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DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
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Sexual Assault Kits Collected from Juvenile Victims

Background

The Montana Department of Justice was a recipient of the U.S DOJ Bureau of Justice Assistance National Sexual Assault Kit Initiative (SAKI) Grant in 2016, 2017, 2020, and 2023. As a statewide SAKI site, Montana DOJ utilizes the Bureau of Justice Assistance's (BJA) three essential elements: convening a multidisciplinary group, conducting an inventory of backlogged sexual assault kits (SAKs), and hiring a SAKI site coordinator. Since 2015, the Montana DOJ Attorney General's Office has coordinated a statewide SAKI Task Force to successfully address and implement Montana SAKI goals and objectives.

Introduction

This series consists of 3 reports that will analyze and assess SAKs collected from juvenile victims. Report 1 is an overview of the 2016 inventory. Report 2 focuses on SAK data by regions and counties. Report 3 shows prosecution outcomes from 30 juvenile victim SAKs that resulted in Combined DNA Index System (CODIS) hits.¹

Montana DOJ SAKI partners with law enforcement agencies to receive case information for each SAK collected as part of the Montana SAKI inventory. In 2016, the Montana DOJ conducted a statewide inventory of untested SAKs located at law enforcement agencies across Montana. The 2016 inventory resulted in 1,268 SAKs with offense dates ranging from 1995 through 2016. Testing these 1,268 SAKs yielded 431 cases that met the CODIS eligibility² for upload. The remaining cases rendered results in the following: ineligible³ (450 cases), negative⁴ (376 cases), contained suspect kits⁵(11 cases). Out of the total 431 CODIS eligible cases, 175 received offender hits and 11 forensic hits. From the total inventory, there were 459 SAKs from juvenile victims.

Sexual Assault Kits Collected from Juvenile Victims

The 2016 inventory included 459 SAKs from juvenile victims, individuals under the age of 18. 413 SAKs came from females, with 13 to 17-year-olds having the highest number of SAKs (Figure 1). Male juvenile victim SAKs were most frequent between the ages of 4 through 6. Out of the total inventory (1,268), DNA from 98 juvenile victim SAKs were CODIS eligible, 172 were ineligible, 188 were negative, and 1 contained a suspect kit. From the 98 entered in CODIS, 30 returned hits with 28 offender hits⁶ and 2 forensic hits⁷. According to data from Darkness to Light⁸, the majority of perpetrators are known to the victim.⁹ Out of the 27 identified suspect-victim relationships,

¹ Combined DNA Index System or CODIS is the United States national DNA database program used as a tool to link violent crimes.

² CODIS Eligibility means the DNA in the SAK met the standard for CODIS entry.

³ Ineligible cases contain DNA that did not meet the standard for CODIS entry.

⁴ Negative cases mean no DNA evidence was found in the SAK.

⁵ [Suspect kits are not considered a forensic sample and therefore will not be analyzed for CODIS upload.](#)

⁶ Offender hits are when a DNA profile from a SAK or crime scene matches with a DNA profile from a known offender or arrestee, possibly identifying a suspect.

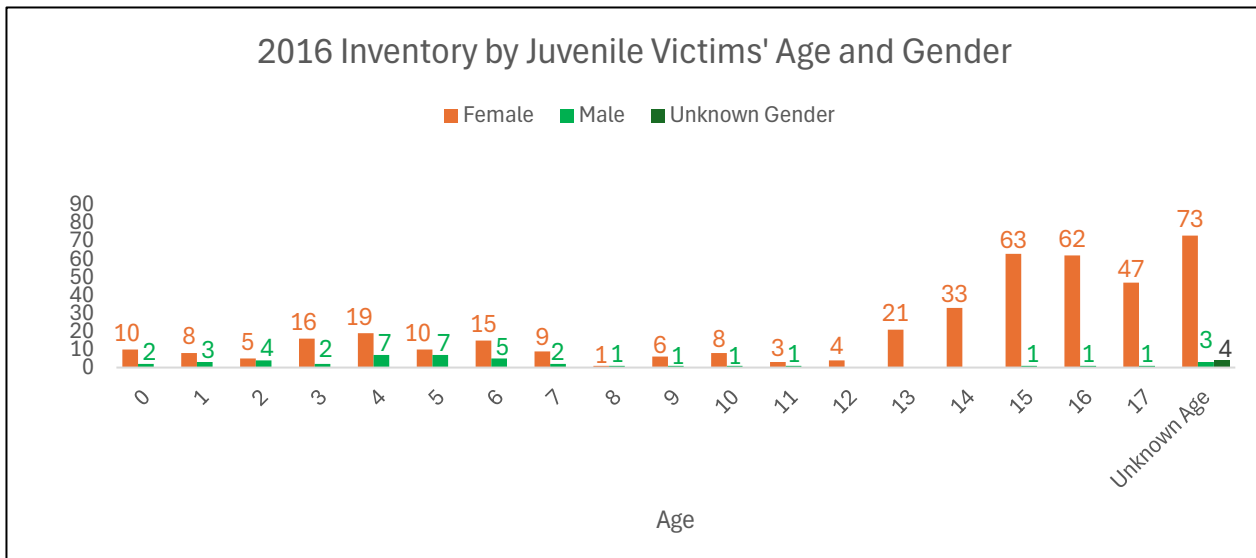
⁷ Forensic hits are when two crimes become linked due to a DNA profile from one SAK or crime scene matching another.

⁸ [Darkness to Light is a non-profit organization working to prevent child sexual abuse.](#)

⁹ [all_statistics_20150619.pdf\(d2l.org\)](#)

20 suspects were acquaintances, 3 suspects were family members, 2 were current or former partner and 2 were strangers.

Figure 1. Number of SAKs by Juvenile Victims' Age and Gender



In 2013, Darkness to Light published a white paper review of six child abuse studies. Their analysis estimates the prevalence of child sexual abuse to be 1 in 10 children. The data was further broken down to show that about 1 in 7 girls and 1 in 25 boys will be sexually abused before they turn 18.¹⁰

The Montana DOJ has been addressing this problem since 2007, with the creation of the Montana Child Sexual Abuse Response Team (MCSART) program. Through MCSART, technical support and training have supported Montana's children's advocacy centers (CAC) and local trained multidisciplinary teams (MDTs). Since 2010, MCSART offers child forensic interview training twice each year. This has provided child forensic interview technique training to Montana's child protection and law enforcement professionals who respond to reports of crimes against children. CACs have assisted victims by creating a safe environment with services such as advocacy, counseling, case management, forensic interviews, and medical care. The State of Montana currently has nine accredited CACs and training courses scheduled to increase the number of people qualified in handling sexual assaults.¹¹ Since 2010, over 1,000 law enforcement, prosecutors, and child protection professionals have completed the DOJ Montana Child Forensic Interview class offered twice each year. For 2023, in partnership with the Children's Alliance of Montana, 2,148 children were served by CACs and 619 professionals were trained.¹²

Access more of the Data Series

[Visual Report 1](#)

[Data Report 2](#)

[Visual Report 2](#)

[Data Report 3](#)

[Visual Report 3](#)

¹⁰ [all_statistics_20150619.pdf \(d2l.org\)](#)

¹¹ [2023 Year-In-Review Template \(childrensalliancemt.org\)](#)

¹² [2023 Year-In-Review Template \(childrensalliancemt.org\)](#)