Though less in number than males, female youth continue to engage in delinquency. The purpose of this study was to determine the amount of heterogeneity among a sample justice-involved youth. Self-report data from 107 females and 219 males was analyzed using latent profile analysis. Using gender neutral, gender responsive, and strengths factors, a three-class solution emerged. More males were grouped based on higher risk scores on gender neutral factors and more females were grouped based on higher risk scores on gender responsive factors. The third group was characterized by lower risk scores and higher strengths scores. Findings are important for the assessment of risk, and the identification of strengths to inform treatment of juvenile justice-involved youth. Future research is needed to better understand change in risk and strength factors over time, and the implication this has on the persistence or desistance of antisocial behavior among youth.

INTRODUCTION

• When it comes to the criminal justice system, historically, little attention has been placed on women and girls
• Though male offending is reportedly still more double that of females, female offending has continued to rise steadily (National Crime Prevention Centre, 2012)
• Theoretical accounts of crime and delinquency
  * Gender neutral: based on a general social psychological perspective, believe the same risk and factors are important for both males and females (Andrews & Bonta, 2010)
  * “Big four”: history of antisocial behavior, antisocial personality pattern, antisocial cognition, and antisocial associates
  * “Central eight”: big four + family/marital circumstances, education/employment, leisure/recreation, and substance abuse
• Gender responsive: gendered pathways to crime have emerged from differential experiences of victimization, structural oppression, and socialized gender roles
  * Extensive histories of victimization, abuse, and trauma (PTSD), mental illness and health issues, and poverty (Chesney-Lind & Selden, 2004), in addition to drug abuse, dysfunctional relationships, parental issues, poor self-concept (Bloom et al., 2003; Morton & Leslie, 2005; Salisbury & Van Voorhis, 2009; Van Voorhis et al., 2010)
• Differential response to strain (Belknap & Holsinger, 2006) and importance of relationships in the achievement of needs (Salisbury & Van Voorhis, 2009)

• Importance of strength factors in mitigating risk and encouraging desistance in crime and delinquency
• Defined in terms of impact on risk factors – by direct impact on criminal behavior or as a moderator between risk factor and criminal behavior
• Have found evidence for the importance of self-efficacy/self-esteem, familial environment, competent coping (e.g., resilience), hobbies & activities, commitment to school or work, religiosity
• Purpose of this study was to address the following: 1. Is there heterogeneity of youth in terms of the co-occurrence of risk factors that gender neutral, gender responsive, and strength theorists deem critical? 2. Is this heterogeneity moderated by gender and race?

METHOD

Sample
• 326 justice-involved youth (107 females and 219 males) recruited from court ordered mental health assessment unit, probation, and open and closed custody facilities in Ontario
  * Mean age of females 16.7 years and 16.9 for males
  * Majority of females were Caucasian (62.6%) and majority of males were non-Caucasian (64.2%); Black, Aboriginal, Asian, Other

Research Design
• Cross-sectional

Measures
• Self-assessment package included:
  * Pride in Delinquency Scale (Shields & Whitehall, 1994)
  * Psychopathy Checklist: Youth Version (Niemann et al., 2006)
  * Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory 2.0 (Hoge & Andrews, 2011)
  * Measure of Criminal Attitudes and Associates (Mills et al., 2002)
  * Youth Self Report (Achenbach & Rescorla, 2001)
  * Adolescent Relationship Scale Questionnaire (Scharfe & Bartholomew, 1995)
  * General Self Efficacy Scale (Luszczynska et al., 2005)
  * Family Assessment Device (Epstein, Baldwin, & Bishop, 1983)
  * Strengths Assessment Inventory - Youth (Brazeau et al., 2012)

Analysis
• Latent Profile Analysis (LPA) used to identify latent groups by clustering groups with shared characteristics
  * Person-centred vs. variable centred; model-based, replicable, takes error, and/or uncertainty of measurement into account

RESULTS

Based on a combination of theory and model fit statistics, a three-class solution fit the data best, suggesting heterogeneity among justice-involved youth. Adding gender and race as covariates into the model, did not change the outcome of the profile classifications, resulting in a similar three-class solution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>High gender neutral</td>
<td>Low risk-high strength</td>
<td>High gender responsive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>Low risk-high strength</td>
<td>High gender neutral</td>
<td>Low risk-high strength</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DISCUSSION

Three-class solution resulted in the following pathways:
• 1. High gender neutral, 2. Low risk-high strength, 3. High gender responsive
• Justice-involved youth are NOT a homogenous entity; there are important differences between males and females that need to be taken into account
• For males, traditional antisocial gender neutral risk factors are more prevalent
• For females, traumatic dysfunction from victimization, internalizing mental health problems, and dysfunctional relationships are more prevalent
• Need to better understand change over time and developmental trajectories to measure stability (or instability) of antisocial behavior among male and female youth
• Build capacity of identified deficits and promote inner strengths to encourage desistance from crime and delinquency

KEY REFERENCES