

## elements of change

Highlighting Trends and Issues in the  
Criminal Justice System

**ORS**

OFFICE OF RESEARCH & STATISTICS

Division of Criminal Justice

Colorado Department of Public Safety

### ***Combo of Polygraph & Treatment Reveals Many Sex Offenders Offend Across Multiple Relationship, Age, Gender, & Crime Type Categories***

The ORS is finalizing work on a National Institute of Justice (NIJ) research grant evaluating the effectiveness of the polygraph as a monitoring, prevention, and behavior containment tool for convicted adult sex offenders.\* The grant is national in scope, drawing data from a survey of hundreds of probation and parole supervisors, analysis of offender case files in four states, and field research in 13 sites across the country.

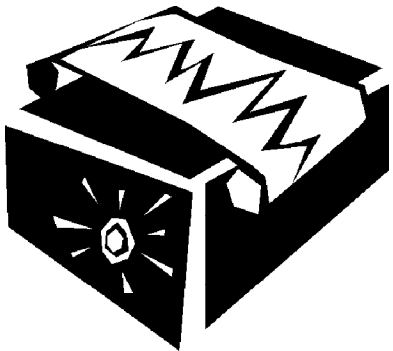
Previous studies have repeatedly proven the effectiveness of the polygraph in determining more accurate (i.e., higher) rates of offending than would have been known simply from criminal history and self-report.

Preliminary data from the NIJ polygraph study suggest that, in addition to revealing higher *rates* of offending, use of the polygraph combined with treatment can also increase criminal justice knowledge of offender **crossover**. Crossover occurs when a sex offender deviates from a single M.O. and targets victims in more than one age and/or gender category and/or exhibits multiple types of offending behavior (e.g., rape *and* exhibitionism). Crossover also includes sex offenders who cross familial boundaries with their offending patterns (e.g., an incest perpetrator who also has unrelated victims). Knowledge of crossover allows for a more comprehensive and accurate assessment of sex offender behavior, thereby increasing public safety and protecting potential crime victims.

The graphs on the following pages illustrate the polygraph's power (when used with treatment) to extract this valuable crossover information. The graphs compare two scenarios for gathering sex offender information:

- 1) "**Before Polygraph/Treatment Process**" describes what is traditionally known about a sex offender -- case file information, including criminal history and current offense data.
- 2) "**After Polygraph/Treatment Process**" depicts what is known about a sex offender from case file information *plus* knowledge gathered from a combination of treatment and polygraph monitoring.

Note, the data in this newsletter focus on the polygraph's ability to uncover *multiple types* of criminal behavior, *not* multiples of one criminal behavior.



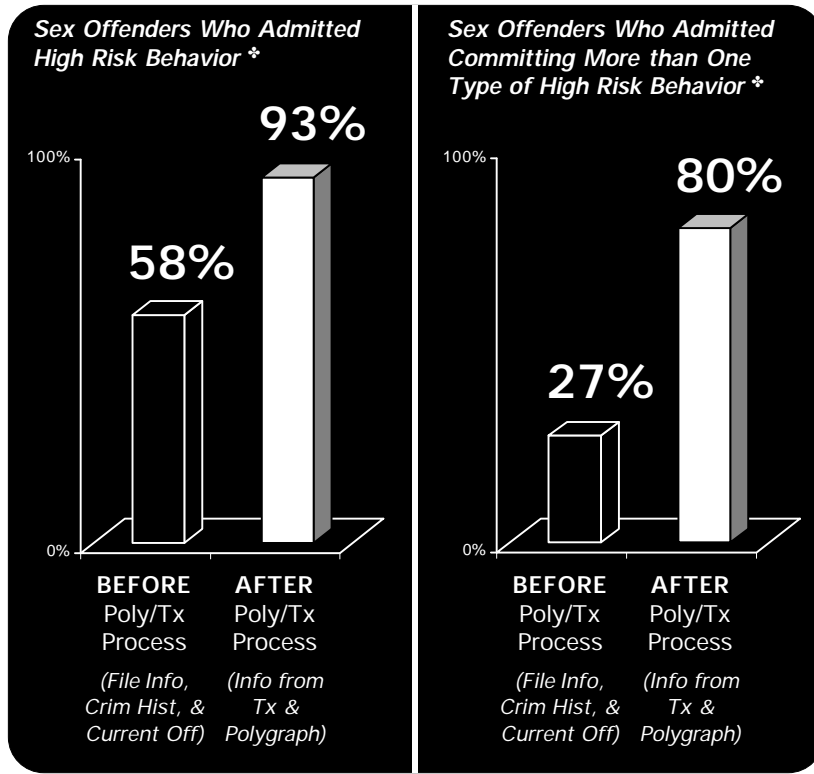
#### ***The CONTAINMENT APPROACH to Sex Offender Management***

*It is important to note that this research looked at the effectiveness of the polygraph, not as an isolated instrument, but as part of a greater containment approach to offender management. A containment approach relies on the following components:*

- 1) *Victim-oriented philosophy;*
- 2) *Clear and consistent public policy;*
- 3) *Effective containment, including polygraph examinations, sex offender treatment, and supervision/surveillance;*
- 4) *Multidisciplinary and multi-agency collaboration; and*
- 5) *Quality control to ensure accountability.*



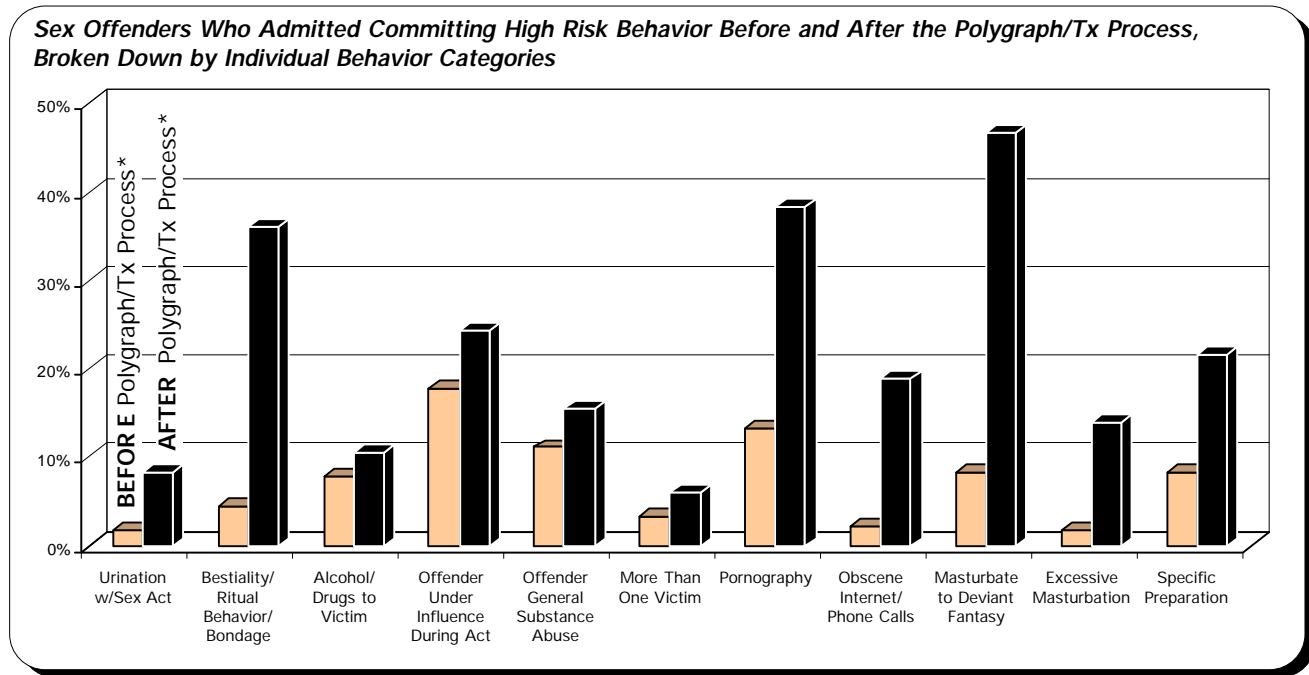
# HIGH RISK BEHAVIOR\* (Note: Scales are not always comparable across tables.)



- High Risk Behaviors include:**
- ▣ Urination with sexual act,
  - ▣ Bestiality,
  - ▣ Giving alcohol or drugs to victim,
  - ▣ Offender under the influence at time of offense,
  - ▣ Abuse of alcohol and drugs during time periods when offenses occur,
  - ▣ More than one unwilling participant,
  - ▣ Pornography,
  - ▣ Obscene internet or phone,
  - ▣ Masturbation to deviant fantasy,
  - ▣ Excessive masturbation,
  - ▣ Specific victim preparation.

**One in four sex offenders admitted to more than one high risk behavior before the polygraph process compared to four out of five after the polygraph/treatment process (27% to 80%).**

(n= 180) For study description, see page 3.

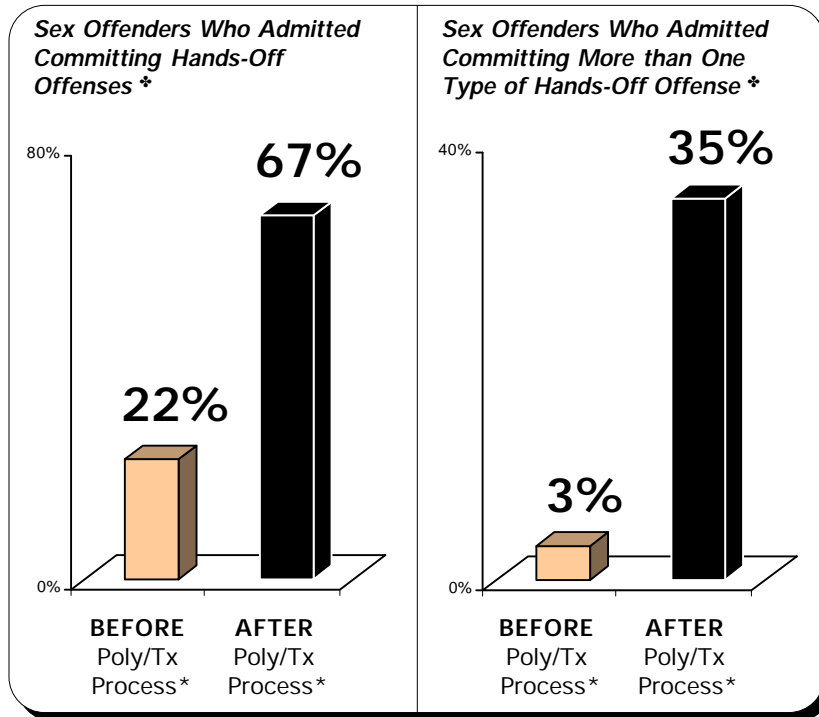


\* **Before Polygraph/Treatment Process** = case file information, including criminal history and current offense data.  
**After Polygraph/Treatment Process** = case file information *plus* knowledge gathered from a combination of treatment and polygraph monitoring.

(n= 180) For study description, see page 3.



## HANDS-OFF OFFENSES\*

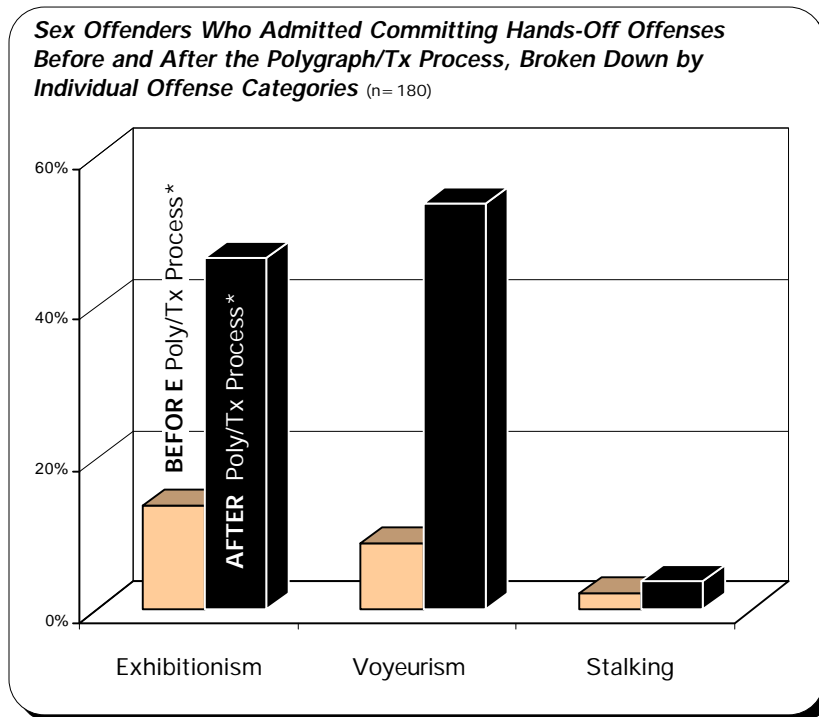


- Hands-Off Offenses include:**
- Exhibitionism,
  - Voyeurism,
  - Stalking.

*The percentage of sex offenders who admitted to committing hands-off offenses tripled (from 22% to 67%) after the polygraph/ treatment process.*

*The percentage of sex offenders who admitted to committing more than one type of hands-off offense increased tenfold (from 3% to 35%) after the polygraph/ treatment process.*

(n= 180) For study description, see note this page.



**Description of the National Institute of Justice Sex Offender Polygraph Study:**

NIJ awarded the Colorado Division of Criminal Justice a two-year grant to examine the efficacy of the post-conviction polygraph with adult sex offenders. The grant was national in scope, drawing data from a telephone survey of hundreds of probation and parole supervisors, data collection and analysis of case files in four states, and field research in 13 sites across the country.

**Data presented in this issue of *Elements of Change* reflect the findings from 180 sex offender case files from sites in three states.**

"Before Polygraph/Tx Process" and "After Polygraph/Tx Process" referred to the points at which data were collected for this study. "Before" included all of the offender's criminal justice file information, as well as information on the current offense. "After" referred to information collected about the offender's sex history as part of the polygraph process -- data gathered from the case file, treatment, polygraph sessions, and pre- and post-polygraph interviews. In one site, "After Polygraph/Tx Process" included sex history information gathered while the offender was under the threat of polygraph (but not actually polygraphed).

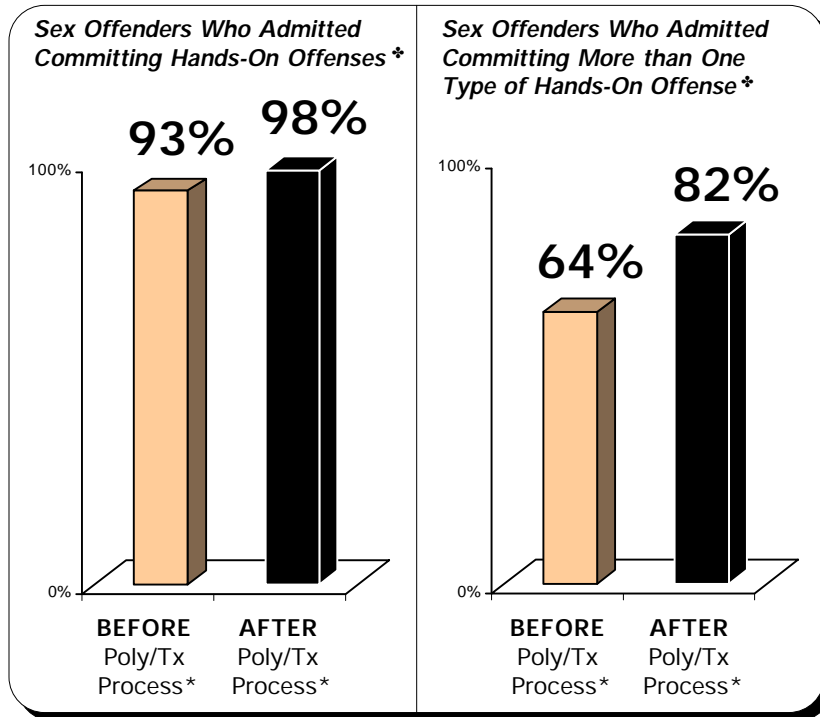
"After" includes all information gained from the polygraph process, regardless of exam outcome -- non-deceptive/deceptive/inconclusive.

NIJ Grant # D97LBVX0014.

\* **Before Polygraph/Treatment Process** = case file information, including criminal history and current offense data.  
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# HANDS-ON OFFENSES\*

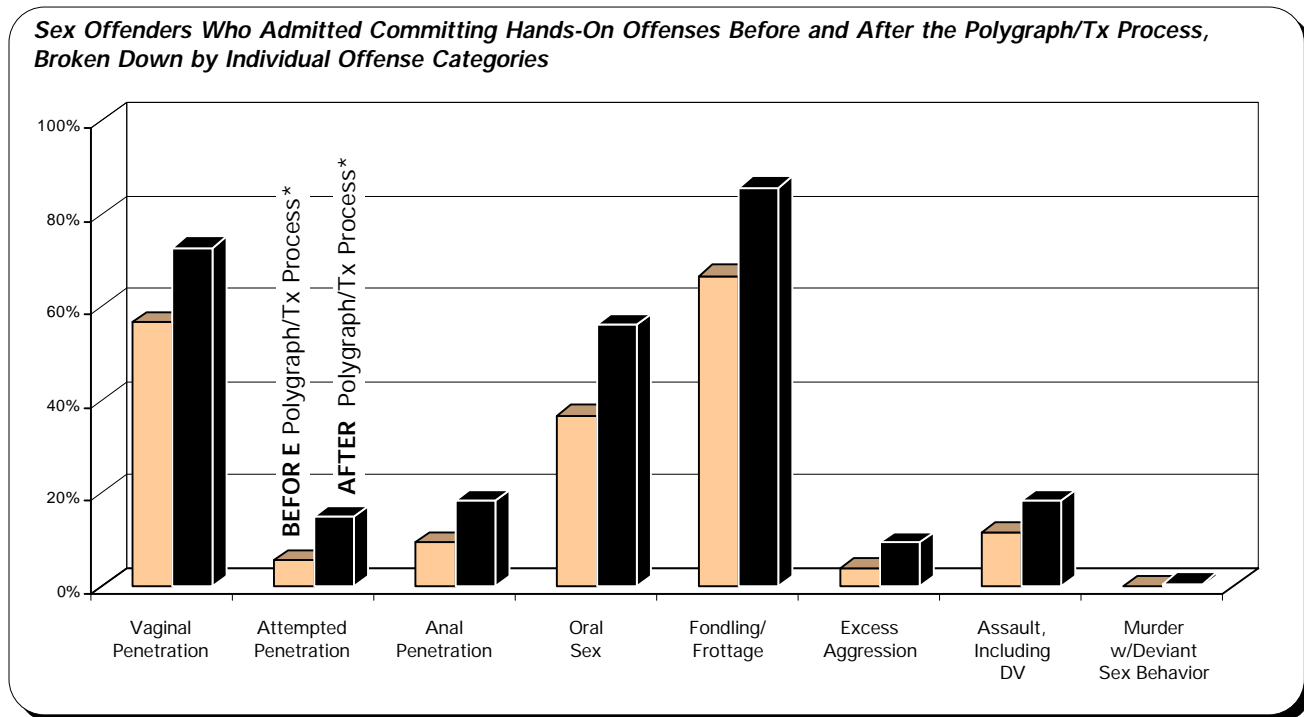


- ✿ **Hands-On Offenses include:**
  - ▣ Vaginal, anal, or attempted penetration,
  - ▣ Oral sex,
  - ▣ Fondling/frottage,
  - ▣ Excess aggression,
  - ▣ Assault including domestic violence with deviant sex.

*The percent of offenders who admitted to hands-on offenses remained fairly stable before and after the polygraph/treatment process.*

*This lack of change was partially due to the fact that a hands-on offense (the type of crime most frequently caught and convicted) was already usually part of the offender's current offense.*

(n= 180) For study description, see page 3.

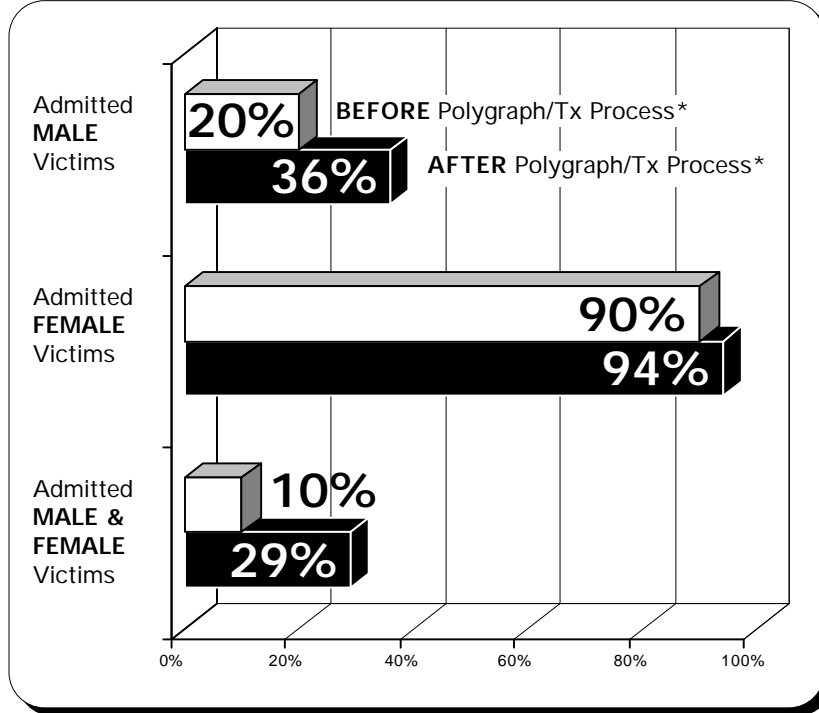


\* **Before Polygraph/Treatment Process** = case file information, including criminal history and current offense data.  
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(n= 180) For study description, see page 3.



### GENDER OF SEX OFFENDER VICTIM(S) (n=180)

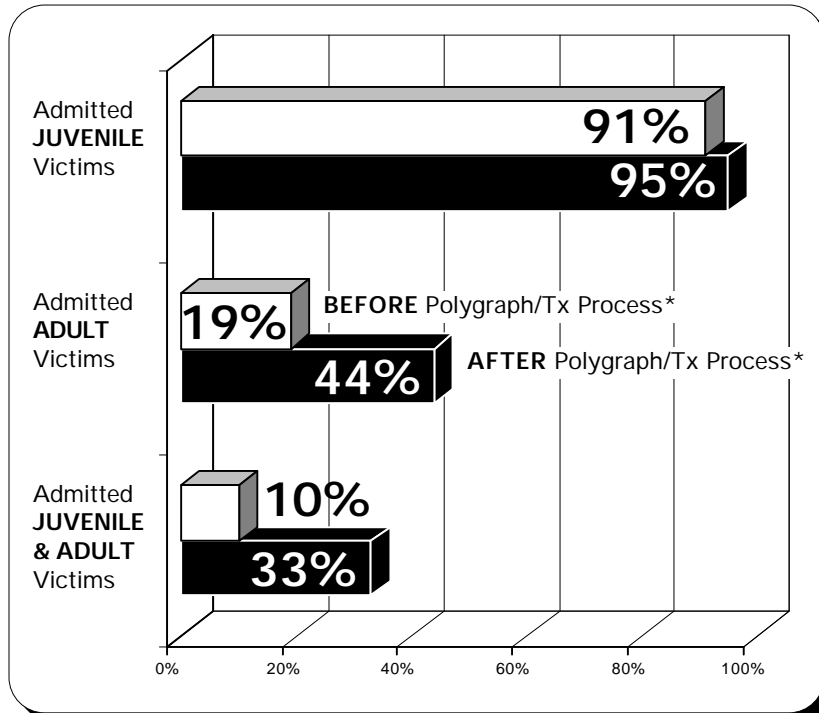


The percentage of sex offenders who admitted to male victims nearly doubled (from 20% to 36%) after the polygraph/treatment process.

The percentage of sex offenders who admitted to victims of both genders tripled (from 10% to 29%) after the polygraph/treatment process.



### AGE OF SEX OFFENDER VICTIM(S) (n=180)



The percentage of sex offenders who admitted to adult victims more than doubled (from 19% to 44%) after the polygraph/treatment process.

The percentage of sex offenders who admitted to both adult and juvenile victims tripled (from 10% to 33%) after the polygraph/treatment process.

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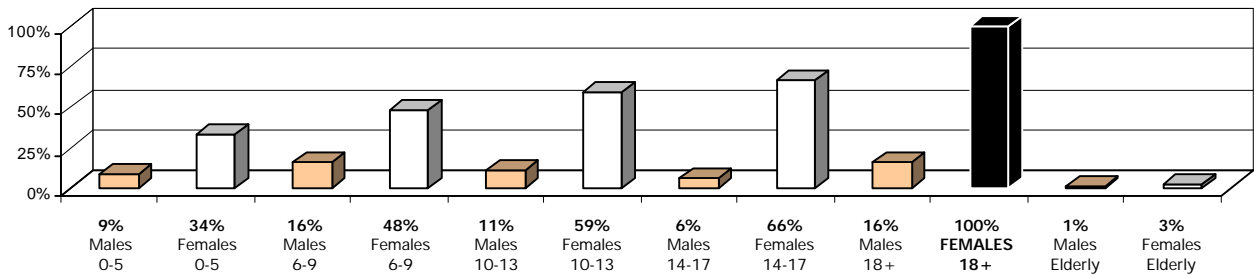
For study description, see page 3.



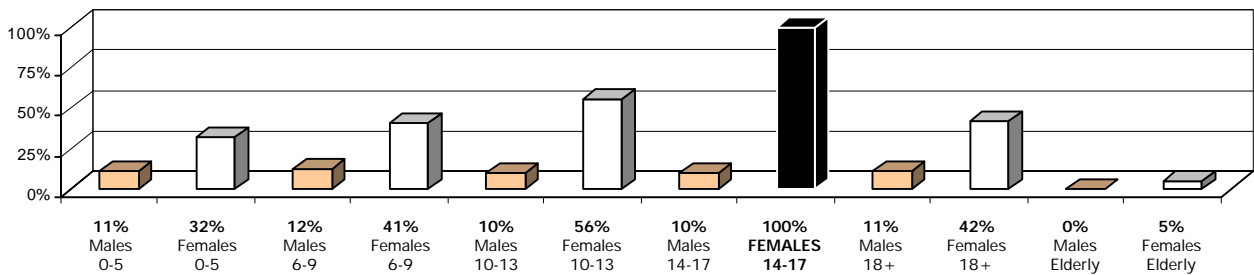
## CROSSOVER BY AGE AND GENDER

Note: Numbers on this page reflect ALL DATA gathered from case files, the polygraph, and treatment. These figures reflect ANY admitted victim, not necessarily the victim from the crime of conviction. Percentages do not total 100% because of overlap in offending categories.

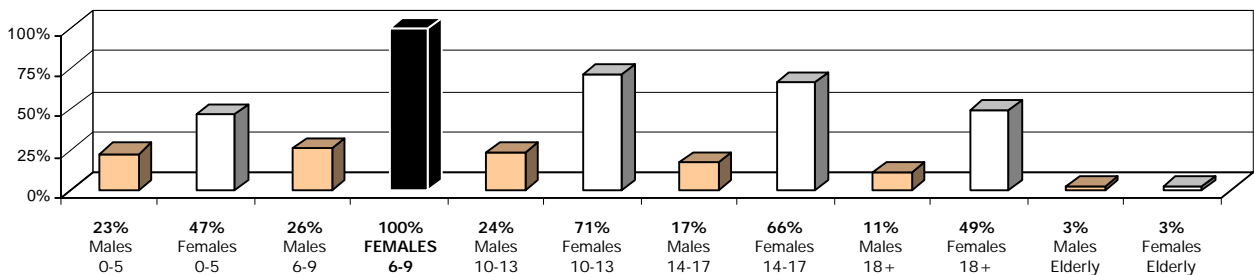
Percentage of Sex Offenders with a FEMALE Victim Age 18+, Who Also Admitted Victims in Other Categories (n=71)



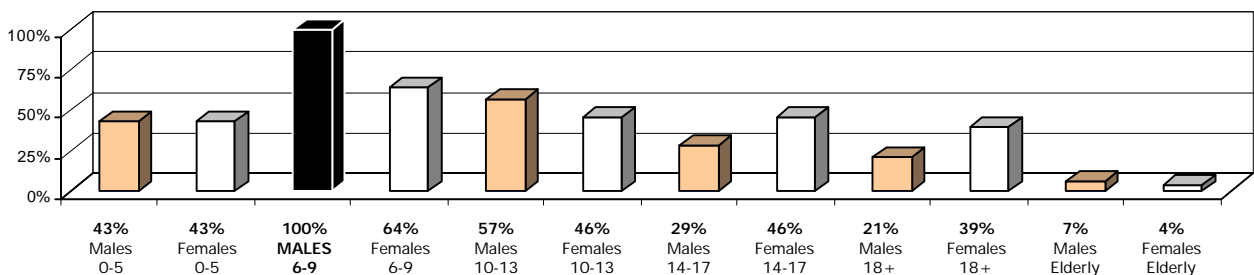
Percentage of Sex Offenders with a FEMALE Victim Age 14-17, Who Also Admitted Victims in Other Categories (n=111)



Percentage of Sex Offenders with a FEMALE Victim Age 6-9, Who Also Admitted Victims in Other Categories (n=70)



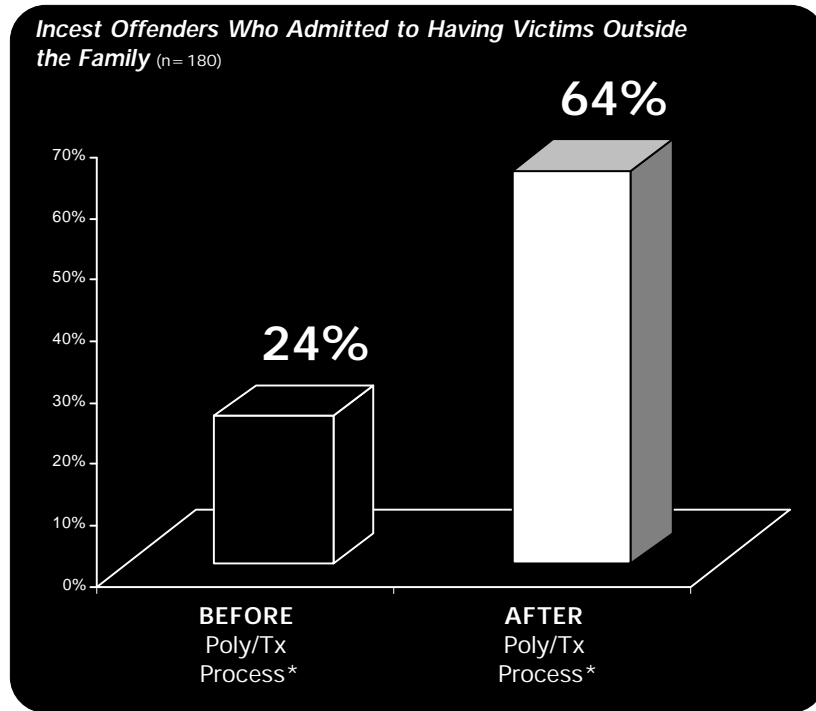
Percentage of Sex Offenders with a MALE Victim Age 6-9, Who Also Admitted Victims in Other Categories (n=28)



For study description, see page 3.



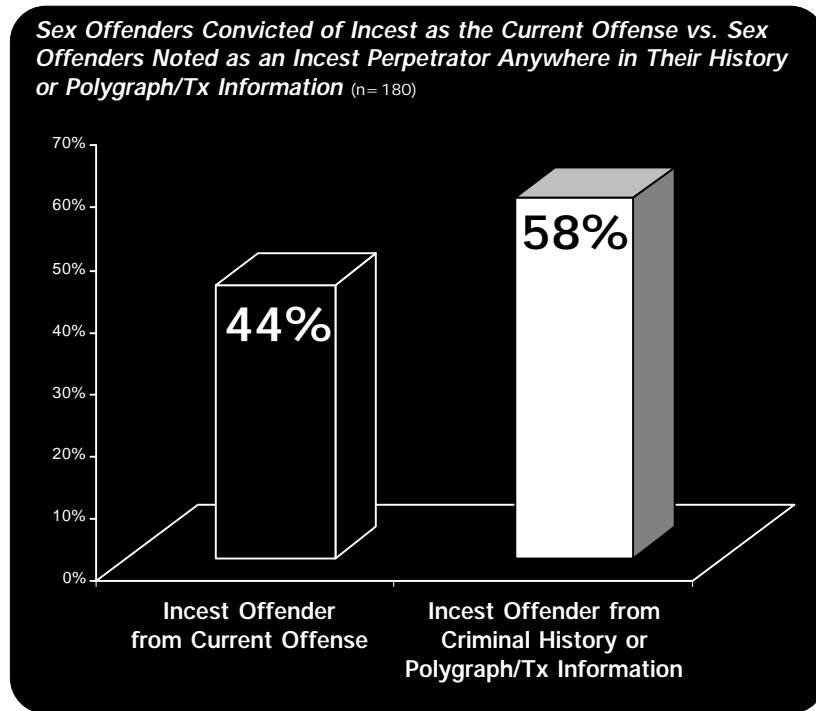
## INCEST OFFENSES



*The percent of incest perpetrators who admitted to offenses against victims outside the family increased by more than two and one-half (24% to 64%) after the polygraph/treatment process.*

\* Before Polygraph/Treatment Process = case file information, including criminal history and current offense data.  
 After Polygraph/Treatment Process = case file information plus knowledge gathered from a combination of treatment and polygraph monitoring.

For study description, see page 3.

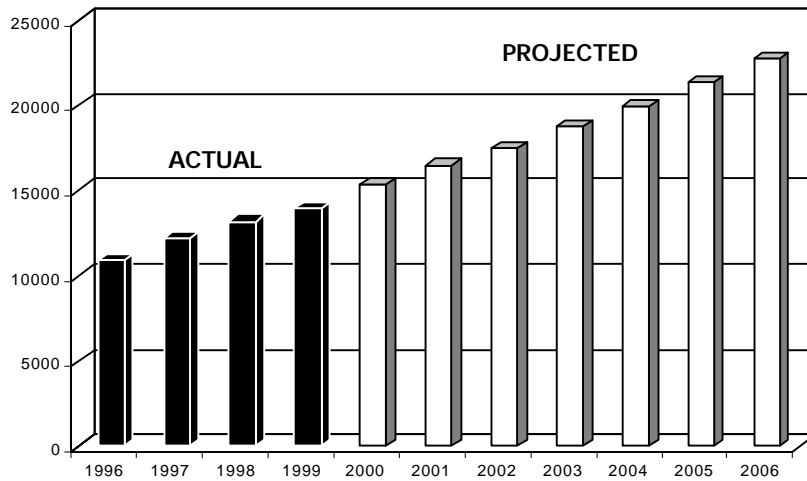


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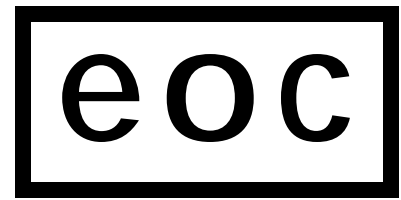
## Coming Up:

In the next issue of **Elements of Change** we will cover DCJ's recently released *Fall 1999 Adult Prison and Parole Population Projections and Juvenile Detention, Commitment, and Parole Population Projections*. For now, here are the basics.

### Colorado Adult Prison Population, Actual and Projected, 1996-2006



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