



2006

Sexual Victimization by Age and Alcohol Use

In the fall of 2005, the Research Unit of the Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice (CCJJ) published findings from a survey of Utah women, age 18 and older, about their experience with sexual violence. The report, "Rape In Utah," provided initial descriptive analysis of the data collected in this survey. As CCJJ has presented findings from this survey, many additional questions have surfaced that merit a secondary review of the data. The following report provides additional analysis of perpetrator and victim drug/alcohol use during the sexual assault when considering the age of the victim.

Alcohol and Drug Use Background

As CCJJ has presented its findings, an issue that consistently arises is the small number of assaults that occurred with alcohol or drug involvement either on the part of the perpetrator or the victim. For those who see victims in hospital settings, anecdotally, they feel the number of assaults that involve drugs and/or alcohol is much higher than what is reported in the survey findings.

According to initial analysis of data from the survey, only in about one-quarter of the assaults, 24.3%, was the perpetrator known to be under the influence of alcohol (see **Table 1**). Only in 2.6% of the assaults was the perpetrator reported to be under the influence of drugs. Most commonly, the perpetrator was not under the influence of drugs or alcohol, 67.5%. Victims were even less likely to be under the influence. In only 9.9% of the assaults did the victim report that she was under the influence of alcohol, and

in 87.4% of the cases, the victim reported she was not under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

One consideration of the apparent discrepancy in alcohol involvement in sexual assaults between the survey data and anecdotal evidence from hospitals is the age of the victim. Most victims in the survey, 86%, were assaulted for the first time before turning 18 years of age. Additionally, 44% were first assault by the time

Table 1: Drug and Alcohol Use During Sexual Assaults

	Number	%
Perpetrator		
Alcohol	74	24.3%
Drugs	8	2.6%
Both Drugs/Alcohol	17	5.6%
Neither	206	67.5%
Victim		
Alcohol	37	9.9%
Drugs	5	1.3%
Both Drugs/Alcohol	5	1.3%
Neither	326	87.4%

they turned 10 years of age. Very few victims ever report the assault to police, and very few victims see a physician after the assault occurred.

One hypothesis is that the survey captured a completely different type of victim than is commonly seen at a hospital. It is possible that those sexually assaulted at a young age were not aware of the drug or alcohol tendencies of the perpetrator or that the perpetrator was not under the influence of drugs or alcohol. These situations often involve victim grooming or using positions of trust to facilitate the assault. Another hypothesis is that victims report-

Table 2: Victim Age by Perpetrator Under the Influence

	Victim Age		
	Under 16	16 and Older	
Perp Not Under Influence	168 74.7%	34 45.3%	202
Perp Under Influence	57 25.3%	41 54.7%	98
TOTAL	225	75	300

ing an assault at an older age may be more likely to be in a dating or party situation where drugs and/or alcohol are involved, either to get the victim in a diminished capacity to object or to free inhibitions of the perpetrator. With either hypothesis, we should find drugs and/or alcohol use more common with older victims than with younger victims.

Age and Substance Analysis

To conduct this analysis, victim age was divided into those sexual assaults that occurred before the victim turned 16 years of age and those that occurred after the victim's 16th birthday. Once categorized, the data was examined to determine if there were indeed differences in drug/alcohol usage by the perpetrator and the victim when controlling for age in this fashion.

As demonstrated in **Table 2**, 300 assaults were examined for perpetrator drug or alcohol use. Most commonly, in 202 cases, the perpetrator was not under the influence of drugs or alcohol. However, in examining the data, there is clearly a relationship with age in the direction expected. Only in 25.3% of the cases with a victim under 16 years of age was the perpetrator under the influence of drugs or alcohol. When looking at those sexually assaulted when 16 years of age or older, twice as many perpetrators, 54.7% were under the influence of drugs or alcohol. This difference was found to be statistically significant.

Table 4: Victim Age by Victim Under the Influence

	Victim Age		
	Under 16	16 and Older	
Victim Not Under Influence	256 91.8%	64 72.7%	320
Victim Under Influence	23 8.2%	24 27.3%	47
TOTAL	279	88	367

Table 3 shows more details of what the perpetrator was under the influence of by age group of the victim. As found previously, perpetrators were more commonly under the influence of alcohol when compared to those under the influence of drugs or both drugs and alcohol. Again, statistically significant differences were

discovered when looking at the age of the victim. In 17.8% of the cases where the victim was under 16 years of age the perpetrator was under the influence of alcohol. When looking at victims who were 16 years of age or older, 45.3% of the perpetrators were under the influence of alcohol. Although the numbers are small, **Table 3** also shows a larger proportion of perpetrators were under the influence of drugs when the victim was 16 years of age or

Table 3: Victim Age by Perpetrator Specific Influence Type

Perpetrator Under Influence of:	Victim Age		
	Under 16	16 and Older	
Alcohol	40 17.8%	34 45.3%	74
Drugs	5 2.2%	3 4.0%	8
Both Drug/Alch	12 5.3%	4 5.3%	16
Neither	168 74.7%	34 45.3%	202
TOTAL	225	75	300

older. Another way to consider the data in **Table 3** is that in more than half of the cases where the victim was 16 years of age or older, the perpetrator was under the influence of drugs, alcohol, or both. However, in nearly three-quarters of the cases where the victim was under 16 years of age, the perpetrator was not under the influence of either drugs or alcohol.

Similar to analysis of perpetrator drug or alcohol use, very few victims reported they were under the influence at the time of the assault (see **Table 4**). However, again, older victims of sexual assault were more likely to have been under the influence at the time of the attack. Only 8.2% of those assaulted when less than 16 years of age reported they were under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol at the time of the attack. This compares to 27.3% of those victims 16 or older who were under the influence at the time of the attack. Victims 16 and older were more

Table 5: Victim Age by Victim Specific Influence Type

Victim Under Influence of:	Victim Age		
	Under 16	16 and Older	
Alcohol	14 5.0%	23 26.1%	37
Drugs	4 1.4%	1 1.1%	5
Both Drug/Alch	5 1.8%	0 0.0%	5
Neither	256 91.8%	64 72.7%	320
TOTAL	279	88	367

than three-times as likely to be under the influence when assaulted.

Table 5 shows what the victim was under the influence of at the time of the assault. Similar to the findings related to perpetrators, victims were most likely not to be under the influence of anything. When victims were under the influence, it was most commonly alcohol-related.

Finally, researchers examined the combination of victim and perpetrator substance use by age group. When the victim is under the influence, it is more likely that the perpetrator is under the influence as well, regardless of the age of the victim. When the perpetrator is under the influence, and the victim is less than 16 years of age, it is less likely that the victim is also under the influence. However, when the victim is 16 or older and the perpetrator is under the influence, there is an even chance that the victim is also under the influence.

Conclusion

In conducting further analysis of the sexual violence survey data, it is clear that there are differences in both perpetrator and victim drug and/or alcohol use when considering the age of the victim at the time of the assault. Most commonly, neither the perpetrator nor the victim are under the influence of drugs or alcohol. However, when victims were categorized as those less than 16 years of age and those 16 years of age and older at the time of the assault, differences in drug and/or alcohol use were discovered.

In considering both perpetrators and victims of sexual assault, when the victim was 16 years of age or older, drugs and/or alcohol were more likely to be involved. The analysis found that more than twice the proportion of perpetrators was under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol if the victim was 16 or older at the time of the assault. The analysis also found that more than three times the proportion of victims was under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol when the victim was 16 or older at the time of the assault. Most commonly, in considering both perpetrators and victims, alcohol was the substance being used. The analysis also discovered that when the victim was under the influence, most commonly the perpetrator was also under the influence.