

Characteristics of Defendants Charged with Vulnerable Adult Abuse

Table 3. Defendant Characteristics

Characteristics	Number of Defendants	Percent of Total
Age		
20-25	7	7.14%
25-29	11	11.22%
30-39	24	22.49%
40-49	28	28.57%
50-59	19	19.39%
60-69	5	5.10%
Over 70	4	4.08%
Gender		
Male	58	59.18%
Female	39	39.80%
Missing	1	1.02%
Race		
White	72	86.73%
All Other	3	3.06%
Missing	10	10.20%
First Time Vermont Offender		
Yes	31	31.63%
No	67	68.36%
Prior Vulnerable Adult Charge		
Yes	4	4.08%
No	94	95.91%
Relationship to Victim⁷		
Family ⁸	7	13.72%
Friend/Acquaintance ⁹	9	17.64%
Missing/Unknown ¹⁰	35	68.62%

Routine activities theory requires motivation on the part of the offender to commit the offense as well as access to the victim. Administrative data do not include the reason an offender committed a crime but do assist in understanding who commits crimes against vulnerable adults. Table 3

⁷ The relationship to the victim is from the NIBRS data. N= 51.

⁸ Includes the following NIBRS Categories: Boyfriend/Girlfriend, Spouse, Grandparent, Parent, Other Family Member.

⁹ Includes the following NIBRS Categories: Friend, Acquaintance, Neighbor, Otherwise Known.

¹⁰ The missing data for relationship to victim is high, given that there was an arrest and prosecution in all cases. This is an indication that perhaps an investigation is still ongoing when the NIBRS victim segment is submitted and not updated for the relationship status.

provides information on the 98 defendants whose data were matched into Vermont Crime Information Center to obtain their criminal histories as well as obtaining additional information on 51 of the 98 offenders from NIBRS data.

Women offenders were more likely to victimize people over 60, while male offenders made no distinction on the age of the victim. This indicates that female offenders may be choosing victims based on a specific factor, such as proximity, as opposed to random selection. If routine activities theory is not explaining this behavior, a normal distribution of the age of the victims would be expected and not targeted as it appears.

Males were the only defendants who were accused of sex crimes, and their victims ranged in age. The sex offenders were serial sex offenders and had multiple past charges of sex offenses in their record, indicating that the male sex offenders are polished, are not choosing their victims randomly, or that the sex offense is the result of another offense such as in the context of domestic violence. Male defendants who were over the age of 60 who committed violence did so against friends, acquaintances, and otherwise known individuals. Only one violent offense committed by a person over 60 was committed against a family member.