



JUVENILE RECIDIVISM IN ILLINOIS: EXAMINING RE-ARREST AND RE-INCARCERATION OF YOUTH COMMITTED FOR A COURT EVALUATION

Juvenile recidivism in Illinois: Examining re-arrest and re-incarceration of youth committed for a court evaluation

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Key findings

This study tracked re-arrest and re-incarceration of 1,230 youth incarcerated in the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice (IDJJ) for court evaluation after being released in state fiscal years 2005, 2006, and 2007. A court evaluation is a 30-, 60-, or 90-day commitment to IDJJ, during which administrators assess a youth's rehabilitative needs and inform a judge's sentencing decision. Demographic characteristics, re-arrest, and re-incarceration of the court evaluation population in Illinois were examined. Key findings include:

- 89 percent of youth incarcerated for court evaluations were male, and about half were African-American. These youth averaged 15.5 years old at admission and 15.8 at exit from the Department of Juvenile Justice.
- 36 percent of the sample had completed some high school (grades 9 through 12).
- Almost two thirds of youth in the sample were incarcerated for court evaluation for a non-violent offense, most commonly a property offense.
- About one quarter of the sample youth were released after being sentenced for a Class 2 felony, while 21 percent had been sentenced for a Class 3 felony.
- Youth incarcerated for court evaluations averaged about 4.6 prior arrests. Only 3 percent of youth had been previously incarcerated.
- Class 4 offenders tended to have more prior arrests, with an average of six. Drug offenders had the lengthiest criminal backgrounds, averaging seven prior arrests.
- Of the youth in the sample, 86 percent were re-arrested within three years of release from a youth prison. Overall, 93 percent of the sample were re-arrested within six years.
- Drug offenders had the highest three-year re-arrest rate at 93 percent, while sex offenders had the lowest (80 percent).
- Class 4 offenders had the highest overall re-arrest rate at 93 percent, while misdemeanants had the lowest (81 percent).
- Overall, 59 percent of the sample was re-incarcerated as either a juvenile or an adult, with 36 percent re-incarcerated within a year after release.
- Forty percent of the youth had at least one juvenile re-incarceration, while 29 percent were re-incarcerated as adults. 10 percent were re-incarcerated as both juveniles and adults.

Introduction

Juveniles incarcerated for court evaluations are a very unique population. These youth occupy an unclear space in the juvenile justice system in Illinois, straddling the border between probation and a full commitment to a juvenile prison. A court evaluation can be ordered when a judge feels that a more in-depth assessment of a youth would be beneficial to inform the final sentencing decision.

When youth are incarcerated for a court evaluation, they usually receive a 30-, 60-, or 90-day commitment to the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice (IDJJ). The sentencing order that accompanies the youth to the IDJJ reception facility is identical to the sentencing order for a full delinquency commitment with one major exception. IDJJ intake workers distinguish a court evaluation order from a regular commitment by the return-to-court date that is added to the sentencing order, which is usually within that 90 day window. While in IDJJ, these youth are subject to the department's disciplinary procedures, and may incur additional time in a facility for behavioral infractions. When the youth returns before the judge after the assessment period, the judge may vacate the youth's sentence or impose a different formal sentence, including a full delinquency commitment to IDJJ.

The way the sentence is ultimately terminated is another of the key distinguishing features when comparing a court evaluation to a full delinquency commitment. While youth exiting from a full commitment will be supervised on parole, youth exiting after a court evaluation are no longer under the supervision of IDJJ once the sentence is vacated.

The other major distinguishing characteristic of a court evaluation is the more determinate length of commitment. Youth who receive a court evaluation are usually limited to 30-, 60-, or 90-days in an IDJJ facility, with the possibility of short extensions by the court or for disciplinary infractions while in IDJJ custody. A full delinquency commitment, however, is subject to an indeterminate sentence based on the level of severity of the committing offense.

Given their unique place in the juvenile justice system, youth incarcerated for court evaluations are an especially understudied population in Illinois. These individuals are not technically diverted, since they end up in a juvenile prison. However, they are not fully committed to IDJJ, since they are there to be assessed and not as part of a formal commitment. Youth receiving court evaluations have recently become a focus for more concentrated diversion efforts, with the understanding that local communities may be better suited to conduct evaluations and provide services to address criminogenic risks and needs. Since there is currently no research available specifically examining these youth, policymakers and practitioners would likely benefit from a more complete understanding of this population and its offending patterns.

Studying juvenile recidivism

Recidivism is one of the most commonly studied outcomes in criminal justice research and is frequently used as a performance measure for criminal and juvenile justice programs. Recidivism is generally defined as re-arrest, re-conviction, re-incarceration, or some combination of these,

depending on a number of background factors. Re-arrest is the least restrictive definition, since an arrest does not require proof beyond a reasonable doubt that a crime actually occurred, or that the individual arrested committed it. Arrest information is often the most readily available data source for criminal justice involvement, so it is frequently used to measure recidivism. Re-conviction is often considered a more accurate measure of reoffending than re-arrest, as it requires an admission or finding of guilt beyond a reasonable doubt. However, conviction information is usually incomplete or unavailable in many jurisdictions due to looser reporting requirements.

Re-incarceration is a more restrictive definition of recidivism, which limits the measure of reoffending to incidents for which some standard of proof has been met and which are considered serious enough to merit re-incarceration. However, a return to prison does not always involve a new offense. If an individual is released with supervision, he can be re-incarcerated for violating the conditions of supervision, which may not necessarily involve criminal activity. Due to the nature of corrections population management, prison admissions are probably the most accurate administrative data source for measuring recidivism. Each of these definitions of recidivism provides a different view of an individual's offending behavior after release from a correctional institution. The inclusion of multiple measures of recidivism allows researchers and practitioners to gain a more complete understanding of individual recidivism patterns, and also allows for easier comparison of results across studies and jurisdictions that use different definitions (Snyder & Sickmund, 2006).

Much of what is currently known about juvenile recidivism rates comes from government-run juvenile justice departments. For these agencies, a recidivism rate is usually a measure of the effectiveness of two main agency functions: rehabilitative programming in facilities or supervision after release from a facility. The way recidivism is measured depends on the data available to these government agencies, often from an agency's internal recordkeeping system.

Juvenile corrections agencies often use re-incarceration as the primary definition for measuring recidivism (Illinois Department of Corrections [IDOC], 2006; North Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention [NCDJJD], 2004; Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice [VDJJ], 2005). However, some agencies have access to additional sources of data and other resources, and can therefore define recidivism in multiple ways (NCDJJD, 2004; VDJJ, 2005). For example, the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice sent out a survey to all 50 states seeking to determine how juvenile recidivism was measured across jurisdictions. The 27 states that responded used a number of different methodologies, follow-up periods, and definitions, resulting in recidivism rates ranging from 8 percent to 78 percent (VDJJ, 2005).

Perhaps the biggest challenge in measuring juvenile recidivism is following youth into the adult system, as it can be a difficult process to match juvenile and adult records. Much of the literature studying the transition from the juvenile system into the adult system has focused on offending trajectories and criminal careers (see Blumstein & Cohen, 1987; Moffitt, 1993; and Nieuwbeerta, Nagin, & Blokland, 2009). However, a major limitation of recidivism research continues to be underrepresentation of reoffending. By counting adult re-arrest and incarceration (Lin, 2007) and referrals of juveniles to adult court (Grunwald, Lockwood, Harris, & Mennis, 2010), more recent studies have been able to provide a more complete picture of juvenile re-offending. Regardless of jurisdiction, the juvenile justice system has an age ceiling that is dependent upon state law

(VDJJ, 2005), so studies that ignore adult outcomes cannot account for offending by individuals who have aged out of the juvenile system during a study period. When considering that the upper age for juvenile jurisdiction is 17 in many states (VDJJ, 2005), and research findings have shown that offending behavior is close to peak levels starting around age 18 (Nagin & Land, 1993), following juveniles into the adult system should have an important methodological role in any juvenile recidivism study.

Illinois last published an official juvenile recidivism rate in 2005, finding that 48 percent of youth were re-incarcerated in a juvenile facility within a three year period (IDOC, 2006). Although it is unclear whether or not this rate included youth who were incarcerated during court evaluations, this number only accounted for re-incarceration in a juvenile correctional facility within three years. However, as many individuals are close to age 17 at the time of their release, they would not be re-admitted to a juvenile facility for a new offense. Such offenders would be dealt with in the adult criminal justice system. Studies that limit themselves strictly to juvenile justice data sources risk underestimating true re-offending rates of individuals transitioning from the juvenile to the adult system.

Illinois juvenile correctional system

The juvenile justice system in Illinois is comprised of various local, county, and state agencies. In Illinois, individuals who are 16 or younger at the time of an offense are considered juveniles and are processed through the juvenile justice system. In 2010, 17-year-olds charged with misdemeanor offenses also were processed as juveniles. Juvenile prison facilities are operated by IDJJ, and a youth must be at least 13 years of age to be incarcerated. At trial and sentencing, a youth who has pleaded or been found guilty (adjudicated delinquent) may be adjudicated a ward of the state and remanded to the custody of IDJJ. These are referred to by IDJJ as delinquency commitments, and these youth receive indeterminate sentences. The only exception is that the youth must be released by their 21st birthday or within the maximum time an adult would serve for the same offense [705 *ILCS* 405/5-710(7)].

Despite a growing number of diversion opportunities targeting court evaluation commitments and the overall decrease in juvenile crime both in Illinois and nationally, significant interest exists in better understanding juvenile incarceration and its consequences. Having more information on youth released from correctional facilities will allow Illinois to better address the impact of incarceration on society, public safety, and state finances. Current official data for youth released from IDJJ facilities is limited to re-incarceration within three years. Little is known about where these youth are returning, their re-offending patterns, or whether they are re-arrested or incarcerated as adults. The purpose of this study is to help address this lack of information by tracking re-arrest and re-incarceration of individuals incarcerated during court evaluations, both as juveniles and as adults, after initial release through November 2010.

This study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. At what rate are these youth re-arrested for new offenses after being released from IDJJ?
2. At what rate are these youth re-incarcerated as juveniles for a new offense?

3. At what rate are these youth subsequently committed to correctional facilities as adults for a new criminal offense?

Methodology

Sample

The Illinois Department of Corrections provided researchers with facility admission and exit files, from which a sample of all youth released from IDJJ facilities during state fiscal years (July 1 through June 30) 2005, 2006, and 2007 was drawn. From this initial group, only youth who were released from facilities after a new court commitment were included. Youth exiting facilities from a technical violation of parole were excluded from the sample. The sample also excluded youth convicted as adults in criminal court but housed in IDJJ, since they are technically adult offenders. Finally, if a youth exited IDJJ multiple times for new offenses during the three-year period, their record started with the earliest exit and researchers considered the remaining incarcerations to be recidivism events.

Overall, there were 4,282 exits in the sample including both full delinquency commitments and court evaluation commitments. Some youth appeared in both the court evaluation commitment sample and the delinquency commitment sample (276 individuals). This study examined only the sample of 1,230 youth exiting from court evaluation commitments. Results for delinquency commitments are presented in a companion report (Bostwick, Boulger, and Powers, 2012).

Arrest data

The youth in the sample were linked to their prior arrests and post-release arrests as recorded in Illinois' central repository for criminal history records information (CHRI), housed by the Illinois State Police (ISP) and accessed electronically by research staff at the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA) via an on-line ad hoc connection. CHRI contains information on juvenile and adult arrests that is statutorily mandated to be collected by arresting agencies [20 *ILCS* 2630/5 (a)]. For adult arrests, state's attorney's offices, circuit courts, and state and correctional institutions are required to submit dispositions to ISP, though this information is not reliably reported. At booking, juveniles ages 10 and older must be fingerprinted if arrested for an offense that would be considered a felony if committed by an adult, and may be fingerprinted when arrested for Class A and B misdemeanors. The arresting agency enters the fingerprint images and arrest information onto either a paper card or into an electronic Livescan system and submits them to ISP for processing and posting to the individuals criminal history record (rap sheet). Once processed, fingerprints are assigned a unique identifier, the State Identification Number (SID). A SID can be used to access all other reported criminal justice events associated with an individual. Approximately 94 percent of all fingerprint arrest cards are submitted electronically via Livescan, which greatly facilitates posting of that information to the CHRI system.

ICJIA has access to CHRI through a special connection to ISP's backup server, which allows research staff to pull electronic extracts of arrest information for specific individuals. Using name and date of birth for the 1,230 sample records from the IDJJ exit files, exact matches in the CHRI system were first selected and reviewed. The unique SIDs assigned to those names in CHRI could be used to pull the associated criminal history information. If there was not an exact match, researchers used the first three letters of the last name, the first three letters of the first name, and the date of birth. An SQL query into the system returned the unique SIDs of potential matches. The researchers then manually examined the potential matches to confirm their accuracy and make adjustments as needed. Once matches were confirmed, all criminal history records for the matched individuals were pulled, cleaned, and analyzed.

Arrest data were pulled from the CHRI Ad Hoc connection on November 22, 2010, and arrest incidents were limited to statutorily reportable arrests (felonies and Class A and B misdemeanors). Minor traffic violations and offenses that were Class C misdemeanors or less serious were excluded. Additionally, CHRI entries for an issuance of a warrant or ordinance violations were excluded from consideration as either prior or subsequent arrest events. For the 1,230 individuals in the sample, arrest records were matched for 1,205 (98 percent).

It is possible that the missing individuals could have actually had an arrest that was not submitted to ISP, or if submitted, may not have been complete enough to be posted to the CHRI system. Arresting agencies are not required to submit misdemeanor arrests to CHRI for juveniles, so it is possible that if such arrests occurred, they were not submitted. Unfortunately, there was no way to ascertain the reason for these missing arrests in CHRI.

For this study, offenses were aligned as closely as possible to statutory definitions. For example, offenses against a person include battery and homicide. Property offenses were aligned with the offenses against property chapter of the *Illinois Compiled Statutes*, with the exception of robbery, which was defined as an offense against a person. Sex offenses, including criminal sexual assault, were placed into their own category separate from offenses against persons. A separate variable for violent offenses was also created based on a definition found in the Rights of Crime Victims and Witnesses Act [725 ILCS 120/ et seq.]. Violent offenses were defined as any offense that involved bodily harm or the threat of bodily harm, and encompassed both offenses against persons and violent sex offenses. However, not all offenses against a person are considered violent (such as reckless conduct or aiding child abduction) nor are all sex offenses considered violent (such as prostitution). A complete list of the offenses classified as violent is provided in *Appendix A*.

Incarceration data

In addition to matching youth to their arrest records, the sample was also linked to any incarcerations (from 1993) in IDJJ facilities using the IDJJ number. Each youth is assigned a unique identification number upon initial admission to an IDJJ facility. That number remains a unique identifier for that youth for all subsequent incarcerations in IDJJ. Admissions were examined back to state fiscal year 1993 to ensure that all prior incarcerations were accounted for. In addition to prior incarcerations, subsequent admissions to IDJJ through state fiscal year 2009, the latest year available, were also pulled.

Since the unique ID number is specific to IDJJ, it is not carried over for a youth who is subsequently incarcerated as an adult in the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC). This required different matching procedures for linking IDJJ data to IDOC records. Using all IDOC admissions between 1993 and 2009, researchers first queried for exact name and date of birth matches. After reviewing those matches for accuracy, the researchers then sought matches using the first three letters of the first name, first three letters of the last name, and date of birth. After the matches were reviewed and finalized, all admissions to IDOC through state fiscal year 2009 were pulled.

Data limitations

There are some limitations that should be considered when examining the results of this study. Given the very unique nature of the court evaluation population, the results reported here may not be generalizable to other jurisdictions. Due to the unique nature of these youth, attempts to compare or generalize these results with those from another state should be done after a comparable population is identified. Although youth sent to IDJJ for court evaluation are generally at lower risk to recidivate than those sent for full commitments, they may be considered higher risk than probation populations or other diverted juveniles.

Juvenile arrest data is generally more limited than adult arrests, due to slightly different reporting requirements. Misdemeanor arrests are not required to be reported for juveniles, so it is likely that some arrests are missing. Further, convictions and other court data are not reliably reported to CHRI. Because of this, accurate re-conviction data for individuals are not readily available. Treatment data are also difficult to obtain in Illinois. Currently, services or treatment a youth receives while in prison are only recorded in paper master files, which makes determining rehabilitative progress difficult. As a result, there is no way to determine the extent to which youth incarcerated for court evaluations received services like substance abuse treatment or mental health treatment during their brief stays in IDJJ, and what effect treatment may have had on recidivism.

The datasets used in this study are generally recognized as being among the best to use for criminal justice research in Illinois. IDJJ files are consistently updated and fixed as errors are found, and CHRI files are maintained and updated by ISP as new events are added to the CHRI system and old events are sealed or expunged. Although some inconsistencies were found in both sets of files, these records were manually checked and errors were fixed using updated data as they were identified.

Findings

Sample demographics

The sample of youth incarcerated for court evaluations consisted of 1,230 unique individuals. Out of these youth, 36.5 percent (n=449) were released in SFY05, 32.3 percent (n=397) were released in SFY06, and the remaining 31.2 percent (n=384) were released in SFY07. Most of the

youth in this sample were black (52.8 percent, n=650), just more than one-third were white (36.3 percent, n=446), and just less than 11 percent were Hispanic (n=132).

As would be expected based on general correctional population characteristics, almost all of the youth in the sample were male (88.9 percent, n=1,093). Youth in the sample tended to be slightly younger at admission and exit than the maximum age of juvenile jurisdiction in Illinois (age 16), with mean ages of 15.47 (SD=1.2) and 15.75 (SD =1.2), respectively. The standard deviation, abbreviated as SD, is the typical distance of a value from the mean and is used as a measure of the variability in the distribution of a variable. When compared to the mean, a large standard deviation indicates a high level of variation, with values for that variable spread out from the mean. A small standard deviation indicates that the values are more closely grouped around the mean. The average education level for the court evaluation sample was 8th grade. Only 36 percent of the sample had completed any high school (9th through 12th grade or GED), while 45 percent had completed grade school. Most of the youth in the sample were admitted to IDJJ for a non-violent offense (64 percent, n=788). The largest group of individuals were admitted to IDJJ for a property offense (46 percent, n=568), while 33 percent were committed for an offense against a person (n=409), about 10 percent for a drug offense (n=117), 6 percent for a weapons offense (n=76), and 3 percent for a sex offense (n=33). The remaining 2 percent were committed for *other* offenses (n=27). A more detailed examination of the sample characteristics among those incarcerated for court evaluations is found in *Table 1*.

Table 1
Sample descriptive characteristics

Characteristic	n	Percent
Race		
White	446	36.3%
Black	650	52.8%
Hispanic	132	10.7%
Other	2	0.2%
Sex		
Female	137	11.1%
Male	1,093	88.9%
Last grade completed		
5 th grade	15	1.3%
6 th grade	53	4.4%
7 th grade	164	13.7%
Grade school graduate (8 th grade)	541	45.1%
9 th grade	282	23.5%
10 th grade	117	9.8%
11 th grade	22	1.8%
High school graduate/GED	6	0.5%

Table 1: Sample descriptive characteristics, continued

Characteristic	n	Percent
Age at admission		
13	64	5.2%
14	191	15.5%
15	344	28.0%
16	422	34.3%
17	175	14.2%
18	30	2.4%
19	4	0.3%
Age at exit		
13	42	3.4%
14	144	11.7%
15	297	24.1%
16	410	33.3%
17	279	22.7%
18	51	4.1%
19	7	0.6%
Violent offense		
No	788	64.1%
Yes	442	35.9%
Offense type		
Person	409	33.3%
Property	568	46.2%
Drug	117	9.5%
Weapons	76	6.2%
Sex	33	2.7%
Other	27	2.2%
Offense class		
Misdemeanor	184	15.0%
4	155	12.6%
3	262	21.3%
2	326	26.5%
1	242	19.7%
X	61	5.0%

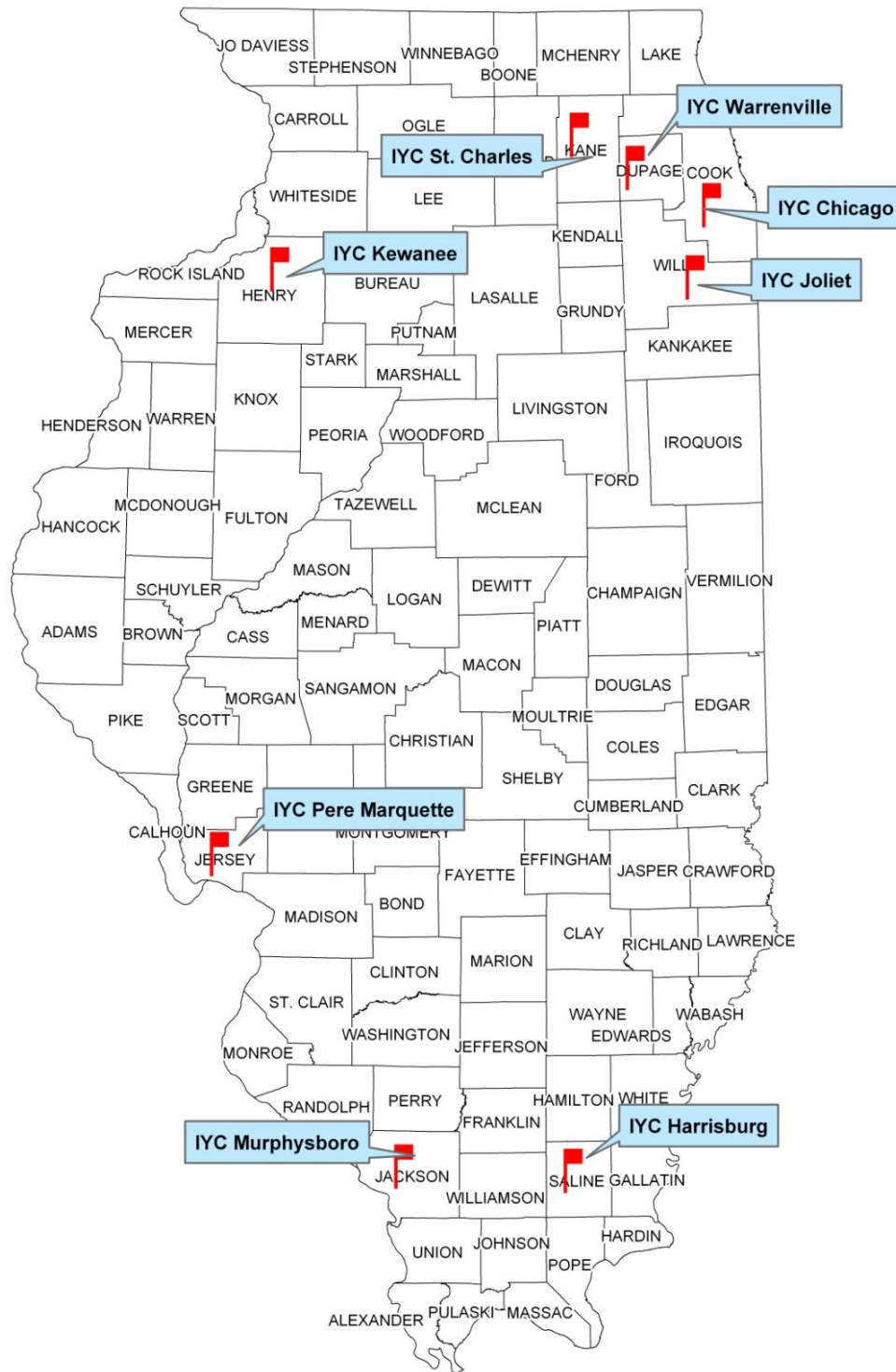
Table 1: Sample descriptive characteristics, continued

Characteristic	n	Percent
Security Level		
Minimum	415	34.2%
Medium	766	63.1%
Maximum	33	2.7%
Release institution		
IYC – Chicago	195	15.9%
IYC – Harrisburg	153	12.4%
IYC – Joliet	117	9.5%
IYC – Kewanee	99	8.0%
IYC – Murphysboro	77	6.3%
IYC – Pere Marquette	36	2.9%
IYC – St. Charles	455	37.0%
IYC – Warrenville	98	8.0%

A large majority of these youth were exiting after a felony sentence (85 percent, n=1,046). Class 2 felonies were the most common offense class (27 percent, n=326), followed by Class 3 offenses (21 percent, n=262). State law allows for juveniles to be sentenced to IDJJ for misdemeanors, but this population was relatively small.

Security levels are assessed at multiple times during a youth’s stay in IDJJ, and are used in deciding facility placement. These assessments are intended to reflect the risk the youth pose to themselves, other inmates, and staff as well as the risk of flight. To gain an accurate representation of the individual’s risk level close to the time of their release, only the last assessed security level was considered. This security level for most individuals was medium (63 percent, n=766), with only about 3 percent being classified as maximum security at release (n=33). Youth in the sample had exited from all eight IDJJ facilities, most frequently from St. Charles (37 percent, n=455). About 16 percent were released from IYC Chicago, a step-down facility mainly for youth close to release (n=195), and about 12 percent exited from IYC Harrisburg (n=153). Figure 1 is a representation of the locations of Illinois Youth Centers throughout the state.

Figure 1
Location of IDJJ Youth Centers



Note: The location of the flags within the counties does not indicate the exact location of the facilities.

Prior arrests

Total prior arrests for the individuals in the court evaluation sample (for those with available CHRI) ranged from 0 to 27 arrests, with an average of 4.56 (SD =4.1) and a median of 3, indicating a slightly positive skew.

Of the 1,205 youth who had available CHRI, 80 percent had at least one felony arrest prior to their incarceration (n=949), and 60 percent had at least one prior violent arrest (n=746). Further breaking down prior arrests into offense types, 70 percent of the youth had at least one prior property arrest (n=848), and 58 percent had at least one prior offense against a person (n=698). Only a third had a prior arrest for a drug offense (n=400), about 12 percent had a prior weapons offense (n=149), 8 percent had a prior status offense arrest (n=98), and only 3 percent had a prior sex offense arrest (n=41).

When arrest history was broken down by charges, these youth averaged 6.06 prior charges (SD=5.2) and total prior charges ranged from 0 to 34. The sample averaged 1.62 prior violent charges (SD =2.1) and 2.66 prior felony charges (SD =2.8). Neither the violent nor felony categories are exclusive. For example, a felony arrest for an offense against a person would be counted as a person arrest, a violent arrest, and a felony arrest. *Table 2* provides an overview of prior arrest statistics broken down into offense types and individual charges.

Table 2
Prior arrest descriptive characteristics

Variable	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Median	SD
Prior arrests	0	27	4.56	3.00	4.06
Prior violent arrests	0	12	1.41	1.00	1.78
Prior felony arrests	0	13	2.13	2.00	2.12
Prior person arrests	0	12	1.39	1.00	1.81
Prior sex arrests	0	2	0.04	0.00	0.19
Prior property arrests	0	17	2.02	1.00	2.42
Prior drug arrests	0	16	0.81	0.00	1.73
Prior weapons arrests	0	4	0.14	0.00	0.41
Prior status arrests	0	6	0.13	0.00	0.53
Prior <i>Other</i> arrests	0	6	0.62	0.00	0.98
Prior charges	0	34	6.06	5.00	5.17
Prior violent charges	0	20	1.62	1.00	2.12
Prior felony charges	0	26	2.66	2.00	2.76

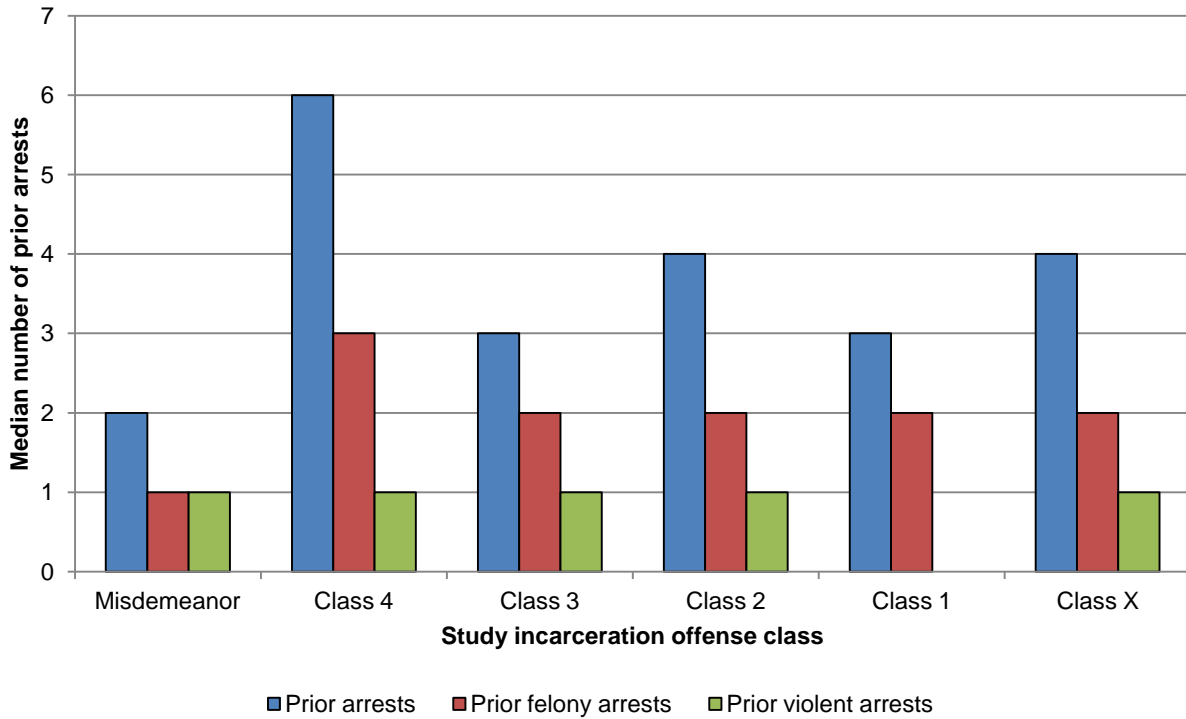
Table 3 provides information on prior arrests by incarceration offense type, and offense class for which the youth was being evaluated in IDJJ. As seen in the table, counts of prior arrests are typically skewed so the median provides a more accurate measure of central tendency.

Table 3
Descriptive statistics for prior arrests by incarceration offense class and type

Study incarceration offense	Prior arrests			Prior felony arrests			Prior violent arrests		
	Mean	SD	Median	Mean	SD	Median	Mean	SD	Median
Offense Class									
Misdemeanor	3.57	3.48	2.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.00
Class 4	6.34	4.36	6.00	3.00	2.00	3.00	2.00	2.00	1.00
Class 3	4.46	3.98	3.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.00
Class 2	4.9	4.37	4.00	3.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	2.00	1.00
Class 1	3.95	3.82	3.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	2.00	0.00
Class X	4.35	3.38	4.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.00
Offense type									
Person	4.72	4.12	3.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00
Property	4.07	3.86	3.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	0.00
Drug	7.16	4.58	7.00	4.00	3.00	4.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Weapons	5	3.95	4.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	2.00	1.00
Sex	2.87	2.47	2.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Other	2.78	2.62	3.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.00
Overall	4.58	4.09	3.00	2.15	2.13	2.00	1.42	1.79	1.00

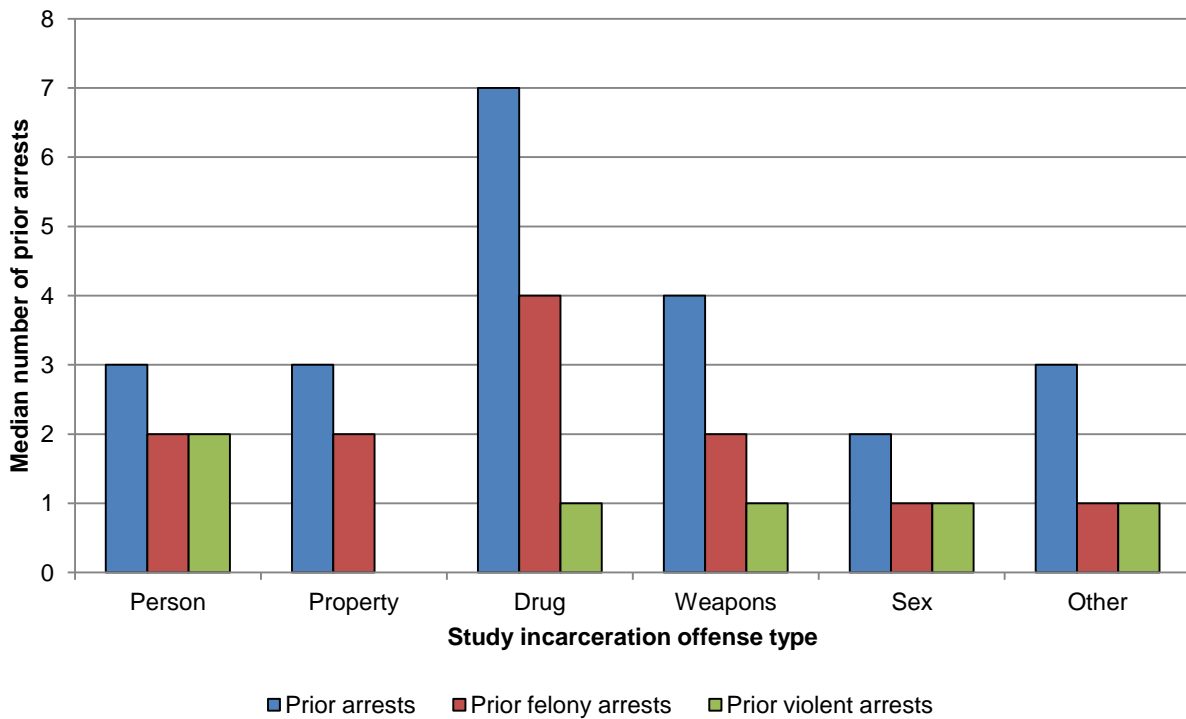
Individuals who were incarcerated for Class 4 offenses had a median of six prior arrests, followed by those admitted on Class 2 and Class X felonies (median of 4). Class 1 and Class 3 offenders both had a median of three prior arrests, with misdemeanants having a median of two prior arrests. There were no individuals given court evaluations for a charge of first degree murder, so that offense is not included in this table. As *Figure 2* shows, prior arrests for felonies and violent offenses were fairly evenly distributed across offense classes.

Figure 2
Median number of prior arrests by incarceration offense class



Youth who were exiting from a court evaluation for a drug offense had a median of seven prior arrests, the highest among all offense types. Weapons offenders were the next highest with a median of four. Sex offenders had the lowest median number of prior arrests, with only two. As shown in *Figure 3*, drug offenders also had the highest median number of prior felony arrests, while youth who had committed offenses against persons had the highest median number of prior violent arrests.

Figure 3
Median number of prior arrests by incarceration offense type



Prior incarcerations

While the youth in the sample had somewhat extensive prior arrest histories, they were very unlikely to have been in IDJJ prior to their evaluation; only 3 percent had a prior IDJJ stay (n=34). Of these 34 youth, only four had more than one prior incarceration. *Table 4* provides more information on the prior incarcerations for the sample.

Table 4
Prior incarceration descriptive characteristics

Variable	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Median	SD
Prior incarcerations	0	3	0.03	0.00	0.20
Prior new sentence incarcerations	0	3	0.03	0.00	0.19
Prior technical violation incarcerations	0	1	0.00	0.00	0.03
Prior violent incarcerations	0	2	0.01	0.00	0.11
Prior felony incarcerations	0	2	0.02	0.00	0.15
Prior person incarcerations	0	2	0.01	0.00	0.11
Prior sex incarcerations	0	0	0.00	0.00	0.00
Prior property incarcerations	0	3	0.02	0.00	0.15

Table 4: Prior incarceration descriptive characteristics, continued

Variable	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Median	SD
Prior drug incarcerations	0	1	0.00	0.00	0.04
Prior weapons incarcerations	0	1	0.00	0.00	0.04
Prior <i>Other</i> incarcerations	0	1	0.00	0.00	0.03

Recidivism

Recidivism after release from IDJJ was defined in four ways: (1) any re-arrest; (2) any re-incarceration as a juvenile or an adult; (3) re-incarceration resulting from a new conviction in juvenile court; and (4) incarceration in an adult facility or an incarceration resulting from a conviction in adult criminal court. A court evaluation commitment does not include parole supervision after release, so re-incarceration for a technical violation of parole was not included in these analyses. It is important to note that youth subsequently admitted to IDJJ facilities for convictions in the criminal court were defined as “adult” incarcerations. For this study, re-incarceration as a juvenile or an adult was based on how the courts prosecuted the offense, rather than solely by the type of facility in which the youth was incarcerated. Some youth convicted as adults may have been sent to a juvenile facility because of age requirements for incarceration in an adult facility. These youth have entered the adult criminal justice system by virtue of their conviction in an adult court and were considered to be adult recidivists. However, the same distinction was not made for arrests, as transfers to adult criminal court are sought by prosecutors or the court and not by law enforcement.

Re-arrest

Of the 1,205 youth admitted for court evaluation who were matched to their criminal histories, only about 7 percent (n=83) were not re-arrested during the follow-up period ranging from three to seven years depending on year of exit. These youth were re-arrested an average of five times ($s=4.3$), with a median of four arrests. About 76 percent of the sample was re-arrested for a felony after release (n=911), with an average of two felony arrests and a high of 12. Just more than 59 percent of these youth were re-arrested for at least one violent offense (n=713), with an average of 1.29 ($s=1.8$) and a median of one. Two thirds of the youth incarcerated for court evaluation were re-arrested for a property offense (n=803), while about 57 percent were re-arrested for an offense against a person (n=690), 50 percent were re-arrested for a drug offense (n=602), and 17 percent were re-arrested for a weapons offense (n=207). About 56 percent of the sample was re-arrested for an offense categorized as *other* (n=652), 19 percent were re-arrested for a status offense (n=230), and less than 3 percent were re-arrested for a sex offense (n=33). Re-arrest characteristics for these youth are further described in *Table 5*.

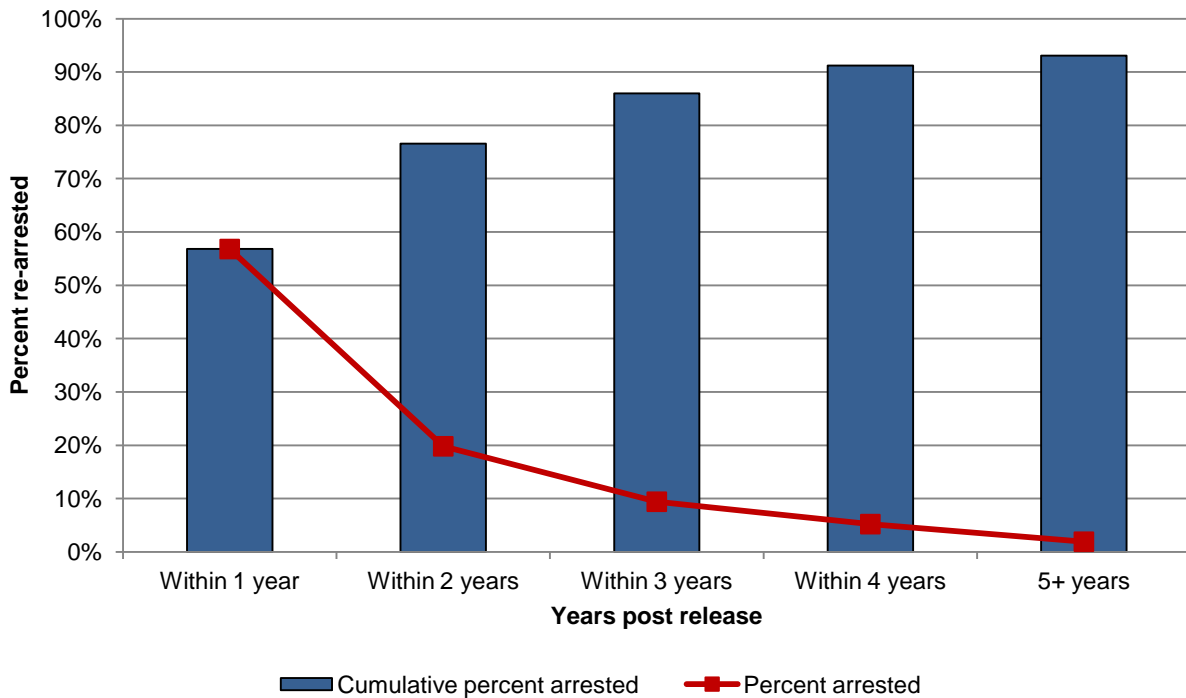
Table 5
Re-arrest descriptive statistics

Variable	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Median	SD
Post arrests	0	28	5.02	4.00	4.28
Post violent arrests	0	14	1.29	1.00	1.75
Post felony arrests	0	12	2.01	2.00	1.88
Post charges	0	40	7.26	6.00	6.17
Post violent charges	0	20	1.58	1.00	2.24
Post felony charges	0	19	2.69	2.00	2.73
Post drug arrests	0	17	1.30	1.00	2.03
Post <i>Other</i> arrests	0	11	1.12	1.00	1.44
Post person arrests	0	14	1.24	1.00	1.72
Post property arrests	0	24	1.73	1.00	2.17
Post sex arrests	0	5	0.04	0.00	0.26
Post status arrests	0	7	0.33	0.00	0.85
Post weapons arrests	0	5	0.22	0.00	0.54

Since there was such an extensive follow up period for this study, re-arrest rates were also examined by year. During the first year after release, about 57 percent (n=684) of these youth had a re-arrest reported in CHRI. The first year is widely recognized as the most high-risk time for re-offending, which is evidenced by the steep decline in re-arrests after year one. In year two, 19.8 percent of the sample was re-arrested for the first time (n=239), which indicates a 65 percent reduction year-to-year. First re-arrests during year three declined to 9.4 percent (n=113), while only 5 percent were re-arrested for the first time during year four (n=63), almost 2 percent during year five (n=21), and 0.2 percent during year six (n=2). It should also be noted that incapacitation due to re-incarceration could impact the yearly rates of re-arrest.

Cumulatively, about 86 percent of the youth in the sample were re-arrested within the first three years after release (n=1,036). By the fourth year after release, 91 percent of youth incarcerated for court evaluation had been re-arrested (n=1,099), increasing to 93 percent after the fourth year (n=1,122). *Figure 4* provides further representation of these cumulative re-arrest rates by year post-release.

Figure 4
Percent re-arrested post release, by year



Sex offenders incarcerated for court evaluations were found to have the lowest re-arrest rates over the entire period studied (87.1 percent), while drug offenders had the highest re-arrest rates (96.6 percent). In terms of offense class, youth incarcerated for court evaluation who were admitted to IDJJ for misdemeanors had the lowest overall re-arrest rate (90 percent), while the small number of offenders admitted for Class X offenses (most serious offenses) were re-arrested at the highest rate (96.7 percent, n=2).

Only 33 court evaluations that had a security level recorded were classified as maximum security (2.8 percent). Despite this small number, all 33 youth incarcerated in a maximum security setting for court evaluation were re-arrested during the study period. The minimum and medium security individuals were re-arrested at lower rates than maximum security individuals, but similar rates to each other (92.7 and 92.9 percent, respectively).

Table 6
Cumulative re-arrest rates by year and by offender/offense characteristic

Offender/offense characteristics	Never re-arrested	Cumulative re-arrest rates				
		Within 1 year	Within 2 years	Within 3 years	Within 4 years	Within 5 or more years
Offense type						
Person	6.2%	54.7%	75.5%	86.4%	91.1%	93.8%
Property	7.4%	54.4%	75.0%	84.6%	90.6%	92.6%
Drug	3.5%	74.1%	89.7%	93.1%	96.6%	96.6%
Weapons	8.0%	60.0%	81.3%	88.0%	92.0%	92.0%
Sex	12.9%	45.2%	61.3%	80.7%	87.1%	87.1%
Other	11.1%	66.7%	74.1%	77.8%	85.2%	88.9%
Offense class						
Misdemeanor	10.0%	50.6%	71.7%	81.1%	88.9%	90.0%
Class 4	4.5%	75.5%	90.9%	92.9%	94.8%	95.5%
Class 3	6.6%	52.9%	71.9%	83.7%	90.7%	93.4%
Class 2	7.5%	58.8%	76.3%	87.2%	90.6%	92.5%
Class 1	6.4%	51.9%	77.3%	84.9%	90.9%	93.6%
Class X	3.3%	51.7%	73.3%	90.0%	95.0%	96.7%
Security level						
Minimum	7.3%	56.7%	75.1%	85.3%	90.7%	92.7%
Medium	7.1%	56.3%	77.0%	86.1%	91.0%	92.9%
Maximum	0.0%	75.8%	90.9%	93.9%	96.9%	100.0%
Race						
White	10.9%	41.6%	66.1%	78.3%	86.5%	89.0%
Black	2.6%	66.5%	83.5%	91.5%	95.5%	97.4%
Hispanic	14.5%	58.8%	76.3%	83.9%	85.5%	85.5%
Other	0.0%	50.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Gender						
Female	18.2%	40.2%	59.9%	70.5%	78.8%	81.8%
Male	5.5%	58.8%	78.7%	87.9%	92.7%	94.5%

Table 6: Cumulative re-arrest rates by year and by offender/offense characteristic, continued

Offender/offense characteristics	Never re-arrested	Cumulative re-arrest rates				
		Within 1 year	Within 2 years	Within 3 years	Within 4 years	Within 5 or more years
Education						
5 th grade	6.7%	46.7%	80.0%	86.7%	86.7%	93.3%
6 th grade	8.0%	40.0%	58.0%	72.0%	84.0%	92.0%
7 th grade	5.7%	50.9%	73.6%	83.0%	91.2%	94.3%
Grade school graduate (8 th grade)	6.2%	60.3%	79.0%	88.2%	92.7%	93.8%
9 th grade	8.7%	57.1%	75.3%	85.5%	89.5%	91.3%
10 th grade	7.8%	54.8%	80.9%	88.7%	92.2%	92.2%
11 th grade	4.6%	68.2%	77.3%	81.8%	95.5%	95.5%
High school graduate	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
GED	0.0%	66.7%	66.7%	66.7%	66.7%	100.0%
Unknown or missing	6.7%	56.7%	80.0%	86.0%	93.3%	93.3%
Age at exit						
13	5.1%	43.6%	61.5%	74.4%	87.2%	94.9%
14	7.1%	43.6%	62.1%	79.3%	88.6%	92.9%
15	6.2%	50.7%	72.4%	83.5%	91.7%	93.8%
16	7.7%	57.7%	80.4%	88.3%	91.3%	92.3%
17	6.5%	68.4%	83.8%	89.2%	92.5%	93.5%
18	6.1%	69.4%	83.7%	91.8%	91.8%	93.9%
19	14.3%	42.9%	71.4%	85.7%	85.7%	85.7%

Hispanic youth had the lowest rate of re-arrest (85.5 percent), followed by white youth (89 percent), and black youth (97.4 percent). Males had a much higher likelihood of recidivism compared to females, as almost 95 percent of males were re-arrested, compared to about 82 percent of females. Youth who had finished the 9th grade (first year of high school) had lower re-arrest rates than youth with lower or higher education levels.

In general, re-arrest rates were similar for individuals regardless of their age at release. The exception, as seen in *Table 6*, is with youth who were 19 upon release. While this age group had the lowest likelihood of re-arrest, it is based on a small sample size (n=7). In raw numbers, only one 19-year-old remained arrest-free after release.

Three year re-arrest

Many of the existing studies that examine recidivism utilize either a one-year or three-year follow-up period. Three years generally allows ample time for the sample to be exposed to the risk of re-offending and to subsequently matriculate through the justice system in the event of recidivism. To be more closely comparable to existing studies, the sample was separately analyzed for recidivism at three years. Individuals who were re-arrested during the three year period after release were still considered to have recidivated.

If a youth had been re-arrested after three years, they were not counted as having recidivated for these analyses. These individuals would not have had a re-arrest recorded if the study had been limited to three years of follow-up originally. Using this shorter follow up period, 14 percent (n=169) of these youth were not re-arrested within three years, while 86 percent (n=1,036) had at least one re-arrest during that period. *Table 7* shows the re-arrest rates for certain sample characteristics that have been adjusted to fit within the three year follow up window.

Table 7
Three-year re-arrest rates by offender/offense characteristic

Offender/offense characteristic	Valid n	Not re-arrested within three years of release		Re-arrested within three years of release	
		n	%	n	%
Offense type					
Person	404	55	13.6	349	86.4
Property	552	85	15.4	467	84.6
Drug	116	8	6.9	108	93.1
Weapons	75	9	12.0	66	88.0
Sex	31	6	19.4	25	80.7
Other	27	6	22.2	21	77.8
Offense class					
Misdemeanor	180	34	18.9	146	81.1
Class 4	155	11	7.1	144	92.9
Class 3	257	42	16.4	215	83.7
Class 2	320	41	12.8	279	87.2
Class 1	233	35	15.0	198	84.9
Class X	60	6	10.0	54	90.0
Security level					
Minimum	409	60	14.7	349	85.3
Medium	748	104	13.9	644	86.1
Maximum	33	2	6.1	31	93.9

Table 7: Three-year re-arrest rates by offender/offense characteristic, continued

Offender/offense characteristic	Valid n	Not re-arrested within three years of release		Re-arrested within three years of release	
		n	%	n	%
Race					
White	428	93	21.7	335	78.3
Black	644	55	8.5	589	91.5
Hispanic	131	21	16.0	110	83.9
Other	2	0	0.0	2	100.0
Gender					
Female	132	39	29.6	93	70.5
Male	1073	130	12.1	943	87.9
Education					
5 th grade	15	2	13.3	13	86.7
6 th grade	50	14	28.0	36	72.0
7 th grade	159	27	16.9	132	83.0
Grade school graduate (8 th grade)	534	63	11.8	471	88.2
9 th grade	275	40	14.6	235	85.5
10 th grade	115	13	11.3	102	88.7
11 th grade	22	4	18.2	18	81.8
High school graduate	2	1	50.0	1	50.0
GED	3	1	33.3	2	66.7
Unknown or missing	30	4	13.3	26	86.7
Age at exit					
13	39	10	25.6	29	74.4
14	140	29	20.7	111	79.3
15	290	48	16.6	242	83.5
16	402	47	11.7	355	88.3
17	278	30	10.8	248	89.2
18	49	4	8.2	45	91.8
19	7	1	14.3	6	85.7

Due to the high rates of re-arrest experienced by these youth, identifying predictors of re-arrest becomes difficult because simply guessing that all youth would be re-arrested within three years, one would be correct 86 percent of the time. However, bivariate analyses allow for testing the relationships between demographic and incarceration characteristics and re-arrest within three years of release. Some statistical tests, particularly chi-square tests, are affected by sample size and may produce significant results due more to the large sample than the actual relationships.

Further, the highly skewed distribution of three-year re-arrest rates can cause tests on the strength of association, such as lambda, to yield misleading results. These difficulties and limitations make a discussion of odds ratios more informative for explaining the relationships between categorical variables.

Table 8
Results of point-biserial correlation analyses with three-year re-arrest

Characteristic	Pearson's r_{pb}
Age at admission	0.13***
Last grade completed	0.03
Age at exit	0.11***
Length of stay	0.02
Prior arrests	0.19***
Prior felony arrests	0.17***
Prior violent arrests	0.09***
Prior IDJJ incarcerations	0.03

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

A youth's age at admission was found to be positively correlated with re-arrest ($r_{pb} = .129$, $p < .001$), although the relationship was a weak. However, age at exit was also significantly related to re-arrest. As Table 8 shows, older youth tended to be more likely to get re-arrested ($r_{pb} = .110$, $p < .001$), although this was a weak relationship as well. Race was also found to have a statistically significant relationship with re-arrest. However, this was not a substantively significant association (Cramer's $V = .177$, $p < .001$). Gender was also found to be related to re-arrest, although it was a weak relationship ($\phi = .157$, $p < .001$). Although the sample incarceration offense type was not significantly related to re-arrest, the seriousness of that offense measured as offense class was significantly related. Although statistically significant, the relationship between offense class and re-arrest was substantively very weak (Cramer's $V = .101$, $p < .05$). See Table 9 for more detailed bivariate results.

Table 9
Results of chi-square analyses with three-year re-arrest

Characteristic	Chi-square	df	Phi/Cramer's V
Race	37.896	3	0.177***
Sex	29.614	1	0.157***
Incarceration offense type	8.299	5	0.083
Incarceration offense class	12.235	5	0.101*
Last security level	1.889	2	0.040

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Criminal history is generally recognized as an important predictor of future criminal behavior. In this sample, indicators of extensive criminal backgrounds were linked to a higher likelihood of re-arrest. Youth who were re-arrested within three years had a higher average number of prior arrests than youth who were not re-arrested ($t = -6.68, p < 0.001$). However, this relationship was found to be rather weak ($r_{pb} = .189, p < .001$). A higher number of prior arrests for felonies was also linked to a higher likelihood of being re-arrested ($t = -5.91, p < 0.001$), though it was a weak correlation ($r_{pb} = .168, p < .001$). Youth who had more prior arrests for violent offenses also showed a higher likelihood for re-arrest within three years ($t = -3.33, p = 0.001$). While this positive correlation was statistically significant, it was also found to be a substantively weak relationship ($r_{pb} = .095, p = .001$).

Youth with a prior incarceration in their background are generally at a higher risk for recidivism than youth who have only been arrested (Cottle, Lee, & Heilbrun, 2001). However, a prior incarceration was a rare event for the youth in this study, so there was no statistical relationship between prior commitments to IDJJ and future offending. *Table 10* provides more detailed results of these bivariate analyses.

Table 10
Results of t-tests with three-year re-arrest

Criminal history	Not re-arrested within 3 years (mean)	Re-arrested within 3 years (mean)	t statistic
Prior arrests	2.669	4.894	-6.681***
Prior felony arrests	1.260	2.290	-5.909***
Prior violent arrests	0.990	1.490	-3.327***
Prior IDJJ incarcerations	0.018	0.034	-0.96

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Results of the chi-square tests found that race, gender, and incarceration offense class were statistically related to re-arrest. While chi-square cannot provide any insight into relationships between the different categories of these variables, odds ratios (OR) can be used to compare the odds of re-arrest between the categories and a reference category. While useful, the odds ratios presented below do not control for the influence of other variables and should be interpreted with care. Black youth in the sample were found to have odds of being re-arrested that were almost three times as high as white youth ($OR = 2.97$). Hispanic youth had a lower odds ratio than black youth, but still had odds of re-arrest 1.45 times as high as white youth in the sample. Males who had been sentenced for a court evaluation were found to have odds of re-arrest over three times as high as female youth ($OR = 3.04$).

Incarceration offense class was also significantly related to re-arrest in the chi-square analyses. In terms of odds of re-arrest, Class X offenders were found to have odds 2.10 times as high youth sentenced for misdemeanors. Class 1 offenders, the next most serious offense class, had odds of re-arrest 1.32 times as high as misdemeanants, while Class 2 and Class 3 offenders also had slightly higher odds of re-arrest compared to misdemeanants ($OR = 1.59$ and 1.19 , respectively). Class 4 offenders had the highest odds of re-arrest when compared to misdemeanants, over three

times as high (OR=3.05). *Table 11* provides a more detailed examination of the relative odds of re-arrest, with the reference category in bold.

Table 11
Three-year re-arrest odds ratios by characteristic

Characteristic	Odds ratio
Race (white reference)	
Black	2.97
Hispanic	1.45
Gender (female reference)	
Male	3.04
Education (no HS or GED reference)	
HS or GED	0.24
Incarceration offense type (person reference)	
Property	0.87
Drug	2.13
Weapons	1.16
Sex	0.66
Incarceration offense class (misdemeanor reference)	
Class X	2.10
Class 1	1.32
Class 2	1.59
Class 3	1.19
Class 4	3.05
Security level (minimum reference)	
Medium	1.06
Maximum	2.67

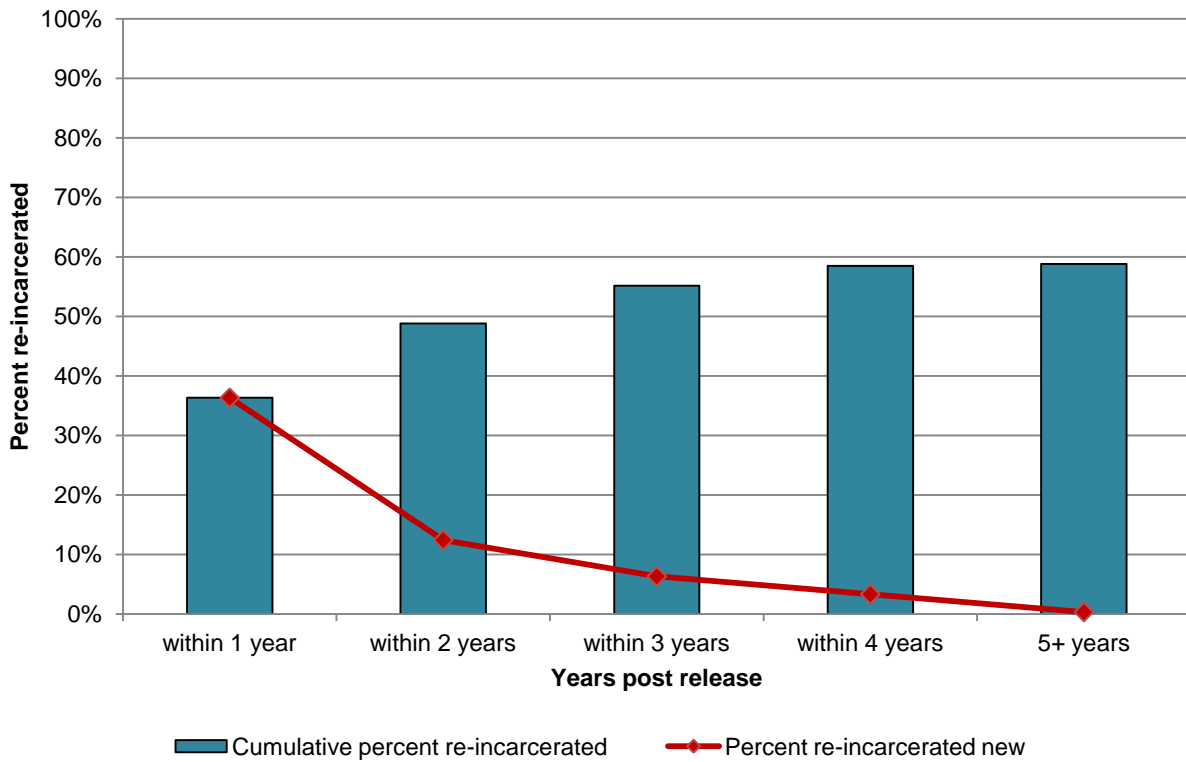
Re-incarceration

If an individual is re-incarcerated for a new sentence, that person has either pleaded guilty to an offense, or has been found guilty. Since youth incarcerated for court evaluation are not subject to parole supervision upon release, they are not at risk for a technical parole violation. As a result, technical violation returns are not included in this examination.

Of the 1,230 youth in the sample, almost 59 percent were re-incarcerated between the time of their release and the end of SFY 2009 (n=723). Since three separate cohorts were included in the sample (SFY05, SFY06, and SFY07), the period of being at risk of re-incarceration varied between two and five years. In the first year after release, 36 percent of the sample was re-

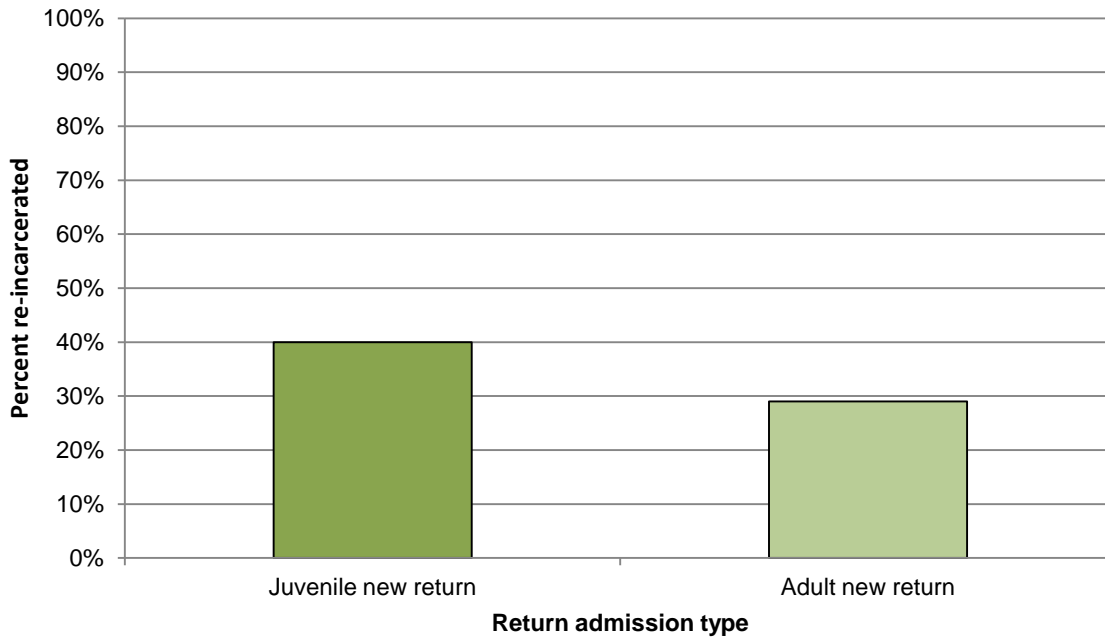
incarcerated (n=447). An additional 12 percent were re-incarcerated during the second year after release (n=153). This declined further to about 6 percent within three years (n=78) and about 3 percent within four years (n=41). Only 0.3 percent of the youth were re-incarcerated for the first time after four years (n=4). *Figure 5* further describes the trends in re-incarceration over time at risk.

Figure 5
Percent of sample re-incarcerated post release, by year



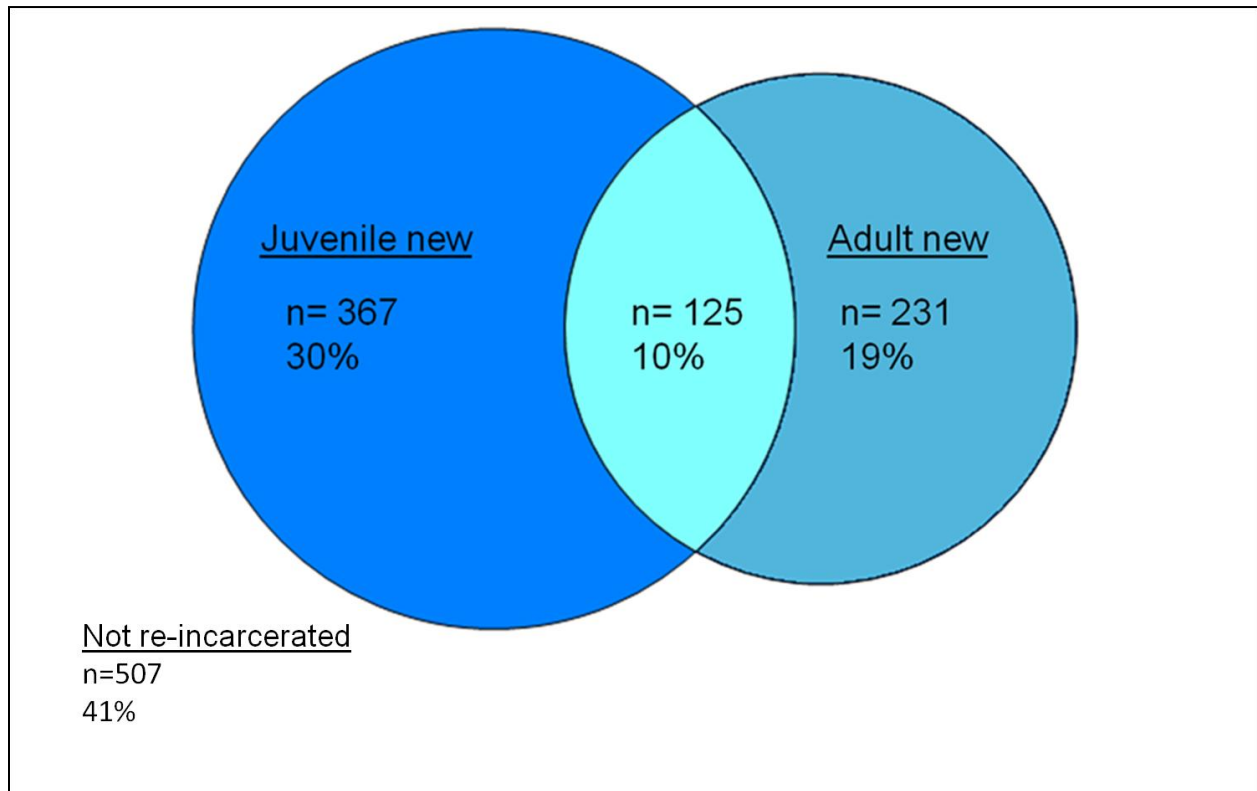
Almost one third of youth who were re-incarcerated for new sentences experienced more than one re-incarceration (n=223). A re-incarceration as a juvenile for a new sentence was most prevalent, as 40 percent of the youth incarcerated for a court evaluation had at least one new return as a juvenile (n=492), while 29 percent had a new return as an adult (n=356). Individuals who had been sentenced for a new offense in adult criminal court, but were housed in IDJJ by virtue of their age, were counted as adult returns. *Figure 6* shows re-incarceration rates by admission type, which is non-exclusive (individuals who were re-incarcerated as both juveniles and adults are counted in both columns).

Figure 6
Re-incarceration by admission type



Although there were a number of individuals who were re-incarcerated for new offenses as both juveniles and adults, most youth in the sample were re-incarcerated as *either* a juvenile *or* an adult. Of the 723 individuals who were re-incarcerated for new offenses, just more than 50 percent were returned only as juveniles (n=367). Thirty two percent of the youth who recidivated were re-incarcerated only as adults for new sentences (n=231), while just more than 17 percent of the sample had a new sentence of re-incarceration as both a juvenile and an adult (n=125). *Figure 7* shows roughly how the re-incarcerations were distributed between the admission types. The percentages included in the diagram are reflective of the overall sample (n=1,230), while the percentages discussed here reflect *only* those individuals who were re-incarcerated (n=723).

Figure 7
Venn diagram of re-incarcerations



Re-incarceration by offense type

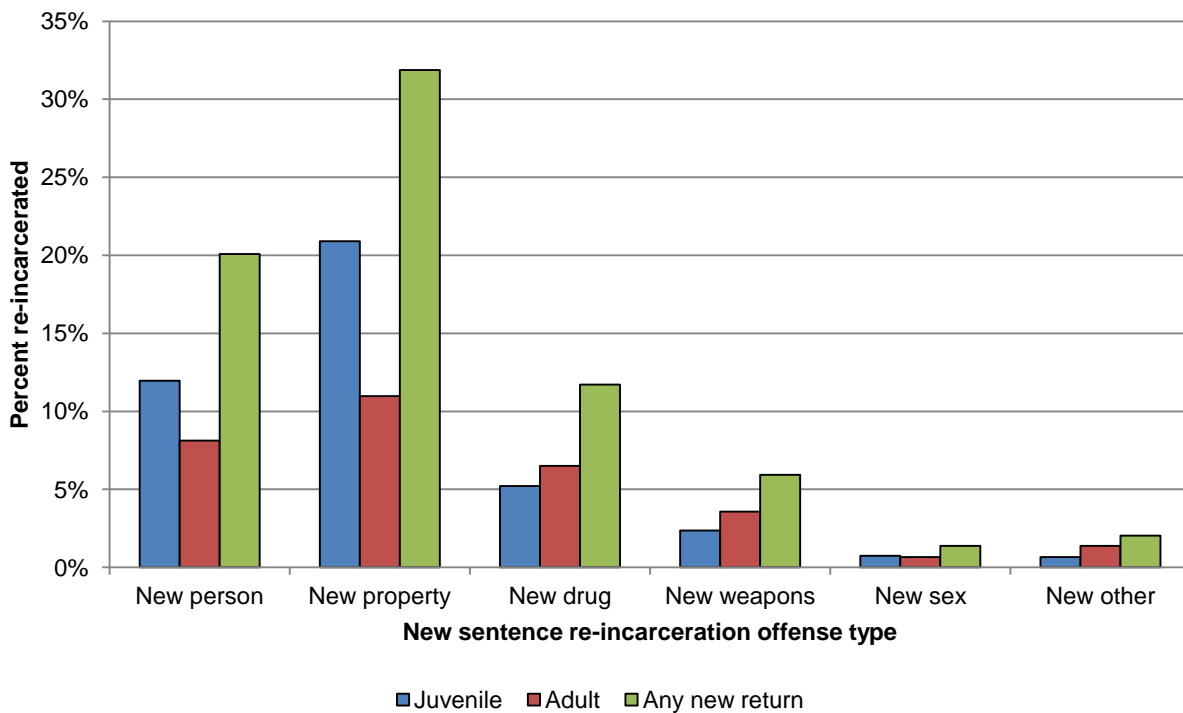
New sentence re-incarcerations were further examined by the type of offense committed. Since many youth had more than one re-incarceration, the study counted all new admissions to get a better idea of the types of offenses for which these individuals were being re-incarcerated. Because the study did not examine only the first re-incarceration, there is some overlap of individuals across offense types and admission types. For example, if an individual was re-incarcerated once for a new drug offense and again for a new property offense, both of those would be counted in their respective offense types. The youth in the sample were most commonly re-incarcerated for property offenses (32 percent), followed by offenses against persons (20 percent). *Table 12* provides a more detailed breakdown of new sentence re-incarceration offense types.

Table 12
New sentence re-incarcerations by offense type

Offense type	Juvenile re-incarceration		Adult re-incarceration		Either juvenile or adult re-incarceration	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Person offense	147	11.9%	100	8.1%	247	20.1%
Property offense	257	20.9%	135	10.9%	392	31.9%
Drug offense	64	5.2%	80	6.5%	144	11.7%
Weapons offense	29	2.4%	44	3.6%	73	5.9%
Sex offense	9	0.7%	8	0.4%	17	1.4%
Other offense	8	0.7%	17	1.4%	25	2.0%
New sentence re-incarcerations	367	29.8%	231	18.8%	125	10.2%

Overall, property offenses appear to be the most common new offense leading to re-incarceration. Close to one third of the youth initially incarcerated for court evaluation were later re-incarcerated for property offenses, while 21 percent of these individuals were re-incarcerated as juveniles for property offenses and 11 percent of these youth were re-incarcerated as adults for property offenses. Offenses against persons were the next most common, with 20 percent of the sample being re-incarcerated for this type of offense. Twelve percent of the sample was re-incarcerated as a juvenile for offenses against persons, while 8 percent were re-incarcerated as adults for these types of offenses. *Figure 8* provides a visualization of how the proportions of new sentence re-incarcerations were spread across the different offense types and adult and juvenile admissions.

Figure 8
New sentence re-incarcerations by offense type



First re-incarceration within two years

Youth in the sample were released between FY05 and FY07. The most current year that IDJJ data were available for this study was FY09, which allows for a follow-up period between two to four years, depending on the date an individual was released from IDJJ. Combining re-incarceration data with varying time periods can potentially skew results, so this study also examined re-incarcerations within the first two years. This allows for a follow-up period that is standardized for the whole sample, regardless of release year. Identifying recidivism during this period was done in a similar way to calculating three year re-arrest rates. Individuals who were re-incarcerated within two years of their original release were still counted as having recidivated, while individuals who were re-incarcerated after two years were counted as not having recidivated for these analyses. Within two years of release, 600 youth had been re-incarcerated (48.8 percent). As *Table 13* shows, almost 40 percent of the sample had a first re-incarceration as a juvenile (n=479) within two years. Just less than 10 percent had a first re-incarceration as an adult within two years (n=121).

Table 13
First re-incarceration within two years, by re-incarceration type

Type	n	Percent of all youth (n=1230)	Percent of all re-incarcerations (n=723)
Not re-incarcerated within two years	630	51.2%	-
First re-incarceration as juvenile	479	38.9%	66.3%
First re-incarceration as adult	121	9.8%	16.7%

Implications for policy and practice

Existing research on juvenile correctional populations in Illinois is limited in terms of quantity and usefulness. This is even more of an issue with youth incarcerated for court evaluations, since there is no existing research literature regarding this population. The implications of having these data available in an easy-to-understand format that can be further analyzed means that decisions that affect IDJJ generally, and court evaluations specifically, can become more data-driven. This study helps to fill a sizeable gap in knowledge for the state with information that can be used to address high recidivism rates. Now that a baseline for recidivism rates has been established, further research is needed to examine the causes behind the high recidivism of this population.

More specifically, the findings presented here have implications for the continued diversion of youth incarcerated for court evaluations. Starting in 2005, Redeploy Illinois has focused on diverting these youth from IDJJ into community-based programming. This initiative makes funds available for enhancing rehabilitative services (substance abuse treatment, mental health treatment, cognitive behavioral therapy) in local jurisdictions. By accepting the money, these jurisdictions agree to reduce the number of commitments to IDJJ by 25 percent. Early in the planning stages, Redeploy Illinois was designed to divert youth from becoming incarcerated for court evaluation and keep them in their communities for evaluation instead. The findings of this study provide support for an expansion of diversion programs like Redeploy Illinois. Youth who underwent court evaluation while incarcerated were found to be at a lower risk for re-incarceration in the future when compared to full commitments (see Bostwick, Boulger, & Powers, 2012), and may benefit from the services provided by programs like Redeploy Illinois.

Youth incarcerated for court evaluation are sent to IDJJ to be evaluated for appropriate placement, usually probation or a full incarceration commitment. Since these individuals generally have less serious criminal backgrounds, they may be more likely to benefit from rehabilitative services such as mental health treatment and cognitive behavioral therapy. In many cases treatment is more appropriately delivered in the community where there is a more well-developed treatment infrastructure and more options available for individualized treatment plans. One of the driving factors behind the creation of Redeploy Illinois was to build up these community resources and increase the capacity of community service providers. Instead of sending these youth to IDJJ to be evaluated, it may make more sense from a fiscal standpoint to have them evaluated in the community, and then placed in a diversion program or, if warranted,

committed to IDJJ. Proper risk, assets, and needs assessments will help to place these individuals in the appropriate setting.

Without the increased demands of supervising and assessing this short term population, IDJJ may be able to better identify and address the risks and needs of youth placed there on a full commitment.

Discussion and conclusions

Youth who are incarcerated for court evaluation are a unique population in Illinois. Although they are incarcerated and spend a relatively short period of time in an IDJJ facility, the sentence can still be vacated, diverting them from continued involvement with IDJJ. Despite this ambiguous status, youth incarcerated for court evaluation share many characteristics with the delinquents who received full commitments to IDJJ. As with the delinquent sample, youth incarcerated for a court evaluation were typically black males exiting IDJJ just prior to their 16th birthday. Most of these youth had finished grade school, while just more than one-third had completed some high school. Given the average age at admission (just over 15), it would be reasonable to assume that the sample would have a higher proportion of youth who had completed some high school. However, it appears that involvement in the juvenile justice system derailed educational outcomes for many of these youth.

Most of the youth in the sample were in IDJJ for a non-violent crime, most commonly a property offense. Just less than half of the sample received a court evaluation after arrest for lower-level offense classes, namely Class 3 and 4 felonies or misdemeanors. These youth averaged about 4.5 prior arrests and about six total prior charges, and most had previous arrests for a violent offense or a property offense. Most youth had also been arrested for a felony offense. Youth who were Class 4 offenders had the highest average number of prior arrests and were most likely to have a prior felony arrest. Although a Class 4 felony is the least-serious felony class, a comparatively lengthy and serious arrest history may partially explain why these youth were sent to IDJJ for evaluation instead of receiving probation. Additionally, drug offenders in the court-evaluated sample tended to have lengthier arrest histories, while sex offenders tended to have fewer prior arrests. Youth incarcerated for court evaluations were very unlikely to have been incarcerated previously (3 percent), which may indicate some previous diversion attempts for these youth.

The court evaluation sample also had high overall re-arrest rates. Between the three to six years of follow-up, about 93 percent of these youth were re-arrested. The highest risk time for re-arrest was found to be within the first year after release, which is consistent with recidivism literature for other populations. About 57 percent of the sample was re-arrested within the first year, while another 20 percent did not make it past two years without a new arrest. After standardizing the follow-up period at three years, the re-arrest rate was only slightly lower (86 percent). Consistent with the measures of prior criminal history, Class 4 offenders tended to have the highest likelihoods of re-arrest (93 percent), while misdemeanants had the lowest (81 percent). In terms of offense type, drug offenders likewise had the highest rates of re-arrest (93 percent), with sex offenders having the lowest (81 percent). Males also had much higher re-arrest rates than females.

The bivariate statistical tests that were conducted on the sample youth showed some relationships between re-arrest within three years and individual characteristics. The age of the sample at both intake and exit were positively correlated with re-arrests at three years, indicating that youths who were older tended to have higher levels of recidivism. Similarly, prior arrests generally and prior felony and violent arrests specifically were also found to be positively correlated with re-arrest within three years. However, these relationships were weak and showed little substantive significance. Nevertheless, these results support current understandings of recidivism; criminal history is generally a good indicator of future criminality. Recidivism measured as re-incarceration also proved to be rather common for the court-evaluated sample, with an overall re-incarceration rate of 59 percent. Within the first year after release, 36 percent of the sample was returned to prison, while an additional 12 percent were re-incarcerated within the second year at risk. Part of the reason for such a high re-incarceration rate was the inclusion of adult returns. Because many of these youth were released close to the maximum age of juvenile jurisdiction, not including adult offending may have depressed previous juvenile recidivism rates. About 30 percent of the sample experienced an adult return, either as a juvenile convicted in that adult system or as a regular adult commitment. Only about 10 percent of the sample consisted of double failures—individuals who were returned both as juveniles and adults.

Although the study has some limitations, the findings presented are consistent with other juvenile corrections populations in some ways, while reflective of the lower risk that these youth present. Although re-arrest rates were quite high for this population, re-incarceration rates were appreciably lower. This finding may be an indication of a lower inherent risk of re-offending for youth incarcerated for court evaluations, a deterrent effect of the short stay in IDJJ, or likely some combination of these and other factors.

Although recidivism rates are high, this should not be interpreted to mean that IDJJ is failing. These youth are not placed in IDJJ to be rehabilitated but to be evaluated for appropriate placement. The vast majority of these youth have their sentences vacated after their brief stay in IDJJ, with aftercare and supervision not required. Under the current economic climate, IDJJ does not have the resources to effect positive change in these individuals, and cannot be realistically expected to do so. This makes identifying and diverting appropriate individuals even more important, and highlights the need for enhanced supervision and aftercare participation for youth who are sent to prison.

There is justifiable concern from criminal justice policymakers, practitioners, and citizens about high recidivism rates of youth released from IDJJ facilities. Close to 30 percent of youth sentenced for court evaluations go on to be incarcerated as an adult, which means that improvements in assessment, treatment, and placement can be made to address this problem. As more information becomes available on cost-effective alternatives that can improve outcomes for juveniles in the system, more informed decisions can be made with respect to having a positive impact on the juvenile corrections system and the youth it serves.

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Appendix A: Violent offenses

The following is a list of offenses categorized as violent according to the Rights of Crime Victims and Witnesses Act which defines a violent offense as any felony in which force or threat of force was used against the victim [725 ILCS 120/et seq.].

Description of offense	Statute
Solicitation for murder	720 ILCS 5/8-1
First degree murder	720 ILCS 5/9
Homicide of unborn child	720 ILCS 5/9-1.2
Second degree murder	720 ILCS 5/9-2
Involuntary manslaughter of unborn child	720 ILCS 5/9-2.1
Involuntary manslaughter or reckless homicide	720 ILCS 5/9-3
Involuntary manslaughter or reckless homicide of unborn child	720 ILCS 5/9-3.2
Drug induced homicide	720 ILCS 5/9-3.3
Concealment of homicidal death	720 ILCS 5/9-3.4
Kidnapping	720 ILCS 5/10-1
Aggravated kidnapping	720 ILCS 5/10-2
Unlawful restraint	720 ILCS 5/10-3
Aggravated unlawful restraint	720 ILCS 5/10-3.1
Forcible detention	720 ILCS 5/10-4
Child abduction	720 ILCS 5/10-5
Trafficking persons	720 ILCS 5/10-9
Indecent solicitation of a child	720 ILCS 5/11-6
Indecent solicitation of an adult	720 ILCS 5/11-6.5
Solicitation to meet a child	720 ILCS 5/11-6.6
Sexual exploitation of a child	720 ILCS 5/11-9.1
Custodial sexual misconduct	720 ILCS 5/11-9.2
Sexual misconduct with a disabled person	720 ILCS 5/11-9.5
Child pornography	720 ILCS 5/11-20.1
Aggravated child pornography	720 ILCS 5/11-20.3
Assault	720 ILCS 5/12-1
Aggravated assault	720 ILCS 5/12-2
Vehicular endangerment	720 ILCS 5/12-2.5
Battery	720 ILCS 5/12-3
Battery of an unborn child	720 ILCS 5/12-3.1
Domestic battery	720 ILCS 5/12-3.2
Aggravated domestic battery	720 ILCS 5/12-3.3
Aggravated battery	720 ILCS 5/12-4
Heinous battery	720 ILCS 5/12-4.1
Aggravated battery with a firearm	720 ILCS 5/12-4.2
Aggravated battery with a machine gun or silencer	720 ILCS 5/12-4.2-5
Aggravated battery of a child	720 ILCS 5/12-4.3
Aggravated battery of an unborn child	720 ILCS 5/12-4.4

Description of offense	Statute
Tampering with food drugs or cosmetics	720 ILCS 5/12-4.5
Aggravated battery of a senior citizen	720 ILCS 5/12-4.6
Drug induced infliction of great bodily harm	720 ILCS 5/12-4.7
Infected domestic animals	720 ILCS 5/12-4.8
Drug-induced infliction of aggravated battery to a child athlete	720 ILCS 5/12-4.9
Reckless conduct	720 ILCS 5/12-5-A
Intimidation	720 ILCS 5/12-6
Compelling organization membership of persons	720 ILCS 5/12-6.1
Aggravated intimidation	720 ILCS 5/12-6.2
Interfering with report of domestic violence	720 ILCS 5/12-6.3
Criminal street gang recruitment	720 ILCS 5/12-6.4
Compelling confession by force or threat	720 ILCS 5/12-7
Hate crime	720 ILCS 5/12-7.1
Educational intimidation	720 ILCS 5/12-7.2
Stalking	720 ILCS 5/12-7.3
Aggravated stalking	720 ILCS 5/12-7.4
Cyber stalking	720 ILCS 5/12-7.5
Cross-burning	720 ILCS 5/12-7.6
Threatening public officials	720 ILCS 5/12-9
Home invasion	720 ILCS 5/12-11
Vehicular invasion	720 ILCS 5/12-11.1
Criminal sexual assault	720 ILCS 5/12-13
Aggravated criminal sexual assault	720 ILCS 5/12-14
Predatory criminal sexual assault of a child	720 ILCS 5/12-14.1
Criminal sexual abuse	720 ILCS 5/12-15
Aggravated criminal sexual abuse	720 ILCS 5/12-16
Criminal transmission of HIV	720 ILCS 5/12-16.2
Criminal abuse or neglect of an elderly person or person with disability	720 ILCS 5/12-21
Child abandonment	720 ILCS 5/12-21.5
Endangering the life or health of a child	720 ILCS 5/12-21.6
Violation of an order of protection	720 ILCS 5/12-30
Inducement to commit suicide	720 ILCS 5/12-31
Ritual mutilation	720 ILCS 5/12-32
Ritualized abuse of a child	720 ILCS 5/12-33
Female genital mutilation	720 ILCS 5/12-34
Robbery	720 ILCS 5/18-1
Armed robbery	720 ILCS 5/18-2
Vehicular hijacking	720 ILCS 5/18-3
Aggravated vehicular hijacking	720 ILCS 5/18-4
Aggravated robbery	720 ILCS 5/18-5

Description of offense	Statute
Arson	720 <i>ILCS</i> 5/20-1
Aggravated arson	720 <i>ILCS</i> 5/20-1.1
Residential arson	720 <i>ILCS</i> 5/20-1.2
Place of worship arson	720 <i>ILCS</i> 5/20-1.3
Aggravated DUI with bodily injury	625 <i>ILCS</i> 5/11-501-D-1-C
	625 <i>ILCS</i> 5/11-501-D-1-E
	625 <i>ILCS</i> 5/11-501-D-1-F
	625 <i>ILCS</i> 5/11-501-D-1-J
Aggravated discharge of a firearm	720 <i>ILCS</i> 5/24-1.2



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