



The Prosecution of Rapists

by Patricia Frazier



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The University of Minnesota is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to its programs, facilities, and employment without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, or sexual orientation.

In February of this year, women in the Twin Cities breathed a collective sigh of relief with the arrest of the infamous serial rapist. It seemed that life could go back to normal. Yet, as those who work with survivors can attest, this sense of safety was, in fact, illusory. It belied the fact that rapes continue to occur at an alarming rate in our community. According to the FBI, in fact, Minneapolis, had the highest per capita rate of reported rape in the United States in 1991. In addition, although the terrifying acts perpetrated by the serial rapist galvanized our community's outrage, in reality, women are more likely to be raped by someone they know than

by a stranger. In short, the problem of sexual violence against women in our community was not solved with the jailing of one alleged serial rapist.

Because sexual violence is a major social problem in the United States, research on its causes and effects is a top priority in psychology and other mental health fields. Numerous studies have documented the toll such assaults can take. Victims experience heightened fear, anxiety, and depression for several months, or sometimes years, following an assault. Research suggests, however, that there is tremendous variation in the extent to which women are affected

by a sexual assault, and that some victims experience more severe and prolonged trauma than others.

For several years, my research has centered on the psychological factors that aid in recovery from sexual assault. Sharing my findings with rape crisis counselors suggested an important factor that I had overlooked—the manner in which the victim is treated within the legal system. This observation led to the present study—an examination of the process by which rapists are prosecuted, an analysis of the factors affecting the outcome of rape cases, and a look at how a rape victim's recovery is linked to the way she perceives the legal system.

What Other Studies Have Shown

The scope of this study was determined following a review of the existing research. Through this review I learned that although the treatment of rape victims in the legal system is often criticized, very little systematic evidence exists about the way in which rape cases are processed in the legal system or the effect of the legal process on victim recovery. For example, only a few studies have assessed the extent of attrition in the processing of rape cases from the time of the initial police report to sentencing. One study found that only about 40 percent of reported rapes resulted in an arrest and that only about half of those arrests resulted in the filing of a felony complaint.

In addition to documenting outcomes, it is important to examine factors that might be related to the decisions made by police and prosecutors regarding which cases to pursue. Examination of the factors affecting case attrition is necessary in order to uncover possible biases in the treatment of rape cases in the legal system. For example, a few studies suggest that more serious charges were filed when the defendant was African-American and the victim was Caucasian, when the victim and defendant were strangers, and when the victim had not been drinking prior to the rape.

Finally, few data are available on victims' perceptions of the legal system or how these perceptions may relate to their recovery. Evidence regarding the link between how victims feel they are treated and their recovery may be useful in helping victims anticipate and understand their responses to the legal process. In addition, these data may suggest ways to make the process easier for victims while still protecting the rights of the accused.

The Design of This Study

The collaboration of the police department in a large Midwestern city, the county

Table 1. Characteristics of Rape Cases Reported to Police (674 cases)

Victims

- Average age = 25 years (range = 1 to 86 years)
- 55% Caucasian, 32% African-American, 11% other ethnic minorities, 2% unknown

Suspects

- 19% Caucasian, 62% African-American, 10% other ethnic minorities, 9% unknown
- 58% known to victim

Assault Characteristics

- 39% the victim was threatened
- 23% there were multiple assailants
- 28% a weapon was used
- 24% there was a witness to the assault

prosecutor's office for that city, and a hospital-based rape crisis program made this study possible. Permission was obtained to code data from the police and court records for all 861 sexual assault cases reported to the police department during 1991. Cases involving multiple instances of assault by the same perpetrator were excluded in an attempt to eliminate cases of sexual abuse, that, for our purposes, represented a distinctly different crime. One hundred seventy-three cases were excluded for this reason. We also excluded the fourteen cases involving male victims. This brought the total sample to 674 cases to be analyzed.

Data were coded on 101 different variables, including various indices of case outcomes (such as whether a suspect was identified, whether the case was referred to the county prosecutor, and whether a suspect was charged) and factors that might be related to case outcomes. These included characteristics of the victim and the suspect (such as race), the severity of the offense (such as whether a weapon was used), and various factors related to the amount of evidence available or the credibility of the complaint (such as whether there was a witness to the assault).

Data on victims' perceptions of the legal system and their post-rape recovery were gathered separately from the police and court data. Victims who chose to participate in this part of the study were part of an ongoing research project being conducted at the rape crisis program. The program is staffed by specially-trained nurses who are on-call twenty-four hours a day and are contacted whenever a rape victim reports to the emergency room. Victims are seen in the emergency room and for up to one year post-rape. About fifty of the victims connected with the program chose to participate in the study. They completed questionnaires and psychological tests at several points post-rape. The data described here were completed three months after the assault.

Who Was Involved?

The sample of sexual assault cases that we analyzed involved mostly young victims (Table 1). More than half were Caucasian and more than half were acquainted with the suspect. The majority of the suspects were African-American. Most suspects already had police records from previous charges. Typically, no weapons were involved and there were no witnesses.

What Happened After the Assault Was Reported?

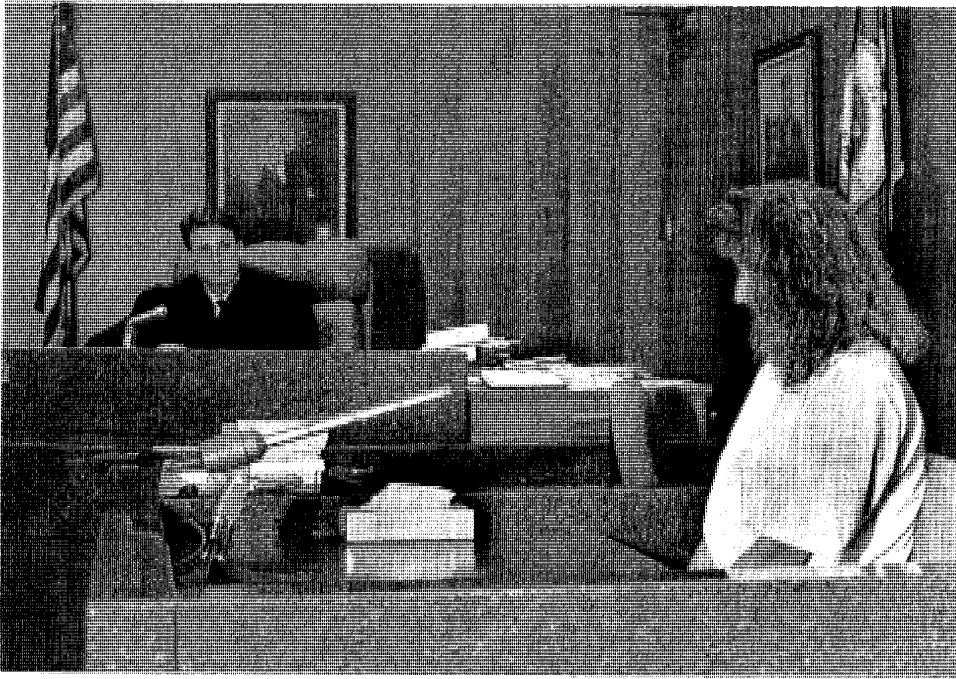
The first purpose of this study was to gather descriptive information on the outcomes of sexual assault cases. The process was examined separately for stranger and for acquaintance rape because different factors are likely to be considered in each type of case. For example, the primary issue in most stranger rape cases is the identity of the assailant whereas, in acquaintance rape, the issue is usually whether the victim consented.

Out of the 674 cases we examined, 281 cases (42 percent) involved stranger rapes and 393 cases (58 percent) involved acquaintance rapes. It should be mentioned, however, that it is difficult to categorize suspects as "strangers" or "acquaintances." For example, we classified a suspect that a victim had just met in a bar as an acquaintance, although it could also be argued that he was a stranger.

The outcomes for stranger rape cases are summarized in Figure 1. In these cases, most of the attrition occurred because a suspect was identified in approximately 25 percent of the cases. Identified suspects were questioned in about 80 percent of these cases (20 percent of the total). Then, from the point of questioning, there was very little attrition before the case reached the prosecutor. That is, in most of the cases in which a suspect was questioned, the suspect was arrested. And almost all (94 percent) of the suspects arrested were referred to the prosecutor for possible charges.

Once the case reached the prosecutor's office, some further drop-off occurred. Charges were filed in 84 percent of the cases (14 percent of the total). Of the thirty-eight

Cover photo: Rape victims were found to be quite dissatisfied with the legal system. About half felt that rapists had more rights than victims.



Only 12 percent of reported rape cases ended with a conviction in 1991. A rapist was sent to prison in only 7 percent of the cases.

stranger rape cases charged, one involved a juvenile defendant and three were merged with other cases. In the remaining thirty-four cases, there were twenty-six convictions and twenty-three of the defendants were sentenced to prison. In other words, 9 percent of the stranger rape cases resulted in convictions and a defendant went to prison in 8 percent of the cases.

The picture is somewhat different for cases of acquaintance rape. Unlike the stranger rape cases, a suspect was identified in the majority (69 percent) of these cases (Figure 2). Identified suspects were questioned 67 percent of the time (45 percent of the total). Most of the suspects who were questioned were arrested (73 percent or 34 percent of the total) and most of those arrested (87 percent) were referred to the prosecutor for possible charges (29 percent of total). The prosecutor filed charges in 74 percent of the acquaintance rape cases that were referred (22 percent of the total). Of the eighty-five acquaintance rape cases charged, eight involved juvenile defendants and four were still unresolved as of July 1993. In the remaining seventy-three cases there were fifty-eight convictions and twenty-five defendants were sentenced to prison. Thus, 15 percent of the acquaintance rape cases resulted in convictions and 6 percent of the defendants were sentenced to prison.

Thus some interesting differences emerge when outcomes of stranger and acquaintance rape cases are analyzed separately. The arrest rate was much lower for stranger rapes (17 percent) than for acquaintance rapes (34 percent), although the percentage of suspects charged among those arrested

was quite high for both groups (84 percent to 87 percent). The percentage of convictions in charged cases also was similar (76 percent and 79 percent), but defendants convicted of acquaintance rape were less than half as likely to go to prison (43 percent) as those convicted of stranger rape (88 percent).

Some interesting differences also emerge between our results and those of previous studies. Specifically, the number

of reported rape cases in which there was an arrest was lower in our sample than in other studies, whereas the percentage of arrested suspects who were charged with felonies was much higher. In other words, fewer suspects were arrested but those who were arrested were more likely to be prosecuted. Nonetheless, our data are consistent with previous research in showing tremendous attrition in the processing of rape cases. Combining both acquaintance and stranger rape cases, 12 percent of the cases resulted in convictions and a defendant was sent to prison in 7 percent of the cases. Only eighteen (or 3 percent) of the cases went to trial.

What Factors Affected Case Attrition?

Given that tremendous attrition does occur in the processing of rape cases, our next step was to try to identify factors that might influence decision-making at various stages in the process. Our first question was whether we could identify factors that influenced police decision-making; that is, Which cases were the police most likely to pursue? Specifically, we examined whether certain suspects were more likely to be questioned by the police than others. Recall that a number of identified suspects were not questioned in both stranger and acquaintance rape cases and that it was at this stage of the process that some of the attrition occurred.

In order to determine whether certain victim or case characteristics were associated with whether or not a suspect was questioned, we performed two stepwise logistic regression analyses. These were done separately for the stranger and acquaintance rape cases. The predictor

Figure 1. Case Outcomes for 1991 Stranger Rapes (281 cases)

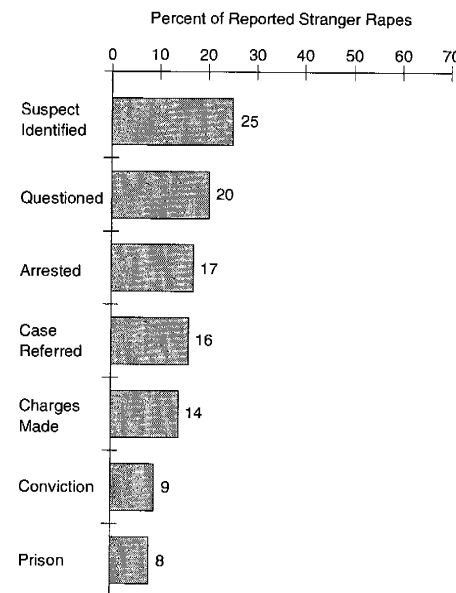
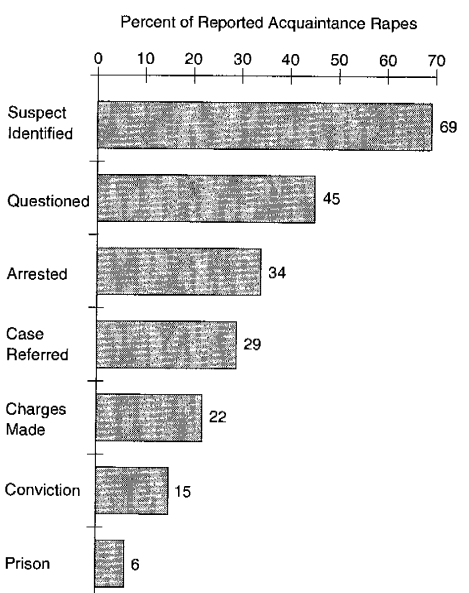


Figure 2. Case Outcomes for 1991 Acquaintance Rapes (393 cases)



variables were seventeen factors that can be classified into four broad groups:

- characteristics of the victim and suspect (such as age and race),
- factors related to the severity of the assault (such as the extent of injuries and the use of weapons),
- evidentiary factors (such as the presence or absence of a witness),
- and factors that might reflect on the credibility of the complaint (such as a victim who had been drinking).

It is important to note that several variables can be interpreted as either evidentiary or credibility factors. For example, a victim who resisted may seem more credible and the resistance is further evidence that an assault occurred.

Table 2 summarizes the results of two logistic regression analyses for one of the case outcomes that we examined—whether suspects were questioned by the police. This outcome was regressed in a stepwise fashion on all seventeen predictor variables. For stranger rape cases, five variables predicted whether a suspect was likely to be questioned and are shown in the table. One such factor was the race of the victim. Suspects were more likely to be questioned in cases involving Caucasian victims (27 percent) than in cases involving non-Caucasian victims (10 percent). This seems to be partly due to the fact that suspects were more likely to be identified in cases involving Caucasian victims.

In addition to race, three factors that were either evidentiary or credibility factors were linked to whether suspects were questioned in stranger rape cases. Suspects were more likely to be questioned if there was a witness, if the suspect had used drugs or alcohol, and if the suspect had prior charges against him. Finally, suspects were more likely to be questioned when there was a weapon.

In acquaintance rape cases, it was primarily the evidentiary and credibility factors that predicted whether a suspect was questioned. For example, suspects were more likely to be questioned if there was a witness, if the victim verbally resisted, if the victim physically resisted, and if the suspect had used drugs or alcohol. In addition, suspects were more likely to be questioned if the victim went to the emergency room for an evidentiary exam.

In summary, many stranger rape cases do not result in an arrest because a suspect is never identified. Nonetheless, in both stranger and acquaintance rape cases, further attrition occurs because identified suspects are not questioned. The best predictors of whether suspects would be questioned were the various evidentiary and credibility factors. However, it also should be noted that often suspects are not questioned because the victim is unwilling to prosecute. Identified suspects were questioned in 88 percent of the cases in which the victim did not state that she was

unwilling to prosecute.

In our sample, the seventeen variables were also examined to see if they would predict whether suspects would be charged (see Table 3). For both stranger and acquaintance rapes, it was the evidentiary, credibility, and offense severity factors that predicted whether charges would be filed. For example, two indicators of the severity of the offense—the victim was threatened and the victim was injured—were associated with charges being filed in both stranger and acquaintance rape cases. Three evidentiary and credibility factors—the victim resisted, there was a witness, and the suspect had prior charges against him—were associated with a suspect being charged.

Again, this was true for both stranger rapes and acquaintance rapes. In acquaintance rape cases, charges were more likely to be filed if the victim did not use drugs or alcohol (but the suspect did) and if the vic-

tim went to the hospital emergency room for an evidentiary exam. Finally, another factor that appeared to affect charging was race. Suspects in cases involving Caucasian victims were more likely to be charged.

In summary, charges are more likely to be filed in cases where (a) there is more evidence, (b) the victim appears credible, (c) the assault was more severe, and (d) the victim is Caucasian.

However, these analyses are based on all cases, whether or not they were referred to the prosecutor for possible charges. If only the referred cases are examined, the picture is somewhat different. Stranger rape cases were more likely to be charged if the victim was injured and went to the emergency room. In acquaintance rape cases, the prosecutor was more likely to file charges when the victim was threatened, did not use drugs or alcohol, and was injured, and when the suspect had prior charges.

Table 2. Factors Predicting Whether Suspects Would be Questioned by Police*

Suspects in stranger rape cases were more likely to be questioned if:

- the victim was Caucasian.
- there was a witness to the assault.
- the suspect used drugs or alcohol.
- the suspect had prior charges.
- there was a weapon.

Suspects in acquaintance rape cases were more likely to be questioned if:

- there was a witness to the assault.
- the victim verbally resisted.
- the victim physically resisted.
- the suspect used drugs or alcohol.
- the victim went to the hospital emergency room.

* All of these factors are statistically significant. The probability that they would predict by chance is five in a hundred.

Table 3. Factors Predicting Whether Suspects Would be Charged by the Prosecutor

Total Sample	Referred Cases Only
Suspects in stranger rape cases were more likely to be charged if:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the victim was threatened. • the victim was injured. • there was a witness to the assault. • the victim physically resisted. • the suspect had prior charges. • the victim was Caucasian. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the victim went to the emergency room. • the victim was injured.
Suspects in acquaintance rape cases were more likely to be charged if:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the victim was threatened. • the victim was injured. • there was a witness to the assault. • the victim verbally resisted. • the suspect used drugs or alcohol. • the victim didn't use drugs or alcohol. • the suspect had prior charges. • the victim went to the emergency room. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the victim was threatened. • the victim didn't use drugs or alcohol. • the suspect had prior charges. • the victim was injured.

* All of these factors are statistically significant. The probability that they would predict by chance is five in a hundred.

The Victims' Perceptions and Their Recovery

Given that most victims never see their assailants prosecuted, our final questions concerned how victims feel about the legal system and the relations between those feelings and their recovery. Because our sample of victims was small and because cases often take a long time to be resolved,

we could not in this study assess the relations between actual case outcomes and victim recovery. Instead we looked at victim attitudes toward the legal system at three months postrape and how these related to the victims' recovery.

Our data show that victims were quite dissatisfied with the legal system. Less than a quarter of the victims had positive feelings about the legal system overall or felt that their rights were protected by the sys-

tem. Conversely, approximately half of the victims felt that the legal system was generally unfair and that rapists seemed to have more rights than victims.

In addition, we examined the relations between victims' attitudes toward the legal system and various measures of their recovery from the rape. These analyses indicated that victims who were less satisfied with the legal system reported more symptoms of depression, more fear and anxiety, more hostility, and more symptoms of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder than victims who were more satisfied with the system.

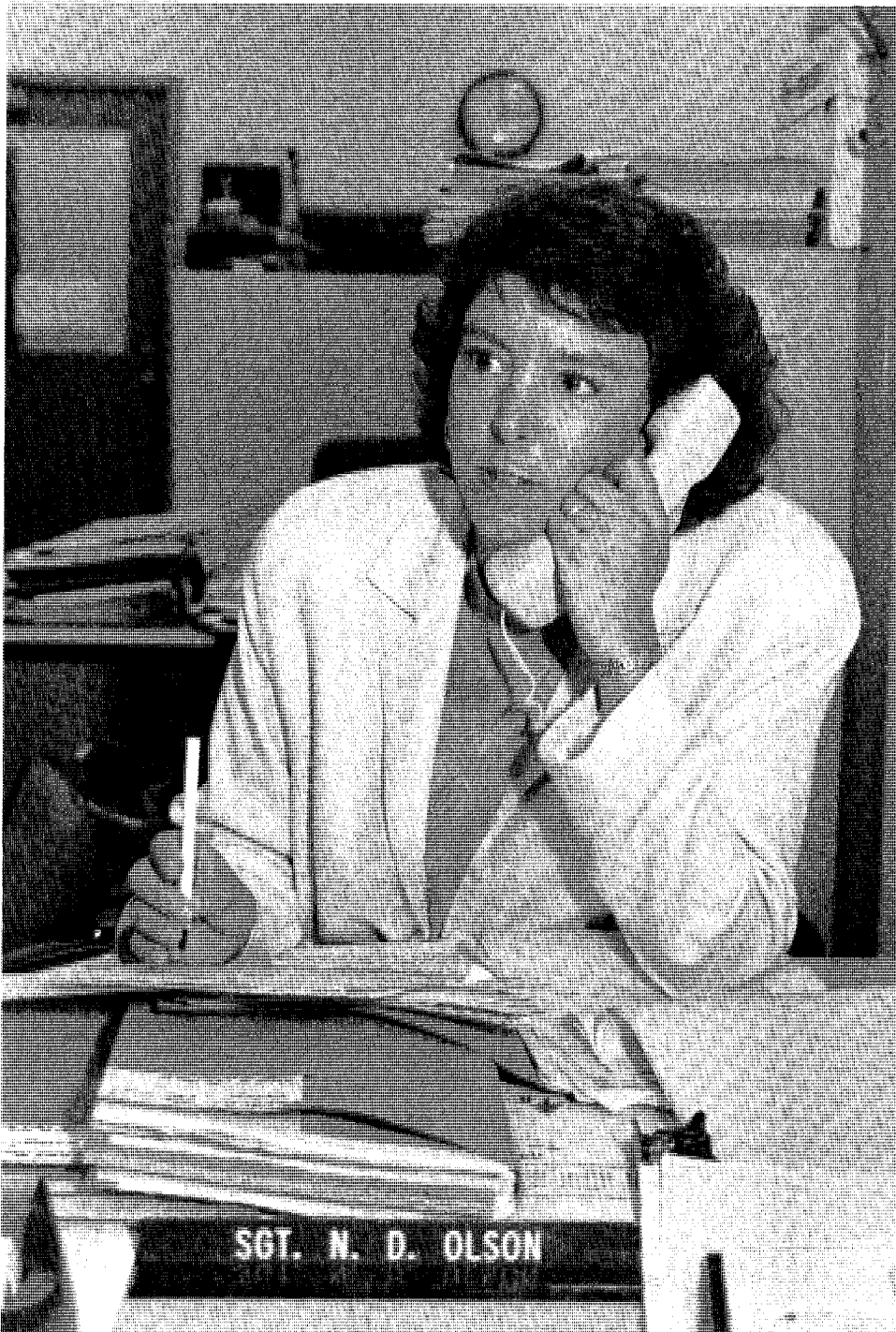
Implications of the Study

Our study shows, first, that there is tremendous attrition in the prosecution of sexual assault cases from the time of the initial report to sentencing. Consequently, charges are filed in a small percentage of cases and an even smaller number result in a conviction or prison sentence. Thus, of the 674 reported cases in 1991, there were 84 convictions and 48 assailants were sentenced to prison.

Second, our data point to several factors that appear to influence the decision-making of police and prosecutors. The police are more likely to refer cases to the prosecuting attorney and prosecuting attorneys are more likely to file charges in cases that are more severe (cases, for example, that involve weapons and injuries) and in cases where there is stronger evidence (such as witnesses and victim resistance). In addition, our own and others' research has found that the race of the victim and defendant affect case prosecution. Although the particular results vary somewhat across studies, in general, cases involving Caucasian victims appear to be prosecuted more vigorously. Moreover, other data we collected suggest that this does not appear to be because non-Caucasian victims are less willing to prosecute.

To what extent are these findings unique to rape cases? Is the legal system biased against rape victims? Some argue that the importance of witnesses and victim resistance suggests that police and prosecutors tend not to believe a victim unless there is independent corroboration of her claim. Others view this as evidence that police and prosecutors are trying to carefully allocate scarce resources—that because of time pressures and overwhelming case loads, they invest time and energy in the cases that are more likely to result in convictions.

What evidence exists to support either of these interpretations? Several studies suggest that police and prosecutors have less favorable attitudes toward rape victims than do mental health professionals. However, only one study has compared attitudes toward different kinds of crime victims. In this study, police judgments of rape victims were more influenced by the personal characteristics of the victim than were their



One of the problems in processing rape cases appears to be that police have insufficient resources for investigating cases.

judgments of other crime victims. More direct evidence comes from studies comparing prosecution of rape cases to prosecution of other crimes. These suggest that, in fact, rape cases are treated very similarly to other serious crimes. For example, the outcomes of rape cases are similar to the outcomes of other violent crimes (like robbery and homicide) and property offenses (like burglary). The factors that predict outcomes also are similar across all types of serious crimes.

In sum, although there may be some unique biases in the processing of rape cases, it appears that attrition is a more general problem in the legal system. This information is important because it implies a different problem and a different solution than if the bias were unique to rape. Since one problem appears to be insufficient resources to investigate cases, finding additional investigative resources for police departments may be a more effective solution than training police about the myths and realities of rape, for example. Nonetheless, some bias does appear to exist in the prosecution of rape cases, particularly racial bias. The police and prosecutors may benefit from being made aware of such factors that could be influencing their decision-making. Finally, given that the criminal justice system will continue to be understaffed and overcrowded, it may also be time to think about new ways to prosecute rape cases.

Until such changes occur, victims are likely to continue to be dissatisfied with the system and this dissatisfaction is likely to impede their recovery. What can be done to increase a victim's satisfaction with the system? Crime victims in Minnesota currently do have extensive legal rights.

- They have the right to be informed about what is happening to their case—for example, to know about plea bargain agreements.
- They have the right to participate in the process—for example, to present a statement at sentencing.
- They have the right to protection. They have, for instance, access to a secure waiting area outside the court room.
- And they have the right to financial assistance. Minnesota grants reparations in the form of payment for lost wages and medical expenses, and grants restitution through payment from the offender for property losses.

Why are victims dissatisfied with the system despite these rights? One reason may be that many victims are not aware of their rights. Victims whose cases are referred to the prosecuting attorney are informed of their rights by a court advocate, but these victims are fewer than a quarter of the total number of victims. Another reason may be that there is currently little accountability in the system if these rights are not enforced. Although victims have a right to restitution from the offender, for example, getting that restitution is very difficult. As a result, victims become

frustrated because they receive no money and there are no consequences to anyone but them. In addition, there is a one-year limit on reparations from the state and victims may not know about their right to reparations until their case reaches the prosecuting attorney's office. By that time it may be too late. Finally, additional rights may be necessary. Victims have the right to present a statement at the time of sentencing, but do not have the same right at bail hearings. Similarly, although they have the right to be notified when an offender is released from prison, they are not notified when a suspect is arrested.

In conclusion, the solutions to this problem are not simple. Yet, given the increasing level of violence in our community, it is time for all of us to contribute to the solution. This study, which involved a collaboration between the University of Minnesota and several community agencies, represents one step in this direction. The data also suggest several additional steps that might be taken to improve the prosecution of rape cases in our community. One is to provide more resources to police investigators. A second is to inform victims of their rights earlier. A third is to increase accountability in the system so that victims' rights are enforced. And a fourth is to provide additional victim rights, particularly at earlier stages in the process.

Patricia Frazier is an assistant professor of psychology at the University of Minnesota. She has published several articles on sexual assault and psychology and law. Funding from the National Institute of Mental Health and the McKnight Foundation allows her to continue her work on the effects of sexual violence on women. She was assisted in this study by Suzanne Candell and Nancy Arikian, doctoral students in psychology, and by Anne Tofteland, who is a law student at the University of Minnesota.

This study was supported by an interactive research grant from CURA and the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs, University of Minnesota. Interactive research grants have been created to encourage University faculty to carry out research projects that involve significant issues of public policy for the state and that include interaction with community groups, agencies, or organizations in Minnesota. These grants are available to regular faculty members at the University of Minnesota and are awarded annually on a competitive basis.

The photographs accompanying this article are illustrative only and do not necessarily depict the persons or places described in the article.

Project Awards

In an attempt to keep our readers more up-to-date about CURA projects, we are featuring a few capsule descriptions of projects underway in each issue of the *CURA Reporter*. The projects listed this time are the project which won the Borchert Fellowship Award in 1993-94 and two health care projects for which CURA is supplying an evaluation.

John R. Borchert was the first director of CURA. He is a Regents Professor Emeritus of the Department of Geography at the University of Minnesota. In his honor, CURA annually awards a fellowship to an advanced graduate student in geography to work on an issue of importance to the citizens of Minnesota. The best proposal is selected jointly by CURA and the geography department. The current winner is working on a study of urban travel.

Gender Differences in Urban Travel.

Urban transportation policy depends on the ability to predict travel demands. These demands are not always constant. Has the entrance of women into the work force and women's continuing household responsibilities changed travel patterns between work and home? Do gender differences in travel patterns vary depending on the types of household and where it is located in the city? These questions are being explored through the use of travel behavior inventory data for the years 1958, 1970, 1982, and 1990. A series of maps will be developed documenting changes in travel patterns over time and the gender differences in these changes. The study will provide empirical evidence on the changing relationships between home and work in the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

Public Health Reform. The Community-Based Public Health Initiative is a four-year, sixteen million dollar effort launched by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation in October 1992. CURA is documenting the evolution and outcomes of this initiative as it is being carried out by seven different consortia. Members in each consortium include community organization staff, citizens, public health department administrators, and faculty and staff in health professions schools. While activities vary from site to site, each consortium is addressing needed reforms in public health education and practice, as well as community capacity building. The evaluation, which runs contiguous to the grant initiative, is assessing changes in three domains: the academic environment, the public health practice environment, and the community. Among other strategies, the evaluation team will be producing a video documentary of the initiative, using local videographers from each consortium.

Access to Health Care. The East Metro Community Health Network in St. Paul is a group of nine community clinics that have joined together with the St. Paul Public Health Division and the Ramsey County Public Health Department to better advocate and provide services for low-income, at-risk persons. Grants from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, The St. Paul Foundation, and others are enabling the network to experiment with three strategies for increasing access to health care: a centralized telephone intake and referral system, a shared pool of medical and dental providers to accommodate demand for services, and coordinated outreach activities. CURA is evaluating the extent to which these three strategies accomplish short-term gains, avoid potential negative repercussions, and increase access without compromising clinic capacity.

Photos on pages 1, 3, 5, 11, and 15 by Nancy Conroy.
 Photo on page 9 by Emily Figueroa.
 Photo on page 10 courtesy of the Hispanic Pre-College Project, University of St. Thomas.

Educating Mexicanos and Latinos

by Bruce Vandal

The education of Mexicano and Latino youth is becoming a significant issue in American education. Concern about their education stems from an increase in the numbers of Mexicano and Latino students of school age. Unfortunately, growth in the school age population has been accompanied by a rise in high school dropouts, seriously affecting the number of Mexicano and Latino students that move on into higher education. Mexicano and Latino students tend to slip out of the educational system early, rarely returning to earn a college degree.

One of the problems leading Mexicano and Latino students to drop out is their lack of academic preparation for higher education. The needs assessment for the University of St. Thomas' Hispanic Pre-College Project found that, in general, Mexicano and Latino students are in need of stronger basic skills, better study skills, and exposure to more rigorous academic courses. The report also found that Mexicano and Latino students often experience low self-esteem and alienation because of the lack of attention to their unique cultural needs and the insensitive stereotypes that students, teachers, and staff apply to them.

Participation in Summer Programs

One strategy for opening the educational pipeline for any student is a pre-college experience such as a summer enrichment program. Research has found that specific "getting ready" experiences help students

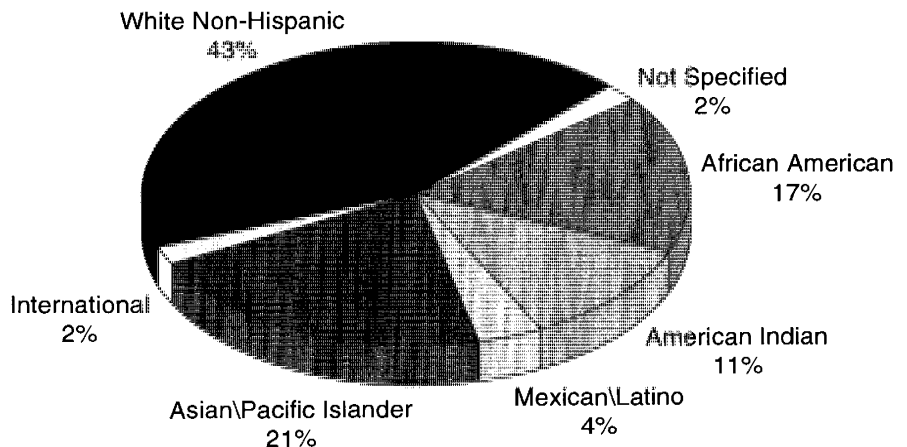
make the transition from high school to college. Louis Attinasi, from the University of Houston, in his research on the educational experiences of Mexican American students found that pre-college experiences help define what college may be like, introduce students to mentors who encourage their participation in higher education, and create the expectation that students will go on to post-secondary education.

Unfortunately, most Mexicano and Latino students in Minnesota are not exposed to these unique learning experiences. The Minnesota Minority Education Partnership's database of students attending summer enrichment programs revealed that Mexicano and Latino students are far and away the least likely to participate in the summer programs. Information collected from sixth through twelfth graders who enrolled in summer programs in the years 1990 through 1992 indicates that of the 2,230 students that have participated in summer programs only 86, or less than 4 percent, described their ethnicity as Mexicano or Latino (Figure 1).

Community Discussions

The Minnesota Minority Education Partnership responded to the problem of low Mexicano and Latino participation in summer programs by sponsoring a series of roundtable discussions with members of the Mexicano and Latino community and summer program educators. The discussions

Figure 1. Ethnicity of Youth Attending Summer Enrichment Programs, 1990-1992



Source: Minnesota Minority Education Partnership.

set out to identify the barriers to Mexicano and Latino participation and strategies for breaking down those barriers. The result of these discussions was the identification of issues that focused on the different roles that individuals play in the process of recruiting students for summer programs.

Valuing Mexicano and Latino Identity

Identifying and valuing the unique cultural heritage of students is a common problem among programs that have traditionally enrolled majority white students. Even programs that seek to recruit “students of color” run the risk of excluding students who do not identify with that term. Abner Arauza, coordinator of minority student affairs at Moorhead State University, states that, “if you identify students of color for recruitment, that is exactly what you will get, but it will not be all students of color.” According to Arauza, many Mexicano and Latino students do not consider themselves students of color and therefore will not respond to recruitment strategies that use that classification. Evelyn Belton-Kocher, an evaluation specialist for the Minneapolis Public Schools, believes that the typical student of color recruited by programs is African American and female. Arauza states that recruitment efforts should value the unique background of students and recruitment materials should identify each ethnic group by name. Ramona A. de Rosales, director of the Hispanic Pre-College Project at the University of St. Thomas, which includes Academia del Pueblo, a program for kindergarten through sixth grade Mexicano and Latino students, feels that many programs may be sensitive to students of color, but not sensitive to Mexicano and Latino students. Rosales’ statement is supported by evidence showing that programs which value cultural background, develop self-esteem in Hispanic youth. Efforts to recruit and educate Mexicano and Latino students must be attentive to their unique cultural needs during the recruitment process and when the student enrolls in a program.

In addition to distinguishing Mexicanos and Latinos from other ethnic populations, educators must consider the differences within the Mexicano and Latino community. Luis Ortega, vice-principal at Minneapolis Southwest High School and director of La Escuelita (a summer program for Mexicano and Latino students run by CLUES—Chicanos Latinos Unidos En Servicios) contends that the term “Hispanic” is too broad. He believes that efforts to attract Mexicano and Latino students must identify the needs of English speaking versus Spanish speaking students, and first generation students versus second and third generation students. Once again research has shown that the experiences and aspirations of students differ depending on their specific cultural background. Studies have found that Mexicanos differ from Latinos in their educational experiences, that first gen-

eration students have different problems than second or third generation students, and that English speaking Mexicanos and Latinos have greater access to programs than non-fluent students.

Family Values and Parental Roles

The family’s role in the life of a student is of particular importance when examining educational achievement in the Mexicano and Latino community. Students look to their families for guidance and support. Parents, in turn, place high expectations on their children. Unfortunately, Mexicano and Latino parents have a difficult time navigating the educational system. The Minnesota State Board of Education’s Hispanic Learner Task Force found several barriers preventing parental involvement in the education of their children. First, the report stated that language differences hinder communication between parents and educators. Luis Ortega, is frustrated with the fact that the language barrier continues to be a problem in the education of Mexicanos and Latinos. Elsa Vega Perez, executive director for the Hispanic Education Program, agrees with Ortega and adds that materials presented in Spanish not only address language difference, they show a sensitivity to the Hispanic culture. Perez states that a brochure in Spanish tells the parent that a program is sincere in its efforts to include Mexicano and Latino students.

A second concern of the Hispanic Learner Task Force is parental knowledge of the educational system. Because Mexicano and Latino families are often first or second generation residents of the United States, they may be less knowledgeable than other parents. As a result, parents may be unaware of how to become more involved in their children’s education. Ramona A. de Rosales explains that the average Mexicano or Latino parent has not graduated from high school and consequently has not been exposed to the unique educational opportunities that are available. Mexicano or Latino parents are, therefore, less likely than other parents to seek out such educational opportunities for their children.

Related to the lack of knowledge about programs is the perception that summer programs are for talented and gifted or low income students. Even parents that consider themselves well informed about summer programs have difficulty understanding whether programs are directed at their child’s ability level. Mexicano and Latino parents arrive at the conclusion that a program is selective when they encounter program titles using terms such as “excellence” and “leadership” or when application procedures ask for teacher recommendations and school transcripts. Rudy Hernandez, an admissions counselor for the University of Minnesota’s General College, believes that the only way to remove this confusion about summer programs is to have personal contact with students and parents. If Mexicano and Latino parents are

unfamiliar with the system it should become the responsibility of summer programs to reach out to them.

The third concern of the Hispanic Learner Task Force is that many families lack the resources for participation in their children’s education. Financial and family responsibilities make it difficult for parents to attend school functions. Despite these difficulties, programs such as Academia del Pueblo have been successful at gaining the participation of parents. According to Patricia Santos, the parent coordinator for Parents as Partners, a coordinated program with Academia del Pueblo, making parental involvement a part of the program ensures a greater effort to reach parents. Academia del Pueblo is able to gain the involvement of parents in meetings throughout the year by providing food, child care, and other services that might otherwise prevent them from attending. The key, according to Santos, is constant contact with parents that reminds them of their obligation to the program.

Family Issues

Another issue affecting student participation in summer programs may be the nature of the Mexicano and Latino family. Mexicano and Latino students that move on to college often experience difficulty in breaking away from family. If the values of the family are not consistent with college attendance, any attempt to move students into unique educational opportunities related to future college enrollment may be resisted. This is reflected in parental concerns about the environment their children will be exposed to during summer programs. Anxiety about safety and cultural awareness are both issues that parents mention when discussing summer programs. Liz Gurrola-Dorado, director of the College of St. Catherine’s program Un Primer Paso, believes that questions of security, particularly for programs where the child is attending a program away from the neighborhood, are a major concern of parents. In addition to safety, community leaders such as Narciso Aleman express the need to integrate the cultural heritage of Mexicano and Latino students into programming. Aleman believes that parents would be much more interested in sending their students to summer programs if an effort were made to recognize their cultural heritage and to foster pride in their background.

Working with the Schools

Discussions with community members and summer program directors reveal frustration in efforts to work with school counselors. The Hispanic Learner Task Force found that parents are not made to feel welcome by many educators. The task force explained that cultural and language barriers inhibit effective communication. This perception is



Many Mexicano and Latino students do not consider themselves students of color.

echoed by summer program directors and community members. They feel that counselors are not informed about and do not recruit students for summer programs. Counselors will often recruit the same students over and over for summer programs and are not receptive to requests for a wider range of students. The students identified by counselors are often those that have benefited from other educational opportunities, are seen as gifted, and are fluent in English. According to Evelyn Belton-Kocher there is a group of students that are invisible to counselors. These students are not high achievers or poor performers, they are just getting by and receiving little recognition. These students are rarely targeted for programs and may be the population that is most at risk.

Many counselors have been outstanding advocates for Mexicano and Latino students.

Unfortunately, according to Ramona A. de Rosales, they become overloaded with work. Programs such as Upward Bound realize that counselors are often too busy to satisfy the specific requests of all the programs that approach them, therefore they look to teachers, coaches, and other educators to identify students for their program. Aloida Zaragosa, director of Upward Bound at the University of Minnesota, defends counselors when she states that programs must make an effort to address the concerns of educators. If one program takes an ongoing interest in the student and another involves the student in a two-week program and does not follow up with the student, then most likely the former program will gain greater support from the counselor than the latter. Zaragosa states that competition for programs does exist and that it is the responsibility of the program to create an attractive program for students and educators.

Community Connections

An interesting issue to consider is the existence of social networks within the Mexicano and Latino community. Research has found that in Mexican American families, social networks are the primary means of disseminating and informing parents of educational options for their children. A study conducted by Concha Delgado-Gaitan, of the University of California-Davis, found that social networks created through church groups, extended family, or community organizations provide a non-threatening environment in which parents feel comfortable asking about the educational system their children attend. This view is echoed in discussions with Mexicano and Latino community leaders. The ability to reach out to families via church groups or community-based organizations is critical in gaining the trust of Mexicano and Latino parents and community leaders. Miguel Cordova, of Carleton College, believes that efforts to reach students and parents require a year-round commitment. Efforts in the community will not be successful if the only time program coordinators are available is when they are recruiting.

Connecting with the community is especially important for Mexicanos and Latinos in greater Minnesota. The cities of Worthington, Willmar, and Moorhead, for example, have a rapidly growing Mexicano and Latino population. Mexicano and Latino families new to these cities are the least likely to have community networks to inform them about summer programs. Abner Arauza, of Moorhead State University, says that little connection has been made between the resources in the Twin Cities metropolitan area and Mexicano and Latino populations in greater Minnesota. By not including students from these non-metropolitan areas, efforts to integrate Mexicano and Latino students into programs exclude the students that have the most to gain from such opportunities.

Cooperation

Connecting with the Mexicano and Latino communities throughout the state requires a tremendous amount of resources from summer programs. Developing partnerships that will maximize resources is one solution. Organizations like the Minnesota Minority Education Partnership can play a crucial role in gathering and disseminating information about program opportunities, but the programs themselves must take the initiative in sharing people and information when recruiting Mexicano and Latino students. One valuable means of reaching the Mexicano and Latino community would be to sponsor community meetings where representatives from various summer programs can present information about what they have to offer. Another effort could be as simple as visiting student homes and making families aware of the opportunities for all their children.



Academia del Pueblo (University of St. Thomas) keeps parents involved with their children's education through a coordinated program, Parents as Partners.

Increasing the participation of Mexicano and Latino students in summer programs and the education system generally will require a commitment by programs, community leaders, and families. Programs must understand that participation of Mexicanos and Latinos, or any ethnic group, requires a sensitivity to the unique aspects of their community and a belief that the inclusion of all students will benefit the educational quality and success of the programs.

Recommendations

The roundtable discussions sponsored by the Minnesota Minority Education Partnership resulted in a number of suggestions for how to break down the barriers that are preventing Mexicano and Latino youth from participating in summer enrichment programs. The suggestions are for program directors of the various summer enrichment programs and for people working in the schools. They also include the possibility of cooperation among summer programs.

Summer programs would do well to develop recruitment strategies aimed specifically at Mexicanos and Latinos. It is unrealistic to expect this group to respond to recruitment drives for students of color or for programs emphasizing excellence or leadership. In fact, strategies are needed for English speaking and for non-English speaking Mexicano and Latinos and for first generation Mexicanos and Latinos and second and third generation students. Brochures printed in Spanish as well as English will help. Programs that include students'

parents will increase the appeal. Relaxing application requirements—such as test scores, teacher recommendations, and school transcripts—will also help. Programs should try and maintain a presence in Mexicano and Latino communities and with their families year around. They should try to establish ties with community leaders who will become long-term contacts and advocates for the program. And they would do well to hire Mexicano and Latino people as program coordinators.

Suggestions for cooperation among programs include establishing regional working groups that can coordinate recruitment efforts in specific areas of the state. Working together, the programs may be able to do much more than if they each work separately. In addition the Minnesota Minority Education Partnership could coordinate a statewide recruitment working group that might meet quarterly to discuss recruitment efforts. Representatives from the regional working groups would coalesce at these meetings to share their problems and their successes.

People working in the schools can help the entire effort if they will identify educators, other than counselors, that work closely with Mexicano and Latino students and involve them in recruiting students into summer programs. Discussing the summer programs with Mexicano and Latino parents during parent-teacher conferences will also make a difference.

It should be noted that many of the issues raised in considering the situation of Mexicano and Latino students, could apply just as easily to any marginalized group of

students. It is important to understand that true diversity in our institutions must involve a concerted effort to include all groups in our educational programs. Developing an appreciation for the Mexicano and Latino communities and a sensitivity to their unique characteristics is critical if educators wish to reach their youth. Patricia Santos summed up one of the roundtable sessions by stating the need to expand our web and gain the commitment of people of all backgrounds.

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Integrating Services for High Risk School-Age Children and Their Families

by Esther Wattenberg

The idea of integrating social service programs has taken on a new significance in the last few years. Escalating caseloads and shrinking financial resources have forced us to consider a re-appraisal of our human service systems. There is broad agreement that comprehensive, community-based systems of social care are required to meet the multiple needs of children and families identified as "at risk." Rigid, categorical systems result in fragmentation, overlap, duplication, and inappropriate responses to children and families. The disconnected proliferation of program initiatives issuing from the child welfare, mental health, education, health, and juvenile justice systems, and the programs from the new offices of drug abuse prevention have resulted in a dense thicket of innovative programs with rapid start and stop time frames that confound both social workers and the families they serve.

A rational plan for structural agency change at the federal and state levels has yet to emerge, but language has appeared to conceptualize the direction that should be taken. "Cooperation," "collaboration," and "integration" are, to some extent, used interchangeably. There is, however, a beginning understanding that there is an ascending ladder of commitments associated with these terms. "Cooperation" can be identified as working together toward the idea of a common goal; "collaboration" implies a tangible commitment of resources based on trust among the participating agencies; "integration" denotes bringing all the components together across organizational boundaries in a free-standing program anchored in a unified approach, supported by pooled resources, and a comprehensive plan at the service level for the child and the family.

In this early period of the integration movement, which emerged in the 1980s, improving linkages among systems concerned with school-age children and families has emerged as a distinct focus. School-linked projects are currently underway around the country attempting to demonstrate "one-stop shopping," co-location, and case management strategies. There are both federal and state initiatives.

Minnesota's Response

In Minnesota, the 1990 legislature designated funding for demonstration projects to encourage community agencies to come together with schools to plan and implement

comprehensive programs for high-risk children. The profiles of "high-risk" children span a litany of problems which impede children's healthy growth and development. School dropouts, those who have failed in school, and those who have been excluded or expelled from school are termed "high risk." The profiles also include homeless children and those living in poverty, neglect, and with substance-abusing family members. Children who have experienced mental health problems, physical, sexual, or psychological abuse, and who may have attempted suicide are part of this troubled profile. Children who have committed a delinquent act or a violent crime are identified as "high risk." Finally, adolescent pregnancy and drug or alcohol abuse are also identified as conditions of "risk." Clearly, the legislature intended to cover a broad range of vulnerable students.

At the same time, there was recognition that an unfortunate structural cleavage existed between the school system and the child welfare system. Each system was lim-

ited in the range of children and families they could serve because of resources, eligibility restrictions, and reimbursement procedures. Neither group had the mandate or the resources to do outreach for prevention services. Each group often served, independently, the same families.

Integration projects have now been established in a number of counties. Funding for these projects has been patched together from a variety of sources. What do these projects look like? And what kind of problems have they run into? To find out, a study of thirty-one family preservation integration projects in Minnesota was conducted in 1992.

In June 1992 the Minnesota Department of Human Services identified forty-five Minnesota projects where:

- The county social service unit was involved in a collaborative project with the school district and one or more of the following agencies: corrections, mental health, public health, and jobs and training. In one case, the school district was



Group meetings are an integral part of Project Re-Connect's efforts to help crack cocaine mothers turn their lives around.

not involved.

- A formal agreement had been reached that gave some broad guidelines for the inter-agency agreement.
- School-age children were the target population.

For this study, the thirty-one programs that had been implemented for at least six months were selected.

With the help of representatives from five community agencies a questionnaire was developed that asked for a program description, the initiation circumstances, management arrangements, front-line practitioner observations, and insights about the experience of initiating and implementing an integration project. The questionnaire was pre-tested and revised. Three graduate students from the School of Social Work used the questionnaire to conduct telephone interviews lasting from forty-five to ninety minutes. The interviews took place during July, August, and September 1992.

Seven projects were then selected for on-site focus group discussions to provide a more detailed understanding of the collaborative process. These projects had strong, stable programs. They had developed procedures and mechanisms to reinforce a model of integrated services. The selection was arbitrary and a number of projects might just as easily have been used as "exemplary" projects.

A Profile of the Projects

The thirty-one programs surveyed by phone (Table 1) shared three characteristics. They had a deep concern for school-age children in high-risk families. They shared a strong interest in the family preservation orientation for reducing out-of-home placement. And they were committed to the pivotal role of county social services in meeting the needs of children and families.

Caseloads were small, typically not more than six families. Services were time-limited, usually up to six months, with reauthorization as needed. They included: in-home family counseling or therapy; parent education; supportive home visits; crisis intervention; behavior management planning; consultation with school, recreation, and other community programs; twenty-four-hour on-call services; and service coordination and advocacy. The staffs of integrated projects were, for the most part, on leave from their home agencies, though a few were "new hires" for the projects.

The projects worked most often with a case management model. Ideally, a lead person was assigned to help families locate whatever services were needed to keep their children living successfully with them in the community. The pivotal role of the lead person, sometimes designated as a "family worker" or a "family therapist," was acknowledged as a core item in strong programs. This relatively new role in staffing patterns was occupied by a person trained in crisis

Table 1. Family Preservation Integration Projects Studied, by Type of Program Offered

Children's Mental Health

Children's Mental Health, Becker County
Cass County Integrated Services Project, Cass County
Children's Mental Health, Cook County
Family-Community Services, Hennepin County
Family-Based Integrated Services Project, Kandiyohi County
Social Worker with Shared Funding, Olmstead County
Children's Local Coordinating Council, Pennington County
Children's Mental Health Advisory Council, Todd County
Children's Mental Health, Yellow Medicine County

Day Treatment for Emotionally Disturbed Children

Benton Stearns Day Treatment Program, Benton and Stearns counties
Outreach Center, Clay County
Interagency Day Treatment Program, Isanti County
Joining Forces: Children's Mental Health, Itasca County
Meeker Day Treatment Program, McLeod County
Day Treatment Program, Mower County
Day Treatment Program, Scott County

High Risk Families

Child Protection Teams, Brown County
Project Fast Forward, Dakota County
Crisis Intervention, Douglas County
Families First, Ottertail County
Child Protection Services, Pine County
Project Reconnect, Ramsey County
Elk River Early Intervention Family Based Pilot Program, Sherburn County

Children with Disabilities

Interagency Early Intervention Team, Chippewa County
Interagency Collaboration with Public Schools, Crow Wing County
Early Childhood Intervention, Renville County
Early Intervention Program, Wabasha County

Delinquency

Youth Council, Jackson County
Juvenile Justice Program, Morrison County

Dropout Prevention for High School Students

SELF: Support for Emancipation and Living Functionally, Grant County
Area Learning Center, Polk County

intervention, intensive home-based services, and advocacy. He or she typically had a good knowledge of community resources, a hands-on approach to problem solving, and a mode of teaching that sought to empower the family.

Many projects allowed the family to choose which staff person from among the collaborating agencies would be their lead worker. In some cases this was the school social worker; in others, it was the special education teacher, the family therapist, or the county social worker. A few projects created a "roundtable" which included all the agencies, family participants and, from time-to-time, the active involvement of the child in order to do a needs assessment for a case plan.

Data were generally shared among the collaborating agencies. Participants were

routinely asked to sign information release forms, and generally did so. This appears to have given permission for case information files to be shared. However, information from community corrections departments and child protection units was usually restricted, and what could be shared among these agencies and the school districts was negotiated. Only one project had developed a unified database, using lap-top computers, with levels of restriction that had been worked out at the administrative level.

About a third of the programs had an independent, free-standing, clearly identified project located in a neighborhood or near a school site, with an office clearly marked. The remaining programs used space in an already existing office.

The Problems They Confronted

Although the thirty-one programs reviewed for this study were at different stages in their development, a number of common issues emerged from the interviews. In attempting to understand the issues raised by the study, it should be kept in mind that the programs, as demonstration projects, were still evolving. They were all in the process of testing, modifying, and searching for alternative procedures.

Leadership. Someone taking leadership was an essential component in getting every program off the ground. When the participants were asked to look back on the project during the interviews, they commonly agreed on who it was that provided the spark, the initiative, the energy for their project to spring into action when funding was made available. Typically, it was a person who had the respect of colleagues, who had some authority to negotiate, and who had access to higher administrative author-

ity. Most of the people taking a leadership role came from the supervisory level of county social service units. This leadership continued to be important throughout the project.

Planning. The time required to plan a collaborative program varied from three months to "at least a decade," as one respondent reported. Most felt that six months was generally adequate to conceptualize working agreements and define them in written form. Projects with a history of some kind of cooperation had shorter planning periods. Developing trust among participating agencies moved at a rapid pace when there was a history of informal networking. This was true, for instance, in small counties where agencies worked in close proximity and were used to sharing information and collegial expertise. In larger counties, developing a partnership took more time.

The programs in this study experienced a number of problems during the planning

stage. Arriving at a common philosophy or vision for a project was a painstaking process. Juvenile justice and corrections systems often did not share a family preservation perspective. They were reluctant to embrace the notion of a delinquent child being maintained in the home and the community, while social service and mental health agencies were more willing to take this risk.

Staff often struggled with differing behavioral assessments of families and of their capacity to change, especially when abuse, violence, and mental illness were involved. Particularly challenging was the crucial task of clarifying the role each agency would play. Often, collaborating agencies duplicated services to some extent. They had to decide who would be responsible for providing which services under the collaboration. Despite such problems, these programs received crucial support in their planning process from school board members and county commissioners who saw preventing out-of-home placement as a fiscally prudent strategy.

Money. Generally, the chief dollar contributions for the programs came from either the school districts, through special education budgets, or from county social services, through federal Title XX (the Social Security Act) funds, the state's Community Social Services Act, and special funding for demonstration projects. In only ten projects did each participating agency make dollar contributions from their general funds or discretionary budget lines. More typically, the majority of agencies contributed in-kind contributions of staff time, supervision, space, and materials. In a few projects, community corrections departments made a dollar contribution. Three projects are pursuing funds through Title XIX (Medicaid) for mental health services, and one project was funded by a foundation grant.

This hodgepodge combination of dollars and in-kind contributions resulted in implementation problems. This was most evident in both a lack of flexible funds for discretionary uses such as rent deposits, telephones, fees for recreation, and transportation, and in a blizzard of paperwork to satisfy accountability requirements. Pooling resources to create an independent project budget is generally accepted as a preferable financing method for integration projects. An independent fund, created by contributions from participating agencies, allows a consistency of action across agency lines and fosters equality among the agencies. Only one project in this study had a budget that stood on its own, and that project was funded by a foundation grant.

Insufficient funding was a pervasive concern and consumed large amounts of staff time and energy. Funds were insufficient to extend programs to surrounding counties; to hire staff, especially family therapists; and even to provide basic services such as housing and transportation and to serve

Project Re-Connect in Ramsey County

This program provides intensive, culturally sensitive services to mothers of children under the age of twelve. The children are clients of the Ramsey County Child Protection Unit, while the mothers are involved in the criminal justice system, usually because of crime related to crack cocaine. The goals are to help mothers stay drug-free and live a law-abiding life, to prevent child abuse, and to reduce out-of-home placements of the children. The project, located on the east side of St. Paul, is in a neighborhood devastated by the heavy use of crack cocaine.

The project began when informal communications between the Minnesota Department of Human Services and the Ramsey County Community Corrections Department identified that both agencies were serving a common client group. Funding came from the United States Department of Justice, channeled through the Minnesota Drug Policy Office and Ramsey County Corrections. The collaborating agencies, participating along with the county corrections department and county human services (child protection), are: Ramsey County Nursing Services, Institute on Black Chemical Abuse, Wilder Community Assistance Program, Advance Health Technologies, and the Wilder Family Service Provider Program.

The staff operates as a team, but team collaboration emerged only after intensive and often sharp exchanges and struggles

to reconcile the various goals of the participating agencies. After six months of clarifying and problem-solving, Project Re-Connect emerged with solid inter-agency understandings and a devoted staff. The underlying philosophy of the project is social learning—to teach the participant how to use available resources, improve parenting, abstain from chemical use, and practice self-sufficiency.

Intensive in-home, family-based services are offered through the Wilder Family Service Provider Program. They provide comprehensive services that include instruction in parenting and homemaking skills. Staff flexibility is indispensable in making the program work. All the participants in the project are under court-order. The staff of the project become, in effect, their extended family during their sixteen week span in the project. Each of five case workers carries a caseload of six families. They meet two or three times a week with each family. The participants are survivors and hope is the key ingredient of the project. There is group work for both mothers and children, assistance with school-related problems, immunization for infants, acupuncture for help with cocaine withdrawal, and five hundred dollars for each family that can be used for items such as telephone, rent deposit, and children's needs. The participants are encouraged to be active in shaping the program.

additional eligible clients. It was almost impossible to help clients who were in need of services but were just above the income guidelines. This made it difficult, as one respondent said, "to be proactive and preventative." The following comments from project directors were typical of responses regarding funding:

"The state expects more and more for less and less."

"The state is requiring eight discreet services for children's mental health, and has not provided sufficient funding for all of these."

"Big directions, stern rebukes....A lot of responsibility, but not a lot of power...."

Finally, the short-term nature of funding for demonstration projects created difficulties. In many cases, funding was awarded on an annual basis. Worry about reapplying absorbed time that should have gone into project development. Writing grants and soliciting funds usually fell into the hands of already overburdened staff.

Not only was short-term funding for demonstration projects inefficient, but it also gave the projects an aura of being a fad. It constantly raised the question of the state's real commitment to integration services and contributed to staff cynicism and burn out. Indeed, a pivotal question was raised: are demonstration projects truly demonstrating a bold, new idea, or are they serving as short-term palliatives and thus delaying or avoiding any real, systemic changes?

Implementation. The case management model used in the integration projects appears to have provided advocacy and a unified approach to the family. Case reviews, training, and staff meetings were all useful in achieving an integrated approach. Nevertheless, problems in implementation became evident in the course of this study.

Most frustrating and troublesome was the variety of eligibility qualifications for reimbursement which had to be accommodated among the participating organizations. For instance, one funding source required a label of Severe Emotional Disturbance (SED), with its own set of defining criteria, while another funding source required a label of Emotional or Behavioral Disorder (EBD), with a somewhat different set of defining criteria. Even though the labels may have little clinical meaning, staff had to make sure they used the correct labels. And they spent considerable time determining which eligibility definitions were appropriate in order to gain access to funding. One observer noted that they "have to label these kids for reimbursement purposes. It is a terrible thing to do."

A good deal of time was also spent on the paperwork documentation required by each agency's separate budget. State and federal reimbursement regulations added complications when they were inconsistent with local needs. For instance, respite care was unavailable to families with severely

troubled children because of tightly drawn reimbursement restrictions, even when the service was critical.

Real, concrete integration of different agencies' services into a unified project was difficult to achieve because the drive for accountability reinforced a separate identity for each agency in the collaboration. The collaborative nature of the projects also required considerable staff time for communication. There are simply more people in a collaborative venture who have to be apprised of reports, case reviews, and so on. This eroded the amount of time available to engage families in a participatory casework process.

Service plans which had to accommodate court orders were restricted in their options for a comprehensive plan. Intensive in-home services as a plan was often com-

promised by a court orientation toward removing children and placing them in a restricted, supervised setting.

Each project noted a particular set of services that were needed to support a comprehensive plan but were not available. These varied from project to project, but included: housing and safe housing; day treatment for emotional or behavioral disorders; chemical dependency treatment, especially day treatment for mothers of young and school-age children; shelters for women in domestic abuse situations and homeless people; transportation; general and specialized child care; health care; family planning; prevention services; respite care; recreation; furniture; Big Brother and Big Sister monitoring activities; paraprofessional homemaker services; self-help groups for families; and family therapists.

Family-Based Integrated Services Project in Kandiyohi County

The integration project in Willmar focuses on children and youth with severe emotional disturbances who are at risk of entering the juvenile corrections system. The project provides in-home mental health services to the children and their families. Following a referral (usually from the school district, a mental health agency, or sometimes the Public Health Department), parents come to a meeting to identify their needs and become involved in case planning. This promotes a plan for the family that is coherent and understood by all concerned. Treatment plans are discussed and service components are assigned to those who can do it best. All agencies are kept apprised of programs through case reviews and staff meetings.

The project uses the Child Adolescent Service System Program model formulated under the Children's Mental Health Demonstrations funded by the state in 1989. One of the eight demonstration programs was established in Kandiyohi County. The model relies on a team focus which is community-based and blends public and private resources. It is an approach that has proved to be extremely successful. Willmar, in fact, is a regional center where people come for services. It has a history of public and private sectors working together. And the project is fortunate to have the understanding and political support of the Kandiyohi County commissioners.

The joint effort of Kandiyohi County Family Services and Lutheran Social Ser-

VICES created the Family-Based Integrated Services Project in Willmar. A commingling of their funds was matched by a state grant, while other collaborating agencies (Kandiyohi County Community Corrections, Kandiyohi County Community Health Services, Willmar Public Schools, Little Crow Special Education Cooperative, and West Central Community Services Center) made cash and in-kind contributions. These agencies share a common vision. The cornerstone of their project is the common philosophy of family preservation, the belief that in-home family services cost less than out-of-home placement and are better for both children and their families. They genuinely focus on the well-being of the child.

The project staff worked hard to overcome obstacles to their team effort. These included reaching joint agreements about data sharing and working with the different eligibility standards required for reimbursement from different funding agencies. While criteria for who can qualify for the project differ under county and school district definitions, the mutual concern for a child who is "acting out" or severely depressed has united staff efforts. "It takes a lot of time and energy to learn to sing from the same sheet of music," says the project director. A common understanding of the child allows the staff to design the most comprehensive services plan to meet the needs of both child and family. In the process, an atmosphere of enthusiasm, mutual respect, and trust is built.



In Willmar, staff from the Family-Based Integrated Services Project meet for case reviews.

Although the family therapist component is crucial to a family preservation focus, family therapists were in short supply in many areas. In some cases, even though services were available, they were not available within a reasonable distance. The small counties were especially lacking in resources for transportation, mental health care services, and day treatment.

There were also problems associated with data. Only one project had a data system which was integrated into a unified system. There was concern that because updating data in a unified system was difficult, it would be neglected and thus unreliable. The one project that did have a unified system obtained it through an extra grant for this purpose. Furthermore, there were problems in sharing information because automation of data was uneven among the various participating agencies.

Evaluation. Evaluations of projects were rare because budgets were insufficient to cover the cost of evaluation. As a result, data on project successes remain anecdotal.

Implications of the Findings

This study suggests that integration projects are still highly experimental and idiosyncratic, reflecting local conditions. Inter-agency collaboration can create fresh, free-standing programs with the capacity to help high-risk children and their families and reduce complex bureaucratic entanglements. But interagency collaboration is not an easy task.

Although most of the projects understood the integration concept, unity was difficult to achieve in reality. Some reasons for this became apparent during the study. First, most staff persons were on loan from a parent agency and reflected, to some extent, their agency mandates and distinctive organizational characteristics. Only a small number were hired specifically for the demonstration projects. We uncovered lit-

tle evidence that the positive experiences in these projects introduced structural changes into the participating agencies. On the contrary, several respondents noted that these projects operated with a degree of isolation from their home bases.

Second, reimbursement procedures reinforced the separate identities of the collaborating agencies. In only one-third of the projects were pooled resources available that enabled programs to operate consistently across agency lines. Generally, each collaborating agency required accountability. Thus, programs were required to assess and label clients differently according to which collaborating agency was providing reimbursement. Eligibility rules chiefly determined at the state and federal levels remained unchanged. There was little evidence of structural changes in the system at the administrative level.

Third, there were, occasionally, fundamental differences in philosophical perspectives among the collaborating agencies. While the overt goal of the projects was family preservation, and the majority of the collaborating organizations shared this goal, the corrections and judicial systems often did not. In fact, the judicial systems in many counties are out of the loop in the integration effort. Judges and county attorneys rarely joined interagency meetings. Probation officers were typically available, but often had to represent a court-ordered plan. In addition, individuals within these systems and in the school systems sometimes held a punitive attitude toward children with problems that was at odds with the philosophy of most of the human services staff.

Despite these limitations, there were strenuous efforts to reach understanding across agency boundaries. Appreciation and respect among participants flourished as programs matured, and throughout, there was a genuine struggle (not always successful) to arrive at a consensus on a plan for the child and family. Several projects reported inter-agency collaboration

around procedures such as intake and assessment, and case management.

Regardless of the stage of development or the scope of the program, the efforts to collaborate broadened the understanding of all participants and increased their satisfaction in their work. Trust, information sharing, a wider view of community needs, and an appreciation of the varied components of the human services systems were values that were appreciated. Collaborative efforts also broadened the community's understanding and improved its view of county social service workers. The projects introduced county social services agencies as "user friendly" and social service workers as advocates for the family.

There were other problems in addition to those associated with achieving a unified, comprehensive program. Integration efforts pay a price in time. The number of interagency meetings, staff discussions, and consultations consumed a large number of working hours. Time had to be allowed for all personnel to become familiar with the skills and resources that each agency representative brought to the table, for the family to choose the lead person with whom a trusting relationship could be developed, and for the child to make use of new program services. The integration projects often did not have necessary resources. For instance, "flexible funds" to meet the incidental, but critical needs of clients, such as transportation, were often not available because rigid accounting systems had no place for them. As another example, although family therapists (people trained in intensive, home-based, crisis-oriented interventions) were a key staff component for many teams, this component was in short supply in many counties.

The demonstration project culture itself also poses a significant problem for integration projects. By its nature, demonstration funding is time limited. This forces the staff to spend inordinate amounts of valuable time seeking additional funding. The

uncertainty of funding undermines staff morale and makes long-term planning difficult. The ultimate effect is that these programs can become palliative measures that address only small pockets of the problems temporarily.

Finally, the evaluation component was missing from many of the projects, making judgments on the projects' successes and failures difficult. For instance, a significant portion of counties report a premature withdrawal of clients from services. This was generally attributed to the high mobility of families, but without more evaluative data, it is impossible to know if this is, in fact, the explanation.

Moreover, a consensus on definition of "success" and "outcomes" is very difficult to achieve. There is political agreement that these programs are fiscally prudent. It is assumed that, given the high cost of out-of-home placement, the programs could be shown to save money for local jurisdictions. However, no project has had a cost-benefit analysis, so this, too, is impossible to assess conclusively. Data on improvements in family functioning are also not available.

Missing from this study are the perspectives of the families. Whether families perceived integration projects as simplifying their entanglements with school systems, child welfare, juvenile corrections, and other community agencies is not known, and qualitative improvements in family functioning remain anecdotal. Families often gain access to more services in an integrated plan. This means that even

more social workers are entangled in their lives. Typically, there are three to four workers involved with each family. However, one project reported that workers from twelve programs were involved with one family. The family was described as "treatment jaded." The ultimate goal, a reduction of the family's problems with complicated systems, has not been systematically documented. Although the number of social workers is rarely reduced, information and case planning has reduced conflicting plans for the families. A few projects noted that with the assignment of a primary person for case management, other workers "backed off."

The projects we studied seemed generally to have a beneficial impact on staff. They were small, and intensive personal relationships among the staff prevailed to a large extent. The staff were remarkably enthusiastic, optimistic, and energetic. Most commented on the satisfaction of being involved in a project which requires flexibility and creativity. They appreciated working in a setting which values innovation and reduces, to some extent, the red tape of bureaucratic procedures. The process of viewing each other as allies in a common endeavor was uniformly described as satisfying and professionally enriching. Collegial relationships that develop in working across agencies were consistently described as "the best part." The most satisfying experiences were described as flowing from mutual support. Turf issues were resolved and they were able to focus on helping the children and their parents.

In summary, the family preservation integrated projects clearly exhibited strengths. All of the programs are small, with a special blend of staff expertise that provides a satisfactory experience for all participants. Children are in a supportive and encouraging environment. Families are working with responsive services. School districts trust the programs' services, which are cost-saving. Counties are also impressed with cost-savings, and the staff has the satisfaction of seeing students and families progress in a positive way. Whether these demonstration projects can be replicated to serve large groups of families and children in need of services without losing their strengths of intimacy, flexibility, and informality remains to be seen.

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reporter

Volume XXIII, Number 3 September 1993

The Center for Urban and Regional Affairs was established to help make the University of Minnesota more responsive to the needs of the larger community and to increase the constructive interaction between faculty and students, on the one hand, and those dealing directly with major public problems, on the other.

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