

# Girls Study Group Spring/Summer 2006 Update

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Activities and Accomplishments  
Since April 2006

## Literature Review

- Eleven chapters have been finalized to be compiled into a book summarizing the findings from the literature review.
- Dr. Zahn has submitted an outline of the book and sample chapters to four publishers. Although Sage and Roxbury Press have decided that the book is too narrow in focus, both Temple and NYU Press are in the review process now and expect to get back to us by the beginning of August.
- Drafts of three bulletins are under review at OJJDP: *Causes and Correlates of Girls Delinquency, Violence and Teenage Girls*, and *Who is the Resilient Girl?*, have been submitted to OJJDP. The Violence bulletin has been sent forward by the project officer for editing and publication.

## Secondary Analysis

- We are contracting with David Huizinga of the University of Colorado to conduct a pathways-focused analysis using longitudinal datasets. We are also in the process of contracting with Duke University to use FastTrack data for the same purpose.
- We have contracted with Jim Derzon of the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation to conduct a meta-analysis of the relationship between sexual assault and delinquency in girls, specifically who perpetrates assault, the age at which the assault occurs, and the frequency of the assault.

## Program Review

- *Compilation of Programs*—RTI staff has continued to collect information on possibly-relevant programs. To date, we have collected information on the following types of programs:
  - Girls-only total: 103 (specifically delinquency-focused programs: 58)
  - Boys and girls total: 127
- *Documentation of Evidence-Based Reviews*—Staff have assessed whether the above programs are included in any one of 14 evidence-based reviews (each of which has different criteria for rating the effectiveness of specific programs). Findings to date:
  - Girls-only programs: 20 out of 97 (delinquency-focused programs: 16 out of 58)
  - Boys and girls programs: 46 out of 127
- *Documentation and Analysis of Evaluations*—Staff has compiled information on published evaluation results available for each delinquency-focused girls-only program. We have developed an abstraction form for reviewing these program evaluations, based on criteria identified in the “What Works Repository” and are in the process of abstracting evaluation information from the delinquency-focused girls-only programs.
  - Staff from University of Colorado *Blueprints for Violence Prevention* are assessing evidence of gender effects among the programs included in the *Blueprints* list.
- *Focus Groups*—We are planning future focus groups with practitioners and girls in programs to be held once we have received IRB approval.

## Risk and Assessment Instrument Review

- RTI staff have continued to conduct literature reviews for validation studies of screening and assessment instruments, focusing on whether these instruments have been validated with girls. To date, nearly 300 instruments have been identified and additional literature review has focused on gender issues in assessment. Although the literature would suggest that assessment instruments that are developed specifically for girls (or that at least are normed or scored separately for girls) are more likely to accurately assess risks and needs among delinquent or at-risk girls, our findings show that:
  - Only a handful of instruments have been developed specifically for girls, but these also have limitations. For example, the Early Adolescent Risk List for Girls (EARL 21G) was developed and tested specifically for use with girls, but it is intended to be used with girls only up to age 12.

- Very few validation studies include a sufficient number of girls in their samples to allow for separate analyses (or instrument development) by gender. Many studies do not even report a gender breakdown in their sample.

Upcoming presentations and a report will include recommendations for selecting and using instruments appropriately with girls and will suggest future areas for research.

## Dissemination

- Recent conference activities:
  - Margaret A. Zahn conducted a briefing for OJJDP, 4/2006 in Washington, DC.
  - Margaret A. Zahn conducted a Congressional briefing with the Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA) on Women and the Criminal Justice System, 5/2006 in Washington, DC. Girls Study Member Candace Kruttschnitt also presented at the briefing, although on research unconnected to the Girls Study Group.
  - Margaret A. Zahn presented findings from the Risk and Assessment Instrument Review at the NIJ Conference, 7/2006 in Washington, DC. GSG member Anne Marie Ambrose served as a discussant.
  - Margaret A. Zahn was invited to write a description of the Girls Study Group project for publication in the *Criminologist*. The article is in press.
- Web statistics for the Girls Study Group web site (<http://girlsstudygroup.rti.org/>) from inception (January 2005) through June 30, 2006:
  - The web site has received a total of 31,740 visitors, with an average of 58 visitors per day.
  - A total of 50,667 pages within the site were viewed, with an average of 93 pages per day.
  - Documents were downloaded 6,647 times:
    - Literature review from RTI's original proposal ( 1,649 downloads)
    - Background section from OJJDP's original solicitation (1,438 downloads)
    - 2004 ASC presentation downloaded (620 downloads)
    - Presentation from Inaugural GSG meeting (428 downloads)
    - 2005 ASC Causes and Correlates presentation (522 downloads)
    - 2005 NIJ R&E presentation (323 downloads)
    - 2005 JRSA Overview presentation (338 downloads)
    - 2005 GSG Summer update newsletter (187 downloads)
    - 2005 GSG Fall update newsletter (177 downloads)
    - 2005 ASC Resilience presentation (228 downloads)
    - 2006 OJJDP Overview presentation (315 downloads)
    - 2006 OJJDP Causes and Correlates presentation (233 downloads)
    - 2006 OJJDP Girls in System presentation (189 downloads)

Please contact Margaret A. Zahn (919-485-7767; mzahn@rti.org) with questions or suggestions.