



Press release

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19 Crime and Criminal Justice

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Criminal judgements: minors and adults

Convicted minors more likely to reoffend as adults

Neuchâtel, 29.05.2017 (FSO) – **A study shows that a quarter of young offenders born in 1992 have been re-convicted on reaching adulthood. Being male, having a history of juvenile delinquency and having committed serious offences as a child and adolescent are factors that increase the risk of being re-convicted as an adult, according to an analysis conducted by the Federal Statistical Office (FSO).**

The FSO has examined the number of young offenders appearing in the statistics on criminal judgements of minors and who subsequently reappear in the statistics on adult convictions. To do this, the FSO followed a group of 6649 Swiss minors born in Switzerland in 1992 who committed an offence under the Swiss Criminal Code (SCC), the Road Traffic Act (RTA) or the Narcotics Act (NarcA). It emerged that between the ages of 18 and 23, 25% of these 6649 young offenders (1664 persons) had been re-convicted by an adult court.

Men likelier to reoffend

Males are not only over-represented among convicted minors (73% boys and 27% girls), they are also more likely to continue on a path of delinquency once they become adults. Boys convicted as minors are, in fact, almost four times more likely than girls to be convicted by an adult court (recidivism rate in adulthood of 31% for men and 8% for women).

The greater the criminal history, the greater the chance of reoffending

The greater the number of judgements passed by a juvenile court, the higher the risk of being convicted as an adult. The recidivism rate in adulthood is 20%, 34%, 49% and 64% among young offenders on whom judgement was passed once, twice, three and four times or more respectively, by a juvenile court.

Likelihood of reoffending increases with the seriousness of offences committed

The results indicated that reoffending in adulthood seems to depend partly on the seriousness of the offences perpetrated as a minor. The reconviction rate in adulthood is 17% for minors who committed only fine-carrying offences compared with 29% for those having committed misdemeanours or felonies.

Drug dealing and road traffic offences increase the probability of reoffending

Recidivism in adulthood seems to be linked to the mention of an offence under the NarcA or the RTA in the judgement passed by a juvenile court. In this context, however, the FSO has observed that variety (i.e. the mention of several offences of a different nature) makes recidivism more probable. But variety is more common when offences have been committed under the NarcA or the RTA than under the SCC alone. This could explain why recidivism increases when drug dealing and traffic offences are involved.

Recidivism rate higher among young offenders close to adulthood

The results concerning the influence of age should be treated cautiously due to some inevitable methodological biases.

Generally speaking, the figures show that minors who are convicted in the two years prior to coming of age are more often re-convicted in adulthood. But data regarding age at first conviction also show that minors who are initially convicted at a very young age demonstrate the highest re-conviction rates in adult life.

FEDERAL STATISTICAL OFFICE
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Methodology

The analyses presented in this publication form the premises of a more in-depth analysis: As was the case for the study of adult recidivism, this publication is in two sections. The first section is devoted to methodology (chapter 3). This section is less accessible and intended for persons interested in the inner workings of a study on recidivism. The second section concerns the analyses conducted as well as updated results (chapter 4). In this more accessible section, methodological concepts indispensable to understanding the results have been repeated.

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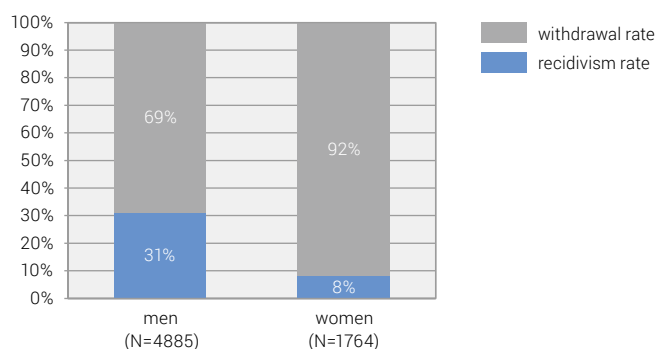
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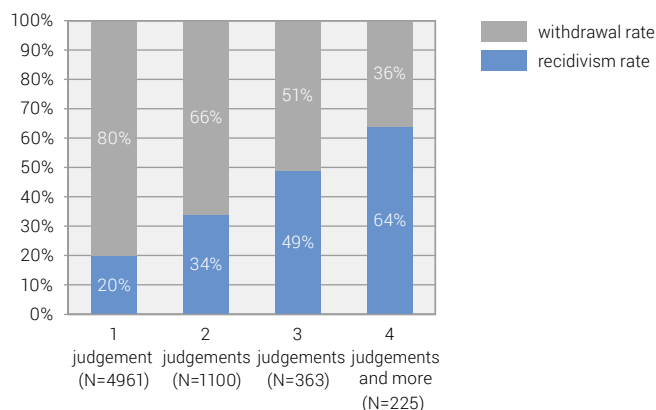
Sex of judged and reoffending minors in adulthood



Source: FSO – Statistics on criminal conviction of minors (JUSUS), Criminal conviction statistics (SUS)

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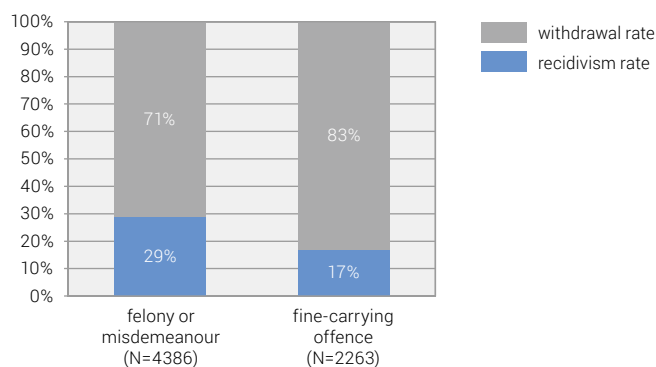
Number of judgements of minors and recidivism in adulthood



Source: FSO – Statistics on criminal conviction of minors (JUSUS), Criminal conviction statistics (SUS)

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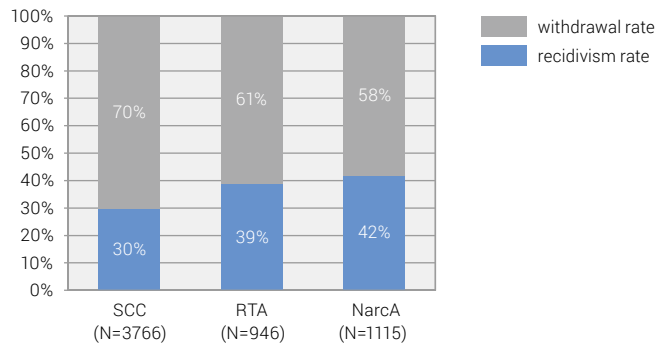
Seriousness of offences among minors and recidivism in adulthood



Source: FSO – Statistics on criminal conviction of minors (JUSUS), Criminal conviction statistics (SUS)

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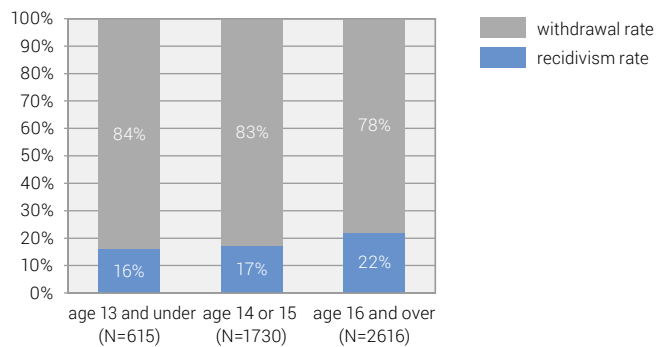
Nature of felonies and misdemeanours of minors and recidivism in adulthood



Source: FSO – Statistics on criminal conviction of minors (JUSUS), Criminal conviction statistics (SUS)

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Age offence committed for which unique judgement made by juvenile court and recidivism in adulthood



Source: FSO – Statistics on criminal conviction of minors (JUSUS), Criminal conviction statistics (SUS)

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