

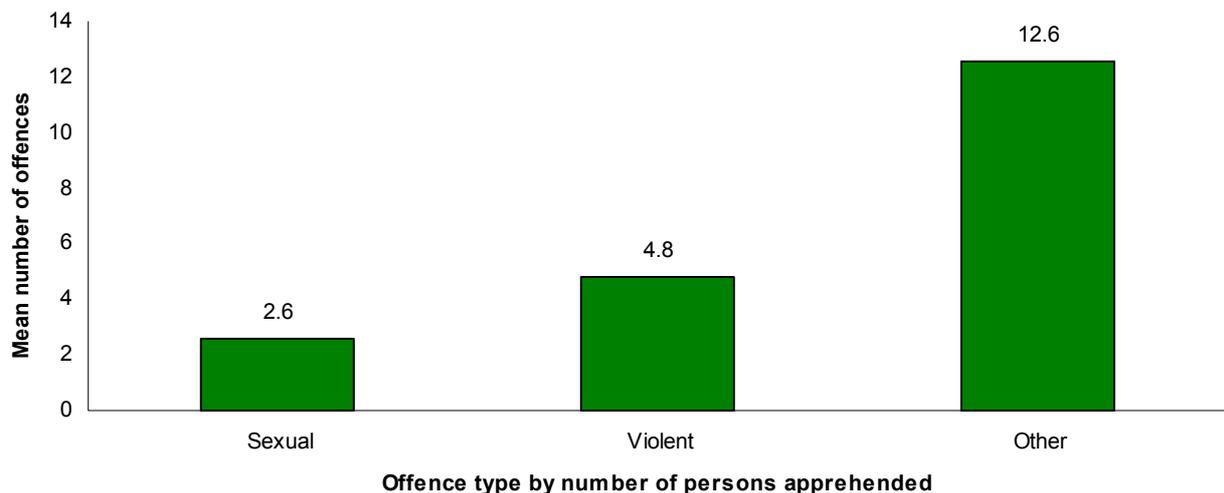


• From the Australian Institute of Criminology •

## *Recidivism of sexual offenders*

A report titled *Recidivism of sexual assault offenders: rates, risk factors and treatment efficacy* provides an overview of Australian and international research on sexual, violent and general recidivism among sex offenders. Despite the assumption that sexual offenders are particularly prone to reoffend, reconviction rates for sex crimes are relatively low. Sexual offenders are similar to the general offender population in terms of their criminal histories and their sociodemographic and psychosocial characteristics. They are versatile offenders, with a large proportion having convictions for violent and 'other' offences, such as drugs or property crimes. At the same time, they may specialise in particular types of sexual offences within their general criminal careers. The risk of recidivism varies for different types of sex offenders, with rapists tending to be more criminally versatile than child molesters. A retrospective study of 629 persons aged 16 years and over, who were apprehended by Victorian police on suspicion of sexual assault of adults pointed to a considerable degree of recidivistic activity between 1993 and 2001. A substantial number had been previously apprehended for violent (n=222) and 'other' offences (n=348). As shown in the chart below, the mean number of sexual offences per individual was lower than for the other crime categories.

### **Mean number of sexual, violent and other offences for persons apprehended for sexual assault (n=629)**



SOURCE: Lievore D 2004. *Recidivism of sexual assault offenders: rates, risk factors and treatment efficacy*. A report prepared for the Office of the Status of Women by the Australian Institute of Criminology Canberra

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Full report available on AIC web site: <http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/reports/2003-06-recidivism.html>