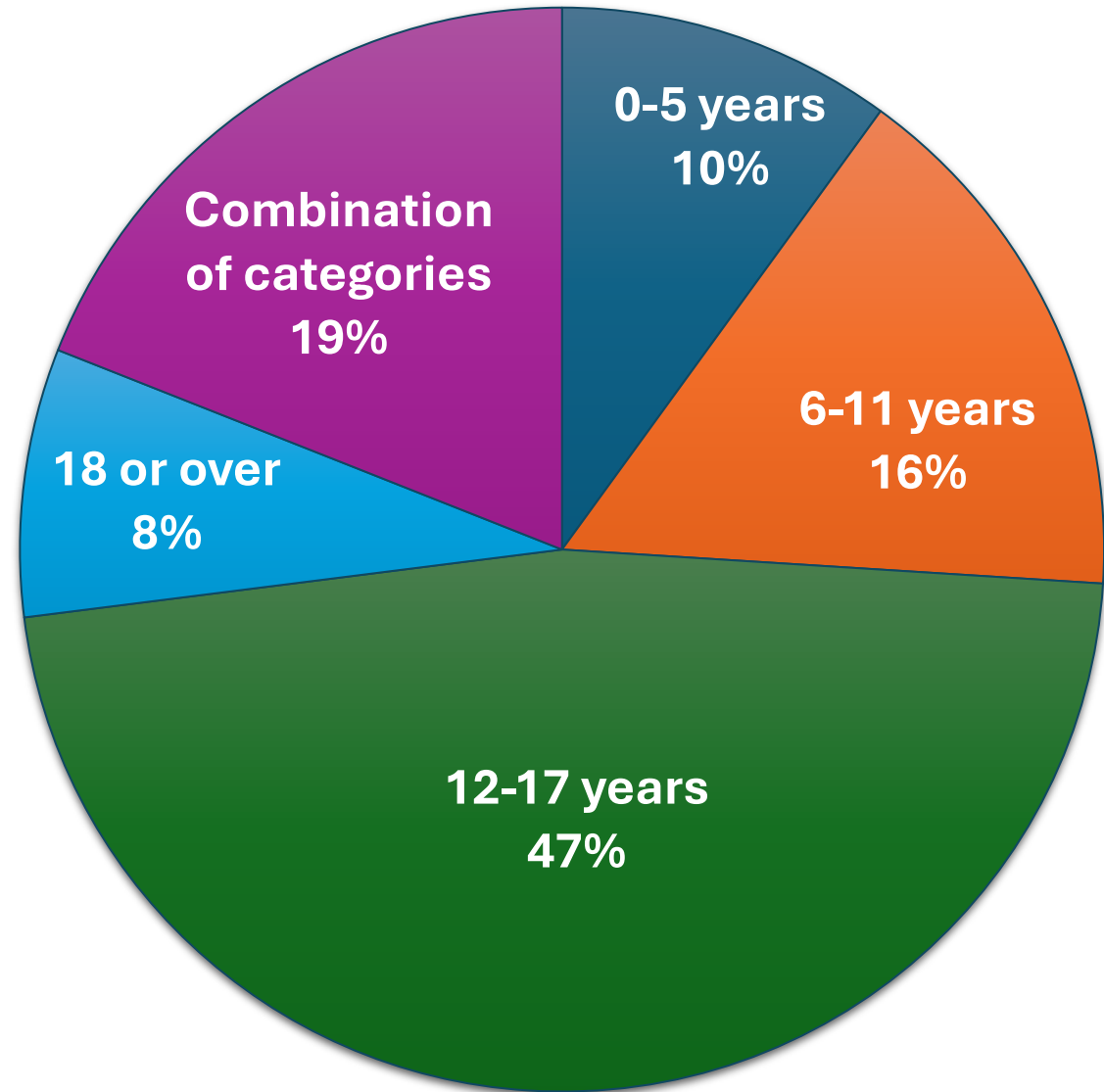
Number of victims



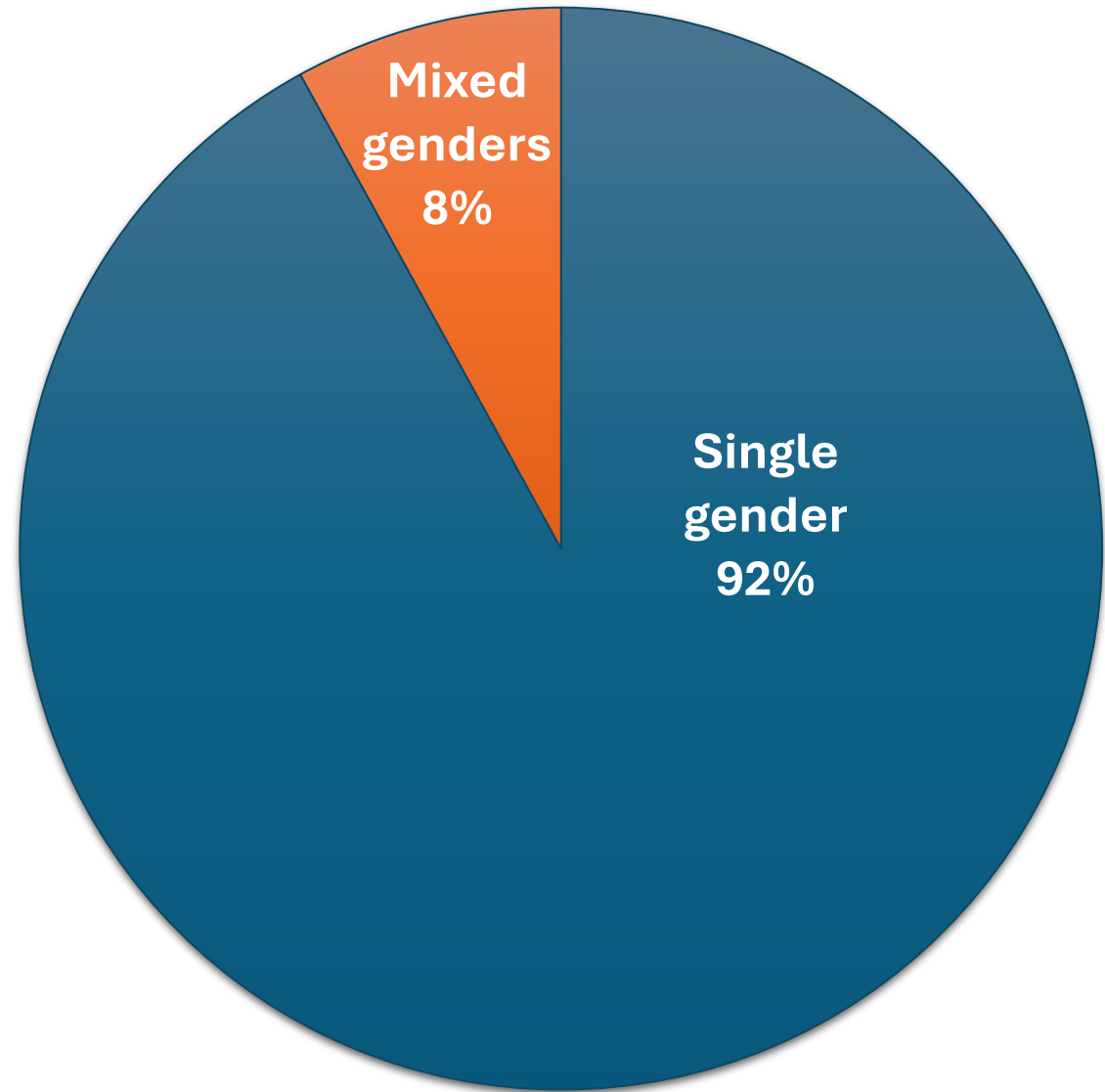
Relationship



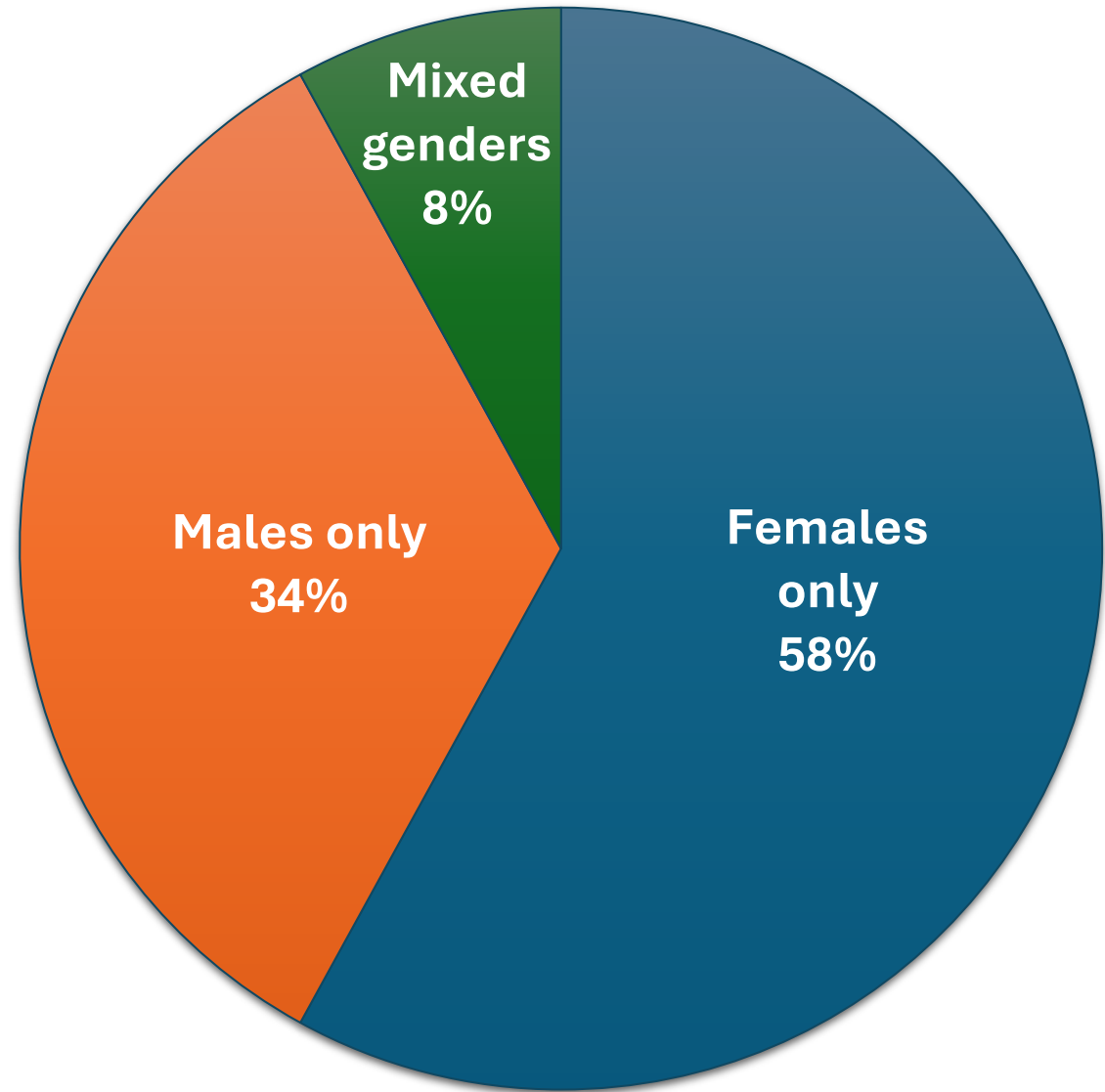
Age of victim



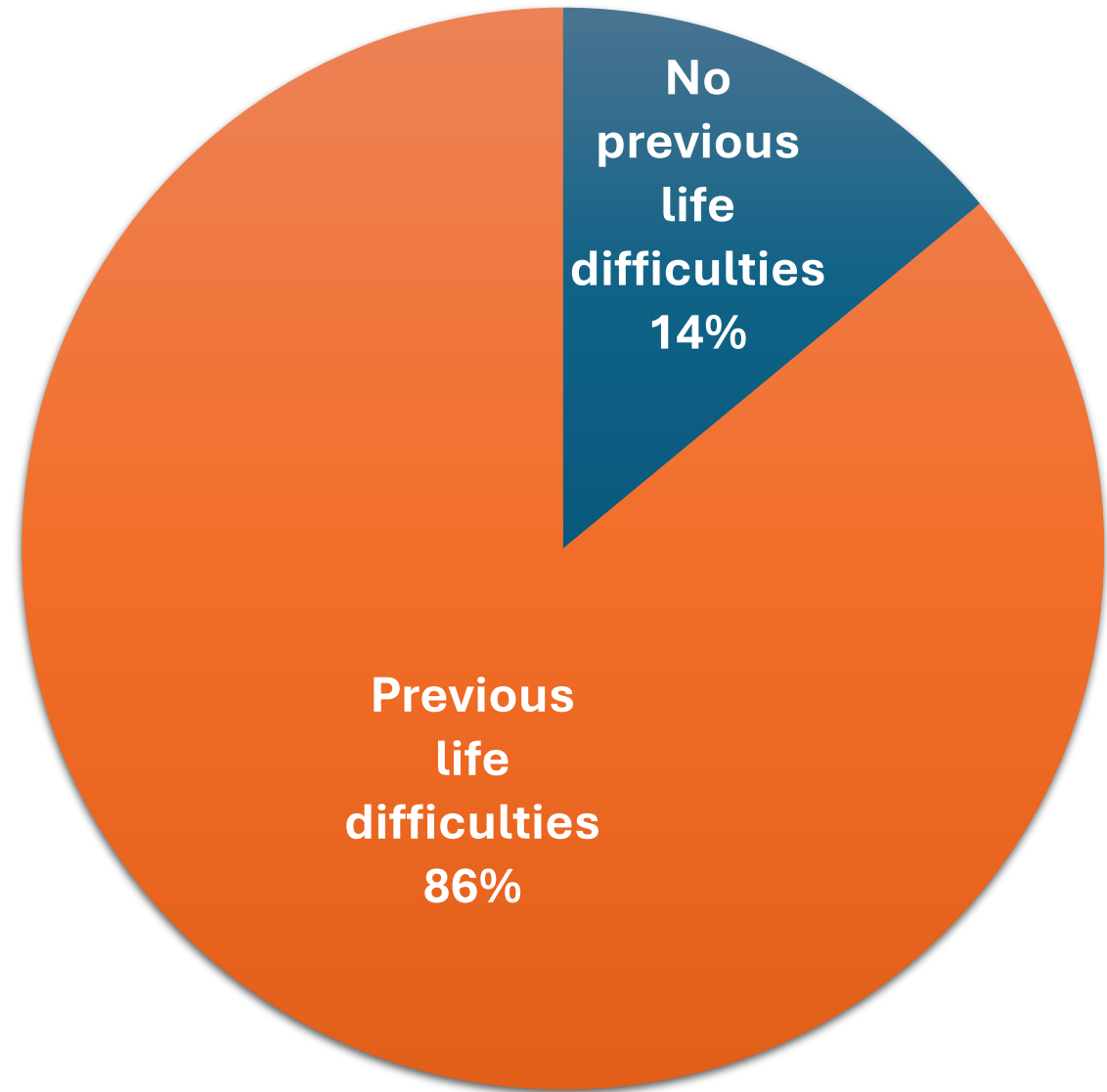
Gender of victim



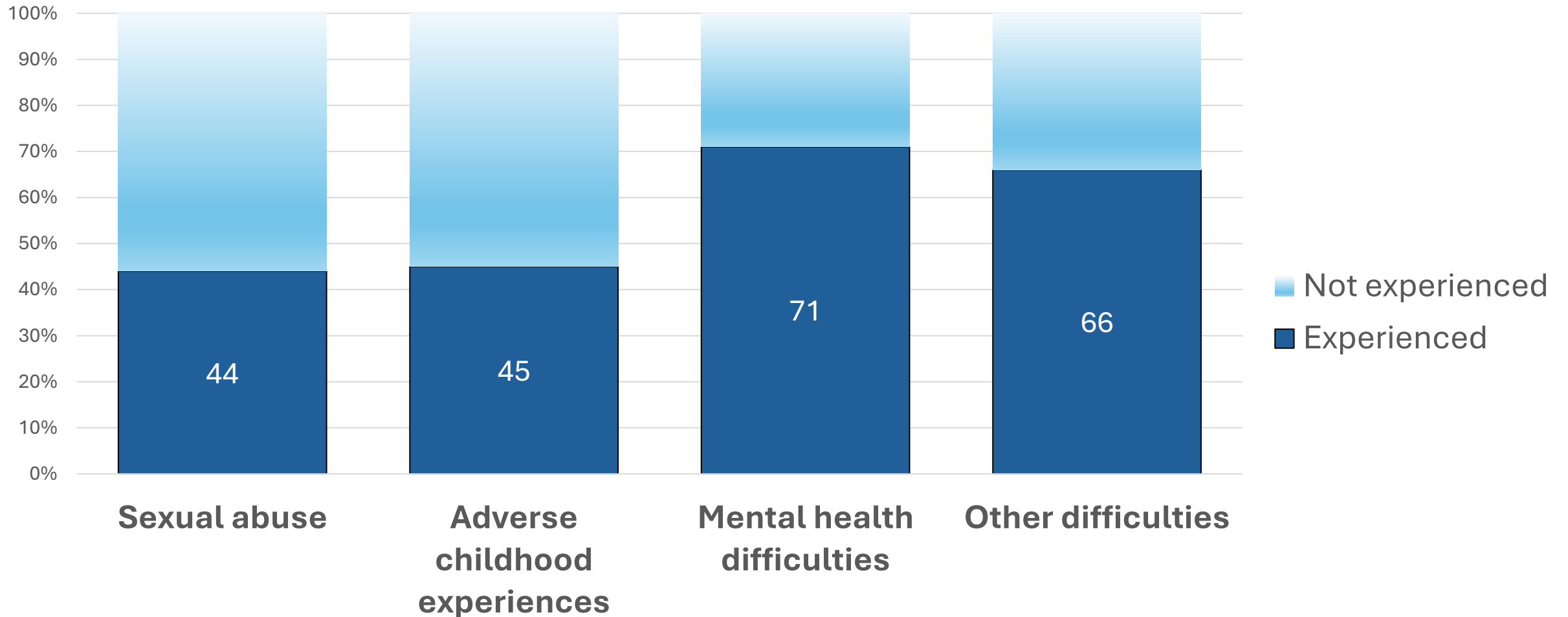
Gender of victim



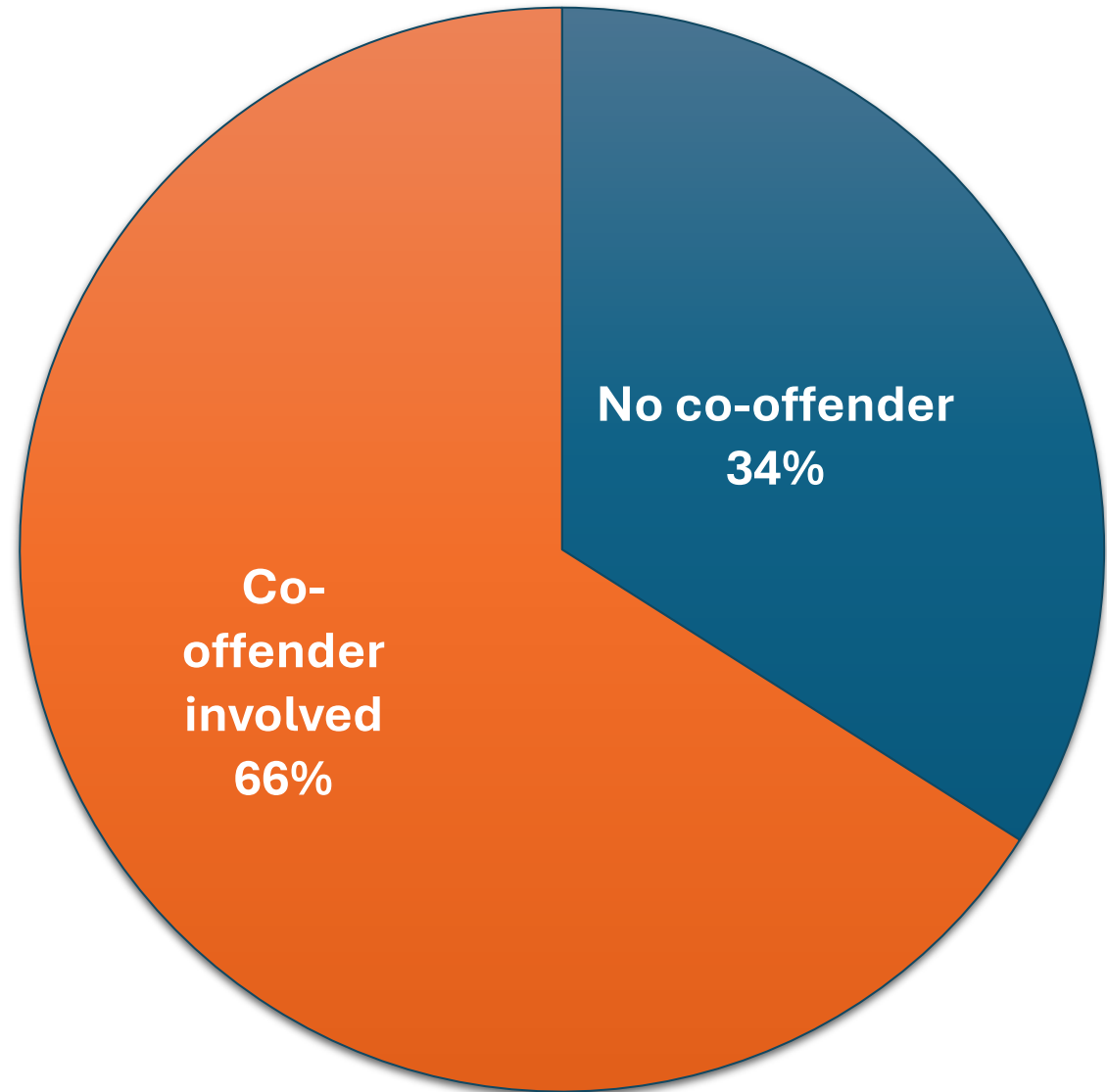
Experience of previous life difficulties



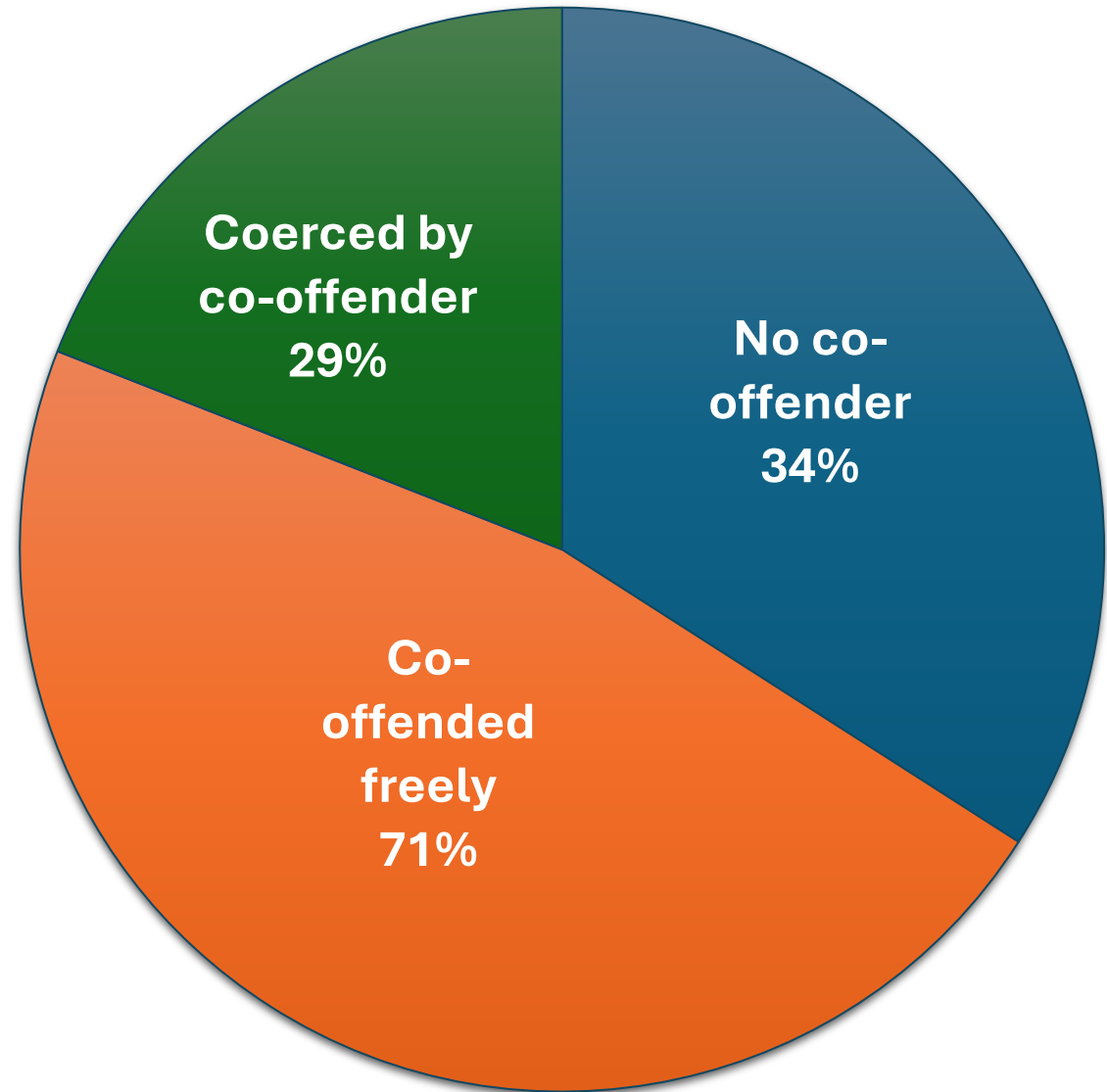
Breakdown of previous life difficulties



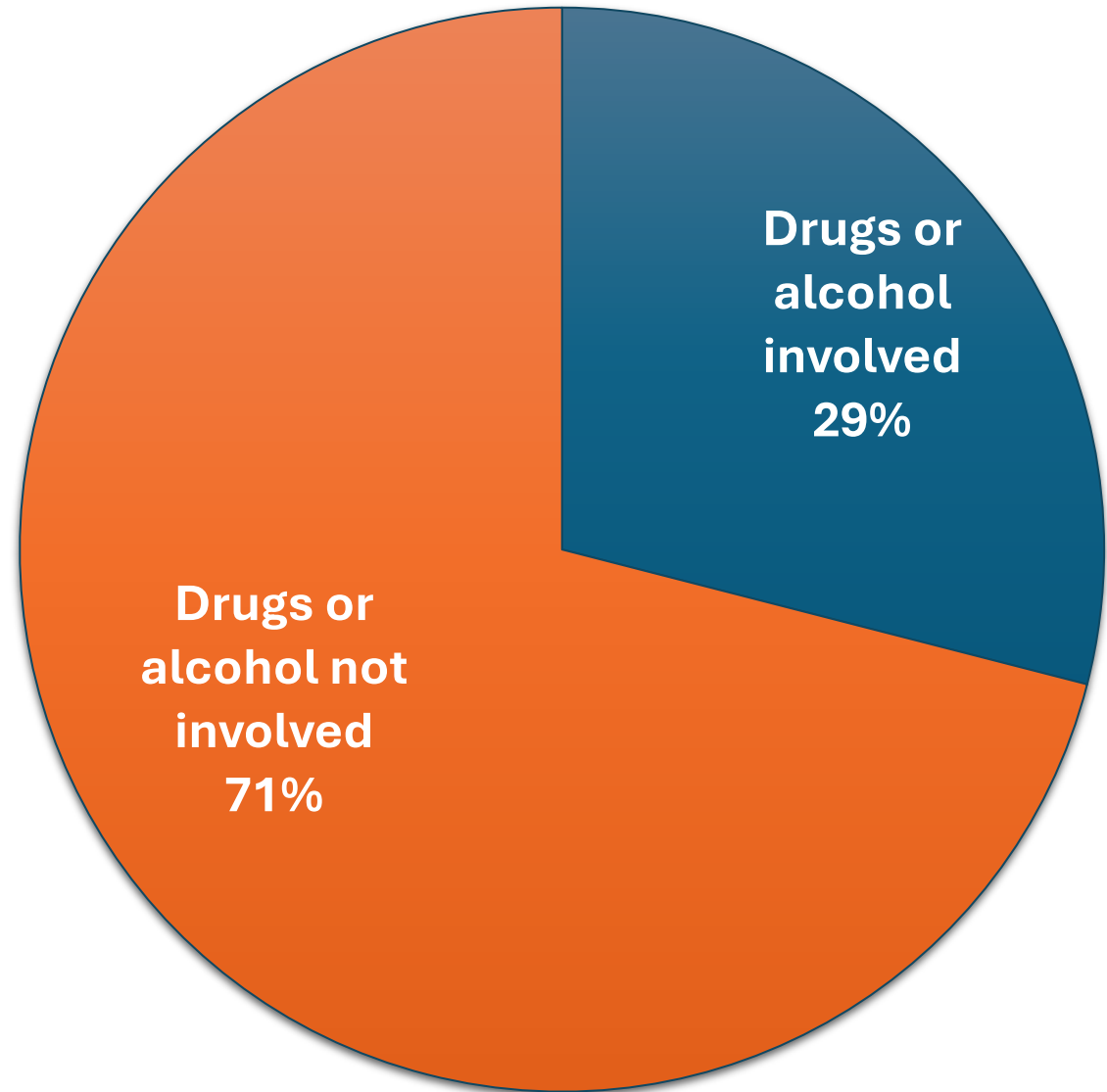
Involvement of a co- offender



Involvement of a co- offender



Involvement of drugs or alcohol



Results - Typologies

**Females who sexually offended:
Cluster analysis typology groups**
(*N* = 56)

1. Antisocial
(*n* = 10)

2. Seeking Love
(*n* = 35)

**3. Seeking Sexual
Gratification**
(*n* = 6)


**4. Seeking to
Please Others**
(*n* = 5)

Antisocial

Motivated by revenge, malice or material gain; substance use likely; less likely to have experience of sexual abuse or adverse childhood experiences; some likelihood of experience of other life or mental health difficulties. ($n = 10$)



Antisocial

- *WWSO 33 years of age, no co-offender, offended against her 9-year-old daughter. The offending included procuring her daughter to engage in prostitution over a period of 6 years where her daughter was made to witness sexual services delivered by the WWSO and her daughter was made to provide sexual services including masturbation and/or fellatio to customers. The daughter was also indecently touched by clients. The offending was for the purpose of financial gain from the operation of a massage therapy business. No background psychosocial difficulties mentioned.*
- 

Seeking Love

Motivated by intimacy (love) could include own sexual gratification; child-youth target; less likely to have experience of sexual abuse or adverse childhood experiences; some likelihood of experience of other life or mental health difficulties. (n = 35)



Seeking Love

- *WWSO 44 years of age, no co-offender, offended against an 11-year-old male former pupil. The offending included kissing, touching, and cuddling that progressed to oral sex over a period of two years. Described as “the offender sees herself as part of a consenting romantic relationship with an adolescent.” Described as a caring and generous teacher who had reached a vulnerable point in her life. She perceived she had outgrown her husband and an extra-marital affair had ended shortly before the offending.*



Seeking Sexual Gratification

Motivated by sexual gratification (to fulfil their own needs); mostly adult target; most likely to have history of adverse background including sexual abuse, adverse childhood experiences, other life difficulties or mental health difficulties. (n = 6)



Seeking Sexual Gratification

- *WWSO 48 years of age, over a period of a week, for her own sexual gratification, viewed child (male and female) child abuse images provided by an online party (male co-offender) and the WWSO engaged in explicit online chat including explicit and lewd sexual conversations about abusing children (including her own grandchildren). Background of childhood trauma and abuse (including sexual abuse); emotionally abusive adult relationships; anxiety, PTSD; major depressive disorder; panic disorder; long-term difficulties with substance use.*




Seeking to Please Others

Motivated to please others; mixed youth-adult target; substance use likely; offend with an accomplice; most likely have history of adverse background including sexual abuse, adverse childhood experiences, other life difficulties or mental health difficulties. (n = 5)



Seeking to Please Others

- *WWSO 43 years of age, co-offended with her husband. Offending included extensive explicit child abuse images, videos, and sexual text message communications in a highly sexually charged environment that centred on a mutual attraction to children. Child abuse images were of prepubescent boys and girls and included their 2 -year-old niece. WWSO described as “more a participant than an instigator” and “her drug abuse and her relationship with her husband were the significant contributing factors leading to the commission of these offences”. WWSO had been diagnosed with a substance use disorder.*
- 

Discussion

- The overlap in typology groups
- Women who have sexually offended are a heterogenous group.
 - There is not going to be a one-size fits all approach to primary prevention, assessment, and intervention.

Discussion

- Quashes long-held stereotypes and models that allow for diminished responsibility.
 - Many offended with no co-offender.
 - Many of the women who co-offended did so freely.
 - Some offended against male victims.
 - Some were viewed as motivated by sexual gratification and some engaged in acts that were penetrative in nature.

Discussion

- The majority had adverse childhood events/ mental health or other life difficulties or sexual abuse history.
 - Clearly need to screen for these factors and consider in assessment and treatment.

Discussion

- Typology
 - Range of static, dynamic, and developmental factors.
- Limitations
 - Sample size.
 - court cases - reached the level of criminal justice intervention, may not have all the information.
 - Does not account for the WWSO viewpoint of their motivation to offend.

Patterson¹, T., Hobbs¹, L., Brown¹, E.,
Purnell¹, M., McKillop², N., Raymond-
McHugh², S., & Christensen², L.

¹Department of Psychological Medicine,
University of Otago

²University of Sunshine Coast

Research supported by the University of
Otago Hume Bequest Fund



University
of Otago

ŌTĀKOU WHAKAIHU WAKA