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Gender-based psychosocial differences in a sample of young offenders

Running head: Gender differences in young offenders

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**TITLE:** Gender-based psychosocial differences in a sample of young offenders

**ABSTRACT**

This study analyses the differential psychosocial characteristics of male and female young offenders with a judicial measure from a juvenile court in Spain. Data on origin, recidivism, criminal and psychosocial characteristics of a sample of 838 juvenile offenders were collected using the Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (YLS/CMI). Most of the minors were males ( $n = 650$ ; 77.6%). Regarding the type of offences committed most males committed some type of crime, while females mainly committed misdemeanours. The rates of infractions committed by large groups and belonging to a gang were higher in males than in females. Concerning psychosocial variables, females presented with higher scores than males in three areas (parenting/educational guidelines, leisure and recreation, attitudes and orientation), in the total score and in several specific variables of the YLS/CMI. Moreover, having a poor relationship with one's mother and limited participation in organized activities were related to being a female minor offender, whereas having a short attention span was related to being a male offender. These three variables correctly classified 77.6% of cases. Female minor offenders present with a more severe psychosocial profile than males. Therefore, gender-based variables should be considered and addressed in prevention and intervention programmes for minors.

**Keywords:** Young offenders; gender differences; psychosocial characteristics; risk factors; assessment.

## Introduction

Juvenile delinquency is a serious social problem. Some studies have shown that perpetration of crimes during adolescence is a major predictor of criminal and anti-social behaviour in adulthood (Basto-Pereira, Começanha, Ribeiro, & Maia, 2015; Cauffman, Monahan, & Thomas, 2015; Piquero, Farrington, Fontaine, Vincent, & Coid, 2012). Therefore, it is necessary to know the specific characteristics of juvenile offenders to develop effective interventions and address public concerns regarding juvenile justice (Pusch & Holtfreter, 2018).

In Spain, of the 13,643 minors to whom a judicial measure was given in 2017, only 20.7% (n = 2,824) were female (Instituto Nacional de Estadística, 2019). Although females are a minority in juvenile justice systems (Rhoades, Leve, Eddy, & Chamberlain, 2016), different studies have shown a striking increase in the proportion of female youth involved in the criminal justice system over the last few decades (Bäckman, Estrada, Nilsson, & Shannon, 2014; Pusch & Holtfreter, 2018; Puzanchera & Adams, 2011; Snyder, 2008). While boys are more likely to be charged with violent offences (robbery and assault), female minor offenders are more likely to present status offences, such as incorrigibility, truancy and running away (Johansson & Kempf-Leonard, 2009; Leve & Chamberlain, 2005; Pusch & Holtfreter, 2018; Ravoira, Graziano, & Patino, 2012). In addition, the likelihood of recidivism continues to be higher for boys. Specifically, females involved in the justice system are less likely than males to persist in criminal activity beyond adolescence (Cauffman et al., 2015; García-Gomis, Villanueva, & Jara, 2017).

The increasing involvement of girls in juvenile justice systems over the past decades indicates that gender must be taken into account when analysing juvenile delinquency. Special attention to the risk factors, development, and specific needs of

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girls with disruptive and delinquent behaviours must be payed. Biological sex is a consistent predictor of delinquent behaviour: Being a male is considered as a risk factor for adolescent delinquency (Janssen, Eichelsheim, Deković, & Bruinsma, 2017; Kazdin, Kraemer, Kessler, Kupfer, & Offord, 1997).

According to the gender role expectations, parenting and pathways theories (Janssen et al., 2017), parents may be more protective of their daughters, who receive more supervision and discipline than boys do. However, a large number of studies have found that the associations between parenting and delinquency are similar for boys and girls (Hoeve, Dubas, Eichelsheim, Van der Laan, Smeenk, & Gerris, 2009). Anyway, girls' initial involvement in the juvenile justice system occurs with less violent behaviours, such as running away (increasing exposure to criminal opportunities), substance abuse, and retaliatory violence. Therefore, the different criminal behaviours in adolescence may be related to the different pathways according to gender (Herrera, & Stuewig, 2017). As the rates of female involvement in the criminal justice system continue to climb, it is necessary to pay attention to how they may differ from male offenders in both their pathways to crime and their risk factors (Pusch & Holtfreter, 2018).

Sex differences in risk factors for juvenile delinquency are mainly found for individual and family factors (Wong, Slotboom, & Bijleveld, 2010). Girls who are involved in the justice system present higher rates of victimization within the family, particularly sexual abuse, than boys (Dierkhising et al., 2013; Foy, Ritchie, & Conway, 2012; Moore, Gaskin, & Indig, 2013). Female minors with a history of sexual abuse tend to have more extreme delinquency outcomes than those without a history of sexual abuse (Goodkind, Ng, & Sarri, 2006; Wareham & Dembo, 2007). Further, studies have consistently indicated that rates of childhood sexual and physical abuse are 3.5–10 times

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higher for girls than for boys in the juvenile justice system (Johansson & Kempf-Leonard 2009; Leve & Chamberlain 2005). In this sense, female minor offenders present with complex physical, emotional and psychological issues related to histories of trauma and abuse (Ravoira, et al., 2012).

Moreover, female minor offenders show higher widespread school failure, physical and emotional health needs, substance use, and family problems than males (Patino, Ravoira, & Wolf, 2006). Specifically, caregiver transitions during early and middle childhood (Leve, Chamberlain, & Kim, 2015), chronic alcohol use and family substance abuse and parent incarceration (Scott & Brown, 2018) have been found to be salient factors contributing to girls' delinquency. In addition, girls who experience pubertal maturation at an earlier age are at increased risk for a host of psychopathological outcomes during adolescence, including increased delinquency (Ge, Natsuaki, Jin, & Biehl, 2011); however, early pubertal maturation does not appear to be a risk factor for delinquency for males (Graber, Seekey, Brooks-Gunn, & Lewinsohn, 2004). Moreover, female minor offenders show higher rates of psychopathological problems than males (Johansson & Kempf-Leonard 2009; Wasserman et al., 2010).

Girls involved in the juvenile justice tend to have romantic relationships with boys who are several years older. However, the precipitating factor related to the offending behaviour may not be the age of the partner but the degree to which the partner encourages them to enlist in antisocial activity (Cauffman et al. 2008; Lederman, Dakof, Larrea & Li, 2004).

Some protective factors against developing delinquent behaviours have been identified. Higher levels of maternal warmth reduce disruptive behaviour and conduct problems in at-risk girls during middle childhood (Hipwell et al. 2008; Van der Molen, Hipwell, Vermeiren & Loeber, 2011). Moreover, prosocial peer relationships are

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associated with later decreased externalizing and internalizing problems, including delinquency, and prosocial peer relationships can be increased through preventive interventions (Kim & Leve, 2011). Specifically, prosocial values predict success for females (Scott & Brown, 2018).

According to the Spanish juvenile justice system, juvenile offenders are those who have committed an offense between 14 and 18 years old. The Law of the Minor in Spain establishes the different measures that can be imposed aiming at the best interests of the minor, and keeping proportionality to the seriousness of the offense committed. Juvenile courts in Spain have technical teams made up of non-legal professionals that include educators, social workers and psychologists, whose purpose is to recommend the type of measure imposed. All decisions and measures imposed by juvenile judges take into account the guidelines on the report of this technical team (Cuervo, Villanueva, & Basto-Pereira, 2020).

The main measures included in the sentences of the Spanish juvenile justice system are socio-educative measures (community service, therapeutic treatment or cohabitation with another family), probation and custody in some type of institutionalized centres (in close, semiopen, or open regimen). Probation is the most commonly applied penal sanction in juvenile justice in Spain (45%), followed by socio-educative measures (26%) and internment (14%) (Ministerio de Sanidad, Servicios Sociales e Igualdad, 2018).

In Spain, there is scarce information about the specific gender-based differential characteristics of juvenile offenders with a judicial measure from a juvenile court. Knowing the differential characteristics of male and female juvenile offenders will allow for the implementation of individually tailored strategies in order to best target

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interventions with both males and females who are at risk for entry into the juvenile justice system, are currently involved in it, or are exiting it (Leve, et al., 2015).

For all these reasons, this study has three objectives: 1) to establish the rate of male and female young offenders who enter a juvenile court in Spain, 2) to determine the differential psychosocial characteristics of male and female young offenders, and 3) to identify the main variables related to gender differences. The ultimate goal of the study is to support the implementation of specific measures aimed at effectively addressing the problems presented by juvenile delinquents considering specific gender characteristics. The primary hypothesis of the study is that although female juvenile offenders will be a minority among all juvenile offenders, and will present less serious infractions than males, they will have a more serious psychosocial profile.

## **Method**

The protocol for this study was approved by the ethics committees of the Universidad Pública de Navarra (code: PI-015/15). Moreover, the Tribunal Superior de Justicia de Navarra authorized access to the data.

### **Participants**

The sample of this study comprised all the young offenders with whom the Justice System of Navarra (a Spanish state) intervened between 2010 and 2013. The inclusion criteria to join the study were the following: 1) having committed an offence between 14 and 18 years of age and 2) having received a judicial decision in the Juvenile Court of Navarra from 2010 to 2013.

According to the mentioned criteria, the total sample consisted of 838 juvenile offenders. Most of the minors ( $n = 522$ ; 62.3%) were born in Spain, and 316 (37.7%) were immigrants; there were no gender-based statistically significant differences ( $X^2 =$

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0.1,  $p = 0.985$ ). Young immigrant offenders came from Latin America ( $n = 201$ ; 63.6%), other European countries ( $n = 63$ ; 19.9%), Africa ( $n = 50$ ; 15.8%), and Asia ( $n = 2$ ; 0.6%).

### **Instruments**

*Archive of the Juvenile Court.* This record is part of the Juvenile Court protocol. In particular, this file provides information about sociodemographic, criminological and judicial characteristics of each minor.

*Technical Team Report.* This consists of a psychosocial report elaborated by the technical team of the Juvenile Court and is composed of psychologists, social workers and social educators. This report shows aspects related to the psychological, family, educational and social profile of each minor.

*Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (YLS/CMI,* Hoge & Andrews, 2006; Spanish version by Garrido, López & Silva, 2006). This is a semi-structured inventory that assesses the risk and protection factors related to the development of criminal behaviour in young offenders between 12 and 17 years old. It also makes it possible to assess the risk of recidivism, to establish a quantitative assessment of the most relevant risk factors and to determine the degree of socio-educational supervision that these minors require. The YLS/CMI is composed of 7 different parts. In this study, the first 2 parts were used. They consist of 42 items that evaluate risk factors for criminal reiteration and that are grouped into 8 areas: 1) Family circumstances; 2) Parenting and educational guidelines; 3) Formal education and employment; 4) Relationship with the peer group; 5) Substance use; 6) Leisure and recreation; 7) Personality and behaviour; and 8) Attitudes, values and beliefs. This evaluation allows us to obtain an estimate of the risk of criminal reiteration presented by the minors and classifies them into four risk groups: low (from 0 to 8 points), moderate (from 9 to 21), high (from 22 to 32) and very high (from 33 to 42).

### **Design**



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A retrospective ex post facto design was carried out based on the collection of archive data.

### **Procedure**

Once the permits of the Juvenile Court were obtained to access the files and reports of the technical team, they were consecutively reviewed from the first file of 2010 to the last of 2013. The YLS/CMI was completed for each minor based on the information provided in these files. For cases in which the file consulted reflected that the minor had previous judicial decisions, information was collected for all of them, regardless of the year of the judicial decision. In this way, all the existing resolutions of every minor were considered. Once the data of young individuals were collected, comparisons between males and females were carried out.

### **Data analysis**

Statistical analyses were carried out using the SPSS programme (version 23.0 for Windows). The characteristics of the sample were determined through descriptive analyses (percentages, means and standard deviations). Comparisons between groups were carried out using the  $X^2$  test in the case of categorical variables and Student's  $t$  test for quantitative variables. Differences with  $p < 0.05$  were considered significant. Moreover, a logistic regression analysis (forward stepwise entry method) was conducted to determine which factors were the most relevant for differentiating between males and females. The variable entry criterion was set to 0.05, and the variable retention criterion was set to 0.10. Moreover, the Hosmer-Lemeshow test was used to assess the goodness of fit of these models.

## **Results**

### **Gender rates in the sample**

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The rate of male minor offenders of the sample was 77.6% ( $n = 650$ ). The rest of the sample ( $n = 188$ ; 22.4%) was females.

### **Comparison in origin**

Comparisons between male and female young offenders for origin are presented in Table 1. Most of the minors (62.3%) were born in Spain. There were no statistically significant gender-based differences between national and immigrant young offenders.

INSERT TABLE 1

### **Comparison in recidivism**

Table 1 also shows the comparison in criminal recidivism between males and females. Most of the minors (71.1%) were not re-offenders. No gender-based differences were observed in the reoffending rates.

### **Comparison in the type of offences**

Comparisons between male and female minors in the type of offences committed are shown in Table 2. While most of the males' offences were some type of crime, females mainly committed misdemeanours.

The most prevalent misdemeanours in both groups were against property. However, there were significant gender-based differences. Male young offenders committed more misdemeanours against property, bodily harm and against public order than females, whereas females presented more threats and slanders than males.

In the case of crimes, there were also significant differences by gender. Crimes against property without violence were the most prevalent in males, while the most prevalent crimes of females were related to gender or domestic violence. Moreover, males committed more crimes against property without violence, against public health or road safety, bodily harm, against public order or belonging to a criminal gang than

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females, whereas females presented with more gender or domestic violence and crimes against property with violence.

#### INSERT TABLE 2

With regard to the number of people who committed the offence, it is noteworthy that, in half of the cases (in both males and females), the infringement was carried out alone. Only a quarter of the infractions involved 3 or more people. In these cases, there were significant differences according to gender: the rate of infractions committed by large groups (4 or more people) was higher in males than in females. Finally, 25 minors (3% of the sample) belonged to a gang at the time of committing the infraction, and they were all male.

#### **Comparison in psychosocial characteristics**

The results of comparisons of psychosocial variables are presented in Tables 3 and 4. Female young offenders presented with higher scores than male offenders in three global areas (parenting/educational guidelines, leisure and recreation, attitudes and orientation) and in the total score of the YLS/CMI.

#### INSERT TABLES 3 AND 4

Comparisons between males and females showed significant differences in several specific variables. Regarding variables related to the educational guidelines of the parents, inconsistent parenting and a poor relationship with the mother were significantly more frequent in females than in males. With regards to the area of education, low achievement in school stood out for its high frequency (60.3% of the sample), without differences between males and females. Moreover, significant differences in truancy were observed, with a significantly higher rate of school absenteeism in females. In the field of leisure and recreation, females participated in fewer organized leisure activities and had fewer personal interests than young males.

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The only variable in which males obtained significantly higher scores than females was related to the personality and behaviour domain. They presented with more problems in maintaining attention than females. On the other hand, a higher proportion of females than males presented defiance to authority.

Finally, in the case of variables related to family history, differences were found in the presence of a greater number of family traumas, the absence or death of the father, a higher proportion of siblings who also have a judicial file, and more denunciations of both the minor towards the parents and the parents to the minor. Females scored significantly higher than males in all of these variables.

#### **Variables associated with being a male or female young offender**

The results of the logistic regression analysis showed that the two variables related to being female were having a poor relationship with their mother and limited organized activities. On the other hand, having a short attention span was the only variable related to being a male. These three variables correctly classified 77.6% of the cases (Table 5).

INSERT TABLE 5

#### **Discussion**

This is the first study carried out in Spain about minor offenders taking into account the gender perspective. A more severe psychosocial profile has been found in female minor offenders who were given a judicial measure than in males. Moreover, offences are less prevalent and severe in females. These findings support the hypothesis of the study.

Most of the minors in the sample (77.6%) were males. This rate is similar to the 79.3% of males found in a previous study in Spain (Instituto Nacional de Estadística, 2019). From a sociodemographic perspective, there were no differences between males and females in origin; being a national or an immigrant was not a gender-related

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variable in this sample. On the other hand, in this study, no gender differences were found in recidivism rates. The higher likelihood of recidivism for boys reported in prior studies (Cauffman et al., 2015; García-Gomis, et al., 2017) was not observed in this study.

Regarding comparisons of the type of offence, female young offenders presented mainly with misdemeanours, while males committed more crimes. Males were engaged in a greater proportion of misdemeanours against property or causing bodily harm than females, while female minors presented higher rates of threats or slanders. With regard to crimes, males showed higher rates of crimes against property without violence, against public order, belonging to a criminal gang or causing bodily harm than females. Minor female offenders presented with more gender or domestic violence, crimes against property with violence or against public or justice system than boys. In summary, boys committed more felonies than females. Previous studies have shown that boys are more likely to be charged with violent offences (robbery and assault), while female minor offenders are more likely to present status offences (Johansson & Kempf-Leonard, 2009; Leve & Chamberlain, 2005; Pusch & Holtfreter, 2018; Ravoira, et al., 2012). In our study, this difference in violence committed according to gender was observed in misdemeanours but not when examining crimes. Fewer females committed crimes than males, but, when this occurred, they were also involved in violent behaviour. However, in the small proportion of offences that were related to belonging to a gang, all the offenders were males; offender females were not engaged in gangs in this study.

One relevant result of this study is the more severe profile of females regarding the psychosocial characteristics of minor offenders. Three significant psychosocial areas (parenting/educational guidelines, leisure and recreation, attitudes and orientation) and

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the global scale of the YLS/CMI were more affected in females than males. Moreover, females showed worse psychosocial characteristics than males in different variables. Most of them referred to family and educational parenting circumstances, as found in previous studies (Wong, Slotboom, & Bijleveld, 2010). Specifically, inconsistent parenting, a poor relationship with the mother, family traumas, absence or death of the father, brothers with judicial files and denunciations involving parents and minors were significantly higher in females. Some of these results are coincident with previous studies. For example, family traumas are more present in females than in males (Ravoira, et al., 2012). Although fewer girls than boys are involved in criminal behaviours, females present a worse profile than males do, with more complicated pathways. Thus, minors' pathways should be taken into account and considered when assessing minor offenders.

However, no differences between males and females in histories of abuse from their parents were found in this study. This gender-based variable was significantly different in previous studies (Dierkhising et al., 2013; Foy, Ritchie, & Conway, 2012; Moore, Gaskin, & Indig, 2013) but not in the present study. Sexual abuse, which was significantly more frequent in females in other studies (Goodkind, et al., 2006; Johansson & Kempf-Leonard, 2009; Leve & Chamberlain, 2005; Wareham & Dembo, 2007), was not assessed in this study, as the YLS/CMI does not explore this specific variable.

On the other hand, the variables related to being a female minor offender were having a poor relationship with one's mother and limited organized activities. This result is in line with a previous study (Jansen et al., 2017), which found that a poor relationship between parents and their daughters involved less levels of self-control.

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Having a short attention span was the only variable of this study related to being a male offender, in the line of the study of Onifade, Nyandoro, Davidson, & Campbell (2010).

This study has a number of limitations. First, the sample was limited and only addresses a specific population and context: the Juvenile Court of Navarra. Although the subjects are all the juvenile offenders in Navarra who met the admission criteria, the results should be generalized with caution. Navarra is known for the quality of the social services, and this could bias the generalization of the results. Second, this is an ex post facto study, and no causal relationships among variables can be established. Finally, some specific variables were not explored in this study, mainly those related to sexual abuse and to the psychopathological characteristics of the minor offenders. Future studies should take these variables into account.

In summary, this study aimed to determine the specific problems presented by young offenders from a gender perspective. Female minor offenders presented with specific psychosocial characteristics and a more severe profile that should be addressed in prevention and intervention programmes for minors. These programmes should be focused on reducing risk factors and strengthening protective factors considering specific gender differences. Intervention programmes for minors will only be more effective by tailoring them to the differential profiles shown by males and females.

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Table 1

*Comparisons of origin and criminal recidivism between male and female young offenders*

	<b>TOTAL</b> <b>N = 838</b>	<b>Male</b> <b>(n = 650)</b>		<b>Female</b> <b>(n = 188)</b>		<b>X<sup>2</sup> (df)</b>	<b>p</b>
		<b>n</b>	<b>(%)</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>(%)</b>		
<b>Origin</b>							
National	522 (62.3%)	405	(62.3%)	117	(62.2%)	.000 (1)	.985
Immigrant	316 (37.7%)	245	(37.7%)	71	(37.8%)		
<b>Criminal recidivism</b>							
Reoffenders	242 (28.9%)	183	(28.2%)	59	(31.4%)	.740 (1)	.390
Non-reoffenders	596 (71.1%)	467	(71.8%)	129	(68.6%)		

Table 2

*Comparison of the type of offence between male and female young offenders*

	Total (N = 838)		Male (n = 650)		Female (n = 188)		X <sup>2</sup> (df)	p
	N	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)		
<b>Type of offence</b>	<b>(N = 987)</b>		<b>(n = 755)</b>		<b>(n = 232)</b>			
Misdemeanour	461	(46.7%)	308	(40.8%)	153	(65.9%)	45.1 (1)	< .001
Crime	526	(53.3%)	447	(59.2%)	79	(34.1%)		
<b>Type of misdemeanour</b>	<b>(N = 461)</b>		<b>(n = 308)</b>		<b>(n = 153)</b>			
Against property	191	(41.4%)	133	(43.2%)	58	(37.9%)		
Bodily harm	155	(33.6%)	108	(35.1%)	47	(30.7%)		
Threats	69	(14.9%)	38	(12.3%)	31	(20.3%)	9.5 (4)	.049
Against public order	25	(5.4%)	18	(5.8%)	7	(4.6%)		
Slanders	14	(3.0%)	6	(1.9%)	8	(5.2%)		
Abuse	6	(1.3%)	4	(1.3%)	2	(1.3%)		
Others	1	(0.2%)	1	(0.3%)	0	--		
<b>Type of crime</b>	<b>(N = 526)</b>		<b>(n = 447)</b>		<b>(n = 79)</b>			
Against property without violence	174	(33.1%)	155	(34.7%)	19	(24.0%)		
Against public health or road safety	73	(14.2%)	63	(14.1%)	10	(12.6%)		
Gender or domestic violence	68	(12.9%)	46	(10.3%)	22	(27.8%)	25.7 (5)	< .001
Bodily harm	59	(11.2%)	53	(11.9%)	6	(7.6%)		
Against public order or belonging to criminal gang	49	(9.3%)	45	(10.1%)	4	(5.1%)		
Against property with violence	39	(7.4%)	28	(6.3%)	11	(13.9%)		
Against public or justice system	18	(3.4%)	13	(2.9%)	5	(6.3%)		
Sexual abuse or harassment	18	(3.4%)	18	(4.0%)	0	--		
Crimes against liberty	13	(2.5%)	13	(2.9%)	0	--		
Against privacy or breaking and entering	7	(1.3%)	6	(1.3%)	1	(1.3%)		
Others	8	(1.4%)	7	(1.5%)	1	(1.3%)		
<b>Number of participants in the offence</b>								
1	423	(50.5%)	329	(50.6%)	94	(50.0%)		
2	212	(25.3%)	156	(24.0%)	56	(29.8%)	13.58 (3)	.003
3	89	(10.6%)	63	(9.7%)	26	(13.8%)		
4 or more	114	(13.6%)	102	(15.7%)	12	(6.4%)		
<b>Offence belonging to a gang</b>								
Yes	25	(3.0%)	25	(3.8%)	0	(0%)	7.45 (1)	.006
No	813	(97.0%)	625	(96.2%)	188	(100%)		

\* The total number of offences is superior to the total number of the sample because there are minors who committed more than one offence in the same action.

Table 3

*Comparison of psychosocial areas (YLS/CMI) between male and female young offenders*

	Total (N = 838)		Male (n = 650)		Female (n = 188)		t	(df)	p	d	(1-β)
	M	(S.D.)	M	(S.D.)	M	(S.D.)					
Parenting/educational guidelines	0.92	(1.33)	0.83	(1.30)	1.22	(1.42)	3.4	(283.7)	.001	0.29	.97
Education and employment	1.35	(1.37)	1.31	(1.36)	1.46	(1.39)	1.3	(836)	.189	0.11	.37
Peer relations	0.62	(0.69)	0.61	(0.70)	0.64	(0.66)	0.5	(836)	.583	0.04	.13
Substance use	0.34	(0.74)	0.35	(0.74)	0.32	(0.75)	0.4	(836)	.724	0.04	.12
Leisure and recreation	0.66	(1.10)	0.61	(1.08)	0.84	(1.18)	2.4	(283.4)	.017	0.21	.81
Personality and behaviour	0.45	(0.97)	0.44	(0.95)	0.51	(1.01)	0.8	(836)	.403	0.07	.22
Attitudes and orientation	0.18	(0.56)	0.16	(0.54)	0.27	(0.63)	2.1	(269.9)	.038	0.20	.77
Total	4.25	(5.18)	4.04	(5.12)	4.94	(5.33)	2.1	(836)	.036	0.17	.67

Table 4

*Comparison of psychosocial characteristics between male and female young offenders*

	Total (N = 838)		Male (n = 650)		Female (n = 188)		X <sup>2</sup> (d)	p
	N	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)		
<b>Parenting/educational guidelines</b>								
Inadequate supervision	63	(7.5%)	44	(6.8%)	19	(10.1%)	2.33 (1)	.126
Difficulty in controlling behaviour	91	(10.9%)	69	(10.6%)	22	(11.7%)	0.17 (1)	.673
Inappropriate parental discipline	107	(12.8%)	76	(11.7%)	31	(16.5%)	3.01 (1)	.083
Inconsistent parenting	258	(30.8%)	184	(28.3%)	74	(39.4%)	8.36 (1)	.004
Poor relationship with father	115	(13.7%)	86	(13.2%)	29	(15.4%)	0.59 (1)	.441
Poor relationship with mother	134	(16.0%)	80	(12.3%)	54	(28.7%)	29.2 (1)	< .001
<b>Education and employment</b>								
Disruptive classroom behaviour	119	(14.2%)	95	(14.6%)	24	(12.8%)	0.41 (1)	.522
Low achievement in school	505	(60.3%)	390	(60.0%)	115	(61.2%)	0.08 (1)	.773
Problems with peers in school	89	(10.6%)	68	(10.5%)	21	(11.2%)	0.07 (1)	.781
Problems with teachers	102	(12.2%)	79	(12.2%)	23	(12.2%)	0.01 (1)	.976
Truancy	212	(25.3%)	148	(22.8%)	64	(34.0%)	9.80 (1)	.002
Unemployment/ Not looking for work	93	(11.1%)	66	(10.2%)	27	(14.4%)	2.61 (1)	.106
<b>Peer relations</b>								
Some delinquent acquaintances	330	(39.4%)	248	(38.2%)	82	(43.6%)	1.82 (1)	.177
Some delinquent friends	55	(6.6%)	45	(6.9%)	10	(5.3%)	0.61 (1)	.434
No/ Few positive acquaintances	12	(1.4%)	11	(1.7%)	1	(0.5%)	1.39 (1)	.238
No/ Few positive friends	122	(14.6%)	94	(14.5%)	28	(14.9%)	0.02 (1)	.882
<b>Substance use</b>								
Occasional drug use	88	(10.5%)	74	(11.4%)	14	(7.4%)	2.40 (1)	.121
Chronic drug use	84	(10.0%)	64	(9.8%)	20	(10.6%)	0.10 (1)	.750
Chronic alcohol use	24	(2.9%)	19	(2.9%)	5	(2.7%)	0.03 (1)	.849
Substance abuse interferes with life	84	(10%)	63	(9.7%)	21	(11.2%)	0.35 (1)	.552
Substance use linked to offence	6	(0.7%)	5	(0.8%)	1	(0.5%)	0.11 (1)	.734
<b>Leisure and recreation</b>								
Limited organized activities	264	(31.5%)	187	(28.8%)	77	(41.0%)	10.04 (1)	.002
Could make better use of free time	157	(18.7%)	115	(17.7%)	42	(22.3%)	2.07 (1)	.150
No personal interests	134	(16.0%)	95	(14.6%)	39	(20.7%)	4.08 (1)	.043
<b>Personality and behaviour</b>								
Physical aggressiveness	27	(3.2%)	18	(2.8%)	9	(4.8%)	1.90 (1)	.168
Outbursts of anger	103	(12.3%)	75	(11.5%)	28	(14.9%)	1.52 (1)	.217
Short attention span	74	(8.8%)	65	(10.0%)	9	(4.8%)	4.92 (1)	.027
Poor frustration tolerance	64	(7.6%)	44	(6.8%)	20	(10.6%)	3.10 (1)	.079
Verbally aggressive	109	(13.0%)	80	(12.3%)	29	(15.4%)	1.25 (1)	.263
<b>Attitudes and orientation</b>								
Antisocial/ Procriminal attitudes	41	(4.9%)	31	(4.8%)	10	(5.3%)	0.09 (1)	.758
Defies authority	79	(9.4%)	53	(8.2%)	26	(13.8%)	5.50 (1)	.019
Callous/ Little concern for others	11	(1.3%)	6	(0.9%)	5	(2.7%)	3.35 (1)	.065



<b>Family circumstances</b>								
Changes of address	372	(44.4%)	279	(42.9%)	93	(49.5%)	2.53 (1)	.112
Crime history	24	(2.9%)	19	(2.9%)	5	(2.7%)	0.03 (1)	.849
Emotional or psychiatric problems	52	(6.2%)	40	(6.2%)	12	(6.4%)	0.01 (1)	.909
Alcohol or drug abuse	41	(4.9%)	28	(4.3%)	13	(6.9%)	2.13 (1)	.144
Marital conflict	118	(14.1%)	88	(13.5%)	30	(16.0%)	0.70 (1)	.401
Financial or housing problems	216	(25.8%)	161	(24.8%)	55	(29.3%)	1.53 (1)	.216
Little collaborative father	43	(5.1%)	33	(5.1%)	10	(5.3%)	0.01 (1)	.895
Little collaborative mother	39	(4.7%)	27	(4.2%)	12	(6.4%)	1.63 (1)	.201
Ethnic/ cultural difficulties	5	(0.6%)	5	(0.8%)	0	--	1.45 (1)	.228
Abusive father	54	(6.4%)	44	(6.8%)	10	(5.3%)	0.51 (1)	.476
Abusive mother	4	(0.5%)	2	(0.3%)	2	(1.1%)	1.75 (1)	.185
Significant family trauma	336	(40.1%)	246	(37.8%)	90	(47.9%)	6.10 (1)	.013
Father deceased or absent	147	(17.5%)	105	(16.2%)	42	(22.3%)	3.86 (1)	.049
Mother deceased or absent	33	(3.9%)	26	(4.0%)	7	(3.7%)	0.03 (1)	.864
Parents reported by the minor	9	(1.1%)	4	(0.6%)	5	(2.7%)	5.73 (1)	.017
Minor reported by parents	40	(4.8%)	24	(3.7%)	16	(8.5%)	7.49 (1)	.006
Changes of guardianship between parents	7	(0.8%)	6	(0.9%)	1	(0.5%)	0.27 (1)	.604
Adopted or host family	32	(3.8%)	21	(3.2%)	11	(5.9%)	2.72 (1)	.099
Separate brothers	26	(3.1%)	20	(3.1%)	6	(3.2%)	0.01 (1)	.936
Brothers with judicial file	54	(6.4%)	35	(5.4%)	19	(10.1%)	5.40 (1)	.020

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Table 5

*Logistic regression: Variables associated to being a male or a female young offender*

<b>Dependent Variable = Sex (0 = Male; 1 = Female)</b>			
	<b>Variables</b>	<b>Odds Ratio</b>	<b>(Confidence Interval 95%)</b>
	Poor relationship with mother	2.90 ( $p < .001$ )	(1.92-4.38)
	Limited organized activities	1.45 ( $p = .040$ )	(1.02-2.06)
	Short attention span	0.35 ( $p = .005$ )	(0.17-0.73)
	Constant	0.22 ( $p < .001$ )	
<i>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup></i>	.071		
Correctly Classified	77.6% (Total)	100% (Male)	0% (Female)