Document Title:	**An Innovative Response To An Intractable Problem: Using Village Public Safety Officers to Enhance the Criminal Justice Response to Violence Committed Against Alaska Native and American Indian Women in Alaska's Tribal Communities**
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An Innovative Response To An Intractable Problem:

Using Village Public Safety Officers to Enhance the Criminal Justice Response to Violence Committed Against Alaska Native and American Indian Women in Alaska's Tribal Communities

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Project Report

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Table of Contents

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Executive Summary

The principal goal of this project was to empirically document and evaluate the impact Alaska's village public safety officer (VPSO) program has on the investigation and prosecution of those who commit acts of sexual and domestic violence against Alaska Native and American Indian women in Alaska's tribal communities. To accomplish this goal, detailed case record reviews were performed on 683 sexual assault and sexual abuse of a minor cases and 982 domestic violence cases that were closed by the Alaska State Troopers C-Detachment between January 1, 2008 and December 31, 2011.

Results show that the men and women who constitute Alaska's VPSO program play a central role in the criminal justice response to incidents of sexual assault, sexual abuse, and domestic violence committed in Alaska's tribal communities. This study documents the many ways that VPSOs not only serve as a "force multiplier" for Troopers by serving as first responders and assisting with investigations. VPSOs also serve victims and their communities by providing crucial post-incidents supports and services in the aftermath of sexual assault, sexual abuse, and domestic violence incidents.

This study finds that VPSOs (and other paraprofessional police) enhance the criminal justice response to incidents of sexual violence by increasing the probability that such cases, once reported, will be referred for prosecution, accepted for prosecution, and ultimately result in conviction. These are tangible, positive outcomes that directly benefit victims, their families and their communities, and evidence that the participation of VPSOs increases the likelihood that the perpetrators of these crimes will be held accountable for their conduct. However, the multivariate analyses conducted show that the contributions made by VPSOs and other paraprofessional police are not uniform across case type. More specifically, this study finds that a paraprofessional police response significantly enhances the criminal justice response to sexual abuse of a minor cases but not sexual assault cases, once other explanatory factors (for example, the quality of evidence collected) are accounted for. While this study's multivariate analyses were constrained by relatively small sample sizes for sexual assault and sexual abuse of a minor cases, respectively, the findings suggest that the "VPSO effect" (or, more generally, the "paraprofessional police effect") on the criminal justice response to violence committed against Alaska Native/American Indian females in Alaska's tribal communities may be "age graded" and limited. That is to say, our results suggest that there is something about the nature of sexual abuse of a minor incidents and their investigation that makes VPSO and other paraprofessional police involvement more tangible and impactful on key case processing outcomes. That VPSO and other paraprofessional police involvement and participation would have differential effects according to case type (and, by definition, victim age) was an unanticipated finding for which we do not have a ready explanation.

This study also shows that VPSOs are intensely involved in the response to, and investigation of domestic violence incidents. However, because referral, acceptance, and conviction rates are so high for crimes of domestic violence, we did not detect any VPSO-specific effect on these

outcomes. While there is no evidence that VPSOs hinder domestic violence investigations in any way, neither did we find any evidence that VPSO participation in their investigation enhances the criminal justice response to these crimes.

VPSO Involvement and Impact: Sexual Assault and Sexual Abuse of a Minor

The findings in this report show that VPSOs play an active role in the response to, and investigation of, sexual assault and sexual abuse of a minor cases. Altogether, VPSOs served as first responders, provided investigative and logistical support, or delivered much needed post-incident support to victims in approximately 1 out of every 7 incidents. Importantly, we find no evidence to suggest that VPSO (or other paraprofessional police) involvement hinders or otherwise compromises sexual assault or sexual abuse of a minor cases, or the likelihood of achieving positive criminal justice outcomes. Furthermore, our results show that the participation of VPSOs (and other paraprofessional police) in sexual assault and sexual abuse of a minor investigations produces tangible outcomes (e.g., reduced reporting time, improved evidence collection) and, in sexual abuse of a minor cases, improved referral of cases. All of these outcomes serve to benefit victims, their families, and their communities. In short, VPSOs (along with other paraprofessional police) enhance the criminal justice response to sexual assault and sexual abuse of a minor incidents that occur in Alaska's tribal communities.

An important caveat to this finding emerged, however. This study did not find that VPSO involvement in sexual assault and sexual abuse of a minor cases produced tangibly better criminal justice outcomes than the two other paraprofessional police models functioning in Alaska's tribal communities (VPOs and TPOs). All three paraprofessional police models demonstrated positive impacts on the criminal justice response. And, while there was variability across the spectrum of criminal justice responses (including key case processing outcomes), these differences were indistinguishable from each other statistically. This is an important finding because it suggests that there is not a VPSO-specific impact on the criminal justice outcomes for sexual assault and sexual abuse of a minor cases. Rather, this study shows that VPSOs, TPOs and VPOs all contribute to enhancing the criminal justice response to sexual violence. Thus, the principle finding is that it is the presence and participation of paraprofessional police in general, not a particular paraprofessional police model, that improves the criminal justice response to sexual assault and sexual abuse of a minor incidents occurring in Alaska's tribal communities. These findings reaffirm those reported by Wood and colleagues.[1]

The absence of a VPSO-specific impact should not be interpreted as a failure of the VPSO program. Quite the contrary, in fact. That the effects of the VPSO program are on par with those of other paraprofessional police models underscores the ability of the VPSO program to deliver positive criminal justice outcomes. This is an important policy consideration in Alaska because the VPSO program is the only paraprofessional police model that is state-funded; the VPSO

[1] Wood, D.S., Rosay, A.B., Postle, G., & TePas, K. (2011). Police presence, isolation, and sexual assault prosecution. *Criminal Justice Policy Review*, 22(*3*), 330-349.

program is the means by which the State of Alaska delivers paraprofessional police services to Alaska's tribal communities.

Specific findings/estimates are provided below.

- In total, 683 sexual assault (SA) and sexual abuse of a minor (SAM) cases were included in the sample.
    - These 683 SA/SAM cases comprised 56.5% of all SA and SAM case records closed by AST C-Detachment during the study period.
    - These 683 SA/SAM cases comprised 26.6% of all SA and SAM case records closed by AST (statewide) during the study period.
- VPSOs were first responders in 7.5% of the SA/SAM cases sampled.
    - In addition to serving as first responders to SA/SAM cases, VPSOs provided additional investigative supports to Troopers including (but not limited to): scheduling, assisting with, and conducting interviews, and collecting/securing evidence.
    - VPSOs helped link victims and their families to critically important social supports and services by providing post-incident referrals and transportation.
    - Altogether, VPSOs were actively involved in the investigation of approximately 1 in 7 SA/SAM cases.

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- 69.4% of SA/SAM cases in the sample were recorded by AST as being referred for prosecution.
    - 67.1% of SA/SAM cases were referred for prosecution when Troopers were first responders.
    - 72.5% of SA/SAM cases were referred for prosecution when VPSOs were first responders.
    - 79.7% of SA/SAM cases were referred for prosecution when paraprofessional police officers (VPSOs, VPOs, TPOs) were first responders.

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- 38.4% of referred SA/SAM cases were accepted for prosecution.
    - 38.5% of referred SA/SAM cases were accepted for prosecution when Troopers were first responders.
    - 47.6% of referred SA/SAM cases were accepted for prosecution when VPSOs were first responders.
    - 42.6% of referred SA/SAM cases were accepted for prosecution when paraprofessional police officers (VPSOs, TPOs, VPOs) were first responders.
- 72.4% of SA/SAM cases accepted for prosecution resulted in conviction.
    - 72.9% of SA/SAM cases accepted for prosecution resulted in conviction when Troopers were first responders.

- 90.0% of SA/SAM cases accepted for prosecution resulted in conviction when VPSOs were first responders.
- 69.2% of SA/SAM cases accepted for prosecution resulted in conviction when paraprofessional police officers (VPSOs, VPOs, TPOs) were first responders.

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Multivariate Highlights

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- The odds of a SAM case in which a paraprofessional first responder was documented being referred by AST were 4 times greater than the odds of a SAM case in which a paraprofessional first responder was not documented being referred by AST.
    - The statistical significance of this finding was reduced only after measures of the amount of evidence collected and victim, suspect, and witness interviews were added to the multivariate model. This suggests that the effect of paraprofessional police response influenced referral decisions indirectly, by increasing the likelihood that these evidentiary factors would be present.
- The presence of a paraprofessional police first responder did not have a significant effect on the odds of referral – positively, or negatively – in SA cases.
- The odds of a SAM case in which the victim was an Alaska Native/American Indian female being referred by AST were 2.6 times greater than the odds of a SAM case in which the victim was not an Alaska Native/American Indian female being referred.
    - The impact of this variable remained a statistically significant predictor of SAM case referral even after the addition of other explanatory factors.
- For both SA and SAM cases, the odds of case referral increased significantly when cases had a strong evidentiary base – that is, when interviews were conducted with victims and witnesses, and as more evidentiary items were collected/seized by investigators.
- For both SA and SAM cases, the relationship between suspects and victims significantly impacted the odds of case referral.
    - The odds of a SAM case in which the suspect and victim were acquaintances being referred were 2 times greater than the odds of a SAM case in which the suspect and victim had some other type of relationship being referred.
    - In SA cases, three suspect-victim relationships significantly increased the odds of case referral: acquaintance, friend, and family member. The strongest of these was family member (odds ratio: 8.362).
- The odds of a SA case in which there was documentation of victim non-genital injury being referred by AST were 2.4 times greater than a SA case in which there was no documentation of victim non-genital injury being referred by AST. Documentation of genital injury did not have a statistically significant impact on the odds of case referral.

- The odds of a SA case in which there was documentation of victim alcohol and/or drug use not being referred by AST were 2 times greater than a SA case in which there was no documentation of victim alcohol and/or drug use not being referred by AST.
- Geographic isolation did not impact the odds of referral for either SA or SAM cases.
- The importance of the quantity/quality of evidence collected by investigators carried through to the second key decision point in the criminal justice process: the acceptance of a case for prosecution.
    - The odds of a SA case being accepted for prosecution increased significantly with each additional item of evidence collected.
- The salience of victim alcohol and/or drug use also carried through to the second key decision point in the criminal justice process: the acceptance of a case for prosecution.
    - The odds of a SA case in which there was documentation of victim alcohol and/or drug use not being referred by AST were 2.6 times greater than a SA case in which there was no documentation of victim alcohol and/or drug use not being referred by AST.

VPSO Involvement and Impact: Domestic Violence

This study shows that VPSOs also play a central role in the response to, and investigation of, domestic violence cases. VPSOs were first responders in approximately 1 out of every 5 of the domestic violence incidents included in the sample. When all forms of participation were combined, VPSOs alone were documented in 1 out of every 3 domestic violence cases. Other paraprofessional police (VPOs and TPOs) were also intensely involved in domestic violence cases, comprising an additional 21.7% of the total number of DV cases sampled. Altogether, paraprofessional police officers (VPSOs, VPOs, and TPOs) were documented as first responders to 44% – nearly half – of all domestic violence incidents. This study also revealed that VPSO involvement – in all respects – was much more frequent in domestic cases than in sexual assault or sexual abuse of a minor cases.

Despite the frequency with which VPSOs were found to be involved in domestic violence investigations (and delivered post-incident supports to victims), this study did not find that VPSOs (or other paraprofessional police) increased the probability that domestic violence cases would be referred for prosecution, accepted for prosecution, or result in conviction. VPSOs neither increased, nor did they decrease, these probabilities. Regardless of who served as the first responder, domestic violence incidents were highly likely to be referred for prosecution by investigators, highly likely to be accepted for prosecution, and highly likely to result in conviction. Simply stated: Because of the high rates of referral, acceptance and conviction, there was little opportunity for VPSOs to improve upon them.

Specific findings/estimates are provided below.

- In total, 982 domestic violence (DV) cases were included in the sample.

    - These 982 DV cases comprised 40.8% of all DV case records closed by AST C-Detachment during the study period.
    - These 982 DV cases comprised 14.0% of all SA and SAM case records closed by AST (statewide) during the study period.
- VPSOs were first responders in 22.4% of the DV cases sampled.
    - In addition to serving as first responders to DV cases, VPSOs frequently provided additional investigative supports to Troopers including (but not limited to): scheduling, assisting with, and conducting interviews, and collecting/securing evidence.
    - VPSOs helped link victims and their families to critically important social supports and services by providing post-incident referrals and transportation.
    - Altogether, VPSOs were actively involved in the investigation of approximately 1 in 3 DV cases.

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- 99.0% of DV cases in the sample were recorded by AST as being referred for prosecution.
    - 98.2% of DV cases were referred for prosecution when Troopers were first responders.
    - 100.0% of DV cases were referred for prosecution when VPSOs were first responders.
    - 99.8% of DV cases were referred for prosecution when paraprofessional police officers (VPSOs, VPOs, TPOs) were first responders.

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- 88.1% of referred DV cases were accepted for prosecution.
    - 87.1% of referred DV cases were accepted for prosecution when Troopers were first responders.
    - 88.6% of referred DV cases were accepted for prosecution when VPSOs were first responders.
    - 89.7% of referred DV cases were accepted for prosecution when paraprofessional police officers (VPSOs, TPOs, VPOs) were first responders.
- 82.4% of DV cases accepted for prosecution resulted in conviction.
    - 84.0% of DV cases accepted for prosecution resulted in conviction when Troopers were first responders.
    - 80.2% of DV cases accepted for prosecution resulted in conviction when VPSOs were first responders.
    - 80.1% of DV cases accepted for prosecution resulted in conviction when para-professional police officers (VPSOs, VPOs, TPOs) were first responders.

Other Select Findings

- DV cases were reported to police sooner than SA and SAM cases, on average.
    - Approximately 80% of DV cases were reported to police within 1 day.
    - Less than 50% of SA and SAM cases were reported to police within 1 day.
- SA cases were reported to police sooner than SAM cases, on average.
    - More than 50% of SA cases were reported to police within 1 day.
    - Just over 25% of SAM cases were reported to police within 1 day.
- SA, SAM and DV cases were reported to police sooner when paraprofessional police officers served as first responders, as compared to Troopers and other certified police officers, on average. These differences were particularly pronounced within the first week of incident occurrence.
- SA incidents were equally likely to involve assaultive touching (e.g., touching of genitalia) (54.6%) and acts of forced penetration (e.g., penile penetration of vagina) (59.3%).
- SAM incidents were much more likely to involve assaultive touching (66.9%) than acts of forced penetration (31.6%).
- DV incidents were characterized primarily by assaultive behaviors rather than threatening or stalking behaviors. With respect to assaultive behaviors, DV incidents typically involved pushing/ shoving/grabbing the victim (44.3%), punching victims with closed fists (41.4%), and slapping victims with an open hand (31.5%).
- SA, SAM and DV incidents sampled displayed clear sex/gender trajectories. Large majorities of suspects were male, and large majorities of victims were female.
    - 97.4% of SA suspects, 93.5% of SAM suspects, and 84.7% of DV suspects were male.
    - 94.2% of SA victims, 79.6% of SAM victims, and 70.3% of DV victims were female.
- SA, SAM and DV incidents sampled involved Alaska Native and American Indian suspects and victims almost exclusively.
    - 92.4% of SA suspects, 83.6% of SAM suspects, and 96.2% of DV suspects were Alaska Native or American Indian.
    - 94.7% of SA victims, 87.8% of SAM victims, and 96.5% of DV victims were Alaska Native or American Indian.
- SA suspects were only slightly older, on average, than SA victims (29.3 years vs. 23.2 years).
- SAM suspects were much older, on average, than SAM victims (32.9 years vs. 11.9 years).
- DV suspects and victims were approximately the same ages (31.1 years vs. 32.1 years).

- Alcohol use – by suspects or victims – was common in SA cases, but relatively rare in SAM cases. For both crime types, suspects were much more likely to be under the influence of alcohol than victims.
- Alcohol use was more prevalent in DV cases than in SA or SAM cases. DV suspects were much more likely to be under the influence of alcohol than DV victims.
- It was common for victims to engage a number of acts/strategies of resistance.
- Rates of victim disclosure to people prior to police notification varied widely across crime types. SAM victims were most likely to disclose to at least one person prior to police notification (60.1%), followed by SA victims (48.9) and finally DV victims (26.8%).
- It was exceedingly rare for SA, SAM and DV suspects to be strangers to victims.
    - SA victims were most likely to be assaulted by an acquaintance (33.8%).
    - SAM victims were most likely to be assaulted by a family member or relative (34.4%).
    - DV victims were most likely to be assaulted by their current intimate partner or spouse (55.3%).
- SA and SAM charges accepted for prosecution were most likely to be Class B felonies[2].
- DV charges accepted for prosecution were most likely to be Class A misdemeanors[2].
- SA and SAM charge convictions were most likely to be Class C felonies[2].
- DV charge convictions were most likely to be Class A misdemeanors[2].
- 11.2% of SA cases sampled resulted in a conviction.
- 9.5% of SAM cases sampled resulted in a conviction.
- 49.1% of DV cases sampled resulted in a conviction.

[2] See Appendix A for Alaska statutory definitions of sexual assault and sexual abuse of a minor.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to contribute to the National Institute of Justice's research program on violence committed against Indian women in tribal communities – specifically, its efforts to evaluate state and tribal responses to violence against Indian women in tribal communities – as well as the specific objective identified in the Violence Against Women Act of 2005 to ensure that "perpetrators of violent crimes against Indian women are held accountable for their criminal behavior."

More specifically, this project set out to understand the specific contributions village public safety officers (VPSOs) make to the criminal justice responses to violence committed against Alaska Native and American Indian women in Alaska's tribal communities. The study focused on the impact VPSOs have on the investigation of domestic violence, sexual assault, and sexual abuse of a minor incidents, and the extent to which VPSOs facilitated the prosecution of those who committed violence against Alaska Native and American Indian women in Alaska's tribal communities.

RESEARCH GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

> *"It is unconscionable that crime rates in Indian Country are more than twice the national average and up to 20 times the national average on some reservations. When one in three Native American women will be raped in their lifetimes, that is an assault on our national conscience; it is an affront to our shared humanity; it is something that we cannot allow to continue."*
>
> (President Barack Obama, July 2010)

As long evidenced by researchers – and noted by President Obama – rates of violence committed against Indian women are extraordinarily high. Alaska-specific data pertaining to sexual and domestic violence is consistent with this body of research. Empirical data from a variety of sources show that Alaska Native and American Indian women are more likely to experience sexual assault and domestic violence than their non-Native counterparts. Moreover, these disparities in victimization risk have been documented for decades, which underscores the need for innovative responses to these crimes if efforts to stem the tide of violence are to be effective.

The challenge, articulated in Title IX of the Violence Against Women Act of 2005[3], is to develop criminal justice responses that (1) decrease the incidence of these acts of violence committed against Indian women, (2) while also strengthening the capacity of tribes to exercise their sovereign authority to respond to violent crimes committed against Indian women, and that (3) ensure perpetrators of violent crimes committed against Indian women are held accountable for their criminal behavior.

[3] Violence Against Women Act of 2005, Pub. L. No. 109-271, 120 Stat. 750 (2006).

When it comes to the delivery of police services to tribal communities, Alaska's VPSO program stands alone in its structure and operation. The unique partnership that has been formed between the State of Alaska and tribal communities is unlike any other in the United States, but it may provide a model of policing that can be exported or adapted to address the challenges communities in Indian Country share in common. But, much remains to be learned about the extent to which the VPSO program is producing tangible public safety benefits in tribal communities. Before this promising state and tribal response can become a recommended strategy with national implications, further research into the workings and outcomes of the VPSO program is necessary.

Through continued investments in the VPSO program and other initiatives, Alaska tribes and the State of Alaska are working to provide a criminal justice response to sexual assault and domestic violence committed against Alaska Native and American Indian women that differs from past efforts, and that is designed to achieve each of the three objectives identified in Title IX of the Violence Against Women Act. **The goal of the proposed project was to empirically document and evaluate the impact Alaska's VPSO program has on the investigation and prosecution of those who commit acts of sexual and domestic violence against Alaska Native and American Indian women in Alaska's tribal communities.**

The primary research strategy to accomplish this goal was to conduct detailed case file reviews of sexual assault, sexual abuse of a minor, and domestic violence case records supplied by the Alaska State Troopers. Coding these case files allowed the researchers to compile and analyze data not routinely collected and stored in administrative data sets (e.g, agency record management system, or RMS), for example VPSO and other paraprofessional police involvement in investigations, the frequency and types of resistance strategies used by victims of sexual and domestic violence, and suspect-victim relationships, among others. The quantitative data collection included detailed case record reviews of domestic violence, sexual assault, and sexual abuse of a minor incidents that occurred in Alaska tribal communities that were investigated by the Alaska State Troopers, and closed between January 1, 2008 and December 31, 2011. In addition, researchers spoke with community members in four Western Alaska villages, VPSOs, VPSO Coordinators, and AST Oversight Troopers to glean additional insights into the roles played by VPSOs in the investigation of these crimes, and the impacts VPSOs have on the criminal justice response.

This report is limited to the presentation and discussion of the quantitative data collected and compiled from the case record reviews.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS & HYPOTHESES

The overarching question this project explores is this:

> *How, and in what ways, does VPSO involvement in sexual assault, sexual abuse of a minor, and domestic violence cases impact the likelihood of prosecution?*

Previous research[4] examining the role played by paraprofessional police working in Alaska's tribal communities have on the investigation and prosecution of domestic and sexual violence cases, while limited, provides an empirical foundation for two complementary, yet distinct, explanations as to how VPSOs might enhance criminal case processing. The first hypothesis, which we term the *investigative capacity thesis*, emphasizes the role VPSOs play in the evidence collection process. The second hypothesis, which we term the *community relationship thesis*, emphasizes the nature of the relationships VPSOs establish and maintain with community members.

The Investigative Capacity Thesis. One possibility is that improved case processing outcomes may result from a combination of presence/proximity to communities where sexual assault, sexual abuse of a minor, and domestic violence incidents occur and supplemental investigative activities performed by VPSOs – activities that help build stronger cases. For example, while Troopers conduct the official investigations, because of their proximity to events VPSOs are well positioned to collect preliminary evidence by obtaining statements from those involved, taking photographs, and securing crime scenes. Because Troopers' arrival in tribal communities may be delayed (sometimes for days) due to factors including resource availability, geographic location and weather conditions, the collection of such information in the immediate aftermath of events by VPSOs may enhance the likelihood that cases are referred, accepted for prosecution, and ultimately result in conviction. In addition, VPSOs may provide a crucial link between the Troopers, prosecutors, and the individuals involved in latter stages of an investigation by assisting with follow-up investigative activities – for example, coordinating interviews with victims and witnesses. The findings reported by Wood and his colleagues[5] provide some evidence in support of this hypothesis: When a sexual assault incident was reported to authorities within 24 hours of its occurrence, the likelihood of that case being accepted for prosecution increased significantly. To the extent that the presence of a VPSO in a village facilitated earlier reporting of sexual assault incidents to authorities (and perhaps the collection of vital evidence as well), these results suggest that VPSOs might enhance the criminal justice response to sexual assault in tribal communities by improving investigative capacity.

The Community Relationship Thesis. A second potential explanation is that VPSOs improve the likelihood of prosecution through the way they interact with victims, victims' families, and the community more generally. In addition to finding that the prosecution of a sexual assault case was more likely when a VPSO or other paraprofessional police officer was the first responder rather than a Trooper, Wood and his colleagues also found that victim cooperation was a salient predictor of sexual assault case processing outcomes. Cases in which victims cooperated with the investigation were much more likely to be prosecuted. Notably, supplemental analysis of these data revealed that when the first responder to a sexual assault incident was a VPSO or other

[4] Wood, D.S., Rosay, A.B., Postle, G., & TePas, K. (2011). Police presence, isolation, and sexual assault prosecution. *Criminal Justice Policy Review*, 22(*3*), 330-349. Postle, G., Rosay, A.B., Wood, D.S., & TePas, K. (2007). *Descriptive analysis of sexual assault incidents reported to Alaska State Troopers: 2003-2004*. University of Alaska Anchorage, Justice Center.

[5] Wood, D.S., Rosay, A.B., Postle, G., & TePas, K. (2011). Police presence, isolation, and sexual assault prosecution. *Criminal Justice Policy Review*, 22(*3*), 330-349.

paraprofessional police officer, victims were more likely to cooperate with the investigation. Taken together, these findings suggest that VPSOs may exert both direct and indirect effects (via victim cooperation with the investigation) on the processing of sexual assault cases that occur in tribal communities.

Ultimately, the intervening mechanisms between VPSO presence in tribal communities and the increased likelihood of prosecution in sexual assault cases remain undocumented, a fact acknowledged by Wood and his collaborators:

> "[A]lthough we uncovered some important relationships and theorized about these relationships, our models *did not explain why*…local police presence increased the likelihood of case processing" (pp. 345; emphasis added).

It is important to note that prior research has examined the role played by paraprofessional police – in general – in the investigation and subsequent prosecution of domestic and sexual violence incidents occurring in Alaska's tribal communities. The role played by VPSOs specifically – as a particular paraprofessional police model – remains unexamined. From a policy perspective, focusing on the role played by VPSOs in the investigation and prosecution of these crimes, as well as the potential impacts of VPSO involvement in these legal processes, is important because the VPSO program is the paraprofessional police model endorsed, adopted, and funded by the state.

This study set out to document the extent to which VPSOs participate in the investigation of domestic and sexual assault incidents, to document the types of activities VPSOs perform when they do participate in domestic and sexual assault incidents, and to explore the explanatory potential of both the *investigative capacity* and *community relationship* theses.

METHODS

The data collected for this study were compiled from detailed case record reviews of sexual assault, sexual abuse of a minor, and domestic violence incidents investigated by the Alaska State Troopers (AST) and closed between January 1, 2008 and December 31, 2011. The sampling frame consisted of all sexual assault (SA), sexual abuse of a minor (SAM), and domestic violence (DV) case records closed by AST in the during the study period. Case records were limited to SA, SAM and DV cases that occurred in AST's C-Detachment, which includes all of Western Alaska except the North Slope. AST provided the fully enumerated roster of C-Detachment SA, SAM and DV case record numbers from which the analysis sample was drawn. Case records were randomly selected using a stratified random sampling procedure. At the first stage, case records were stratified by type (SA/SAM, DV). At the second stage, case records were stratified by the calendar year in which they were closed. Case records were selected (without replacement) following the second stratification stage.[6]

[6] Samples were assessed for geographic representativeness within the sample catchment area (C-Detachment). In order to ensure the protection of individual identities – particularly the identities of crime victims – and to protect against the negative impacts of community stigmatization these data are not presented in this report.

Our sampling goal was to select 200 case records of each type for each of year of the study period. In other words, our aim was to obtain 800 sample records for both SA/SAM case records and 800 DV records in order to achieve sufficient temporal and geographic coverage, as well as statistical power. It was estimated that approximately 80% of the case records initially sampled would provide sufficient data for analysis; therefore, we returned SA/SAM and DV rosters containing approximately 1,000 case record numbers for each case type (SA/SAM and DV) to AST, whose staff was responsible for locating all case records, scanning them into .pdf format, and providing them to the project research team.

The study fell short of its sampling target for SA/SAM cases, but exceeded its sampling target for DV cases. The final SA/SAM analysis sample size was 683 case records (approximately 170 case records for each year in the study period), and the final DV analysis sample size was 982 case records (approximately 245 case records for each year).

All data collection took place at the State of Alaska Scientific Crime Detection Laboratory in Anchorage, Alaska. Members of the research team were provided access to a secure room where all computers and data files were stored. Case file reviews consisted of research team members ("coders") reading, in its entirety, each SA/SAM and DV case record. During this initial review, coders recorded detailed notes and jottings in a notebook in order to assist with recall and to expedite data entry. After reading through a case record and jotting notes, coders then began coding variables into the project database. Case records were available at all times for reference, and coders made extensive use of their research notebooks during data entry. Quality control procedures (random data validity/confirmation checks; inter-rater reliability assessments) were used throughout the project[7]. Prior to beginning data entry, all coders successfully completed the University of Alaska Anchorage's CITI human subjects research training and certification, underwent a 2-day training in the use of the data collection instrument, and completed a 1-day vicarious trauma training.

This project was approved by the University of Alaska Anchorage Institutional Review Board.

A note on data limitations. As noted previously, all data contained in this report were derived from Alaska State Trooper Case records. Thus, in order for SA and SAM incidents to be included in the study, SA and SAM incidents had to ultimately be reported to AST. While Alaska-specific estimates of non-reporting of SA and SAM are not available, national estimates reveal that sexual assaults are among the least reported of all violent crimes. For example, results from the 2016 *National Crime Victimization Survey* (NCVS) show that less than a quarter

[7] For example, at the start of data collection, every coder had to have every case entry reviewed by the on-site data collection team leader. This included a variable-by-variable review entered into the database. Coders were required to complete 10 consecutive error-free entries before they were permitted to advance to batch submissions. Once advanced to this stage, coders submitted 5-case record batches, from which 1 case record was randomly selected for a variable-by-variable review. If an error or discrepancy was detected at this stage, coders had to revert to the single record review process and begin again. Once coders submitted 5 consecutive 5-record batches without error, they could then begin submitting 10-case record batches. Again, when a 10-case record batch was submitted, the data collection team leader would randomly select one case record for a variable-by-variable review. If an error or discrepancy was detected, coders had to revert to 5-case record batches and begin that process again. Once coders submitted 5 consecutive 10-case record batches without error, they then advanced to entering case records subject to spot-check review.

(22.9%) of rapes/sexual assaults were reported to police. In contrast, 54% of robberies, 58.5% of aggravated assaults, 49.7% of burglaries, and 79.9% of motor vehicle thefts were reported to police[8]. Therefore, the data presented in this report cannot be assumed to be a representative sample of SA or SAM incidents in general, but rather only those SA and SAM incidents reported to AST – and only those reported to AST within the study's geographic catchment area (C-Detachment). Readers are cautioned against making inferences about SA or SAM incidents *in general* based on the data presented. In addition, the data coded and analyzed were extracted only from the contents of SA and SAM case records. To the extent that information was not contained in case records, it was neither coded nor analyzed.

Alaska's Village Public Safety Officer (VPSO) Program: A Primer[9]

The Alaska State Troopers (AST) provide public safety services to communities lacking a municipal or borough police department, and thus AST is the agency that shoulders the responsibility for policing most tribal communities in Alaska. Troopers provide services to approximately 230 tribal communities in the state. Two of the biggest challenges facing AST in its efforts to serve Alaska's tribal communities are (1) the geographic isolation of rural villages, and (2) the provision of culturally relevant and culturally sensitive police services. Since 1981, AST has administered the village public safety officer (VPSO) program, which is designed to address both the logistical and cultural challenges of policing rural Alaskan villages by employing paraprofessional police officers, many of whom already live in rural communities, are immersed in local cultures, and therefore possess a deep understanding of each community's people and public safety needs. Since the VPSO program's inception, one or more VPSOs have been assigned to163 Alaska Native communities. In 2011 (the last year of this project's study period), 87 VPSOs were working in 73 villages throughout Alaska. More than three-quarters (n=66; 75.9%) of these VPSOs were located in C-Detachment communities.

Given its longevity, Alaska's VPSO program cannot be accurately described as "new." Despite its age, however, the program is innovative in the way it provides police services to the state's rural tribal communities. The program's three core innovations are (1) its use of a corps of paraprofessional police (2) to provide comprehensive public safety services including fire prevention and suppression, water safety, search and rescue, emergency medical response, and traditional police services to village residents[10], and (3) its unique administrative structure, which combines both localized control (via administration of the program by regional non-profit Alaska

[8] Morgan, R.E., & Kena, G. (2017). *Criminal victimization, 2016.* U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics.

[9] An excellent overview and discussion of the development of Alaska's VPSO program is provided in Marenin (1991) and Marenin and Corpus (1991). See: Marenin, O. (1991). Policing the last frontier: Visions of social order and the development of the village public safety officer program in Alaska. *Police and Society: An International Journal of Research and Policy, 2*(4): 273-291. Marenin, O. & Copus, G. (1991). Policing rural Alaska: The Village Public Safety Officer (VPSO) program. *American Journal of Police*, *10*(4): 1-26. See also: Jolley, P. (1990). *History of the VPSO Program.* Simon Fraser University. ; State of Alaska (n.d.). *The village public safety officer program: Concept, history and operation.*

[10] For readers interested in descriptive and comparative analyses of the day-to-day, routine work duties and activities of VPSOs, see: Trostle, L.C. (1992a). The non-enforcement role of the VPSO. *Alaska Justice Forum, 8*(4). Trostle, L.C. (1992b). Village public safety officers: A further look. *Alaska Justice Forum*, *9*(1). Wood, D.S. & Trostle, L.C. (1997). The nonenforcement role of police in Western Alaska and the Eastern Arctic Canadian Arctic: An analysis of police tasks in remote arctic communities. *American Journal of Criminal Justice*, *25*(5): 367-379.

Native corporations[11], with input from village/tribal councils and community members) and statewide oversight (via field supervision and mentorship of VPSOs by AST). While VPSOs serve as a "force-multiplier" of sorts for the Troopers, they are also expected to be respectful of Native cultural traditions and lawways, be accountable to local communities, and be responsive to the needs of community residents. Thus, the VPSO program puts into practice many of the core principles of community-oriented policing – and more.

Alaska's VPSOs are one of three distinct forms of paraprofessional police used to bolster the public safety and law enforcement services provided to Alaska's rural tribal communities. In addition to VPSOs, public safety services are also provided to Alaska's tribal communities by village police officers (VPOs) and tribal police officers (TPOs)[12].

VPSOs are certified and regulated by the Alaska Department of Public Safety (DPS) not by the Alaska Police Standards Council (APSC), which is the body designated by the Alaska Legislature in 1972 with the responsibility of certifying and regulating the state's police officers (as well as probation, parole, correctional and municipal corrections officers). While VPSOs perform a number of the same law enforcement duties as certified police officers (for example, serving as a first responder to reports of crime and detaining criminal suspects), the range of law enforcement duties they undertake is limited (for example, conducting felony investigations and carrying firearms).

VPSOs differ from certified police officers in three important ways. First, as mentioned previously, VPSOs are neither regulated nor are they certified by the APSC. Second, VPSOs are not employed by the State of Alaska, police departments, or villages. Rather, VPSOs are employed by regional Native non-profits or boroughs. VPSOs work for and are supervised only by the corporation or borough that hires them[13,14]. Third, while APSC basic police officer certification requires a minimum of 650 continuous hours of instruction, VPSO training requires much less: a minimum of 240 continuous training hours. In addition, the substantive focus of training is very different for VPSOs. Whereas APSC police certification focuses almost

[11] Sometimes referred to as "tribal consortiums," Alaska Native Regional Non-Profit Organizations were created under the authority of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (1971) and the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (1975) to assume responsibility to provide services to the people comprising each of Alaska's 229 federally recognized tribes. Each regional organization is incorporated as a 501(c)(3) non-profit entity. Services provided by the regional non-profits are wide ranging, from early childhood education, to primary health care, to the provision of public safety services, including administration of the VPSO program. There are currently 12 Native regional non-profits: Arctic Slope Native Association, Kawerak, Inc., Maniilaq, Inc., Association of Village Council Presidents, Tanana Chiefs Conference, Cook Inlet Tribal Council, Bristol Bay Native Association, Aleutian Pribilof Island Association, Chugach Native Association, Tlingit-Haida Central Council, Kodiak Area Native Association, and Cooper River Native Association.

[12] TPOs and VPOs, along with VPSOs, provide paraprofessional police services to Alaska's tribal communities. Each of these paraprofessional police models, which do not have the authority or training of certified police officers, do have their own specific certifications and regulations. TPOs are typically appointed by a village tribal council or an unincorporated community to provide public safety services. Like VPSOs, TPOs are not regulated or certified by the APSC, and thus they do not have the authority of a police officer under Alaska law. VPOs, in contrast, are regulated and certified by the APSC, but the certification standards for VPOs are much less stringent than for certified police officers. VPOs can be appointed at a younger age (19 years) than certified police officers (21 years of age) and are only required to complete 48 hours of training as compared to the 650 hours of training required of police officers certified by the APSC.

[13] This is a critically important distinction because in order for an individual to receive APSC's *basic police officer certification*, they must be a full-time paid police officer of an Alaska police department and complete an APSC-certified police academy (as specified in 13 AAC 85.050(b)).

[14] It is also important to note that while VPSOs are not employees of the State of Alaska, the State of Alaska provides the funding for the VPSO program. Funds for the VPSO program are appropriated by the Alaska Legislature each year. Those funds are provided to the Alaska Department of Public Safety which, in turn, provides the funds to Alaska Native regional non-profits or boroughs in the form of grants.

exclusively on law enforcement topics and skills, VPSO training has a broader public safety emphasis that includes first responder basic first aid, CPR and emergency trauma training, rural fire protection, and search and rescue.

ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT

This report is divided into two major parts: Part I details the findings for sexual assault and sexual abuse of a minor cases; Part II details the findings for domestic violence cases. Each part contains multiple sections, beginning with the presentation and discussion of data addressing the central question under investigation: *Does VPSO involvement in sexual assault/sexual abuse of a minor and domestic violence cases enhance the criminal justice response?*

Following presentation of findings pertaining to VPSO impact on sexual assault, sexual abuse of a minor, and domestic violence cases data describing case-level characteristics (e.g., time to report, types of evidence collected); incident characteristics (e.g., incident locations, assaultive behaviors); the characteristics of people involved (suspects, victims, witnesses/third parties) such as demographics, relationships and injuries sustained; and, charge-level information are presented.

Part I

Sexual Assault and Sexual Abuse of a Minor Cases

VPSO Involvement

Sexual Assault and Sexual Abuse of a Minor Cases

Sample. In total, 683 sexual assault (SA) and sexual abuse of a minor (SAM) case records were sampled. This total represented 56.5% of the total number of SA and SAM case records closed by AST in the study region (n=1,208) between January 1, 2008 and December 31, 2011. The 1,208 SA and SAM case records closed by AST in the study region during the study period represented 47.0% of all SA and SAM case records closed statewide during the study period (n=2,568). Thus, the sample of 683 case records included in this study represented more than a quarter (26.6%) of all SA and SAM case records closed by AST between January 1, 2008 and December 31, 2011.

Table 1.
Number of sexual assault (SA) and sexual abuse of a minor (SAM) case records sampled in comparison to the total number of SA and SAM case records generated by Alaska State Troopers (AST) in study region: 2008-2011.

	Study Sample		AST Totals: 2008-2011	
Case Record Type	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Sexual assault (SA)	366	53.6%	1,357	52.8%
Sexual abuse of a minor (SAM)	317	46.4	1,211	47.2
TOTAL:	683	100.0%	2,568	100.0%

Notes

First responders. Table 2 shows the first responder[15] distribution of SA and SAM cases included in the sample. In a majority of cases, sworn police were the first responders to SA and SAM incidents. Importantly, however, VPSOs and other paraprofessional police officers

Table 2.
Distribution of sexual assault (SA) and sexual abuse of a minor cases, by police/law enforcement agency to which incident first reported.

Agency	Number	Percent
Alaska State Troopers (AST)	529	77.5%
Other police	31	4.5
Sworn police	*560*	*82.0%*
Village public safety officer (VPSO)	51	7.5
Village police officer (VPO)	61	8.9
Tribal police officer (TPO)	11	1.6
Paraprofessional police	*123*	*18.0%*
TOTAL:	683	100.0%

Notes

[15] First responder was coded for sworn and paraprofessional officers only. It is therefore an indicator of police (sworn or paraprofessional) first response.

were first responders in nearly 1 out of every 5 SA/SAM cases included in the sample[16]. VPSOs, specifically, were first responders in 7.5% (n=51) of the 683 SA/SAM case records sampled, or 41.4% of the SA/SAM incidents for which paraprofessional police officers were first responders.

In addition to capturing the VPSO role in SA/SAM cases as first responder, this study also included additional measures of VPSO involvement. A series of separate indicators were used to capture whether or not VPSOs played an active role in the investigation of SA/SAM cases, independent of whether or not they were first responders. Table 3 presents the frequencies of each of these additional items.

Table 3.
Distribution of VPSO investigative activities in SA/SAM incident investigations.

VPSO Activity[a]	Number	Percent
Scheduling interviews	37	5.4%
Present during interviews (non-participant)	38	5.6
Assist with interviews	20	2.9
Conduct interviews	20	2.9
Secure crime scene	18	2.6
Evidence collection	19	2.8
Secure evidence collected	15	2.2

Notes
a. VPSO activities not mutually exclusive. Individual VPSOs could have been coded for none of the items, one of the items, or any combination of items.

These data demonstrate that a non-trivial aspect of the VPSO role in the investigation of SA/SAM cases was assistance with the scheduling and conducting of interviews with suspects, victims, and witnesses/third parties. Case records indicated that VPSOs assisted with the scheduling of interviews in 5.4% (n=37) SA/SAM cases, VPSOs were present when interviews were conducted in 5.6% (n=38) SA/SAM cases, VPSOs conducted interviews in 2.9% (n=20) SA/SAM cases, and VPSOs assisted with interviews in 2.9% (n=20) of SA/SAM cases. VPSOs also assisted with evidence security and collection. Case records explicitly noted that VPSOs provided such assistance in 22 of the sampled SA/SAM cases. Duties performed by VPSOs included securing crime scenes (n=18; 2.6%), securing/storing evidence items (n=15; 2.2%), and assistance with evidence collection (n=19; 2.8%).

When all of these measures – first responder, interview assistance/participation, evidence collection/security – were combined into a single measure, VPSOs were involved in the *investigation* of SA/SAM incidents in 93 (13.6%) of the sampled cases, or approximately 1 out of every 7 SA/SAM investigations during the study period.

Finally, VPSOs helped link victims and their families to support services, although this aspect of the VPSO response to SA/SAM incidents was documented much less frequently. In total, 13 case

[16] This percentage is slightly higher than a prior study that reported paraprofessional police were first responders in an estimated 14.8% of SA/SAM cases. That study, however, used a statewide sample of SA/SAM case records. In contrast, the current study was focused on SA/SAM cases originating in only one region of the state. See: Postle, G., Rosay, A., Wood, D., & TePas, K. (2007).

records (1.9%) indicated that VPSOs provided some form of post-incident support to SA/SAM victims and/or victims' families, including but not limited to medical referrals, victim advocacy referrals, and assistance with transportation (data not shown).

VPSO Impact

Sexual Assault and Sexual Abuse of a Minor Case Processing

The primary objective of this study was to assess the extent to which VPSO involvement in the response to, and investigation of, SA/SAM incidents occurring in Alaska's tribal communities impacted the criminal justice response. More specifically, the study was focused on the impact of VPSO involvement on three criminal justice outcomes: (1) referral for prosecution, (2) acceptance for prosecution (given referral), and (3) conviction (given referral and prosecution).

This section presents bivariate analyses of the impact VPSO involvement had on the decision of AST investigators to refer SA/SAM cases for prosecution.

Referral for prosecution. Each SA/SAM case record included one of seven closure codes. Three of these closure codes were used to create a single measure of case referral: CA, CR, and CD[17]. The closure code CA was used in cases in which AST placed one or more individuals under arrest, filed for arrest warrants, or issued summonses. Cases closed CA were referred for prosecution. The closure code CD was used to indicate that a case was referred for prosecutorial review prior to an arrest being made, and that it was subsequently determined that formal charges pertaining to the case would not be accepted or filed. The closure code CR was used in those cases that were forwarded for screening and review, prior to an arrest being made.

Overall, more than two-thirds (n=461; 67.5%) of the SA/SAM cases sampled were recorded as being referred for prosecution by AST investigators. The full sample of SA/SAM cases was then cross-referenced using AST's unique case record identification number with all SA/SAM cases received by the Alaska Department of Law (DOL). An additional 13 SA/SAM cases were included in the DOL data, but not coded as being referred for prosecution in AST case records. These case records had been coded CI rather than CA, CR, or CD. These 13 SA/SAM case records were then recoded to reflect their status as referred. With this change, the total number of SA/SAM cases that were referred was 474, 69.4% of total sample (see Table 4).

[17] Cases that were closed but not referred for prosecution were assigned one of the four remaining closure code designations by AST. Cases were closed CE (closed, exception) when circumstances beyond AST's control (e.g., death of a suspect) prevented the agency from arresting or charging a suspect, making it not possible to move a case forward. The CI (closed, investigated) designation was used in those cases in which an investigation was concluded and there was a determination that there was insufficient evidence to move a case forward. (However, the CI designation is not a determination that the alleged offense did not occur.) Closed, logged (CL) cases represented those instances whereby an incident or event reported to the Troopers did not necessitate a formal report and no further police action was necessary. Finally, cases in which it was determined that the initial complaint was deemed to be false or baseless – that is, that the alleged offense did not occur – were coded CU (closed, unfounded).

Table 4.
Distribution of SA/SAM case record closure codes.

Closure Code	Number	Percent[a]
CA (closed, arrest)[b]	122	17.9%
CR (closed, referred)[b]	326	47.7
CD (closed, declined)[b]	13	1.9
CI (closed, investigated)[c]	146	21.4
CU (closed, unfounded)	71	10.4
CE (closed, exception)	3	0.4
CL (closed, logged)	2	0.3
TOTAL:	683	100.0%
Referred for prosecution[d]	474	69.4%

Notes

a. Percentages may not sum to 100.0% due to rounding error.

b. Items used to create initial AST referral for prosecution measure.

c. 13 case records coded as CI by AST were identified in Alaska Department of Law (DOL) prosecution records. These 13 case records were recoded as having been referred for prosecution.

d. The total number of cases referred for prosecution includes those case records coded by AST as CA, CR, or CD, plus the 13 case records coded as CI by AST but subsequently identified in the DOL prosecution data as being referred.

Table 5 shows the percentage of cases referred for prosecution according to first responder. Data for AST and other certified police officers are presented in the upper portion of the table; data for VPSOs, VPOs, and TPOs are presented in the lower portion of the table.

Table 5.
Distribution of SA/SAM cases referred for prosecution, by first responder.

First Responder	Total Number	Number Referred	Percent Referred
Alaska State Troopers (AST)	529	355	67.1%
Other police	31	21	67.7
Sworn police	*560*	*376*	*67.1%*
Village public safety officer (VPSO)	51	37	72.5
Village police officer (VPO)	61	53	86.9
Tribal police officer (TPO)	11	8	72.7
Paraprofessional police	*123*	*98*	*79.7%*
TOTAL:	683	474	69.4%

Notes

Overall, slightly more than two-thirds (n=376; 67.1%) of SA/SAM incidents in which Troopers or other certified police were first responders were referred for prosecution. AST investigators represented more than 94% of these SA/SAM cases (n=355). A significantly[18] higher percentage – 79.7% – of SA/SAM cases were referred for prosecution when paraprofessional police officers (VPSOs, VPOs, TPOs) were first responders. None of the percentage differences among paraprofessional police types (VPSO-VPO; VPSO-TPO; VPO-TPO) were significantly different.

[18] Chi-square=7.458; *p*=.006.

Acceptance for prosecution. Data pertaining to the decisions of DOL prosecutors to accept SA/SAM cases for prosecution were collected in addition to the data on AST investigators' referral decisions. Specific charge-level data were obtained from the DOL. SA and SAM case records were matched to DOL case information by referring police agency name and referring police agency case record number. In total, 255[19] of the SA/SAM case records included in the sample were directly matched to prosecutorial records in the DOL data set[20]. This subsample of DOL cases were used for the computation of two prosecutorial decision variables: the case acceptance rate, and the case conviction rate.

In total, these 255 SA/SAM cases included a total of 1,060 separate criminal charges. A SA/SAM case was coded as "accepted for prosecution" if any of the charges in that case were recorded as "accepted" by DOL. Table 6 presents the total number of cases recorded as referred (by DOL), the total number of cases accepted for prosecution (by DOL), and the percentage accepted for prosecution by first responder to the SA/SAM incident.

Table 6.
Distribution of SA/SAM cases accepted for prosecution, by first responder.

First Responder	Number Referred[a]	Number Accepted[a]	Percent Accepted
Alaska State Troopers (AST)	182	70	38.5%
Other police	12	2	16.7
Sworn police	*194*	*72*	*37.1%*
Village public safety officer (VPSO)	21	10	47.6
Village police officer (VPO)	36	14	38.9
Tribal police officer (TPO)	4	2	50.0
Paraprofessional police	*61*	*26*	*42.6%*
TOTAL:	255	98	38.4%

Notes
a. Total number of SA/SAM case records included in sample that were matched with DOL prosecution records and coded by DOL as "referred" or "accepted."

DOL records showed that more than a third (n=72; 37.1%) of referred SA/SAM cases in which sworn police officers (AST or other police) were first responders were subsequently accepted for prosecution. In contrast, in excess of 40% (n=26; 42.6%) of referred SA/SAM cases in which paraprofessional police officers were first responders were subsequently accepted by DOL for prosecution. VPSOs, specifically, had a prosecution acceptance rate of 47.6%. VPOs and TPOs had a combined prosecution acceptance rate of 40.0%. The observed 5.5% difference in

[19] There is a clear discrepancy between the number of cases AST recorded as referred (n=461) and the number of cases DOL recorded as referred (n=255). A significant portion of this discrepancy is due to the fact that the vast majority of SA and SAM cases involving juvenile offenders were not referred to DOL for prosecution, but DJJ for juvenile adjudication. (The AST case closure codes did not include agency to which cases were referred.) While the rate with which juvenile SA and SAM offenders are charged as adults is not known, our data show that 338 (73.3%) of the SA and SAM cases that were originally referred by AST (to either DOL or DJJ) involved an offender known to be 18 years of age or older. (Note: Suspect age could not be determined in an additional 124 cases. If one assumes that a large majority of these unknown suspect ages were, in fact, greater than or equal to 18, then the percentage of adult suspects would increase by as much as an additional 15 percentage points.) If the remaining balance of 338 is used as a proxy for "Referred to DOL," the discrepancy is substantially reduced (from 206 to 83), but not fully eliminated. In either case, the reason for the discrepancy in referral numbers is unknown. Both agencies – AST and DOL – defend their respective referral counts. It is likely that the "true" number is somewhere in between each agency's referral number.
[20] The sub-sample of 255 SA/SAM cases represent only those cases coded by DOL as "referred."

prosecution acceptance rates between sworn police (37.1%) and paraprofessional police (42.6%) was not found to be statistically significant but it is nevertheless suggestive given the relatively small number of paraprofessional first responder cases included in the sample.

Overall, SA/SAM cases in which paraprofessional police were first responders were nearly twice as likely to be accepted for prosecution (26 SA/SAM cases accepted for prosecution ÷ 123 SA/SAM cases in which paraprofessional police were first-responders = 21.1%) than cases in which sworn police were first responders (72 SA/SAM cases accepted for prosecution ÷ 560 SA/SAM cases in which sworn police were first responders = 12.9%).[21] While the data presented in Table 5 show that this impact on case acceptance was achieved primarily through the increased likelihood of case referral, Table 6 suggests that paraprofessional police might also make additional contributions to the investigation of these crimes that increase the likelihood of prosecutorial action.

Conviction. Data pertaining to case convictions were also collected from DOL. A SA/SAM case was coded as "convicted" if any of the charges in that case were recorded as "convicted" by DOL. Table 7 presents the total number of cases recorded as accepted (by DOL), the total number of cases resulting in one or more charge convictions (by DOL), and the percentage of cases resulting in one or more charge convictions by first responder to the SA/SAM incident. In contrast to the data presented in Tables 5 and 6, which showed that paraprofessional police involvement enhanced the criminal justice response, the data in Table 7 show that there was a slight decrease in the likelihood of case conviction (-6%) when paraprofessional police were first responders. This difference was not statistically significant, but nevertheless suggests that, in the aggregate, VPSOs and other paraprofessional police did not substantially improve the chances that a sexual offense suspect would be convicted. (Of note, however, 9 of the 10 VPSO first responder cases that were referred and accepted for prosecution, resulted in conviction.)

Table 7.
Distribution of SA/SAM cases resulting in conviction, by first responder.

First Responder	Number Accepted[a]	Number Convicted[a]	Percent Convicted
Alaska State Troopers (AST)	70	51	72.9%
Other police	2	2	100.0
Sworn police	*72*	*53*	*73.6%*
Village public safety officer (VPSO)	10	9	90.0
Village police officer (VPO)	14	9	64.3
Tribal police officer (TPO)	2	0	0.0
Paraprofessional police	*26*	*18*	*69.2%*
TOTAL:	98	71	72.4%

Notes
a. Total number of SA/SAM case records included in sample that were matched with DOL prosecution records and coded by DOL as "accepted" or "convicted."

[21] Chi-square=5.627; *p*=.018.

Summary. VPSOs were identified as first responders in 7.5% of 683 SA/SAM case records sampled. Altogether, paraprofessional police (VPSOs, VPOs, TPOs) were first responders in 18.0% – nearly 1 out of every 5 – SA/SAM cases. Beyond serving as first responders, VPSOs also played non-trivial investigative and service provision roles in SA/SAM cases. Case records indicated that VPSOs assisted with suspect/victim/witness interviews, evidence collection and security, and they helped link victims and their families to support services. When all measures of VPSO participation were combined, VPSOs were shown to be involved in 13.6% – or approximately 1 out of every 7 – of the sampled SA/SAM cases.

VPSOs and other paraprofessional police appear to enhance the criminal justice response to crimes of sexual violence committed in Alaska's tribal communities. At the bivariate level the data shown in Tables 5 and Table 6 demonstrate that paraprofessional police involvement in the investigation of SA/SAM incidents – specifically as first responders – enhances the criminal justice response to reported incidents of sexual violence (see Table 8). The likelihood of referral for prosecution increased by nearly 20% (18.8%)[22] when a paraprofessional police officer was the first responder, as compared to when the first responder was a Trooper or other sworn police officer. Similarly, the likelihood of acceptance for prosecution (given referral) increased by nearly 15% (14.8%)[23] when a paraprofessional police officer was the first responder. When examined as a percentage of all SA/SAM cases and not just those that were referred, the likelihood of acceptance for prosecution increased by 63.5%.[24]

Table 8.
Summary of case processing impacts (%), by first responder.

First Responder	Percentage referred for prosecution	Percentage accepted for prosecution	Percentage resulting in conviction
Alaska State Troopers (AST)	67.1	38.5	72.9
Other police	67.7	16.7	100.0
Sworn police	*67.1*	*37.1*	*73.6*
Village public safety officer (VPSO)	72.5	47.6	90.0
Village police officer (VPO)	86.9	38.9	64.3
Tribal police officer (TPO)	72.7	50.0	0.0
Paraprofessional police	*79.7*	*42.6*	*69.2*
TOTAL:	69.4	38.4	72.4

Notes

These findings reaffirm the results reported by Wood and colleagues[25] in their study of the role and impact of paraprofessional police on the prosecution of SA/SAM cases. In that study, which

[22] The observed difference in the percentage of cases referred (79.7 - 67.1 = 12.6) translates to an increased likelihood of 18.8% (12.6 / 67.1 = 18.8).
[23] The observed difference in the percentage of cases accepted (42.6 – 37.1 = 5.5) translates to an increased likelihood of 14.8% (5.5 / 37.1 = 14.8).
[24] The observed difference in the percentage of cases accepted (21.1 – 12.9 = 8.2) translates to an increased likelihood of 63.6% (8.2 / 12.9 = 63.6).
[25] Wood, D.S., Rosay, A.B., Postle, G., & TePas, K. (2011). Police presence, isolation, and sexual assault prosecution. *Criminal Justice Policy Review*, 22(*3*), 330-349.

used a statewide sample of SA/SAM incidents reported to AST in 2003 and 2004, when paraprofessional police were first responders the likelihood of case referral increased by 17.5%, and when paraprofessional police were first responders the likelihood of case acceptance increased by 59.3% (see Table 2, p. 340).

Importantly, the data presented in Tables 5 Table 6 also show that there was not a statistically significant difference between the impact of VPSO involvement, VPO involvement, or TPO involvement. All three paraprofessional police models demonstrated higher rates of SA/SAM case referral and acceptance, and while there was some variability in their respective case referral and acceptance rates they were indistinguishable from each other statistically. This is an important finding because it suggests that there is not a VPSO-specific impact on the likelihood of SA/SAM case referral or acceptance. VPSOs, VPOs, and TPOs all increase the likelihood of prosecution when they act as first responders, and in the aggregate they do so at a rate that is significantly higher than when Troopers and other police are the first to respond to SA/SAM incidents in tribal communities. Thus, the findings presented here reinforce the notion that it is the presence and participation of paraprofessional police in general, not a specific para-professional police model, that enhances the criminal justice response to SA/SAM incidents occurring in Alaska's tribal communities.

The absence of a VPSO-specific impact on the likelihood of case referral for prosecution relative to the other two paraprofessional police models in use in Alaska should not be interpreted as a failure of the VPSO program. Quite the contrary, in fact. That the effects of VPSO involvement is on par with other paraprofessional police involvement underscores the ability of the program to deliver positive criminal justice outcomes. This is an important policy consideration because the VPSO program is the only paraprofessional police model that is state-funded; the VPSO program is the means by which the State of Alaska delivers paraprofessional police services to Alaska's tribal communities.

The impact that VPSOs, VPOs, and TPOs have on the likelihood of obtaining convictions in SA/SAM cases is less promising based on the results presented above. Even when the limited number of cases available for analysis (due to substantial case attrition by that stage of the criminal process) is taken into consideration, there was little evidence to suggest that paraprofessional police involvement in SA/SAM investigations increases the likelihood of obtaining convictions in SA/SAM cases.

Multivariate Analyses: SA and SAM Case Referral

Our multivariate analyses begin with the case referral decision – that is, the forwarding of a case by AST investigators to the Department of Law (DOL) or the Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ). The analytic objective was to examine the extent to which VPSO and other paraprofessional police participation in the investigation of SA and SAM incidents influenced the odds that cases were referred, once other potential explanatory factors were considered. The bivariate analysis findings presented above, while suggestive, are limited because they do not take into account

other potential explanatory factors that may reduce or eliminate altogether the bivariate relationship between VPSO/paraprofessional police involvement and case referral.

Of particular interest were the two overarching hypotheses this study set out to explore. The *investigative capacity thesis* suggests that VPSOs (and other paraprofessional police), due to their proximity to SA and SAM incidents, might enhance to criminal justice response by increasing the likelihood that critical evidence will be collected/secured. The second hypothesis, which we termed the *community relationship thesis*, emphasizes the nature of the relationships VPSOs establish and maintain with community members. To the extent that their embeddedness in Alaska's tribal communities facilitates the development of meaningful and trusting relationships with community members, VPSOs and other paraprofessional police might enhance the criminal justice response to SA and SAM incidents by increasing the chances that incidents will be reported to them, that incidents will be reported to them in a more timely fashion, and that victims will be more likely to actively participate in/cooperate with SA and SAM investigations.

Table 9 presents several measures that provide for the evaluation of the explanatory potential of these two theses. The first variable is an evidence collection composite that combines 10 dichotomous evidence collection measures[26]. Evidence composite values ranged from 0 to 10, with an overall mean of 1.252 and a standard deviation of 2.021. Table 9 presents the mean value on this evidence composite measure according to first responder (VPSO, VPO/TPO, Trooper, Other police), as well as when VPSOs were involved in investigations in any way, not just as first responders.

Table 9.

Average number of evidence items collected, average number of witnesses interviewed, the proportions of cases in which victims and suspects were interviewed, the proportion of SA and SAM incidents reported within 1 day of occurrence, and proportion of case records in which SA and SAM victims were documented as uncooperative with the investigation, by first responder

	First Responder				
Variable	VPSO	VPO/TPO	Trooper	Other Police	VPSO Involvement
Evidence composite	2.039	2.070	1.047	1.581	1.914
Victim interviewed	0.941	0.931	0.845	0.903	0.936
Suspect interviewed	0.706	0.875	0.662	0.645	0.742
# Witnesses interviewed[a]	1.824	2.083	1.469	1.323	1.828
Reported w/in 1 day	0.667	0.708	0.378	0.516	0.591
Victim non-cooperation	0.157	0.097	0.102	0.129	0.140

Notes

a. Label truncated/shortened for table display purposes. Variable is "Number of Witnesses/Third Parties Interviewed."

[26] Each of the 10 measures were binary (0=No; 1=Yes) indicating if the case record indicated that the particular form of evidence was collected, irrespective of the individual (Trooper, VPSO, etc.) that collected the evidence. The specific measures included in the composite measure included: DNA evidence collected from suspect, DNA evidence collected from victim, electronic data recovered, photographs of scene taken, photographs of individual evidence items seized, physical evidence from scene collected, trace evidence collected from scene, weapons seized as evidence, suspect undergo forensic medical examination, and victim undergo forensic medical examination.

On average, the aggregate amount of evidence collected was significantly higher when VPSOs[27] and VPOs/TPOs[28] were first responders to SA and SAM incidents than when Troopers were the first to respond. Similarly, the number of evidence items collected was significantly higher[29] when VPSOs were involved in the investigation more generally, not simply as first responders to SA and SAM incidents. At the bivariate level, these findings lend support to the *investigative capacity* thesis.

Table 9 also includes three additional evidence/investigatory measures: *victim interviewed* (0=No; 1=Yes), *suspect interviewed* (0=No; 1=Yes), and the *number of witnesses/third parties interviewed.* Table 9 presents the proportion for the victim and suspect interview measures, as well as the mean number witnesses/third parties interviewed, according to first responder (VPSO, VPO/TPO, Trooper, Other police), as well as when VPSOs were involved in investigations in any way, not just as first responders.

None of the observed differences in proportions for the victim interview measure were statistically significant. However, the proportion of cases in which suspects were interviewed when VPOs/TPOs were first responders (0.875) was significantly[30] higher than the proportion of cases in which suspects were interviewed when Troopers were first responders (0.662). (None of the other observed differences in mean proportions was statistically significant.)

The same overall pattern in mean differences was observed for the *number of witnesses/third parties interviewed*. Significantly[31] more interviews were conducted with witnesses/third parties when VPOs/TPOs were first responders (2.083) than when Troopers were first responders (1.469).

The fifth variable presented in Table 9 is the proportion of SA and SAM incidents that were reported within 1 day of occurrence. For this measure, both VPSO[32] and VPO/TPO[33] participation as first responder significantly increased the likelihood that an incident would be reported within 1 day. Among incidents in which VPSOs were first responders, 66.7% were reported within 1 day; among incidents in which VPOs/TPOs were first responders, 70.8% were reported within 1 day. In contrast, the percentages of incidents reported within 1 day were 37.8% and 51.6% for Troopers and other sworn police, respectively.

Finally, the last variable included in Table 9 is *victim non-cooperation with the investigation*.[34] Victim non-cooperation with the investigation was coded based on descriptions and accounts provided by investigators in case record narratives/synopses. Indicators of victim non-

[27] *p*=.004.
[28] *p*=.000.
[29] *p*=.001.
[30] *p*=.001.
[31] *p*=.032.
[32] *p*=.000.
[33] *p*=.000.
[34] Originally, following the precedent in prior research, the case file review instrument included a measure of "victim cooperation." However, during pre-testing of the instrument using actual case records it became clear that references to victim cooperation would not work, as victim cooperation was only rarely documented in case records. However, case record narratives frequently referenced perceived victim non-cooperation – and in many instances, this perceived non-cooperation on the part of victims was extensively noted and detailed.

cooperation with the investigation included such things as recanting, telling investigators they would no longer participate in the investigation, telling investigators not to contact them, refusing to answer the phone or return messages, refusing to answer questions in interviews, and refusing to undergo forensic medical examinations, among other behaviors. The values shown in Table 9 are the proportion of cases in which victims were documented by investigators as uncooperative with the investigation. The data show that documentation of victim non-cooperation was most prevalent when VPSOs were first responders (15.7%). In contrast, only 9.7% of SA and SAM cases that involved VPOs/TPOs as first responders, 10.2% of SA and SAM cases that involved Troopers as first responders, and 12.9% of SA and SAM cases that involved other sworn police as first responders documented victim non-cooperation with investigations. While none of the observed differences in proportions was statistically significant, the findings are contrary to the expectation that SA and SAM victims would be more likely to participate in/cooperate with investigations when VPSOs were first responders.

On balance then, the data presented in Table 9 suggest that the *investigative capacity thesis* might provide more explanatory potential for understanding how VPSOs and other paraprofessional police enhance the criminal justice response to sexual violence committed in Alaska's tribal communities. When VPSOs, VPOs, and TPOs participated in investigations SA and SAM incidents were more likely to be reported within 1 day, more evidence items were collected, and interviews were more likely to be conducted. In contrast, the variable most closely associated with the *community relationship thesis* – victim non-cooperation with the investigation – was more, not less, likely to be observed in SA and SAM cases in which VPSOs were first responders.

Victim race/ethnicity. This study's intent was to examine the extent to which VPSOs and other paraprofessional police enhance the criminal justice response to sexual violence committed against *Alaska Native/American Indian women* in Alaska's tribal communities. Therefore, it is important to understand the extent to which Alaska Native/American Indian females were represented as victims in the sample of SA and SAM case records.

Table 10.
Racial/ethnic and sex/gender composition of SA and SAM cases, by first responder

	First Responder				
Demographic Measure	VPSO	VPO/TPO	Trooper	Other Police	VPSO Involvement
Victim AIAN	1.000	0.986	0.889	0.936	1.000
Victim female	0.961	0.903	0.885	0.968	0.936
Victim AIAN female	0.961	0.889	0.807	0.903	0.936

Notes

Table10 presents the race/ethnicity and sex/gender of SA and SAM victims identified in case records. SA and SAM victims were comprised almost exclusively of Alaska Natives/American Indians (90.9%) and almost exclusively females (89.6%), and this was especially true when it came to SA and SAM cases in which VPSOs and other paraprofessional police officers were first responders. SA and SAM victims were Alaska Native/American Indian in all of the incidents in

which VPSOs were involved, and 98.6% of incidents in which VPOs/TPOs participated as first responders. SA and SAM victims were female in more than 96% of the SA and SAM incidents to which VPSOs were first responders, and slightly more than 90% of the SA and SAM cases in which VPOs/TPOs were first responders. Taken together, 96.1% of SA and SAM incident victims were Alaska Native/American Indian females in VPSO first responder cases, 98.6% of VPO/TPO first responder cases, 88.9% of Trooper first responder cases, and 93.6% of cases in which other sworn police were first responders. None of the observed differences shown in Table 10 was statistically significant.

Table 11.
Racial/ethnic and sex/gender composition of SA and SAM cases, by case type

	Case Type	
Demographic Measure	Sexual Assault	Sexual Abuse of a Minor
Victim AIAN	.943	.871
Victim female	.954	.830
Victim AIAN female	.904	.748

Notes

Table 11 shows the proportions of victims that were Alaska Native/American Indian, female, and Alaska Native/American Indian female according to case type. While these data are limited to SA and SAM incidents occurring in Western Alaska that were ultimately made known to AST, these data show clear racial/ethnic and sex/gender trajectories. Irrespective of victim age (the basis for the legal distinction between SA and SAM cases), victims were overwhelmingly – albeit not exclusively – Alaska Native/American Indian women and girls. More than 9 out of every 10 SA victims identified in AST case records were Alaska Native/American Indian women, and 3 out of every 4 SAM victims identified in AST case records were Alaska Native/American Indian girls.

Other predictors of case referral. In the only study to date that used a multivariate framework to examine the impact of paraprofessional police response on the criminal case processing of SA cases originating in Alaska's tribal communities, Wood and colleagues also included measures of the geographic isolation where SA incidents occurred, indicators of assault severity (victim injury, aggravated offense), the relationship between suspects and victims, and an indicator of victim alcohol and/or illicit drug use. With the exception of geographic isolation, the predictors included in Wood et al.'s analysis have previously been shown to impact sexual assault case attrition.[35] For example, research shows that cases are significantly more likely to advance from investigation by police to a criminal prosecution when there is forensic or otherwise documented evidence that perpetrators threated or used force, particularly if such force resulted in victim

[35] It should be noted that while there is an extensive research literature examining the factors impacting prosecutorial decision making in sexual assault cases, considerably less attention has been paid to the decisions made by police to refer cases for prosecution (see: Alderden, M.A. & Ullman, S.E. (2012). Creating a more complete and current picture: Examining police and prosecutor decision-making when processing sexual assault cases. *Violence Against Women*, *18*(5): 525-551; Campbell, B.A., Menaker, T.A., & King, W.R. (2015). The determination of victim credibility by adult and juvenile sexual assault investigators. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, *43*(1): 29-39; Tasca, M., Rodriguez, N., Spohn, C., & Moss, M.P. (2012). Police decision making in sexual assault cases: Predictors of suspect identification and arrest. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *28*(6): 1157-1177).

injury.[36] Likewise, the interpersonal relationship between sexual assault suspects and victims has also been shown to exert a consistent effect on the probability of case referral. Published research reveals a reduced likelihood of referral when sexual assault perpetrators and victims are strangers. Instead, police are more likely to refer sexual assault cases that involve a suspect who is known to the victim, ranging from mere acquaintances to former or current intimate partners[37]. Victim alcohol and/or illicit drug use has also been shown to influence the likelihood of case referral[38].

Table 12 shows the distributions of the geographic isolation, victim injury, aggravated offense, suspect-victim relationship, and victim alcohol/drug use measures included in this study's SA and SAM case referral multivariate analysis. All of the measures shown in Table 12 were dichotomous, whereby 0=No, not documented in case record, 1=Yes, documented in case record.

Following the work by Wood and colleagues,[39] *community isolation* was operationally defined as locations inaccessible to Troopers by automobile. In other words, for the purposes of this study, isolated communities were defined as communities accessible by Troopers only through the use of an airplane, a boat, or an all-terrain vehicle or snowmobile. Nearly all of the SA and SAM incidents involving VPSOs and other paraprofessional police occurred in isolated communities. Importantly, all of the SA and SAM cases in which VPSOs were first responders originated in isolated communities.

Two measures of victim injury are also included in Table 12: *genital injury* and *non-genital injury*. These items were coded separately to capture the extent to which SA and SAM victims experienced none, either, or both types of injury. Both types of victim injury were relatively common in both SA and SAM cases. Overall, victim genital injuries were documented in 19.2% of SA and SAM cases, and non-genital injuries were documented in 18.2% of SA and SAM cases (data not shown). In SA and SAM cases in which paraprofessional police were first responders, non-genital injuries were more frequently documented than genital injuries, although these differences in documentation rates were not statistically significant. The same held true for

[36] See: Alderden, M.A. & Ullman, S.E. (2012). Gender difference or indifference? Detective decision making in sexual assault cases. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *27*(1): 3-22; Bouffard, J.A. (2000). Predicting type of sexual assault case closure from victim, suspect, and case characteristics. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, *28*: 527-542; Frazier, P.A. & Haney, B. (1996). Sexual assault cases in the legal system: Police, prosecutor, and victim perspectives. *Law and Human Behavior*, *20*(6): 607-628; Kerstetter, W.A. (1990). Gateway to justice: Police and prosecutorial response to sexual assaults against women. *Journal of Criminal Law & Criminology*, *81*(2): 267-283; Snodgrass, G.M., Rosay, A.B., & Gover, A.R. (2014). Modeling the referral decision in sexual assault cases: An application of random forests. *American Journal of Criminal Justice*, *39*: 267-291; Tasca, M., Rodriguez, N., Spohn, C., & Moss, M.P. (2012). Police decision making in sexual assault cases: Predictors of suspect identification and arrest. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *28*(6): 1157-1177.

[37] See: Alderden, M.A. & Ullman, S.E. (2012). Gender difference or indifference? Detective decision making in sexual assault cases. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *27*(1): 3-22; Bouffard, J.A. (2000). Predicting type of sexual assault case closure from victim, suspect, and case characteristics. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, *28*: 527-542; DuMont, J. & Myhr, T.L. (2000). So few convictions: The role of client-related characteristics in the legal processing of sexual assaults. *Violence Against Women*, *6*(10): 1109-1136; LaFree, G.D. (1981). Official reactions to social problems: Police decisions in sexual assault cases. *Social Problems*, *28*(5): 582-594; LaFree, G.D. (1989). *Rape and criminal justice: The social construction of sexual assault*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth; Snodgrass, G.M., Rosay, A.B., & Gover, A.R. (2014). Modeling the referral decision in sexual assault cases: An application of random forests. *American Journal of Criminal Justice*, *39*: 267-291.

[38] See: Campbell, B.A., Menaker, T.A., & King, W.R. (2015). The determination of victim credibility by adult and juvenile sexual assault investigators. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, *43*(1): 29-39; Schuller, R.A. & Steward, A. (2000). Police responses to sexual assault complaints: The role of perpetrator/complainant intoxication. *Law and Human Behavior*, *24*(5): 535-551.

[39] Wood, D.S., Rosay, A.B., Postle, G., & TePas, K. (2011). Police presence, isolation, and sexual assault prosecution. *Criminal Justice Policy Review*, 22(*3*), 330-349.

those cases in which other sworn police were first responders. Only when SA and SAM cases were initially investigated by Troopers did the proportion of cases documenting genital injuries exceed the proportion of cases documenting non-genital injuries. The proportions of cases that included documentation of victims' injuries did not differ significantly according to first responder.

Table 12.
Proportions of SA and SAM cases documenting geographic isolation, victim injury, aggravated offense, and suspect-victim relationship, by first responder.

	First Responder				
Variable	VPSO	VPO/TPO	Trooper	Other Police	VPSO Involvement
Geographic isolation	1.000	0.931	0.853	0.710	0.989
Victim injury					
Genital injury	0.235	0.181	0.185	0.258	0.204
Non-genital injury	0.275	0.264	0.153	0.323	0.312
Aggravated offense	0.451	0.375	0.382	0.516	0.495
Relationship					
Acquaintance	0.314	0.361	0.308	0.290	0.290
Friend	0.196	0.319	0.149	0.226	0.140
Intimate partner/spouse[a]	0.078	0.069	0.087	0.194	0.151
Family member[b]	0.314	0.194	0.268	0.161	0.258
Other (known)[c]	0.020	0.042	0.130	0.065	0.075
Stranger	0.039	0.014	0.021	0.032	0.043
Victim alcohol/drug use	0.392	0.444	0.257	0.581	0.344

Notes

a. Includes current or former intimate partner or spouse.

b. Excluding current or former intimate partner or spouse. Includes familial relationships such as parent (or legal guardian), grandparent, aunt/uncle, and cousin.

c. Includes types of suspect-victim relationship in which suspects and victims were known to each other, excluding acquaintance, friend, intimate partner/spouse, or family member.

The proportion of SA and SAM cases that included an *aggravated offense* (operationalized as an offense categorized as an unclassified felony under Alaska law) did not significantly differ according to first responder. Nearly half of SA and SAM incidents (45.1%) to which VPSOs were first responders, and more than a third of SA and SAM incidents (37.5%) to which VPOs/TPOs were first responders, included an aggravated offense.

The data presented in Table 12 show that it was exceedingly rare for SA and SAM incidents to involve suspects who were strangers to victims. Overall, suspects were mostly likely to be people victims knew but did not know well or have a close relationship with (acquaintances; 31.3% of cases). Suspects were family members in just over a quarter of SA and SAM cases (25.9%), friends of victims in 17.4% of cases, and current or former intimate partners in 8.9% of cases. The proportion of suspects who were friends with victims was significantly higher among SA

and SAM cases in which VPOs/TPOs were first responders[40], but otherwise the suspect-victim relationship did not differ significantly according to first responder.

Victim alcohol and/or drug use was documented in 30.2% of SA and SAM cases. Documentation of victim alcohol/drug use ranged from 25.7% of SA and SAM cases in which Troopers served as first responders to 44.4% of SA and SAM cases in which VPOs/TPOs served as first responders. None of the observed differences in proportions were statistically significant.

Table 13 presents the descriptive statistics for all of the variables included in this study's multivariate analysis of SA and SAM cases. Data are presented separately for SA and SAM cases, respectively, because separate multivariate models were estimated for each case type.

Table 13.
Descriptive statistics for predictors of case referral, by case type

	SA Cases (n=366)		SAM Cases (n=317)	
Variable	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Paraprofessional responder	0.224	0.418	0.129	0.336
ANAI[a] female victim	0.904	0.294	0.748	0.435
Victim interviewed	0.899	0.302	0.823	0.382
Suspect interviewed	0.708	0.456	0.662	0.474
# Witnesses interviewed	1.585	1.854	1.517	1.641
Evidence composite	1.841	2.286	0.574	1.387
Incident reported within 1 day	0.577	0.495	0.284	0.452
Victim non-cooperation	0.126	0.332	0.085	0.280
Victim: Genital injury	0.238	0.426	0.139	0.346
Victim: Non-genital injury	0.279	0.449	0.069	0.254
Victim alcohol and/or drug use	0.506	0.501	0.066	0.249
Aggravated offense	0.502	0.501	0.265	0.442
Suspect-victim relationship				
Acquaintance	0.333	0.472	0.290	0.455
Friend	0.251	0.434	0.085	0.280
Current/former intimate/spouse	0.109	0.312	0.066	0.249
Family member	0.191	0.394	0.338	0.474
Other (known)	0.068	0.253	0.158	0.365
Stranger	0.022	0.146	0.022	0.147
Geographic isolation	0.852	0.355	0.880	0.325

Notes
a. ANAI=Alaska Native/American Indian.

The data presented in Table 13 highlight some important differences between SA cases, on the one hand, and SAM cases on the other. In addition to the fact that SA and SAM cases are distinguished by victim age, we can also see that SA cases were more likely than SAM cases to involve VPSOs, VPOs, and TPOs as first responders[41]; SA cases were more likely than SAM

[40] p=.002.
[41] Due to a lack of statistical differences in rates of referral, as well as significant differences for other explanatory variables, the VPSO and VPO/TPO measures were combined into a single paraprofessional first responder variable.

cases to involve an Alaska Native/American Indian female victims; SA cases had more evidence items collected, on average; SA incidents were more likely than SAM incidents to be reported within 1 day of occurrence; SA incidents were more likely than SAM incidents to result in both genital and non-genital victim injuries; SA incidents were more likely than SAM incidents to involve victim alcohol and/or drug use; SA incidents were more likely than SAM incidents to include an aggravated offense; and, SA incidents were more often perpetrated by friends, current or former intimate partners/spouses. In contrast, SAM incidents were more often perpetrated by family members, and other known persons (particularly individuals who maintained a position of authority over victims, such as teachers, coaches, and clergy).

Table 14 presents the logistic regression results for the sample of SA cases. Results are presented in three columns within the table. The first model, labeled Base Model, includes two predictor variables: paraprofessional first responder and Alaska Native/American Indian female victim. The second model, labeled Thesis Model, includes the two variables from the Base Model plus the evidentiary measures and victim non-cooperation measures for assessing the *investigative capacity* and *community relationship* theses. Finally, the third model, labeled the Full Model, includes all of the variables from the previous two estimations plus additional measures of victim injury, victim alcohol and/or drug use, aggravated offense, suspect-victim relationship, and geographic isolation.

The Base Model results reveal that there was no statistically significant relationship between the type of first responder and the likelihood of SA case referral. Once the SA cases were partitioned from the SAM cases in the sample, the bivariate relationship between a paraprofessional first response and case referral dissolved[42]. Additionally, the Base Model shows that a victim's identity as an Alaska Native/American Indian woman did not significantly influence the likelihood of SA case referral (although the *p*-value for this result - .082 - suggests that with a larger sample this variable might cross the threshold of statistical significance). The finding that a paraprofessional police first response did not significantly increase the likelihood of SA case referral, while perhaps disappointing, is consistent with the findings reported by Wood and colleagues[43]. These researchers also failed to find a statistically significant relationship between victim race/ethnicity (Alaska Native/American Indian) in their analysis.

With the addition of the five[44] Thesis Model variables, the explanatory power of the model increased substantially. In fact, four of the five variables added were statistically significant predictors of SA case referral, and three out of these four variables increased the probability of case referral. The odds of an SA case that documented a victim interview being referred were 4.3

[42] This held true even when Alaska Native/American Indian female was excluded and only a bivariate logit was estimated.
[43] Wood, D.S., Rosay, A.B., Postle, G., & TePas, K. (2011). Police presence, isolation, and sexual assault prosecution. *Criminal Justice Policy Review*, 22(*3*), 330-349.
[44] Post-estimation goodness-of-fit analyses revealed significant collinearity issues that required the removal of the *suspect interviewed* measure. Nearly 90% of SA cases that were referred included a suspect interview. Re-estimation of the model excluding the *suspect interviewed* measure remedied the goodness-of-fit issue.

Table 14.

Logistic regression results: Sexual assault case referral (n=366)

	Base Model			Thesis Model			Full Model		
Variable	*OR*	*SE*	*p*-value	*OR*	*SE*	*p*-value	*OR*	*SE*	*p*-value
Paraprofessional responder	1.145	0.334	.641	1.019	0.341	.955	0.875	0.319	.714
ANAI[a] female victim	1.899	0.700	.082	0.989	0.433	.981	0.906	0.455	.843
Victim interviewed				4.326**	1.827	.001	3.821	1.782**	.004
Suspect interviewed[b]				---	---	---	---	---	---
# Witnesses interviewed				1.294*	0.132	.011	1.232	0.123*	.037
Evidence composite				1.244**	0.102	.007	1.262	0.121**	.015
Incident reported within 1 day				0.602	0.180	.089	0.620	0.201	.141
Victim non-cooperation				0.198***	0.073	.000	0.209	0.082***	.000
Victim: Genital injury							1.134	0.502	.776
Victim: Non-genital injury							2.405	1.042*	.043
Victim alcohol and/or drug use							0.501	0.162*	.033
Aggravated offense							0.559	0.168	.053
Suspect-victim relationship							---	---	---
Acquaintance							3.937	2.240*	.016
Friend							5.848	3.571**	.004
Current/former intimate/spouse							2.860	1.824	.099
Family member							8.362	5.495**	.001
Other (known)							2.000	1.374	.313
Stranger (*reference category)							---	---	---
Geographic isolation							1.257	0.504	.568
Constant	1.477	0.512	.260	0.664	0.333	.415	0.267	0.205	.085
Logistic regression model statistics									
Log likelihood:		-212.010			-173.778			-158.988	
LR chi-square:		3.28			79.12			108.70	
p-value:		.194			.000			.000	
Pseudo R^2:		.001			.185			.255	
Pearson Goodness of Fit Chi-Square:		2.86			153.33			330.59	
p-value:		.091			.751			.288	

Notes

a. ANAI=Alaska Native/American Indian.

b. Goodness of fit diagnostics revealed that suspect interview had to be removed from the model due to collinearity with the dependent variable.

times greater than the odds of an SA case being referred that did not document a victim interview. In addition, as the number of witnesses interviewed and the number of evidence items collected increased, so, too, did the odds of SA case referral. Taken together, these findings lend support to the notion that SA cases with a "stronger" evidentiary basis are much more likely to be referred by police. The fourth statistically significant predictor included in the Thesis Model was victim non-cooperation with the investigation. The odds that an SA case would not be referred were 5 times greater when victims were documented as being uncooperative. Notably, this variable exerted the most influence of all the variables in the model, and displayed the highest level of statistical significance. Thus, it appears that while evidentiary factors certainly play an important role in predicting the probability of SA case referral, victim non-cooperation with the investigation may be more determinative. It should also be noted that in their study Wood and colleagues found that victim cooperation doubled the odds of SA case referral.

Ten additional predictors were added to constitute the Full Model. All of the predictors found to be statistically significant in the Thesis Model – victim interviewed, number of witnesses interviewed, evidence composite, and victim non-cooperation with the investigation – remained significant in the Full Model estimation. Additional predictors that were statistically significant included non-genital injury, victim alcohol and/or drug use, and three suspect-victim relationship indicators: acquaintance, friend, and family member.

The odds of an SA case that documented victim non-genital injuries being referred were 2.4 times greater than the odds of an SA case being referred that did not document victim non-genital injuries. In contrast, documentation of victim genital injuries did not have a statistically significant impact on the odds of SA case referral. These findings suggest that SA case referral decisions may very well continue to rely upon "real rape" mythology[45], whereby "good victims" are identified according to outwardly visible signs of suspect coercion and victim nonconsent, rather than more direct evidence of sexual contact or penetration.

The suspect-victim relationship measures that were found to significantly influence the odds of SA case referral highlight the importance of detailed measurement of this construct. Our findings show that it is not merely whether or not an SA suspect and an SA victim knew each other, but rather the particular nature of their interpersonal relationship that impacted the odds of case referral. The odds that an SA case in which suspects and victims were current or former intimate partners/spouses being referred was not significantly more likely to be referred than an SA case in which suspects and victims were strangers. Similarly, the odds that an SA case in which suspects and victims knew each other in some way other than as an acquaintance, a friend, a current or former intimate partner/spouse, or a family member being referred was not significantly more likely to be referred than an SA case in which suspects and victims were strangers. However, cases in which suspects and victims were acquaintances (OR=3.937; p=.016), friends (OR=5.848; p=.004), or family members (OR=8.362; p=.001) were more likely to be referred. Moreover, the odds ratios and p-

[45] Estrich, S. (1987). *Real rape*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

values of these measures suggest that the odds of case referral increased as the level of inter-personal intimacy increased.

Additional variables that did not significantly impact the odds of SA case referral included the timeliness of an SA incident report, aggravated offense, and geographic isolation.

Table 15 presents the logistic regression results for the sample of SAM cases. In contrast to the findings for SA cases, the Base Model results shown in Table 15 reveal a highly significant association between paraprofessional police first responder and the odds of SAM case referral. **The odds that a SAM case in which a VPSO, a VPO, or a TPO served as the first responder being referred were 4 times greater than a SAM case in which a VPSO, a VPO, or a TPO did not serve as the first responder**. Furthermore, the Base Model findings show that the odds of a SAM case involving a victim who was an Alaska Native/American Indian female being referred were 2.6 times greater than the odds that a SAM case that did not involve a victim who was an Alaska Native/American Indian female would be referred *independent of who served as first responder*. Notably, while the strength of association between the Alaska Native/American Indian female identity of SAM victims and the likelihood of case referral was slightly diminished with the addition of more covariates in subsequent models it remained a statistically significant predictor.

As occurred with SA cases, the addition of the five Thesis Model variables improved the explanatory power of the model. Three of the variables added in the Thesis Model were statistically significant predictors of SAM case referral: victim interviewed (OR=6.362; p=.000), the number of witnesses interviewed (OR=1.717; p=.000), and the number of evidence items collected (OR=4.207; p=.001). In contrast with the SA results, victim non-cooperation was not found to be significantly associated with the likelihood of case referral in SAM cases.

However, once the Thesis Model variables were added, the influence of paraprofessional first responder was no longer statistically significant. This suggests that the paraprofessional first responder effect identified in the base model might be attributable, at least in part, to the increased chances of victim and witness interviews, and the increased likelihood of evidence collection, due to their presence and role as first responders. More detailed analyses/modeling will need to be done before a firm conclusion can be reached, however.

Full Model results are presented in the last column of Table 15. Due to severe collinearity problems revealed during post-estimation goodness of fit diagnostic examination, the full range of suspect-victim relationship measures could not be included in the model estimation[46]. In order to provide meaningful contrast and comparison, a series of models were estimated whereby each suspect-relationship measure was entered singly. Only the model including the *acquaintance* relationship indicator resulted in a statistically significant odds ratio. The model with this variable included is what is presented in Table 15 as the full model.

[46] While some variability was observed, a prior relationship between suspects and almost perfectly predicted case referral. In 92.4% of SAM cases, suspects and victims were known to each other. Furthermore, in 98.6% of SAM cases that were referred, suspects were known to victims.

Table 15.

Logistic regression results: Sexual abuse of a minor case referral (n=317)

	Base Model			Thesis Model			Full Model		
Variable	*OR*	*SE*	*p*-value	*OR*	*SE*	*p*-value	*OR*	*SE*	*p*-value
Paraprofessional responder	4.060**	2.023	.005	1.908	1.105	.265	1.967	1.174	.257
ANAI[a] female victim	2.601***	0.702	.000	2.340*	0.810	.014	2.168*	0.777	.031
Victim interviewed				6.362***	2.688	.000	7.508***	3.270	.000
Suspect interviewed[b]				---	---	---	---	---	---
# Witnesses interviewed				1.717***	0.238	.000	1.686***	0.239	.000
Evidence composite				4.207**	1.838	.001	4.511**	2.008	.001
Incident reported within 1 day				0.789	0.272	.493	0.802	0.285	.533
Victim non-cooperation				0.500	0.245	.156	0.545	0.274	.228
Victim: Genital injury							1.106	0.595	.851
Victim: Non-genital injury							0.432	0.322	.261
Victim alcohol and/or drug use (omitted)[b]							---	---	---
Aggravated offense							0.830	0.307	.614
Suspect-victim relationship							---	---	---
Acquaintance							1.994*	0.696	.048
Friend							---	---	---
Current/former intimate/spouse							---	---	---
Family member							---	---	---
Other (known)							---	---	---
Stranger							---	---	---
Geographic isolation							1.512	0.655	.340
Constant	0.822	0.188	.391	0.089	0.043	.000	0.052	0.031	.000
Logistic regression model statistics									
Log likelihood:		-192.244			-142.266			-138.595	
LR chi-square:		24.80			124.76			132.10	
p-value:		.000			.000			.000	
Pseudo R^2:		.061			.305			.323	
Pearson Goodness of Fit Chi-Square:		2.54			70.06			168.97	
p-value:		.111			.996			.911	

Notes

a. ANAI=Alaska Native/American Indian.

b. Goodness of fit diagnostics revealed that suspect interview and victim alcohol and/or drug use measures had to be removed from the model due to collinearity with the dependent variable.

All of the variables found to be statistically significant in the Thesis Model – Alaska Native/American Indian female victim, victim interviewed, number of witnesses interviewed, and evidence composite – remained statistically significant in the Full Model. Only one of the five additional variables included in the Full Model was statistically significant. The odds of a SAM case that involved a suspects and a victim who were known acquaintances being referred were 2 times greater than a SAM case that did not involve a suspects and a victim who were acquaintances being referred.

When comparing results for SA and SAM cases, we see both similarities and important differences when it comes to the factors that impacted the likelihood of case referral. For both SA and SAM cases, the odds of referral increased greatly when investigators were able to conduct interviews with both victims and witnesses. And, the odds of referral significantly increased with each additional piece of evidence collected. While these findings are not surprising (we would expect that cases with a stronger basis in evidence and corroboration would be more likely to advance in the criminal process), there is nevertheless real value in empirically documenting these effects.

What is revealing, however, is the numerous differences between SA and SAM cases with respect to other factors that influenced the odds of case referral. First and foremost is the differential impacts of paraprofessional first response. While a paraprofessional police first response had no measurable effect on the odds of SA case referral, it had a strong and highly significant effect on the odds of SAM case referral, an effect that was reduced to non-significance (but not completely eliminated) only after evidentiary variables were added to the multivariate model. This provides some evidence that the impact of VPSOs and other paraprofessional police on the criminal justice response to sexual violence committed against Alaska Native/American Indian females is "age-graded" in that it depends in large part on whether those victims are adults are children.

A second important difference pertains to the effects of victim race/ethnicity and sex/gender. The SA logit models did not evidence either enhanced or diminished chances of case referral when victims were Alaska Native/American Indian women; the variable was non-significant in all three of the models estimated. In contrast, the SAM models revealed that cases involving Alaska Native/American Indian girls were significantly more likely to be referred, even after controlling for a host of other factors. These findings are encouraging. At the very least, there is no empirical evidence contained in the analyses presented here that SA cases involving Alaska Native/ American Indian women as victims are less likely to be forwarded by police. More promising still, there is empirical evidence that SAM cases involving Alaska Native/American Indian girls are significantly more likely to be referred by police for further action in the juvenile and criminal justice systems.

The findings reported here also highlight some additional burdens faced by adult victims of sexual violence. For example, SA cases that included documentation of victim non-cooperation with the investigation were *5 times less likely to be referred* than cases that did not contain

documentation of victim non-cooperation. In contrast, documentation of victim non-cooperation did not exert significant influence on the likelihood of case referral in SAM cases. Despite the fact that base rates of victim non-cooperation were low for both SA cases (12.6%) and SAM cases (8.5%), the impact of documented non-cooperation in SA cases was profound.

A second burden faced by adult victims of sexual violence was the use of alcohol and/or illicit drugs. The odds of SA cases that included the use of alcohol and/or drugs by victims not being referred were twice as likely as the odds of SA cases that did not include the use of alcohol and/or drugs by victims. Furthermore, victim alcohol and/or drug use was not included in the SAM model because it was very nearly a perfect predictor of case referral: In excess of 90% of SAM cases that involved victim alcohol and/or drug use were referred. Thus, it appears that victim alcohol and/or drug use works in one direction for adults (reducing the likelihood of referral), and in the opposite direction for juveniles (increasing the likelihood of referral).

Finally, a third burden faced by adult sexual violence victims is the importance of documented non-genital injury. The odds of an SA case that included documentation of non-genital injury being referred were 2.4 times greater than an SA case that did not include documentation of non-genital injury being referred. Put another way, the absence of non-genital injuries (e.g., bruising, abrasions, bite marks, broken teeth/bones) significantly reduced the chances that a SA case would be referred. Meanwhile, documentation of genital injuries had no measurable effect on SA case referral. In contrast, neither documentation of genital or non-genital injuries influenced the likelihood of referral for SAM cases. This finding highlights not only the salience of the legal requirements pertaining to consent for the investigation (and subsequent prosecution) of SA and SAM cases, but the indicia legal actors rely upon to make determinations of victim *non*consent.

Multivariate Analysis: SA Case Acceptance for Prosecution

The prior section explored the factors that influence the likelihood that SA and SAM cases would be referred by Troopers to DJJ for adjudication, or DOL for prosecution. In this section of the report, we shift focus from case referral to case *acceptance* by DOL. Our interest is in furthering our understanding of SA and SAM case processing by examining the extent to which the factors that significantly influenced the likelihood of case referral also predict cases DOL case acceptance by DOL. Therefore, the likelihood of case acceptance for prosecution is modeled using the same set of variables that were used to model SA and SAM case referral.

Because the multivariate analysis of SA and SAM case acceptance is limited to only those cases processed by DOL, the analytic sample was limited SA and SAM cases that included suspects who were 18 years or older, and those cases AST documented as referred. The total number of SA and SAM cases meeting both of these criteria was 382 (n=220 SA cases; n=162 SAM cases).

Table 16 presents the Full Models for both SA and SAM cases. Neither the SA case acceptance model nor the SAM case acceptance model performed particularly well. While goodness-of-fit diagnostics for both models were acceptable, the models accounted for only small proportions of variance of the case acceptance models. And, while the SA case acceptance model was

Table 16.
Logistic regression results: Sexual assault (SA) and sexual abuse of a minor (SAM) case acceptance

	Sexual Assault (SA) (n=220)			Sexual Abuse of a Minor (SAM) (n=162)		
Variable	*OR*	*SE*	*p*-value	*OR*	*SE*	*p*-value
Paraprofessional responder	1.312	0.537	.507	1.312	0.670	.594
ANAI[a] female victim	0.588	0.400	.434	0.886	0.445	.809
Victim interviewed[b]	---	---	---	---	---	---
Suspect interviewed[b]	---	---	---	---	---	---
# Witnesses interviewed	1.030	0.102	.766	1.081	0.119	.477
Evidence composite	1.192*	0.099	.034	1.161	0.161	.281
Incident reported within 1 day	1.138	0.474	.756	1.736	0.759	.207
Victim non-cooperation	0.739	0.618	.717	0.270	0.299	.238
Victim: Genital injury	0.906	0.400	.823	0.996	0.702	.996
Victim: Non-genital injury	1.874	0.793	.138	0.806	0.628	.782
Victim alcohol and/or drug use	0.383*	0.150	.014	---	---	---
Aggravated offense	1.244	0.454	.549	0.621	0.286	.301
Suspect-victim relationship						
Acquaintance	5.203	5.593	.125	3.414**	1.368	.002
Friend	2.546	2.886	.410			
Current/former intimate/spouse	0.670	0.833	.747			
Family member	1.470	1.594	.722			
Other (known)	3.473	4.812	.369			
Stranger	---	---	---			
Geographic isolation	1.129	0.608	.822	1.582	1.352	.592
Constant	0.103	0.137	.088	0.115	0.100	.013
Logistic regression model statistics						
Log likelihood:	-104.577			-84.239		
LR chi-square:	33.23			19.01		
p-value:	.007			.061		
Pseudo R^2:	.137			.101		
Pearson Goodness of Fit Chi-Square:	220.71			108.04		
p-value:	.069			.454		

Notes
a. ANAI=Alaska Native/American Indian.
b. Goodness of fit diagnostics revealed that suspect interview had to be removed from the model due to collinearity with the dependent variable.

statistically significant overall (*p*=.007), the SAM case acceptance model was not (*p*=.061). While some of the problems with the SA and SAM case acceptance models presented in Table 1 6 are likely due to small samples sizes, it is also likely that additional work will be required to improve predictive models of SA and SAM case acceptance, namely using different model specifications with different predictor variables, as well as different model estimation techniques (e.g., Heckman sample selection models).

With these caveats in mind, it must also be noted that the SA case acceptance model was statistically significant and it did provide adequate model fit. Two variables were found to be significant predictors of the case acceptance in the model: the number of evidence items collected (*evidence composite*) and *victim alcohol and/or drug use*. The former increased the

odds of case acceptance (OR=1.192; *p*=.034), while the latter decreased the odds of case acceptance (OR=0.383; *p*=.014).

The strength of the effect of the victim alcohol and/or drug use measure is notable for two reasons. Firstly, it exerted a much stronger effect on the likelihood of case acceptance than the evidence scale composite. Secondly, it was higher in the case acceptance model than the case referral model (OR=.383 vs. OR=.501). The odds that an SA case that documented victim alcohol and/or drug use would not be accepted for prosecution were 2.6 times greater than the odds that an SA case that did not document victim alcohol and/or drug use would not be accepted for prosecution. That victim alcohol and/or drug use significantly decreases the odds of case acceptance by prosecutors if fully consistent with the SA case referral model and the research literature on prosecutorial decisionmaking more generally.

Discussion

In this section of the report we used multivariate statistical models to more closely examine the influence VPSOs and other paraprofessional police have on the criminal justice response to sexual violence committed against Alaska Native/American Indian females in Alaska's tribal communities. Two specific criminal justice decision points were examined: case *referral* by AST and *case acceptance* for prosecution by DOL.

The findings presented show that the impact VPSOs and other paraprofessional police have on the likelihood of case referral depend on case type. Paraprofessional first responders did not significantly increase (nor did they significantly decrease) the odds that SA cases would be referred. However, our results also showed that paraprofessional first responders did increase the odds that SAM cases would be referred, and that this effect was attributable to an increased likelihood of interviews with victims, suspects and witnesses/third parties, as well as more intensive evidence collection that was made possible by the presence and investigatory participation of VPSOs and other paraprofessional police. This was an unexpected, but thought-provoking, finding of our analyses. It suggests that perhaps the impact VPSOs and other paraprofessional police have on the criminal justice response to sexual violence committed against Alaska Native/American Indian females *in Western Alaska* is "age graded." For child victims of sexual violence –particularly Alaska Native/American Indian females – paraprofessional first responders enhance the criminal justice response, but they do so indirectly, by facilitating interviews and collective evidence.

More generally, the multivariate analyses of SA and SAM case referral highlighted the importance of developing separate predictive models according to case type. The results presented in Tables 14 and 15 demonstrate that different factors predict case referral outcomes for SA and SAM cases. For example, the SA model revealed 9 variables that significantly impacted the odds of case referral (victim interviewed, number of witnesses interviewed, evidence composite, victim non-cooperation with the investigation, victim non-genital injury, victim alcohol and/or drug use, suspect-victim: acquaintance, suspect-victim: friend, and suspect-victim: family member). In contrast, the SAM model identified only 5 variables that

significantly impacted the odds of case referral (Alaska Native/American Indian female, victim interviewed, number of witnesses interviewed, evidence composite, and suspect-victim: acquaintance). In short, while our case referral analyses show the strength of evidence was important for both SA and SAM case referral, sexual assault cases involving adult victims relied more heavily than sexual assault cases involving juvenile victims on factors pertaining to the documentation of victim non-consent (e.g., non-genital injury), which are largely moot in SAM cases due to victim age, and other factors pertaining to victim culpability (e.g., victim non-cooperation and victim alcohol and/or drug use).

Our analysis of case acceptance, given case referral, revealed that there is a need for more refined model specification and estimation at this stage of the criminal process. In short, the factors found to predict SA and SAM case referral did not work well for predicting SA and SAM case acceptance. Given that these decisions are made by different criminal justice system actors (AST investigators on the one hand, and DOL prosecutors on the other) with differing perspectives and focal concerns, this is, perhaps, not a surprising finding. Nevertheless, we think it is important that these differences – and their implications for model estimation – be recognized; simply applying a statistical model constructed for the purposes of explaining police case referral decisions should not simply be replicated for the purposes of explaining prosecutor case acceptance decisions.

Despite these limitations, we were able to fit a case acceptance logistic regression model for SA cases, and that model highlighted two factors that should be explored more fully in future research. That model revealed that the greater the number of evidence items collected in SA cases, the greater the odds of case referral, and that the documentation of victim alcohol and/or drug use significantly reduced the odds of case referral. Both of these factors were also found to impact investigators' case referral decisions, suggesting that they are robust predictors at multiple stages of case processing in SA cases.

The remainder of this section of the report provides an overall description of the characteristics of the SA and SAM case records that were coded. These data are provided to give readers a broader context of the various features of the incidents that served as the basis for the study.

Case-Level Characteristics

Case type. The 683 cases included in the analysis sample included 366 (53.6%) sexual assault (SA) cases and 317 (46.4%) sexual abuse of a minor (SAM) cases. While the elements of each crime type differ in number of ways (see Alaska Statutes definitions of each offense type and level in Appendix A), the classifications are very similar. Each crime type consists of four degrees (first degree, second degree, third degree, fourth degree) and the crime class for each degree for each crime type is the same. First degree offenses for both sexual assault and sexual abuse of a minor are unclassified felonies. Second degree offenses for both sexual assault and sexual abuse of a minor are class B felonies. And so forth (see Table 17).

Table 17.
Classifications of sexual assault and sexual abuse of a minor, by degree of offense

		Crime Class			
Crime Type	Felony or Misdemeanor	Class C	Class B	Class A	Unclassified
Sexual assault					
First degree	Felony				X
Second degree	Felony		X		
Third degree	Felony	X			
Fourth degree	Misdemeanor			X	
Sexual abuse of a minor					
First degree	Felony				X
Second degree	Felony		X		
Third degree	Felony	X			
Fourth degree	Misdemeanor			X	

Notes

Police notification. Tables 18 and 19 present data pertaining to AST notifications of SA and SAM incidents. Table 18 presents the frequency distributions of agencies/individuals documented in case records as being the first to be notified of SA and SAM incidents. In two-thirds of SA cases (67.2%; n=246) and nearly three-fourths of SAM cases (72.6%; n=230) AST was the first agency to be notified. In the remainder of SA and SAM cases, AST learned of incidents from other agencies/individuals. VPSOs were notified first in 9.3% (n=34) of SA cases and 5.4% (n=17) of SAM cases. VPOs were notified first in 12.0% (n=44) of SA cases and 5.4% (n=17) of SAM cases. It was rare for SA and SAM incidents to be reported to TPOs first (1.1% of SA cases, 2.2% of SAM cases). Among the SA case records sampled, other police agencies were the first to be notified in 6.8% (n=25) of cases. However, among the SAM case records sampled, other police agencies were the first to be notified in only 1.9% (n=6) of cases. In

contrast, 6.3% of SAM cases (n=20) indicated that the first agency to be notified was children's/family services. Children's/family services was the first agency notified in only 1.4% (n=5) of the SA case records sampled.

Table 18.
Agency/individual to whom incident was first reported, by offense type

	Offense Type			
	Sexual assault[a]		Sexual abuse of a minor[a]	
Agency/Individual	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
AST	246	67.2	230	72.6
VPSO	34	9.3	17	5.4
VPO	44	12.0	17	5.4
TPO	4	1.1	7	2.2
Other police	25	6.8	6	1.9
Other authorities	0	0.0	1	0.3
Children/family services	5	1.4	20	6.3
Medical/psychological	4	1.1	7	2.2
School/teacher	1	0.3	5	1.6
Child/victim advocacy org.	0	0.0	3	1.0
Juvenile/adult corrections	1	0.3	2	0.6
Witness/third party	0	0.0	2	0.6
Unknown/unspecified	2	0.6	0	0.0
TOTALS	366	100.1	317	100.1

Notes
a. Totals may not sum to 100.0% due to rounding error.

In addition to the agency/individual to whom SA and SAM incident were reported first, data was also collected pertaining to who first reported SA and SAM incidents to police (see Table 19). In a majority of SA cases (52.2%; n=191) police were first notified by victims, followed by witnesses/third parties (31.2%; n=114), medical/psychological personnel (8.2%; n=30), and childen's/family service agencies (4.9%; n=18). Other sworn police and paraprofessional police – including VPSOs – were the first to notify police in only a small fraction of SA cases. SA incident notifications were also noted from schools/teachers and child/victim advocacy organizations. In one case, the suspect notified police of the incident.

The distribution for SAM cases was quite different. In nearly 60% of SAM cases, police were first notified by a witness or other third party (59.6%; n=189). Victims were the first to notify police in just 14.8% (n=47) of SAM cases. Children's/family service agencies were the first to notify police of a SAM incident in roughly the same proportion (14.5%; n=46). Medical/ psychological staff were the first to notify police in just 3.8% (n=12) of SAM cases. In none of the SAM case records reviewed were VPSOs or VPOs identified as the first individual/agency to report a SAM incident to police. Five SAM case records indicated that police were first notified of a SAM incident by TPOs. Schools/teachers notified police in just 1.6% (n=5) SAM cases, and

child/victim advocacy organizations first contacted police in only 1.3% (n=4) SAM cases. Juvenile/adult correctional staff notified police in 1 SAM case. Finally, suspects were identified as the first to report to police in 2 SAM case records.

Table 19.
Agency/individual that reported incident to police, by offense type

	Offense Type			
	Sexual assault[a]		Sexual abuse of a minor[a]	
Agency/Individual	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Victim	191	52.2	47	14.8
Witness/third party	114	31.2	189	59.6
VPSO	2	0.6	0	0.0
VPO	1	0.3	0	0.0
TPO	1	0.3	5	1.6
Other police	3	0.8	1	0.3
Children/family services	18	4.9	46	14.5
Medical/psychological	30	8.2	12	3.8
School/teacher	2	0.6	5	1.6
Child/victim advocacy org.	1	0.3	4	1.3
Suspect	1	0.3	2	0.6
Juvenile/adult corrections	0	0.0	1	0.3
Unknown/unspecified	2	0.6	5	1.6
TOTALS	366	100.3	317	100.0

Notes
a. Totals may not sum to 100.0% due to rounding error.

Community isolation. Table 20 presents the percentage of SA and SAM cases that originated in "isolated" communities. Following the work by Wood and colleagues,[47] community isolation was operationally defined as locations inaccessible to Troopers by automobile. In other words, for the purposes of this study, isolated communities were defined as communities accessible by Troopers only through the use of an airplane, a boat, or an all-terrain vehicle or snowmobile.

The vast majority of SA incidents (85.3%; n=312) and SAM incidents (88.0%; n=279) closed by AST between 2008 and 2011 originated in isolated communities.

[47] Wood, D.S., Rosay, A.B., Postle, G., & TePas, K. (2011). Police presence, isolation, and sexual assault prosecution. *Criminal Justice Policy Review*, 22(*3*), 330-349.

Table 20.
Geographic isolation of community where incidents occurred, by offense type

	Offense Type			
	Sexual assault[a]		Sexual abuse of a minor[a]	
Isolated[b] community	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Yes (isolated)	312	85.3	279	88.0
No (not isolated)	54	14.8	38	12.0
TOTALS	366	100.1	317	100.0

Notes

a. Totals may not sum to 100.0% due to rounding error.

b. "Isolated" operationalized as a community location inaccessible by Troopers using an automobile. Communities coded as "isolated" could only be accessed using an airplane, a boat, or an ATV/snowmobile (depending on season).

Evidentiary forensic exams and DNA. Each AST case record was coded for the administration of evidentiary forensic exams for both victims and suspects (see Table 21). Suspects submitted to exams in 53 (7.8%) of the case records sampled. In contrast, victims submitted to evidentiary forensic exams in approximately a quarter of cases (n=166; 24.3%). Photographs of victim injuries were documented in nearly 80% (n=132) of the case records in which a victim exam was noted; photographs of other materials were noted in 66.3% (n=110) of the case records in which a victim exam was conducted. Overall, evidentiary forensic exams were conducted with both SA/SAM suspects and victims in only 7% (n=48) cases, and with either suspects or victims in 25.0% (n=171) cases.

Table 21.
Frequency of evidence collected: Evidentiary forensic exams and DNA.

Evidence Collected	Number	Percent[a]
Evidentiary forensic exam (suspect)	53	7.8%
Evidentiary forensic exam (victim)	166	24.3
Photos, victim injuries	132	19.3
Photos taken, other	110	16.1
DNA (suspect)	111	16.3
DNA (victim)	126	18.5
Evidentiary forensic exam (either)	171	25.0
Evidentiary forensic exam (both)	48	7.0
DNA (either)	152	22.3
DNA (both)	85	12.5
Forensic evidence forwarded to lab for analysis	111	16.3

Notes

A separate measure was used to indicate when case records specifically mentioned that DNA was collected from suspects and victims. Whereas only 7.8% of SA/SAM case records indicated that suspects submitted to evidentiary forensic exams, DNA was specifically noted as being collected from suspects in 16.3% (n=111) cases. Conversely, while 24.3% of the SA/SAM case records indicated that victims underwent evidentiary exams, fewer (18.5%; n=126) case records specifically mentioned that a DNA sample was collected from victims. DNA was collected from both SA/SAM suspects and victims in 12.5% (n=85) cases, and with either suspects or victims in 22.3% (n=152) cases.

Finally, case record reviews included a measure to indicate whether or not there was specific reference to any forensic evidence being forwarded/submitted to the state's crime lab for analysis. In total, 111 SA/SAM case records (16.3%) indicated that at least one piece of forensic evidence was sent to the crime lab for analysis.

Table 22.
Frequency of evidence collected: Other evidence items.

Evidence Collected	Number	Percent[a]
Physical evidence	160	23.4%
Trace evidence	56	8.2
Electronic data	11	1.6
Weapons	9	1.3
Photographs, crime scene	120	17.6
Photographs, evidence items	43	6.3

Notes
a. Multiple response item.

The most common form of evidence collected fell into the category of physical evidence (e.g., items of clothing, objects/instruments used in the commission of a SA/SAM incident, or that were seized in order to obtain trace evidence), documented in 23.4% (n=160) of SA/SAM case records. Second most common was photos of the crime scene (17.6%; n=120), followed by the collection of trace evidence (8.2%; n=56) and photographs taken of individual evidence items (6.3%; n=43). Electronic data were recovered and weapons were seized in less than 2% of cases, respectively.

Additional measures were included in the case record review to document various forms of evidence that was collected, such as electronic data, scene/location photographs, photographs of evidence items, the collection of physical evidence/objects, the collection of trace evidence (e.g., suspected biological substances, textile fibers/fabric, and chemicals), and weapons.

Search warrants. Table 23 shows the number of SA/SAM cases for which one (or more) search warrants were obtained by investigators. Overall, 114 SA/SAM case records (16.7%) indicated that one or more search warrants were acquired. The most frequently observed type of warrant was for searches of persons – for example, to collect biological samples. A total of 51 SA/SAM

case records included this kind of search warrant. Warrants to record conversations were obtained in 47 (6.9%) cases. Warrants to search property/residences were acquired in 6% (n=41) cases. Case records documented search warrants specifically aimed at personal records (such as phone records, bank records) in only two SA/SAM cases.

Table 23.
Frequency of search warrants obtained.

Warrant	Number	Percent[a]
Any search warrant obtained	114	16.7%
Search warrant: Person	51	7.5
Search warrant: Audio recording	47	6.9
Search warrant: Property/residence	41	6.0
Search warrant: Records	2	0.3

Notes
a. Multiple response item.

Year and months of SA/SAM incident reports and case closures. Table 24 shows the number of SA/SAM cases closed for each year of the sample period (2008-2011) according to the year cases were reported to AST. On average, more than half of the SA/SAM cases sampled (57.4%) were closed by AST in the same calendar year they were opened. In 2010, 140 of the 208 SA/SAM cases closed by AST (67.3%) were reported to the agency that same calendar year. In 2011, 51 of the 111 SA/SAM cases closed by AST (46%) were reported to the agency that same calendar year. The percentage of SA/SAM cases that were closed in the same calendar year was 54% for cases closed in 2008, and 56.6% for cases closed in 2009.

Table 24.
Distribution of sexual assault and sexual abuse of a minor cases, by year case reported to and year closed by Alaska State Troopers

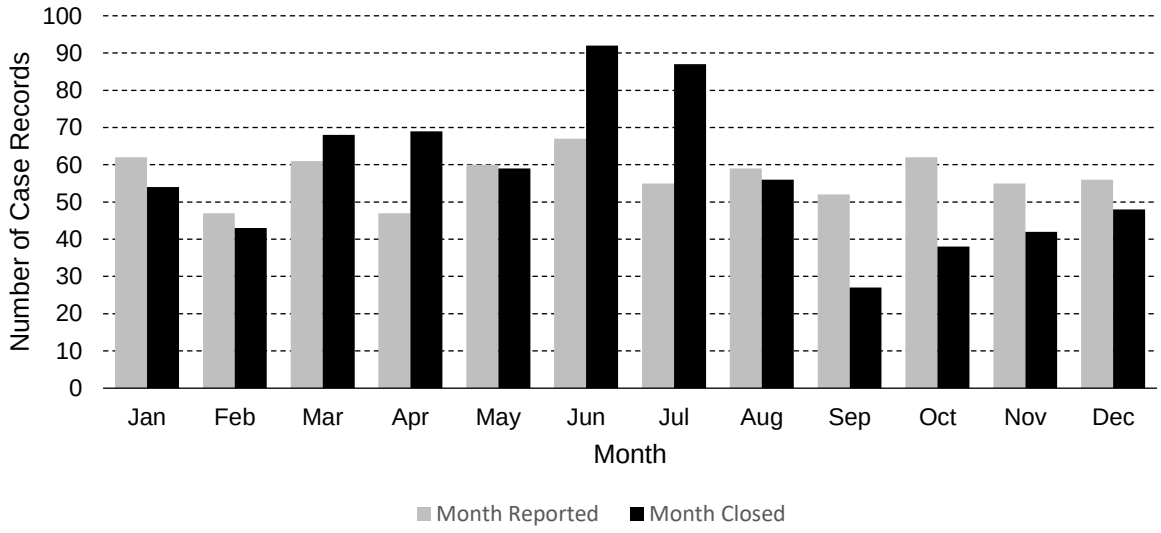
	Year Closed				
Year Reported	2008	2009	2010	2011	Total
2003	0	1	1	0	2
2004	0	0	1	0	1
2005	4	0	0	0	4
2006	10	4	0	0	14
2007	77	10	4	4	95
2008	107	57	7	4	175
2009	0	94	55	3	152
2010	0	0	140	49	189
2011	0	0	0	51	51
Total	198	166	208	111	683

Notes

Figure 1 shows the distribution of SA/SAM case records according to the month cases were reported to AST (grey bars) and the month cases were closed by AST (black bars). The month

with the highest number of both reported and closed SA/SAM cases was June. The month with the fewest SA/SAM incidents reported to Troopers was February; the month with the fewest SA/SAM cases closed by Troopers was September. Overall, the number of SA/SAM case closures was much more variable on a month-to-month basis (*s.d.*=19.463) than the number of SA/SAM

Figure 1.
Number of case records, by month case reported and month case closed



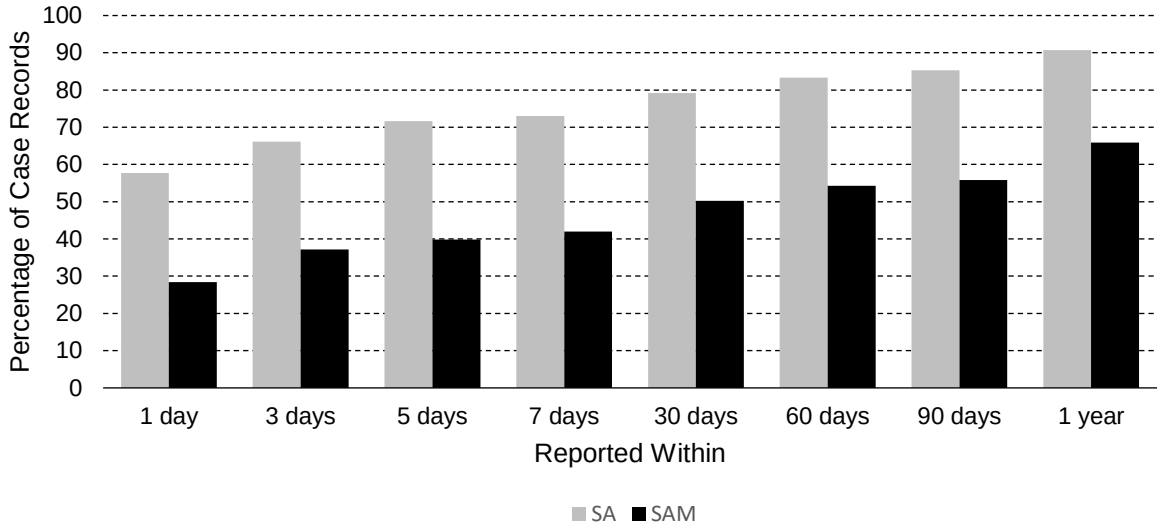
Notes

incidents reported to AST (*s.d.*=6.127). The number of SA/SAM incidents closed was particularly concentrated in the months of June and July (n=179; 26.2%) and markedly lower in the months of September and October (n=27 and n=38, respectively).

Time to report. Figure 2 shows the percentage of SA and SAM cases that were reported to AST at progressive time intervals following assault incidents. The graph clearly depicts a significant difference between SA and SAM case with respect to the percentage of cases reported to AST at each point in time. For example, 57.7% (n=211) of the SA cases in the sample were reported within 1 day of the sexual assault incident, as compared to 28.4% (n=90) of SAM cases – a difference of 29.3 percentage points. The magnitude of this difference is nearly constant all the way out to the one-year mark. More than 90% (n=332; 90.7%) of SA cases in the sample were reported to AST within one year, as compared to 65.9% of SAM cases – a difference of 24.8 percentage points.

Figure 3 shows the percentage of SA cases that were reported to AST for the same time intervals, according to who was the first responder. Because of the relatively small number of VPSO, VPO, and TPO cases, all three were consolidated into a single paraprofessional police grouping. For ease of comparison, Troopers and other sworn police officers were consolidated into a single group as well.

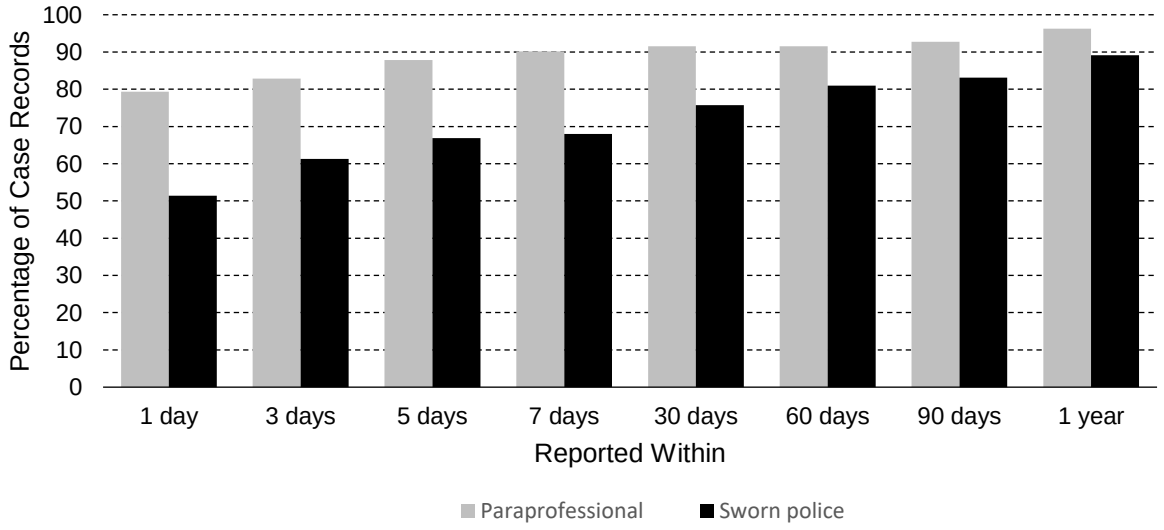
Figure 2.
Percentage of case records, by days to report and case type (SA vs SAM)



Notes

At every time interval shown in Figure 3, a significantly[48] higher percentage of paraprofessional SA cases were reported. Nearly 80% (79.3) of SA cases in which a paraprofessional police officer was the first responder were reported within one day of the assault compared to just 51.4% of SA cases in which a Trooper or other sworn police officer was the first responder, a difference of 27.9 percentage points. At the three-day mark, the percentages increase for both

Figure 3.
Percentage of SA case records, by days to report and first responder (paraprofessional vs. sworn)



Notes

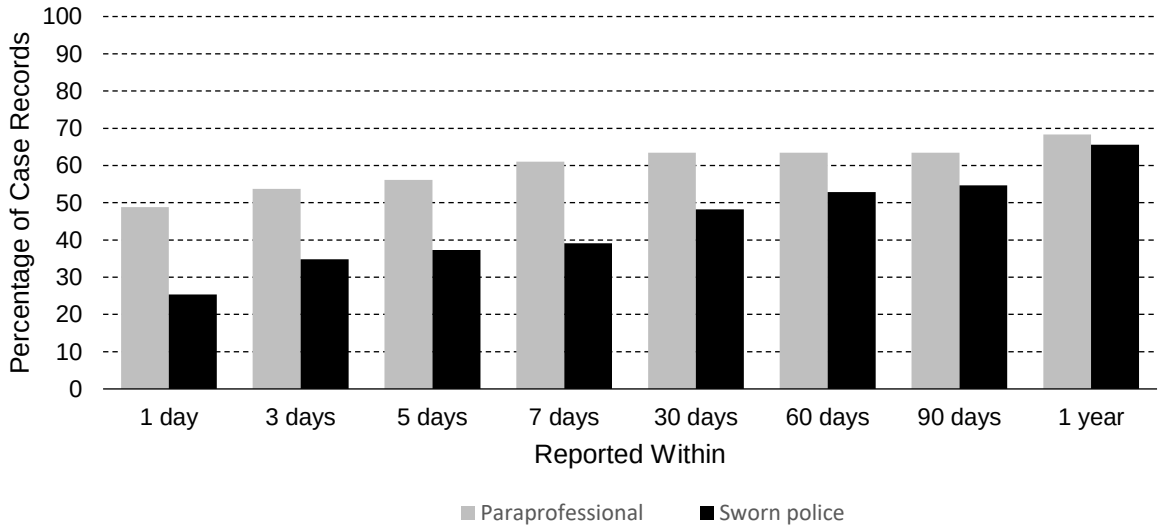
[48] $p<.05$.

groups of first responders – 82.9% and 61.3%, respectively – but the difference in percentages remained highly significant. Even at the last time interval – SA cases reported within 1 year of the assault incident – the difference between paraprofessional and sworn police were statistically significant.

Figure 4 presents the same paraprofessional–sworn police comparison for SAM cases. Once again, higher percentages of cases were reported to paraprofessional police officers at each time interval. Slightly less than half (48.8%) of SAM cases in which a paraprofessional police officer was the first responder were reported within 1 day of the assault compared to only 25.4% of the SAM cases in which a sworn police officer was the first responder, a difference of 23.4 percentage points. The observed percentage difference between paraprofessional and sworn police cases remained statistically significant through the fourth time interval. Between half and two-thirds of SAM cases (61%) involving a paraprofessional first responder were reported within 7 days. In contrast, just 39.1% SAM cases involving a sworn police officer as first responder were reported within 7 days of the incident. Beyond this time interval, the observed differences were not statistically significant. By the last interval (1 year), the observed difference had narrowed to only 2.7 percentage points (68.3% for paraprofessionals, 65.6% for sworn police).

The data presented in Figures 3 and 4 clearly show that the SA and SAM cases to which paraprofessional police served as first responders were much more likely to be reported to them earlier than the SA and SAM cases to which Troopers and other sworn police served as first

Figure 4.
Percentage of SAM case records, by days to report and first responder (paraprofessional vs. sworn)



Notes

responders. This was especially true in the period immediately following SA and SAM incidents. More specifically, the odds that a SA case would be reported to a paraprofessional police officer within three days were 3 times greater than the odds that a SA case would be reported to a sworn

police officer within three days. The odds that a SAM case would be reported to a para-professional police officer within three days were 2.2 times greater than the odds that a SAM case would be reported to a sworn police officer within three days.

Incident Characteristics

Assault context. A number of variables were coded of SA and SAM case records to capture the overall context in which suspects and victims came into contact with one another, the type of locations where suspects and victims first came into contact, where SA and SAM incidents occurred, and where the contact between suspects and victims was terminated. The results are presented below in a series of tables.

Table 25.
Distribution of sexual assault and sexual abuse of a minor cases, by to social context in which initial suspect-victim contact occurred

	Offense Type			
	Sexual assault[a]		Sexual abuse of a minor[a]	
Initial Suspect-Victim Contact Type	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Social setting/party	195	53.3	68	21.5
Sudden attack	41	11.2	13	4.1
Legitimate service	5	1.4	19	6.0
Other	93	25.4	150	47.3
Missing	32	8.7	67	21.1
TOTALS	366	100.0	317	100.0

Notes
a. Totals may not sum to 100.0% due to rounding error.

The data shown in Table 25 describe the type of setting/interactional context in which SA/SAM suspects and victims initially came into contact with one another. The three primary categories included: social setting/party, legitimate service, and sudden attack. The initial contact type was coded as "social setting or party" if the case record indicated that suspects and victims came into contact with each other within the context of a social event, gathering, or party. Cases were coded as "legitimate service" when the sole or primary reason for the encounter was the provision of a legitimate service by either the suspect or the victim. "Sudden attack" was coded in circumstances whereby suspects and victims came into contact with one another outside the context of social settings/parties or legitimate service encounters, the interactions were limited to the assault incident, and the incident was characterized by the use of force, coercion, and/or violence. Encounters that fell outside of these pre-defined categories were coded "other" social context.

For SA incidents, suspects and victims most commonly came into contact with one another within the context of a social event (53.3%; n=195). Only slightly more than 1 out of every SA incident (11.2%; n=41) were characterized as sudden, violent attacks. It was rare for a sexual assault victims to have initially encountered suspects within the context of the provision of a

legitimate service. In contrast, fewer SAM incidents (21.5%; n=68) were preceded by suspects and victims encountering one another within the context of a social gathering or party. Suspects and victims were much more likely to initially come into contact with one another in other interactional contexts not specifically measured, such as routine interactions between family members, friends and acquaintances, and intimate partners.

In addition to the general social context in which SA/SAM suspects and victims came into contact with one another, each case record was coded to reflect the types of indoor or outdoor locations suspects and victims interacted with one another. Suspect-victim encounters were measured separately at three points in time: contact initiation, assault incident, and post-incident contact termination. Table 26 shows the percentages of SA and SAM incidents that occurred indoors and outdoors, respectively.

Table 26.
Distribution of sexual assault and sexual abuse of a minor cases, by the indoor/outdoor locations of assaults

	Offense Type			
	Sexual assault		Sexual abuse of a minor	
Assault Location	Number	Percent[a]	Number	Percent[a]
Indoors	304	83.1	234	73.8
Outdoors	30	8.2	21	6.6
Missing	32	8.7	62	19.6
TOTALS	366	100.0	317	100.0

Notes
a. Totals may not sum to 100.0% due to rounding error.

For both SA and SAM incidents assaults were most likely to occur in an indoor location. Case records indicated that 83.1 (n=304) SA incidents and 73.8% (n=234) SAM incidents happened indoors. The vast majority of these assaults were committed in a private residence – in the home of either the suspect, the home of the victim, or some other person's home (see Table 27). Only 8.9% (n=27) of indoor SA incidents and 7.3% of indoor SAM incidents occurred somewhere else (e.g., a workplace, a publicly accessible building or structure). For both SA and SAM incidents,

Table 27.
Distribution of sexual assault and sexual abuse of a minor cases, by the type of indoor place assault occurred

	Offense Type			
	Sexual assault		Sexual abuse of a minor	
Contact Initiated: Indoor place	Number	Percent[a]	Number	Percent[a]
Home: suspect	124	40.8	141	60.3
Home: victim	89	29.3	47	20.1
Home: other	64	21.1	29	12.4
All other	27	8.9	17	7.3
TOTAL	304	100.1	234	100.0

Notes
a. Totals may not sum to 100.0% due to rounding error.

the single-most likely assault location was suspects' residences. However, SAM incidents were particularly likely to occur there (60.3% vs. 40.8%).

With respect to outdoor locations of SA and SAM incidents, the most frequently cited assault place indicated in case records was outdoor locations such as campgrounds near lakes, rivers/streams, and woods (see Table 28). Trails and greenbelt areas were also noted relatively frequently, as were outdoor areas immediately adjacent to private residences (e.g., yards, alleys). Outdoor assault locations readily observable to the public such as streets/sidewalks and parking lots were observed, but infrequently.

Table 28.
Distribution of sexual assault and sexual abuse of a minor cases, by the specific type of outdoor place assault occurred

	Offense Type			
	Sexual assault		Sexual abuse of a minor	
Contact Initiated: Outdoor place	Number	Percent[a]	Number	Percent[a]
Street/sidewalk	4	13.3	3	14.3
Parking lot	1	3.3	1	4.8
Trail/greenbelt	5	16.7	5	23.8
Lake/river/woods	11	36.7	5	23.8
Adjacent to private residence	4	13.3	3	14.3
Private vehicle	2	6.7	0	0.0
All other	3	10.0	4	19.1
TOTAL	30	100.0	21	100.1

Notes
a. Totals may not sum to 100.0% due to rounding error.

Analysis of the data collected detailing the locations of where SA/SAM suspects and victims initiated contact with one another (prior to the assault) and terminated contact with each other (following the assault) revealed a high degree of location stability. For example, 285 of the 304 SA incidents (93.8%) and 214 of the 234 SAM incidents (91.5%) that occurred in an indoor place also began and ended in an indoor location (data not shown). The data also show that in addition to there being stability in the type of location (i.e., indoor vs. outdoor), there was stability with respect to the specific places where suspects and victims initiated contact, where assaults occurred, and where suspect and victims terminated contact. For example 115 of the 124 SA incidents (92.7%) and 126 of the 141 SAM incidents (89.4%) that occurred indoors at suspects' residences also began and ended at the suspects' residences (data not shown). This pattern of location consistency held for each type of location and place.

Weapon use. Table 29 presents the frequency with which suspect weapon use was documented in SA/SAM case records. Weapon use was operationalized to include both instruments and strategies intentionally employed by SA/SAM suspects to incapacitate, intimidate, coerce or harm victims. While the most common type of weapon use documented in both SA and SAM

case records was the use of hand/fists/feet (32.5% and 21.1%, respectively), it was significantly[49] more likely to be documented in SA case records than SAM case records.

Table 29.
Distribution of sexual assault and sexual abuse of a minor cases, by the specific type of suspect weapon use

	Offense Type			
	Sexual assault (n=366)		Sexual abuse of a minor (n=317)	
Weapon Used	Number	Percent[a]	Number	Percent[a]
Threats of force	19	5.2	10	3.2
Hands/fists/feet	119	32.5	67	21.1
Choking/asphyxiation	6	1.6	2	0.6
Blunt object	1	0.3	0	0.0
Knife or other cutting instrument	5	1.4	0	0.0
Firearm	2	0.6	1	0.3
Drugs and/or alcohol facilitation	3	0.8	3	1.0
Other	3	0.8	9	2.8

Notes
a. Percentages will not total to 100.0% because case records may not have indicated any weapon use, only one type of weapon use, or multiple types of weapons use.

Sexual contact[50] and assaultive behaviors. Case record narratives, suspect and victim interview transcripts, and whenever possible, evidentiary medical examination reports were used to measure the assaultive behaviors and sexual acts for SA and SAM incidents. The data presented in Table 30 show the how often these behaviors and acts that were documented. For cases involving multiple victims and/or multiple suspects, the frequencies represent an aggregate consolidation for each case record.

Among SA cases, the most frequently recorded form of sexual contact was penile penetration of the vagina, which was observed in half of the cases included in the sample (n=183; 50.0%). Among SAM cases, the most frequently observed form of sexual contact was the touching of female victim genitalia (n=149; 47.0%). In general, SA and SAM cases differed significantly in their composition of forced sexual contact. SA case records were significantly[51] more likely to involve one or more acts of sexual penetration. In contrast, SAM case records were significantly[52] more likely to involve one or more forms of assaultive touching and significantly[53] more likely to include forced masturbation. There was no statistically significant difference in the percentages of case records that documented forced oral copulation. Table 30 also presents the percentage of SA and SAM case records that documented suspect condom use

[49] Chi-square = 11.098; *p*=.001.
[50] Alaska law defines "sexual contact" as "the defendant's knowingly touching, directly or through clothing, the victim's genitals, anus, or female breast" or "knowingly causing the victim to touch, directly or through clothing, the defendant's or victim's genitals, anus or female breast." (see: AS 11.81.900(a)(58)(A).)
[51] Chi-square = 52.572; *p*=.000.
[52] Chi-square = 10.619; *p*=.001.
[53] Chi-square = 5.175; *p*=.023.

and the percentage of SA and SAM case records that documented evidence of suspect ejaculation. SA case records were significantly[54] more likely to document evidence of suspect ejaculation; however, there was not a statistically significant difference in the percentage of case records documenting suspect condom use.

Table 30.
Distribution of sexual assault and sexual abuse of a minor cases, by the specific type of suspect weapon use

	Offense Type			
	Sexual assault (n=366)		Sexual abuse of a minor (n=317)	
Assaultive Behavior	Number	Percent[a]	Number	Percent[a]
Assaultive touching (any)	200	54.6	212	66.9
Kiss/bite/scratch	44	12.0	25	7.9
Touch victim breast (female)	77	21.0	46	14.5
Touch victim genitalia (female)	153	41.8	149	47.0
Touch victim genitalia (male)	7	1.9	31	9.8
Touch victim anus	28	7.7	47	14.8
Forced oral copulation (any)	16	4.4	22	6.9
Genitals: Of victim, by suspect	10	2.7	17	5.4
Genitals: Of suspect, by victim	8	2.2	9	2.8
Anus: Of victim, by suspect	0	0.0	0	0.0
Anus: Of suspect, by victim	0	0.0	0	0.0
Penetration by suspect(s) (any)	217	59.3	100	31.6
Digital penetration: vagina	42	11.5	42	13.3
Penile penetration: vagina	183	50.0	54	17.0
Object penetration: vagina	0	0.0	2	0.6
Digital penetration: anus	7	1.9	5	1.6
Penile penetration: anus	21	5.7	11	3.5
Object penetration: anus	0	0.0	0	0.0
Forced masturbation (any)	10	2.7	20	6.3
Of victim, by suspect	6	1.6	14	4.4
Of suspect, by victim	5	1.4	8	2.5
Other incident characteristics				
Condom used	15	4.1	11	3.5
Suspect ejaculation	49	13.4	22	6.9

Notes
a. Percentages will not total to 100.0% because case records may not have indicated any weapon use, only one type of weapon use, or multiple types of weapons use.

[54] Chi-square = 7.582; *p*=.006.

Individual Characteristics

A total of 3,140 individuals were identified in the 638 SA/SAM case records sampled. Of these individuals, 702 (22.4%) were suspects, 786 (25%) were victims, and 1,652 were witnesses/third parties. Each of these three role categories was approximately evenly split across SA and SAM case records (see Table 31).

Table 31.
Distribution of individuals identified in sexual assault (SA) and sexual abuse of a minor (SAM) case records, by offense type and individual role

	Offense Type			
	Sexual assault		Sexual abuse of a minor	
Individual Role	Number	Percent[a]	Number	Percent[a]
Suspect	379	22.8	323	21.9
Victim	393	23.6	393	26.7
Witness/third party	894	53.7	758	51.4
TOTALS	1,666	100.1	1,474	100.0

Notes
a. Totals may not sum to 100.0% due to rounding error.

Suspect and victim demographic characteristics. With the exception of age, the demographic characteristics of SA/SAM suspects and victims were, on the whole, very similar (see Table 32). Very large majorities of both SA/SAM suspects and SA/SAM victims were identified in case records as being of Alaska Native/American Indian descent. More than 90% of SA suspects (92.4%; n=350) and SA victims (94.7%; n=372), and more than 80% of SAM suspects (83.6%; n=270) and victims (87.8%; n=345), were identified as Alaska Native/American Indian. With the exception of small minorities of Caucasian/White SAM suspects (5.9%; n=19) and victims (4.6%; n=18), members of racial/ethnic groups other than Alaska Native/American were rarely reported in case records.

Table 32.
Race/ethnicity of sexual assault (SA) and sexual abuse of a minor (SAM) suspects and victims, by offense type

	Offense Type			
	Sexual assault		Sexual abuse of a minor	
Suspect Race/Ethnicity	Number	Percent[a]	Number	Percent[a]
Alaska Native/American Indian	350	92.4	270	83.6
Asian	4	1.1	1	0.3
Black/African American	1	0.3	1	0.3
Caucasian/White	7	1.9	19	5.9
Missing/unknown	17	4.5	32	9.9
TOTALS	379	100.2	323	100.0

Table 32 {continued}
Race/ethnicity of sexual assault (SA) and sexual abuse of a minor (SAM) suspects and victims, by offense type

	Offense Type			
	Sexual assault		Sexual abuse of a minor	
Victim Race/Ethnicity	Number	Percent[a]	Number	Percent[a]
Alaska Native/American Indian	372	94.7	345	87.8
Asian	1	0.3	2	0.5
Black/African American	0	0.0	0	0.0
Caucasian/White	7	1.8	18	4.6
Missing/unknown	13	3.3	28	7.1
TOTALS	393	100.1	393	100.0

Notes
a. Totals may not sum to 100.0% due to rounding error.

A similar pattern was found with respect to the sex/gender of SA/SAM offenders and victims. For both types of offenses, suspects were predominantly male, while victims were predominantly female. One notable exception to this pattern was that SAM cases were significantly[55] more likely than SA cases to involve male victims (17.6% vs. 5.6%).

Table 33.
Sex/gender of sexual assault (SA) and sexual abuse of a minor (SAM) suspects and victims, by offense type

	Offense Type			
	Sexual assault		Sexual abuse of a minor	
Suspect Sex/Gender	Number	Percent[a]	Number	Percent[a]
Male	369	97.4	302	93.5
Female	5	1.3	15	4.6
Missing/unknown	5	1.3	6	1.9
TOTALS	379	100.0	323	100.0

	Sexual assault		Sexual abuse of a minor	
Victim Sex/Gender	Number	Percent[a]	Number	Percent[a]
Male	22	5.6	69	17.6
Female	370	94.2	313	79.6
Missing/unknown	1	0.3	11	2.8
TOTALS	393	100.1	393	100.0

Notes
a. Totals may not sum to 100.0% due to rounding error.

[55] Chi-square = 30.461; *p*=.000.

With respect to age, SA and SAM case records differed markedly. Firstly, SAM suspects were significantly[56] older than SA suspects, on average. Whereas the average age of SAM suspects was 32.9 years, the average age of SA suspects was 29.3 years. Secondly, and not surprising given the distinction between the two offense categories, SAM victims were significantly[57] younger than SA victims. In fact, SA victims were nearly twice as old as SAM victims (23.2 years vs. 11.9 years), on average. As a result of SAM suspects being older, on average, than SA suspects, and SAM victims being younger, on average, than SA victims, the age differential between suspects and victims was substantially larger for SAM cases in comparison to SA cases.

Table 34.

Average age of sexual assault (SA) and sexual abuse of a minor (SAM) suspects and victims, by offense type

	Offense Type			
	Sexual assault		Sexual abuse of a minor	
Age Measure	Mean	SD	Number	SD
Suspect age	29.3 yrs	12.172	32.9 yrs	16.868
Victim age	23.2 yrs	11.237	11.9 yrs	5.856

Notes

a. SD=standard deviation

In addition to these three demographic characteristics – race/ethnicity, sex/gender, age – information pertaining to potential disabilities of suspects and victims was also collected. Three broad classifications of disability were coded from investigator narratives and other supporting documentation contained in each case record: (1) cognitive/developmental disability, (2) psychiatric/mental health disability or condition, and (3) physical disability. In total, only five (5) SA/SAM suspects were noted as having some form of cognitive/developmental disability. No other forms of disability were noted for suspects in the case records. In contrast, 14 SA/SAM victims were noted by investigators as having some form of cognitive/developmental disability, 3 SA/SAM victims were noted as having a physical disability, and 1 SA/SAM victim was noted as having a psychiatric/mental health disability or condition.

Victim alcohol and drug use. SA/SAM victim alcohol and drug use was measured using eight indicators. These eight measures captured three dimensions of alcohol and drug use: (1) timing (before or after assault), (2) substance used (alcohol or illicit drugs), and (3) voluntariness (voluntarily or involuntarily used). SA and SAM victim alcohol/drug intoxication was measured separately from alcohol and drug use. A single item was used to indicate whether or not SA and SAM victims were documented in case records as being intoxicated (drugs or alcohol) when assault incidents occurred.

The case record review of the sampled case records revealed five main findings. First, contrary to the widely held belief among police and other criminal justice officials that alcohol is involved in nearly "all" SA/SAM incidents, only slim majorities of SA/SAM victims and suspects were

[56] t=3.076; p=.002.

[57] t=16.469; p=.000.

documented in case records as having consumed alcohol prior to or following assaults. Second, illicit drug use by either SA/SAM suspects or victims was relatively rare, and certainly less commonly observed than alcohol use. Third, the case record review shows that alcohol use by suspects and victims was much more commonly observed in SA incidents than in SAM incidents. This difference was particularly pronounced for SA and SAM victims. Fourth, post-assault use of alcohol or drugs was infrequently documented in case records. Fifth, and finally, among SA and SAM victims, compelled consumption of alcohol or illicit drugs was rarely observed.

Table 35.

Frequency of alcohol and/or drug use by sexual assault and sexual abuse of a minor victims, by offense type

	Offense Type			
	Sexual assault (n=393)		Sexual abuse of a minor (n=393)	
Victim Alcohol/Drug Use	Number	Percent[a]	Number	Percent[a]
Voluntary alcohol, before assault	199	50.6	24	6.1
Involuntary alcohol, before assault	4	1.0	2	0.5
Voluntary alcohol, after assault	5	1.3	7	1.8
Involuntary alcohol, after assault	1	0.3	0	0.0
Voluntary drug, before assault	18	4.6	2	0.5
Involuntary drug, before assault	1	0.3	1	0.3
Voluntary drug, after assault	0	0.0	0	0.0
Involuntary drug, after assault	1	0.3	0	0.0

Notes

a. Multiple response items. Percentages will not total to 100%.

Table 35 presents the detailed results for SA and SAM victims. Approximately half (50.6%; n=199) of SA victims were documented in case records as having voluntarily consumed alcohol prior to the assault. In contrast, only 6.1% (n=24) of SAM victims were documented as having consumed alcohol prior to being assaulted. This percentage difference was highly significant[58]. Less than 5% (4.6%; n=18) of SA victims were documented as having voluntarily used illicit drugs prior to being assaulted. Even fewer (0.5%; n=2) SAM victims were found to have voluntarily used illicit drugs prior to being assaulted. Very few SA/SAM victims were documented in case records as having been forced to consume alcohol or illicit drugs, or to consume alcohol or illicit drugs (voluntarily or involuntarily) following assault incidents. Overall, 51.4% of SA victims consumed any alcohol (voluntarily or involuntarily) prior to or following assault incidents. For SAM victims, it was 6.4%. Only 5.1% of SA victims and 0.8% of SAM victims used any drugs (voluntarily or involuntarily) prior to or following incidents.

Table 36 shows the frequency distribution for the victim alcohol/drug intoxication measure. The data in Table 36 suggest that when SA and SAM victims had been drinking and/or using drugs,

[58] Chi-square = 191.728; *p*=.000.

they did so to the point of intoxication. For example, 50.6% of SA victims were documented in case records as drinking alcohol prior to their assault (see Table 35). As shown in Table 36, 46.1% (n=181) SA victims were noted in case records as being drunk when the assault occurred. Similar findings are shown for drug intoxication and use as well.

Table 36.
Frequency of alcohol and/or drug intoxication of sexual assault and sexual abuse of a minor victims, by offense type

	Offense Type			
	Sexual assault (n=393)		Sexual abuse of a minor (n=393)	
Type of Intoxication	Number	Percent[a]	Number	Percent[a]
Alcohol	181	46.1	22	5.6
Drug	7	1.8	1	0.3
Both alcohol and drug	7	1.8	2	0.5
Neither alcohol nor drug	169	43.0	330	84.0
Missing/unknown	29	7.4	38	9.7
TOTALS	393	100.1	393	100.1

Notes
a. Totals may not sum to 100.0% due to rounding error.

Suspect alcohol and drug use. SA/SAM suspect alcohol and drug was measured using six items. The primary focus of these items was to measure suspect alcohol and/or illicit drug intoxication/inebriation when the assault occurred. Additional items were included to capture whether suspects consumed alcohol and/or drugs with victims, both before and after the assault.

Table 37.
Frequency of alcohol and/or drug use by sexual assault and sexual abuse of a minor suspects, by offense type

	Offense Type			
	Sexual assault (n=379)		Sexual abuse of a minor (n=323)	
Suspect Alcohol/Drug Use	Number	Percent[a]	Number	Percent[a]
Under influence of alcohol when assault occurred	228	60.2	61	18.9
Use alcohol w/ victim, before assault	160	42.2	18	5.6
Use alcohol w/ victim, after assault	4	1.1	0	0.0
Under influence of drugs when assault occurred	19	5.0	8	2.5
Use drugs w/ victim, before assault	11	2.9	4	1.2
Use drugs w/ victim, after assault	2	0.5	0	0.0

Notes
a. Multiple response items. Percentages will not total to 100%.

Table 37 presents the detailed results for SA and SAM suspects. Nearly two-thirds (60.2%;

n=228) of SA suspects were documented in case records as being under the influence of alcohol when the assault occurred. This was significantly[59] higher than the percentage of SAM suspects who were documented as being under the influence of alcohol when the assault occurred (18.9%; n=61). It was also significantly[60] higher than the percentage of SA victims who were documented as having consumed alcohol prior to being assaulted. Case records also indicated that 42.2% (n=160) SA suspects consumed alcohol with victims prior to assault incidents. Only slightly more than 5% (5.6%; n=18) of SAM suspects consumed alcohol with victims prior to assault incidents. This difference, too, was highly significant[61]. Thus, these data suggest that SA suspects were more likely than their victims to have used alcohol prior to assault incidents, that SA suspects were more likely to be under the influence of alcohol when assault incidents occurred than SAM suspects, and SA suspects were more likely than SAM suspects to consume alcohol with victims prior to assault incidents. Importantly, however, among SA suspects who were documented as being under the influence of alcohol when assaults occurred, more than 70% (70.2%; n=160) were also documented as drinking with victims prior to the assault. The data presented in Table 37 also show that SA and SAM suspects, like SA and SAM victims, were unlikely to be under the influence of illicit drugs. Thus, to the extent that substance use/abuse were implicated in the SA and SAM incidents sampled, it was much more likely for SA/SAM suspects and victims to have consumed alcohol than to have used illicit drugs.

Table 38.
Frequency of injuries sustained by sexual assault and sexual abuse of a minor victims, by offense type

	Offense Type			
	Sexual assault (n=393)		Sexual abuse of a minor (n=393)	
Victim Injury	Number	Percent[a]	Number	Percent[a]
Genital injury	92	23.4	46	11.7
Non-genital injury	106	27.0	25	6.4
Bruising	78	19.9	7	1.8
Lacerations or bite marks	39	9.9	5	1.3
Bone fractures (including teeth)	1	0.3	0	0.0
Scrapes or abrasions	6	1.5	0	0.0
Pain	94	23.9	41	10.4

Notes
a. Multiple response items. Percentages will not total to 100%.

Injuries sustained by victims. A total of seven items were coded during the review of each case record to document injuries sustained by SA and SAM victims. A single item was used to measure whether or not documentation (e.g., forensic medical exams, other medical documentation, interview transcripts, investigator narratives) included within case records indicated that victims sustained any genital injuries. Six additional items were used to capture

[59] Chi-square = 122.648; *p*=.000.
[60] *t*=2.662; *df*=770; *p*=.004.
[61] Chi-square = 123.715; *p*=.000.

information pertaining to the non-genital injuries suffered by SA and SAM victims, including a composite non-genital injury measure, as well as separate indicators for bruising, lacerations or bite marks, bone fractures (including teeth), scrapes or abrasions, and victim complaints of physical pain. The distribution of documented victim injuries is provided in Table 38.

Table 39.

Frequency of forensic medical examinations of sexual assault and sexual abuse of a minor victims, by offense type

	Offense Type			
	Sexual assault (n=393)		Sexual abuse of a minor (n=393)	
Forensic Medical Examination	Number	Percent[a]	Number	Percent[a]
Underwent examination	160	40.7	39	9.9
Refused examination	17	4.3	2	0.5

Notes

a. Multiple response items. Percentages will not total to 100%.

The detection and treatment of victim injuries may have occurred within the context of a forensic medial examination when victims were treated by other medical providers. Less than half of SA victims (40.7%; n=160) and less than a tenth (9.9%; n=39) of SAM victims were documented in case records as undergoing a forensic medical exams (see Table 39). Case records documented 17 SA victims (4.3%) and 2 SAM victims (0.5%) who refused forensic medical exams.

The case record review also included measures of the frequency with which victims received medical treatment beyond what they may have received as part of a forensic medical exam. Table 40 shows the percentage of SA and SAM victims who received treatment for genital and non-genital injuries, as well as treatment for severe alcohol and/or drug intoxication. Overall, the data show that it was relatively unlikely that SA and SAM victims would receive medical treatment for genital and/or non-genital injuries outside the context of a forensic medical exam if they received treatment at all.

Table 40.

Frequency of medical treatment received by sexual assault and sexual abuse of a minor victims, by offense type

	Offense Type			
	Sexual assault (n=393)		Sexual abuse of a minor (n=393)	
Received Medical Treatment For:	Number	Percent[a]	Number	Percent[a]
Genital injuries	23	5.9	16	4.1
Non-genital injuries	33	8.4	3	0.8
Alcohol/drug intoxication	4	1.0	1	0.3

Notes

a. Multiple response items. Percentages will not total to 100%.

Victim incapacitation. A separate measure was used to indicate whether or not, at the time of the assault, SA and SAM victims were incapacitated due to alcohol/drug intoxication, physical injury, or because they were incapacitated for some other reason (e.g., sleeping when the assault occurred). Results are presented in Table 41.

Table 41.
Frequency of incapacitation of sexual assault and sexual abuse of a minor victims, by offense type

	Offense Type			
	Sexual assault (n=393)		Sexual abuse of a minor (n=393)	
Type of Intoxication	Number	Percent[a]	Number	Percent[a]
Unconscious: Intoxication	73	18.6	2	0.5
Unconscious: Trauma or injury	2	0.5	0	0.0
Unconscious: Other (e.g., sleep)	83	21.1	55	14.0
Conscious	213	54.2	295	75.1
Missing/unknown	22	5.6	41	10.4
TOTALS	393	100.0	393	100.0

Notes
a. Totals may not sum to 100.0% due to rounding error.

Overall, it was more likely than not that SA (54.2%; n=213) and SAM (75.1%; n=295) victims were conscious when they were assaulted. SA victims were significantly[62] less likely to be conscious than SAM victims, however. On the other hand, SA victims were more likely than SAM victims to have been unconscious due to intoxication and unconscious for other reasons (e.g., sleep) than SAM victims.

Victim resistance. The case record review utilized seven items to capture information about the actions and strategies of resistance used by SA and SAM victims. The measures used ranged from more "passive" actions/strategies deployed by SA and SAM victims such as cooperating or pretending to cooperate with their attackers, to yelling/screaming for help, to attempting to run away or escape, to physically resisting/assaulting the suspect. Table 42 presents the frequency distributions for each of these measures for both SA and SAM victims.

Among SA victims, the most commonly used resistance strategy documented in case records was attempting to reason/plead with suspects (27.7%; n=109), followed by physically resisting or attacking the suspect (20.4%; n=80), attempting to run away/escape (19.1%; n=75), attempting to contact police (14.0%; n=55), cooperating or pretending to cooperate with the suspect (14.0%; n=55); and yelling/screaming for help (11.2%; n=44). Only two SA victims in the sample were noted as having threatened the suspect. Sixty percent of SA victims used at least one of these strategies to resist the assault. Among these SA victims, the average number of strategies used was 1.8 (s.d.=.910).

The most frequently recorded strategy of resistance for SAM victims was to cooperate or pretend

[62] Chi-square = 93.861; *p*=.000.

to cooperate with suspects (24.7%; n=97), followed by attempting to reason or plead with their attacker (13.2%; n=52); attempting to run away or escape (9.4%; n=37), physically resisting or attacking the suspect (6.6%; n=26), attempting to contact the police or other authorities (5.9%; n=23), and yelling/screaming for help (4.3%; n=17). Two SAM victims threatened the suspect. In all, less than half of SAM suspects (47.3%; n=186) engaged in one or more of these resistance behaviors. The average number of strategies used by SAM victims was 1.4 (s.d.=.593).

Table 42.
Frequency of acts/strategies of resistance engaged by sexual assault and sexual abuse of a minor victims, by offense type

	Offense Type			
	Sexual assault (n=393)		Sexual abuse of a minor (n=393)	
Resistance Type	Number	Percent[a]	Number	Percent[a]
Cooperate/pretend to cooperate	55	14.0	97	24.7
Attempt to reason/plead with suspect	109	27.7	52	13.2
Yell/scream for help	44	11.2	17	4.3
Attempt to contact police/authorities	55	14.0	23	5.9
Threaten suspect	2	0.5	2	0.5
Attempt to run away/escape	75	19.1	37	9.4
Physically resist or attack suspect	80	20.4	26	6.6
One or more strategies	236	60.8	186	47.3

Notes
a. Multiple response items. Percentages will not total to 100%.

The data presented in Table 42 show marked differences between SA and SAM with respect to the likelihood that these resistance strategies would be used. Whereas 60.8% of SA victims used one or more strategies just 47.3% of SAM victims did. This difference was highly significant statistically[63]. Given wide age differences between these two groups of victims, coupled with the large differences (on average) in the ages of SA and SAM suspects, this finding is not unexpected.

Victim disclosure. The case record review included the coding of 15 separate indicators of victim notification (see Table 43). On the whole, SAM victims (60.1%; n=236) were significantly[64] more likely than SA victims (48.9%; n=192) to disclose an assault incident to at least one other person prior to when AST was notified. Beyond this aggregate measure of assault disclosure, however, Table 31 reveals different patterns of disclosure between the SA and SAM victims who did choose to tell someone about what happened to them. For example, in particular, SAM victims (38.2%; n=150) were more than twice as likely[65] to disclose their assault to a parent or guardian than SA victims (16.0%; n=63). In contrast, SA victims (13.7%; n=54) were

[63] Chi-square = 12.792; *p*=.000.
[64] Chi-square = 9.931; *p*=.000.
[65] Chi-square = 48.745; *p*=.000.

significantly[66] more likely than SAM victims (8.9%; n=35) to disclose to a friend. SA victims were also more likely to disclose to a spouse or intimate partner. Once again, due to the differences in SA victim and SAM victim ages (on average), these findings are perhaps not surprising. Notably, for both SA victims and SAM victims the person they were most likely to confide in (if they disclosed the assault to anyone) was a parent, and both groups were equally likely to disclose an assault to a family member other than a parent/guardian or spouse. In general, if SA and SAM victims disclosed an assault incident to anyone, it was likely to be to a member of their circle of intimates: parents or other family members, spouses and intimate partners, or friends. Aside from medical professionals (5.6% and 3.3%, respectively), it was highly unlikely that SA and SAM victims shared what happened to them with anyone prior to AST being notified.

Table 43.
Frequency of disclosures by sexual assault and sexual abuse of a minor victims, by offense type

	Offense Type			
	Sexual assault (n=393)		Sexual abuse of a minor (n=393)	
Disclosure To:	Number	Percent[a]	Number	Percent[a]
Any disclosure	192	48.9	236	60.1
Intimate partner/spouse	33	8.4	2	0.5
Parent/guardian	63	16.0	150	38.2
Other family member	63	16.0	76	19.3
Friend	54	13.7	35	8.9
Therapist/counselor	7	1.8	19	4.8
Crisis line/advocate	3	0.8	7	1.8
Medical professional	22	5.6	13	3.3
Clergy/spiritual advisor	0	0.0	1	0.3
Employer/co-worker	1	0.3	0	0.0
Child protection/social worker	4	1.0	1	0.3
Other police besides AST	3	0.8	1	0.3
Teacher/school employee	8	2.0	8	2.0
Other authorities	2	0.5	1	0.3
Stranger	2	0.5	0	0.0
Suspect's intimate partner/spouse/ family	2	0.5	1	0.3

Notes
a. Multiple response items. Percentages will not total to 100%.

Suspect-Victim relationship. A single multi-category variable was used to collect information between suspects and victims. The measure was coded as the suspect's relationship to the victim.

[66] Chi-square = 4.574; *p*=.032.

Therefore the base number used in percentage calculations is the total number of SA and SAM suspects included in the sample. Table 44 presents the findings for both SA and SAM suspects.

Table 44.
Victim–Suspect relationship, by offense type

	Offense Type			
	Sexual assault (n=379)		Sexual abuse of a minor (n=323)	
Suspect–Victim Relationship	Number	Percent[a]	Number	Percent[a]
Acquaintance	128	33.8	103	31.9
Friend	99	26.1	29	9.0
Current intimate partner	16	4.2	17	5.3
Former intimate partner	23	6.1	5	1.6
Current spouse	1	0.3	0	0.0
Relative	77	20.3	111	34.4
Authority figure (to victim)	6	1.6	31	9.6
Stranger	8	2.1	7	2.2
Other (unspecified)	1	0.3	0	0.0
Unknown/missing	20	5.3	20	6.2
TOTALS	379	100.1	323	100.2

Notes
a. Totals may not sum to 100.0% due to rounding error.

Among SA suspects, the most common relationship with victims was as an acquaintance (33.8%; n=128). In other words, SA suspects were most likely to know the victim, but not intimately or well. The second most frequent suspect – victim relationship noted in SA case records was friend. More than a quarter of SA suspects (26.1%; n=99) were friends with victims prior to the assault. The third most common relationship between SA suspects and victims was relative. Approximately 20% of SA suspects (20.3%; n=77) were the fathers, mothers, uncles, aunts, grandparents, or siblings of SA victims. About 1 out of every 10 SA suspects (10.6%; n=40) were either the current or former intimate partner/spouse of victims. Approximately 2 % (2.1%; n=8) of SA suspects had no previous relationship with victims.

Among SAM suspects, the most common relationship with victims was as a relative (34.4%; n=111). That is, SAM suspects were most likely to be the father, mother, uncle, aunt, grandparent or sibling of SAM victims. The second most common relationship between SAM suspects and SAM victims was that of acquaintance (31.9%; n=103). SAM suspects were in formal positions of authority (relative to victims) approximately 10% (9.6%; n=31) of the time. Nine percent (n=29) of SAM suspects were friends with victims, and nearly 7% (6.8%; n=22) of SAM suspect were either the current or former intimate partner of victims. Like SA suspects, SAM suspects were unlikely to have had no previous relationship with victims.

With respect to contrasts, two statistically significant differences emerged. SA suspects were significantly[67] more likely than SAM suspects to have been friends with, or former intimate partners[68] of, victims prior to the assault. SAM suspects, on the other hand, were significantly more likely than SA suspects to have been a relative[69] of, or an authority figure[70] to, victims.

An additional measure coded in the case record review, but not presented in Table 32, was whether or not suspect and victims shared a residence (cohabitated) when SA and SAM incidents took place. Once again, there was a significant difference. SAM suspects (20.4%; n=66) were significantly[71] more likely than SA suspects (7.9%; n=30) to share a residence with victims.

Victim nonconsent. Two measures of victim consent/nonconsent were also included to capture information pertaining to SA and SAM victims granting of and/or withdrawal of consent for sexual contact. Results are shown in Table 45.

Table 45.
Frequency of sexual assault and sexual abuse of a minor victims' granting and withdrawal of consent for sexual contact, by offense type

	Offense Type			
	Sexual assault (n=393)		Sexual abuse of a minor (n=393)	
Victim Consent	Number	Percent[a]	Number	Percent[a]
Initially consented to sexual contact	24	6.1	24	6.1
Withdrew consent for sexual contact	8	2.0	2	0.5

Notes

According to the documentation provided in case records, only 6% of SA and SAM victims initially consented to sexual contact with suspects. Fully a third (33%; n=8) of SA victims who initially provided consent for sexual contact actively withdrew that consent at some point during the assault. Substantially fewer case records (8.3%; n=2) indicated withdrawal of consent among SAM victims.

Data were also collected on whether or not SA and SAM suspects admitted to investigators that they had sexual contact with victims. Approximately 30% (30.9%; n=117) SA suspects and 25.4% (n=82) of SAM suspects did not dispute having sexual contact, and in fact told investigators they had sexual contact with victims. More than half of SA suspects (59.8%; n=70) who admitted having sexual contact claimed that victims consented. Nearly a third (31.7%; n=26) of SAM suspects also claimed that sexual contact was consensual.

[67] Chi-square = 36.494; *p*=.000.
[68] Chi-square = 11.103; *p*=.004.
[69] Chi-square = 18.927; *p*=.000.
[70] Chi-square = 23.991; *p*=.000.
[71] Chi-square = 23.147; *p*=.000.

Table 46.
Frequency of sexual assault and sexual abuse of a minor suspects' admissions of sexual contact and claims of victims' consent for sexual contact, by offense type

	Offense Type			
	Sexual assault (n=379)		Sexual abuse of a minor (n=323)	
Suspect Statement	Number	Percent[a]	Number	Percent[a]
Admitted to sexual contact w/ victim	117	30.9	82	25.4
Claimed victim consent	70	18.5	26	8.1

Notes

Investigative activities and outcomes. Detailed information was collected pertaining to the experiences of both SA/SAM victims and suspects in the investigative process. Table 47 presents the measures for the data that were collected for SA and SAM victims.

Table 47.
Frequency of investigative activities and outcomes for sexual assault and sexual abuse of a minor victims, by offense type

	Offense Type			
	Sexual assault (n=393)		Sexual abuse of a minor (n=393)	
Investigative Activity	Number	Percent[a]	Number	Percent[a]
Interviewed	355	90.3	324	82.4
In-person	292	74.3	299	76.1
Telephonically	59	15.0	14	3.6
Interview recorded: Audio	316	80.4	270	68.7
Interview recorded: Video	34	8.7	109	27.7
Statements internally consistent	329	83.7	291	74.1
Interviewee uncooperative[a]	20	5.1	19	4.8
Uncooperative with investigation[a]	46	11.7	28	7.1
Notified of rights, resources	241	61.3	161	41.0

Notes
a. As documented by investigators in case file.

Case records documented interviews with large majorities of SA (90.3%; n=355) and SAM (82.4%; n=324) victims. The observed difference was statistically significant[72]. Given an interview, it was equally likely that SA and SAM victims would undergo an in-person interview with investigators (74.3% and 76.1%, respectively). However, telephonic interviews were documented in case records more frequently for SA victims (15.0%; n=59) than for SAM victims 3.6%; n=14). SA victims were significantly[73] more likely to have audio recordings made of their interviews as well; however, SAM victims were significantly[74] more likely to have their

[72] Chi-square = 10.397; *p*=.001.
[73] Chi-square = 14.191; *p*=.000.
[74] Chi-square = 48.084; *p*=.000.

interviews recorded on video. Close examination of case record narratives and interview transcripts showed that both SA (83.7%; n=329) and SAM (74.1%; n=291) victims' statements were internally consistent, although SA victims' statements demonstrated a higher[75] level of internal consistency. Within the specific context if interviews with investigators, interviewee non-cooperation was only rarely documented in case records. However, when the entire case record was coded for SA and SAM victim non-cooperation[76] a significant difference between SA and SAM victims surfaced. SA victims (11.7%; n=46) were significantly[77] more likely to be uncooperative with the investigation than SAM victims (7.1%; n=21). Finally, the last item included in Table 35 reveals that SA victims (61.3%; n=241) were more likely[78] than SAM victims (41.0; n=161) to be informed by investigators of their rights and the resources available to crime victims.

Despite the statistical differences noted above, it is important to note that, in general, the overall patterns of investigative activities and outcomes were quite similar for SA and SAM victims. Large majorities of both groups were interviewed. When interviewed, roughly three-quarters of SA and SAM victims were had in-person interviews with investigators. Recordings – either audio or video – were likely to be made. The statements made by SA and SAM victims were found to have high rates of internal consistency. Non-cooperation with interviews and the investigation more generally was uncommon.

Table 48 presents the investigative activities and outcomes for SA and SAM suspects. As was the case with SA and SAM victims, there was a great deal of pattern consistency in the investigative activities and outcomes of SA and SAM suspects. However, there were fewer statistically significant differences in the percentages observed. The only measure for which there was a significant percentage difference was for the likelihood that an audio recording was made. SA suspects (67.8%; n=257) were significantly more likely than SAM suspects (58.2%; n=188) to have an audio recording made of their interview with investigators[79].

Overall, less than half of SA and SAM suspects were present when officers arrived. Most SA and SAM suspects were interviewed by investigators, and when they were it was more likely than not that they were interviewed in-person. A majority of the interviews conducted with SA and SAM suspects were recorded with either audio or video equipment. About half of SA and SAM suspects provided statements that were internally consistent, and SA and SAM suspects were only rarely described by investigators as non-cooperative in interviews and the investigation more generally. Arrest of SA and SAM suspects was documented in case records relatively

[75] Chi-square = 15.071; *p*=.001.

[76] During the case record review process interview non-cooperation and investigation non-cooperation were coded separately. In some cases, interviewees were cooperative during interviews, but withdrew their cooperation at later stages of the investigation – for example, telling investigators they would no longer participate in the investigation, telling investigators not to contact them again, refusing to answer the phone or return messages, not answering questions during follow-up interviews with investigators, or refusing to undergo a forensic medical examination, among others. Both of these variables were coded as "uncooperative" after pre-testing the case record review instrumentation against actual case records and discovering that while investigators only rarely documented cooperation, they frequently made extensive notes detailing perceived non-cooperation with the investigation.

[77] Chi-square = 4.833; *p*=.028.

[78] Chi-square = 32.587; *p*=.000.

[79] Chi-square = 6.933; *p*=.008.

infrequently (even though an arrest may have be affected at a later date). Arrest warrants for SA and SAM suspects were documented only rarely.

Table 48.
Frequency of investigative activities and outcomes for sexual assault and sexual abuse of a minor suspects, by offense type

	Offense Type			
	Sexual assault (n=379)		Sexual abuse of a minor (n=323)	
Investigative Activity	Number	Percent[a]	Number	Percent[a]
Present when officers arrived	178	47.0	130	40.3
Interviewed	275	72.6	222	68.7
In-person	250	66.0	199	61.6
Telephonically	21	5.5	13	4.0
Interview recorded: Audio	257	67.8	188	58.2
Interview recorded: Video	2	0.5	7	2.2
Statements internally consistent	222	58.6	179	55.4
Interviewee uncooperative	21	5.5	11	3.4
Arrested	77	20.3	51	15.8
Warrant obtained for arrest	17	4.5	11	3.4

Notes

Witness/third party characteristics. As shown in Table 31 above, a majority of the individuals involved in SA and SAM investigations were witnesses and third parties. In total, this group constituted 53.7% (n=894) of the individuals identified in SA case records, and 51.4% (n=758) of the individuals identified in SAM case records. Both SA and SAM case records documented between 2 and 3 witnesses/third parties (average for both case types was 2.4 witnesses/third parties per case record). This section of the report provides an overall description of these individuals and their role in SA and SAM investigations.

Table 49.
Race/ethnicity of sexual assault (SA) and sexual abuse of a minor (SAM) witnesses/third parties, by offense type

	Offense Type			
	Sexual assault		Sexual abuse of a minor	
Witness Race/Ethnicity	Number	Percent[a]	Number	Percent[a]
Alaska Native/American Indian	804	89.9	617	81.4
Asian	6	0.7	8	1.1
Black/African American	1	0.1	0	0.0
Caucasian/White	51	5.7	90	11.9
Missing/unknown	32	3.6	43	5.7
TOTALS	894	100.0	758	100.1

Notes
a. Totals may not sum to 100.0% due to rounding error.

Table 49 provides a summary description of the race/ethnicity of the witnesses/third parties identified in the case record review, for both SA and SAM cases. Overall, the racial/ethnic composition of the witnesses/third parties was very similar to the racial/ethnic composition of SA/SAM victims and suspects: overwhelmingly Alaska Native/American Indian, with only limited representation of people from other racial/ethnic groups. One exception to this was a relatively "high" percentage of Caucasian/White (11.9%; n=90) witnesses/third parties involved in SAM investigations.

Witnesses/third parties distinguished themselves from SA/SAM victims and suspects when it came to sex/gender composition, however. Whereas SA/SAM victims were overwhelmingly female, and SA/SAM suspects were overwhelmingly male, the sex/gender composition of witnesses/third parties was more evenly balanced (see Table 50).

Table 50.
Sex/gender of sexual assault (SA) and sexual abuse of a minor (SAM) witnesses/third parties, by offense type

	Offense Type			
	Sexual assault		Sexual abuse of a minor	
Witness Sex/Gender	Number	Percent[a]	Number	Percent[a]
Male	412	46.1	247	32.6
Female	475	53.1	493	65.0
Missing/unknown	7	0.8	18	2.4
TOTALS	894	100.0	758	100.0

Notes
a. Totals may not sum to 100.0% due to rounding error.

The sex/gender composition for witnesses/third parties was nearly evenly balanced in SA case records. Slightly less than half (46.1%; n=412) were male, and slightly more than half (53.1%; n=475) were female. In contrast, the sex/gender composition of witnesses/third parties was predominantly female (65.0%; n=493). These differences were statistically significant[80].

The average ages of witnesses/third parties in SA and SAM case records are presented in Table 51. On average, witnesses/third parties in SA cases were 33.3 years of age. Witnesses/third parties in SAM cases were slightly older: 35.4 years. This difference was statistically significant[81].

[80] Chi-square = 35.532; *p*=.000.
[81] *t*=2.620; *df*=1,473; *p*=.009.

Table 51.
Average age of sexual assault (SA) and sexual abuse of a minor (SAM) witnesses/third parties, by offense type

	Offense Type			
	Sexual assault		Sexual abuse of a minor	
Age Measure	Mean	SD	Number	SD
Witness/third party age	33.3 yrs	14.935	35.4 yrs	15.415

Notes
a. SD=standard deviation

Table 52 shows the distribution of relationships between witnesses/third parties and SA and SAM suspects. Among SA witnesses/third parties, the most frequently observed relationship was that of an acquaintance (34.9%; n=312), followed by relative (19.6%; n=175), and friend (19.5%; n=174). The relationship between witnesses/third parties and SA suspects could not be gleaned from case records for 15.4% (n=138) of instances. The most frequently observed relationship between witnesses/third parties and SAM suspects was also acquaintance (31.9%; n=242), but that was followed closely by relative (31.1%; n=236). Witnesses/third parties were much more likely[82] to be a relative of SAM suspects than SA suspects. In contrast, witnesses/third parties were much more likely[83] to be the friend of SA suspects (19.5%; n=174) than SAM suspects (7.9%; n=60).

Table 52.
Witness–Suspect relationship, by offense type

	Offense Type			
	Sexual assault (n=894)		Sexual abuse of a minor (n=758)	
Witness–Victim Relationship	Number	Percent[a]	Number	Percent[a]
Acquaintance	312	34.9	242	31.9
Friend	174	19.5	60	7.9
Current intimate partner	15	1.7	15	2.0
Former intimate partner	2	0.2	12	1.6
Current spouse	12	1.3	14	1.9
Relative	175	19.6	236	31.1
Authority figure (to suspect)	13	1.5	24	3.2
Stranger	53	5.9	44	5.8
Unknown/missing	138	15.4	111	14.7
TOTALS	894	100.0	758	100.1

Notes
a. Totals may not sum to 100.0% due to rounding error.

[82] Chi-square = 31.082; *p*=.000.
[83] Chi-square = 46.062; *p*=.000.

Table 53 presents the distribution of relationships between witnesses/third parties and SA and SAM victims. The most commonly observed relationship between witnesses/third parties and SA victims was that of relative (34.0%; n=304), followed by friend (24.2%; n=216), and then acquaintance (18.2%; n=163). Substantially smaller percentages of witnesses/third parties were the current or former intimate partners or spouses of SA victims, or individuals who occupied positions of authority (relative to victims). Fewer than 5% of witnesses/third parties were strangers to SA victims. Among witnesses/third parties in SAM cases, there was a much greater likelihood[84] that they were relatives of victims (50.9% vs. 34.0%). Witnesses/third parties were also more likely[85] to be authority figures to SAM victims (13.6%; n=103) than to SA victims (5.2%; n=46). As was the case in SA cases, fewer than 5% of witnesses/third parties were strangers to SAM victims.

Table 53.
Witness–Victim relationship, by offense type

	Offense Type			
	Sexual assault (n=894)		Sexual abuse of a minor (n=758)	
Witness–Victim Relationship	Number	Percent[a]	Number	Percent[a]
Acquaintance	163	18.2	114	15.0
Friend	216	24.2	67	8.8
Current intimate partner	34	3.8	3	0.4
Former intimate partner	0	0.0	1	0.1
Current spouse	11	1.2	0	0.0
Relative	304	34.0	386	50.9
Authority figure (to victim)	46	5.2	103	13.6
Stranger	38	4.3	25	3.3
Unknown/missing	82	9.2	59	7.8
TOTALS	894	100.1	758	99.9

Notes
a. Totals may not sum to 100.0% due to rounding error.

Relatively few witnesses/third parties identified in the case record review were "eye witnesses" to SA and SAM incidents. Slightly more than 13% (13.1%; n=117) of witnesses/third parties in SA cases and 7.8% (n=59) of witnesses/third parties in SAM cases directly witnessed assaults or their immediate aftermath (data not shown). Irrespective of whether or not they were an "eye witness" to events, more than a quarter (25.9%; n=196) of witnesses/third parties to SAM incidents and 14.5% (n=130) of witnesses/third parties to SA incidents reported them to police or other authorities (data not shown). SAM victims directly shared what happened to them with nearly a third of the witnesses/third parties included in the sample (32.7%; n=248). SA victims disclosed to more than a quarter of SA witnesses/third parties (26.3%; n=235) in the sample (data not shown).

[84] Chi-square = 50.412; *p*=.000.
[85] Chi-square = 37.229; *p*=.000.

Charge Characteristics

Charging data were collected from two sources: AST case records, and case file records obtained from the Alaska Department of Law (DOL). The results presented in this section of the report are limited to the data obtained from DOL. Therefore, the findings discussed below are limited to the criminal charges that were formally recognized by prosecutors and that were subject to the criminal legal process beyond the initial inquires of police investigators.

Charge referral. The analysis begins with a summary of the charges that were recorded as "referred" by DOL. Out of the 683 SA and SAM case records included in the sample, 255 (37.3%) were recorded as referred by DOL. SA cases comprised 156 of the 255 cases recorded as referred by DOL (61.2%); SAM cases comprised 99 of the 255 cases recorded as referred by DOL (38.9%). In total, the 255 referred cases included 283 charges. The maximum number of separate charges referred in a single SA or SAM case was 27.

Table 54.
Distribution level and class of charges referred to DOL by AST, by offense type

	Case Type			
	Sexual assault (n=174)		Sexual abuse of a minor (n=109)	
Charge Level: Charge Class	Number	Percent[a]	Number	Percent[a]
Felony: Unclassified	85	48.9	33	30.3
Felony: Class A	2	1.2	1	0.9
Felony: Class B	72	41.4	56	51.4
Felony: Class C	13	7.5	19	17.4
Misdemeanor: Class A	1	0.6	0	0.0
Misdemeanor: Class B	1	0.6	0	0.0
TOTALS	174	100.2	109	100.0

Notes
a. Totals may not sum to 100.0% due to rounding error.

Table 54 shows the distribution of charges referred to DOL by AST investigators. Nearly all of the charges referred in SA cases (98.9%; n=172) and all of the charges referred in SAM cases were felonies. Among felony charges, the most frequently observed offense class was for charges levied in SA cases were unclassified felonies (48.9%; n=85), followed closely by Class B felonies (41.4%; n=72). Among SAM cases, Class B felonies were most common (51.4%; n=56) with unclassified felonies being the second most common (30.3%; n=33). Class C felony charges were much less common than unclassified or Class B charges in both SA and SAM cases (7.5% and 17.4%, respectively). Class A felony charges were exceedingly rare in both SA and SAM cases.

Table 55 shows the distribution of referral charges according to charge level and the type of case, rather than charge level and class. Nearly 90% (88.5%; n=154) of the charges included in SA cases were felony sexual assault charges. An additional 4.0% (n=7) charges identified in SA

cases at the referral stage of the criminal process were felony sexual abuse of a minor charges. Thirteen additional charge level–offense type combinations were observed in SA cases, including felony kidnapping charges (n=2), felony assault charges (n=1), felony property charges (n=6), misdemeanor assault (n=1), and misdemeanor harassment (n=1) charges.

In similar fashion, nearly 90% (85.3%; n=93) of the charges laid in SAM cases were felony sexual abuse of a minor charges. An additional 12.8% (n=14) of the charges identified in SAM cases at the referral stage of the criminal process were felony sexual assault charges. The two remaining charges in SAM cases were both for felony property crimes.

Table 55.
Distribution of level and offense type of charges referred to DOL by AST, by offense type

	Case Type			
	Sexual assault (n=174)		Sexual abuse of a minor (n=109)	
Charge Level: Offense Type	Number	Percent[a]	Number	Percent[a]
Felony: Sexual assault	154	88.5	14	12.8
Felony: Sexual abuse of a minor	7	4.0	93	85.3
Felony: Kidnapping	2	1.1	0	0.0
Felony: Assault	1	0.6	0	0.0
Felony: Property	6	3.5	2	1.8
Felony: Other	2	1.1	0	0.0
Misdemeanor: Assault	1	0.6	0	0.0
Misdemeanor: Harassment	1	0.6	0	0.0
TOTALS	174	100.0	109	99.9

Notes
a. Totals may not sum to 100.0% due to rounding error.

Charge acceptance for prosecution. In total, 221 charges in SA cases and 136 charges in SAM cases were recorded by DOL as accepted for prosecution. The charge level–charge class distributions for accepted charges, for each case type, are shown in Table 56. Readers will note that the total number of charges accepted for prosecution in both SA and SAM cases exceeds the total number of charges referred (n=174 and n=109, respectively). This is because prosecutors sometimes added additional charges to cases, charges that were not originally referred.

Comparing Table 54 (referral) and Table 56 (acceptance), we see a "downward" shift in the composition of SA charges. The percentages of unclassified and Class B felony charges declined for both SA and SAM cases, while the percentages of Class C felony and misdemeanor charges increased. This pattern was especially pronounced among SAM cases, which did not include any misdemeanor charges at referral, but 8.8% misdemeanor charges at the acceptance for prosecution stage.

Table 56.
Distribution level and class of charges accepted for prosecution by DOL, by offense type

	Case Type			
	Sexual assault (n=221)		Sexual abuse of a minor (n=136)	
Charge Level: Charge Class	Number	Percent[a]	Number	Percent[a]
Felony: Unclassified	59	26.7	29	21.3
Felony: Class A	5	2.3	0	0.0
Felony: Class B	81	36.7	55	40.4
Felony: Class C	45	20.4	40	29.4
Misdemeanor: Class A	20	9.0	8	5.9
Misdemeanor: Class B	5	2.3	4	2.9
Violations	6	2.7	0	0.0
TOTALS	221	100.1	136	99.9

Notes
a. Totals may not sum to 100.0% due to rounding error.

Charge level–offense type distributions for charges included in SA and SAM cases that were accepted for prosecution are presented in Table 57. A comparison of Tables 55 and 57 reveals a dramatic elaboration in diversity of the overall charge compositions of SA and SAM cases owing to the addition and amendment of charges by prosecutors, and the addition of misdemeanor charges especially.

The percentage of felony sexual assault charges in SA cases dropped significantly, from 88.5% of charges at referral to 54.3% of charges accepted. The total number of felony sexual assault charges in SA cases also declined, suggesting substantial charging amendments. Similarly, the percentage of felony sexual abuse of a minor charges in SAM cases dropped from 85.3% of charges at referral to 63.2% of charges accepted for prosecution. These declines in percentages of sexual assault and sexual abuse of a minor charges were evenly distributed across the other offense types such that changes were only minimal.

Changes occurred in the remaining distributions of charges included in SA and SAM cases, but these distributional changes were minor. The most pronounced difference between Table 55 and Table 57 was the addition of 7 offense type categories in Table 57. All of these additions to Table 57 were attributable to charges being added and/or charging amendments being made by prosecutors, and all of these additions were for misdemeanor-level offenses, as well as non-criminal violations.

Table 57.
Distribution of level and offense type of charges accepted for prosecution by DOL by AST, by offense type

	Case Type			
	Sexual assault (n=221)		Sexual abuse of a minor (n=136)	
Charge Level: Offense Type	Number	Percent[a]	Number	Percent[a]
Felony: Sexual assault	120	54.3	19	14.0
Felony: Sexual abuse of a minor	13	5.9	86	63.2
Felony: Kidnapping	10	4.5	3	2.2
Felony: Assault	20	9.0	1	0.7
Felony: Property	19	8.6	2	1.5
Felony: Other	8	3.6	13	9.6
Misdemeanor: Assault	14	6.3	3	2.2
Misdemeanor: Sexual assault	1	0.5	1	0.7
Misd.: Sexual abuse of a minor	0	0.0	2	1.5
Misdemeanor: Drugs	2	0.9	2	1.5
Misdemeanor: Alcohol	2	0.9	0	0.0
Misdemeanor: Property	2	0.9	1	0.7
Misdemeanor: Harassment	1	0.5	2	1.5
Misdemeanor: Other	3	1.4	1	0.7
Violations	6	2.7	0	0.0
TOTALS	221	100.0	136	100.0

Notes
a. Totals may not sum to 100.0% due to rounding error.

Charge conviction. The final stage of the criminal process documented for charges in SA and SAM cases was conviction. In total, 95 charges resulted in conviction: 56 charges in SA cases (25.3% of accepted charges), and 39 charges in SAM cases (28.7% of accepted charges). Table 58 presents the charge level–charge class distributions for SA and SAM charge convictions.

Comparing Tables 56 and 58 we see a dramatic change in composition with respect to charge class from acceptance for prosecution to conviction. At the charge acceptance stage, approximately 25% of charges in SA and SAM cases were unclassified felonies but at the charge conviction stage we see that only between 3% and 5% of conviction charges were unclassified felonies. Table 58 also shows large changes in the percentage of Class C felony charges, which increased markedly for both SA and SAM cases. So much so, in fact, that by the conviction stage charge convictions in both SA and SAM cases were most likely to be Class C felonies. Class B felonies were the second most common charge conviction, followed by Class A misdemeanors.

Table 58.
Distribution level and class of charges resulting in conviction, by offense type

	Case Type			
	Sexual assault (n=56)		Sexual abuse of a minor (n=39)	
Charge Level: Charge Class	Number	Percent[a]	Number	Percent[a]
Felony: Unclassified	2	3.6	2	5.1
Felony: Class A	0	0.0	0	0.0
Felony: Class B	17	30.4	11	28.2
Felony: Class C	25	44.6	15	38.5
Misdemeanor: Class A	7	12.5	9	23.1
Misdemeanor: Class B	2	3.6	2	5.1
Violations	3	5.4	0	0.0
TOTALS	56	100.1	39	100.0

Notes
a. Totals may not sum to 100.0% due to rounding error.

The data presented in Tables 54, 56, and 58 clearly demonstrate charge attrition. The process began with a total of 283 charges combined in SA and SAM cases. That number was increased at the acceptance stage to 357 due to charging amendments and additions made by prosecutors. Despite the additional charges at the acceptance stage, at at the conviction stage the number of charges for both SA and SAM cases totaled just 95, nearly a 75% reduction in the number of charges accepted for prosecution (and 66.4% less than the original 283 charges referred).

In addition to charge attrition at each stage of the criminal process, these data also show how the overall composition of charges changed at each stage as well. From referral to acceptance for prosecution to charge conviction we see a consistent shift in charge classifications. This change is most clearly evident when comparing the class designations of referred charges to the class designations at conviction. Unclassified felonies constituted 41.7% of all charges at referral, but only 4.2% of all charges at conviction. Class B felonies comprised 45.2% of all charges at referral, but just 29.5% of all charges at conviction. In contrast, Class C felonies represented only 11.2% of all charges at referral but 42.1% of all charges at conviction, and misdemeanors (and violations) constituted a mere 0.7% of all charges at referral but 24.2% of all charges at conviction.

Finally, Table 59 presents the frequency charge level–offense type distributions for conviction charges for both SA and SAM cases. The conviction charge most frequently observed in SA cases was felony sexual assault (41.1%; n=23). Additional felonies included sexual abuse of a minor (12.5%), assault (12.5%), as well as property and unspecified other felonies. Misdemeanor charge convictions included sexual assault, assault harassment, property, as well as non-criminal violations.

With respect to conviction charges in SAM cases, 56.4% (n=22) of charge convictions were for felony sexual abuse of a minor, and an additional 5.1% of charge convictions were for

misdemeanor sexual abuse of a minor. Additional charge convictions included felony sexual assault, kidnapping, felony property, and other felony. Misdemeanor charge convictions included sexual assault, sexual abuse of a minor, assault, harassment, and unspecified misdemeanor (1 observation each).

Table 59.
Distribution of level and offense type of charges resulting in conviction, by offense type

	Case Type			
	Sexual assault (n=56)		Sexual abuse of a minor (n=39)	
Charge Level: Offense Type	Number	Percent[a]	Number	Percent[a]
Felony: Sexual assault	23	41.1	2	5.1
Felony: Sexual abuse of a minor	7	12.5	22	56.4
Felony: Kidnapping	0	0.0	1	2.6
Felony: Assault	7	12.5	1	2.6
Felony: Property	4	7.1	1	2.6
Felony: Other	3	5.4	1	2.6
Misdemeanor: Assault	3	5.4	4	10.3
Misdemeanor: Sexual assault	3	5.4	2	5.1
Misd.: Sexual abuse of a minor	0	0.0	2	5.1
Misdemeanor: Drugs	0	0.0	1	2.6
Misdemeanor: Harassment	2	3.6	1	2.6
Misdemeanor: Property	1	1.8	0	0.0
Misdemeanor: Other	0	0.0	1	2.6
Violations	3	5.4	0	0.0
TOTALS	56	100.2	39	100.2

Notes
a. Totals may not sum to 100.0% due to rounding error.

The data presented in Tables 55, 57, and 59 reveals a decline the percentage of sexual assault and sexual abuse of a minor charges from the beginning to the end of the criminal process. At referral, sexual assault and sexual abuse of a minor charges (both felony and misdemeanor) comprised 94.7% of all charges. By the conviction stage, however, sexual assault and sexual abuse of a minor charges (both felony and misdemeanor) constituted just less than two-thirds – 64.2% – of all conviction charges.

Case-level outcomes. The charge-level data collected for SA and SAM cases from DOL were aggregated into summary case-level measures of case acceptance and case conviction. An SA or SAM case was coded "accepted for prosecution" if any of the referred charges were subsequently accepted for prosecution, irrespective of whether or not charges were amended upon acceptance. Similarly, SA and SAM cases were coded "convicted" if any charges resulted in a final disposition of conviction. Table 60 presents the percentages of SA and SAM cases that were referred, that were accepted for prosecution, and that resulted in conviction.

Table 60.
Distribution of case processing outcomes, by offense type

	Case Type			
	Sexual assault (n=366)		Sexual abuse of a minor (n=317)	
Case Processing Outcome (DOL)	Number	Percent[a]	Number	Percent[a]
Referred for prosecution	156	42.6	99	31.2
Accepted for prosecution	54	14.8	44	13.9
Accepted (conditional prob.)		*34.6*		*44.4*
Resulted in conviction	41	11.2	30	9.5
Convicted (conditional prob.)		*75.9*		*68.2*

Notes
a. Totals may not sum to 100.0% due to rounding error.

Using the DOL measure of case referral (rather than the AST measure of case referral), we find that, overall, 37.3% (n=255) of the SA/SAM case records sampled were referred to for prosecution. A higher percentage of SA cases (42.6%; n=156) than SAM cases (31.2%; n=99) were referred. Despite having a lower probability of referral, a higher percentage of SAM cases (44.4%; n=44) than SA cases (34.6%; n=54) were accepted for prosecution. As a consequence, the overall case acceptance rates for SA and SAM cases were very similar – 14.8% and 13.9%. More than three-quarters of SA cases (75.9%; n=41) that were accepted for prosecution resulted in conviction, and more than two-thirds of SAM cases (68.2%; n=30) that were accepted for prosecution resulted in conviction. All told, 71 of the 683 SA and SAM cases resulted in a conviction – slightly more than 25% of the cases referred for prosecution and approximately 10% of all the cases sampled.

Part II
Domestic Violence Cases

Domestic Violence
Alaska Definition

Alaska uses a relatively unique statutory framework for defining and prescribing criminal punishments for domestic violence. In Alaska, there are no criminal statutes identifying specific DV offenses. Instead, under Alaska law the definition of domestic violence hinges on the *relationship* between an offender and a victim:

> " 'Domestic violence' and 'crime involving domestic violence' mean one or more of the following offenses or an offense under a law or ordinance of another jurisdiction having elements similar to these offenses, or an attempt to commit the offense, *by a household member against another household member*: …"[86] (emphasis added)

The statute goes on to identify a list of crimes that when committed by a household member against another household member including (but not limited to): all crimes against persons, and several crimes against property (e.g., burglary, trespass, criminal mischief, arson).

Alaska law defines "household member" as:

> " 'household member' includes (A) adults or minors who are current or former spouses; (B) adults or minors who live together or who have lived together; (C) adults or minors who are dating or who have dated; (D) adults or minors who are engaged in or who have engaged in a sexual relationship; (E) adults or minors who are related to each other up to the fourth degree of consanguinity, whether of the whole or half blood or by adoption, computed under the rules of civil law; (F) adults or minor who are related or formerly related by marriage; (G) persons who have a child of the relationship; and (H) minor children of a person in a relationship that is described in (A) – (G) …"[87]

Thus, under Alaska law there is no specific statute, per se, that defines or prescribes the penalty for "spousal assault," "intimate partner assault," "family member assault" or similar domestic violence-specific crimes. Rather, in Alaska, criminal offenses such as homicide, sexual assault, assault, and coercion are defined *independently* from domestic violence. However, any of these offenses (and many more) could be classified as a crime involving domestic violence if the offense was committed *by a household member against another household member*.

[86] See: AS 18.66.990(3)(A-H).
[87] See: AS 18.66.990(5)(A-H).

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VPSO Involvement

Domestic Violence Cases

Sample. In total, 982 domestic violence (DV) case records were sampled. This total represented 40.8% of the total number of DV case records closed by AST in the study region (n=2,404) between January 1, 2008 and December 31, 2011. The 2,404 DV case records closed by AST in the study region during the study period represented 34.4% of all DV case records closed during the study period (n=6,993). Thus, the sample of 982 case records included in this study represented 14% of all DV case records closed by AST between January 1, 2008 and December 31, 2011.

First responders. Table 61 shows the "first responder" distribution of DV cases included in the sample. In a majority of cases, sworn police were the first to respond to DV incidents. Importantly, however, VPSOs and other paraprofessional police officers were first responders to 44.1% (n=433) of DV incidents sampled[88]. In other words, within the region where this study was conducted, the first responder to a DV incident was nearly as likely to be a VPSO or other paraprofessional police officer as a Trooper or other sworn police officer. This highlights the centrality of the public safety role played by VPSOs and other paraprofessional police in Alaska's rural villages. VPSOs, specifically, were first responders in 22.4% (n=220) of the 982 DV case records sampled, or 50.8% of the DV incidents for which paraprofessional police officers were first responders.

Table 61.
Distribution of domestic violence (DV) cases, by police/law enforcement agency to which incident first reported.

Agency	Number	Percent
Alaska State Troopers (AST)	507	51.6%
Other police	42	4.3
Sworn police	*549*	*55.9%*
Village public safety officer (VPSO)	220	22.4
Village police officer (VPO)	190	19.4
Tribal police officer (TPO)	23	2.3
Paraprofessional police	*433*	*44.1%*
TOTAL:	982	100.0%

Notes

In addition to capturing the VPSO role in DV cases as first responder, this study also included several additional measures of VPSO involvement. A series of separate indicators were used to capture whether or not VPSOs played an active role in the investigation of DV incidents,

[88] This percentage is much higher than a prior study that reported VPSOs and other paraprofessional police were first responders in an estimated 14.8% of DV cases. That study, however, used a statewide sample of DV case records. In contrast, the current study was focused on DV cases originating in only one region of the state. See: Rivera, M., Rosay, A.B., Wood, D., Postle, G., & TePas, K. (2008).

independent of whether or not they were first responders. Table 62 presents the frequencies of each of these additional items.

Table 62.
Distribution of VPSO investigative activities in DV incident investigations.

VPSO Activity[a]	Number	Percent
Scheduling interviews	203	20.7%
Present during interviews (non-participant)	257	26.2
Conduct interviews	233	23.7
Assist with interview	78	7.9
Secure crime scene	155	15.8
Evidence collection	159	16.2
Secure evidence collected	148	15.1

Notes
a. VPSO activities not mutually exclusive. Individual VPSOs could have been coded for none of the items, one of the items, or any combination of items.

These data demonstrate that VPSOs played an active role in the investigation of DV cases, particularly when it came to scheduling and conducting interviews. VPSOs were noted in case records as the individual responsible for scheduling/arranging interviews in 20.7% (n=203) DV cases, being present during interviews in 26.2% (n=257) of DV cases, conducting interviews themselves in 23.7% (n=233) of DV cases, and otherwise assisting other investigators with interviews in 7.9% (n=78) of DV cases. VPSOs also assisted with evidence collection and security. Duties performed by VPSOs included securing crime scenes (15.8%; n=155), evidence collection (16.2%; n=159) and securing/storing evidence items (15.1%; n=148).

When all of these measures – first responder, interview assistance/participation, evidence collection/security – were combined into a single measure, VPSOs were involved in the investigation of nearly a third (32.8%; n=322) of all the DV incidents in the sample.

Table 63.
Distribution of VPSO support activities following DV incident incidents.

VPSO Support Activity[a]	Number	Percent
Post-incident support to victim/family	115	11.7%
Referral to medical services	19	1.9
Referral to victim advocacy services	17	1.7
Referral to safe shelter	9	0.9
Referral to mental health/counseling	4	0.4
Transportation/transportation referral	10	1.0
Other referrals or supports	71	7.2

Notes
a. VPSO activities not mutually exclusive. Individual VPSOs could have been coded for none of the items, one of the items, or any combination of items.

Table 63 details several of the post-incident supports VPSOs provided in the aftermath of DV incidents. While none of the activities listed in Table 63 occurred at a high rate of prevalence, the data nevertheless demonstrate the important contributions VPSOs make to linking DV victims and their families to critical post-incidents supports and services.

Notably, the data presented in Tables 62 and 63 reveal that VPSOs were much more deeply involved in the criminal justice response to domestic violence incidents than sexual assault and sexual abuse of a minor incidents. And, this was true with respect to both of the dimensions of VPSO involvement measured (investigatory involvement, post-incident support).

VPSO Impact

Domestic Violence Case Processing

The primary objective of this study was to describe and assess the extent to which VPSO involvement in the response to, and investigation of, DV incidents occurring in Alaska's tribal communities impacted the criminal justice response. More specifically, the study was focused on the impact of VPSO involvement on three criminal justice outcomes: (1) referral for prosecution, (2) acceptance for prosecution (given referral), and (3) conviction (given referral and prosecution).

Mandatory arrest for domestic violence. Alaska is what is commonly termed a "mandatory arrest" state. In Alaska, police are required to arrest the "principal physical aggressor" in both misdemeanor- and felony-level domestic violence incidents, as well as persons who have violated domestic violence protective orders. The only circumstances in which officers are permitted to not make an arrest are when they have received authorization from a prosecuting attorney. If a police officer does not make an arrest after investigating a complaint of domestic violence, they are required by law to write a report detailing the specific reasons for not making an arrest[89]. Because Alaska is a mandatory arrest state, the analyses in this section will focus primarily – but not exclusively – on the latter two decision points in the criminal process: acceptance for prosecution, and conviction.

Referral for prosecution. Each DV case record included one of seven closure codes. Three of these closure codes were used to create a single measure of AST referral for prosecution: CA, CR, and CD[90]. The closure code CA was used in cases in which AST placed one or more individuals under arrest, filed for arrest warrants, or issued summonses. Cases closed CA were referred for prosecution. The closure code CD was used to indicate that a case was referred for

[89] See: AS 18.65.530.

[90] Cases that were closed but not referred for prosecution were assigned one of the four remaining closure code designations by AST. Cases were closed CE (closed, exception) when circumstances beyond AST's control prevented the agency from arresting or charging a suspect, making it not possible to move a case forward. The CI (closed, investigated) designation was used in those cases in which an investigation was concluded and there was a determination that there was insufficient evidence to move a case forward. (However, the CI designation is not a determination that the alleged offense did not occur.) Closed, logged (CL) cases represented those instances whereby an incident or event reported to the Troopers did not necessitate a formal report and no further police action was necessary. Finally, cases in which it was determined that the initial complaint was deemed to be false or baseless – that is, that the alleged offense did not occur – were coded CU (closed, unfounded).

prosecutorial review prior to an arrest being made, and that it was subsequently determined that formal charges pertaining to the case would not be accepted or filed. The closure code CR was used in those cases that were forwarded for screening and review, prior to an arrest being made.

As Tables 64 and 65 make clear, there was little room for VPSOs to have an impact on DV case referral outcomes. According to AST case records, 99.0% (n=972) of the DV cases included in the sample were referred for prosecution.

Table 64.
Distribution of DV case record closure codes.

Closure Code	Number	Percent[a]
CA (closed, arrest)[b]	852	86.8%
CR (closed, referred)[b]	117	11.9
CD (closed, declined)[b]	3	0.3
CI (closed, investigated)	9	0.9
CU (closed, unfounded)	1	0.1
TOTAL:	982	100.0%

Notes
a. Percentages may not sum to 100.0% due to rounding error.
b. Items used to create initial AST referral for prosecution measure.

In fact, 100% of the DV cases in which VPSOs, TPOs, and sworn police (other than Troopers) were called upon as first responders were referred for prosecution. The only "slippage" that occurred was for cases in which Troopers (98.2%; n=498) and VPOs (99.5%; n=189) served in the first responder role. These are astonishingly high referral rates for any crime, but they are perhaps not surprising given that Alaska law mandates arrest in DV cases.

Table 65.
Distribution of DV cases referred for prosecution, by first responder.

First Responder	Total Number	Number Referred	Percent Referred
Alaska State Troopers (AST)	507	498	98.2%
Other police	42	42	100.0
Sworn police	*549*	*540*	*98.4%*
Village public safety officer (VPSO)	220	220	100.0
Village police officer (VPO)	190	189	99.5
Tribal police officer (TPO)	23	23	100.0
Paraprofessional police	*433*	*432*	*99.8%*
TOTAL:	982	972	99.0%

Notes

Acceptance for prosecution. Data pertaining to the decisions of prosecutors to accept DV cases for prosecution were collected in addition to the data on AST investigators' referral decisions. Specific charge-level data were obtained from DOL. In total, 664 of the DV case records

included in the sample were directly matched to prosecutorial records in the DOL data set[91]. This subsample of DOL cases was used for the computation of two prosecutorial decision variables: the case acceptance rate, and the case conviction rate.

A DV case was coded as "accepted for prosecution" if any of the charges in that case were recorded as "accepted" by DOL. Table 66 presents the total number of cases recorded as referred (by DOL), the total number of cases accepted for prosecution, and the percentage accepted for prosecution by first responder to the DV incident.

Table 66.
Distribution of DV cases accepted for prosecution, by first responder.

First Responder	Number Referred[a]	Number Accepted[a]	Percent Accepted
Alaska State Troopers (AST)	373	325	87.1%
Other police	28	24	85.7
Sworn police	*401*	*349*	*87.0%*
Village public safety officer (VPSO)	114	101	88.6
Village police officer (VPO)	133	122	91.7
Tribal police officer (TPO)	16	13	81.3
Paraprofessional police	*263*	*236*	*89.7%*
TOTAL:	664	585	88.1%

Notes
a. Total number of DV case records included in sample that were matched with DOL prosecution records and coded by DOL as "referred" or "accepted."

DOL records reveal that there were no statistically significant differences in the percentage of DV cases that were accepted for prosecution according to who was the first responder. All five first responder groups – Troopers, other sworn police, VPSOs, VPOs, and TPOs had nearly identical rates of case acceptance, and all were high – exceeding 80%. Overall, 88.1% (n=585) of the DV cases were accepted for prosecution.

Conviction. Data pertaining to case convictions were also collected from DOL. A DV case was coded as "convicted" if any of the charges in that case were recorded as "convicted" by DOL. Table 67 presents the total number of cases recorded as accepted, the total number of cases resulting in one or more charge convictions, and the percentage of cases resulting in one or more charge convictions by first responder to the DV incident.

Once again, we found that there were no statistically significant differences in the percentages of DV cases that resulted in conviction according to first responder. The rate of case conviction for VPSOs (80.2%) was only nominally different from that of Troopers (84.0%), other sworn police (83.3%) or VPOs (78.7%). And once again we see that irrespective of type of officer who served as a first responder, there were high conviction rates. Overall, more than 80% (82.4%; n=482) of DV cases resulted in conviction.

[91] The sub-sample of 664 DV cases represent only those cases coded by DOL as "referred."

Summary. In contrast to the findings reported for SA and SAM cases, there was little evidence at the bivariate level that VPSOs had a significant impact (positively or negatively) on criminal justice outcomes in DV cases. Simply put: No matter who the first responder was, DV cases were very likely to be referred for prosecution, highly likely to be accepted for prosecution, and highly likely to result in conviction.

Table 67.
Distribution of DV cases resulting in conviction, by first responder.

First Responder	Number Accepted[a]	Number Convicted[a]	Percent Convicted
Alaska State Troopers (AST)	325	273	84.0%
Other police	24	20	83.3
Sworn police	*349*	*293*	*84.0%*
Village public safety officer (VPSO)	101	81	80.2
Village police officer (VPO)	122	96	78.7
Tribal police officer (TPO)	13	12	92.3
Paraprofessional police	*236*	*189*	*80.1%*
TOTAL:	585	482	82.4%

Notes
a. Total number of DV case records included in sample that were matched with DOL prosecution records and coded by DOL as "accepted" or "convicted."

The remainder of this section of the report provides an overall description of the characteristics of the DV case records that were coded. These data are provided to give readers a broader context of the various features of the incidents that served as the basis for the study.

Case-Level Characteristics

Evidence collected. Information pertaining to the types of evidence collected during the course of DV investigations was coded from each AST case record. By far, the most common type of evidence collected/compiled was photographs of victims' injuries (see Table 68). Photographs of victims' injuries were documented in more than half 51.4% (n=505) of the case records sampled. Photographs of the crime scene were documented in approximately a quarter (23.3%; n=229) DV cases, and photographs of specific items of evidence were documented in 8.8% (n=86) of DV case records. Physical evidence items (e.g. items of clothing) were collected in 17.8% (n=175) cases, and weapons specifically in 11.6% (n=114). Trace evidence and electronic data were noted as collected in only a handful of DV case records.

Separate measures were used to indicate when case records specifically mentioned that DNA samples were collected from suspects and victims. DNA was documented as being collected from only about 1% of DV suspects and victims. Case record reviews included a measure to indicate whether or not there was specific mention of any forensic evidence being forwarded/ submitted to the state's crime lab for analysis. In total, 33 DV case records (3.4%) indicated that at least one piece of forensic evidence was sent to the crime lab for analysis.

Case records documented search warrant applications in just 16 (2.1%) of DV cases.

Table 68.
Frequency of evidence collected in DV cases

Evidence Collected	Number	Percent[a]
Physical evidence	175	17.8
Trace evidence	21	2.1
Electronic data	3	0.3
Weapons	114	11.6
Photographs, crime scene	229	23.3
Photographs, evidence items	86	8.8
Photographs, victim injuries	505	51.4
DNA (suspect)	9	0.9%
DNA (victim)	10	1.0
Forensic evidence forwarded to lab for analysis	33	3.4

Notes
a. Multiple response items. Percentages will not total to 100%.

Year and months of DV incident reports and case closures. Table 69 shows the number of DV cases closed for each year of the sample period (2008-2011) according to the year cases were

reported to AST. On average, 88.8% of the DV cases sampled were closed by AST in the same calendar year they were opened.

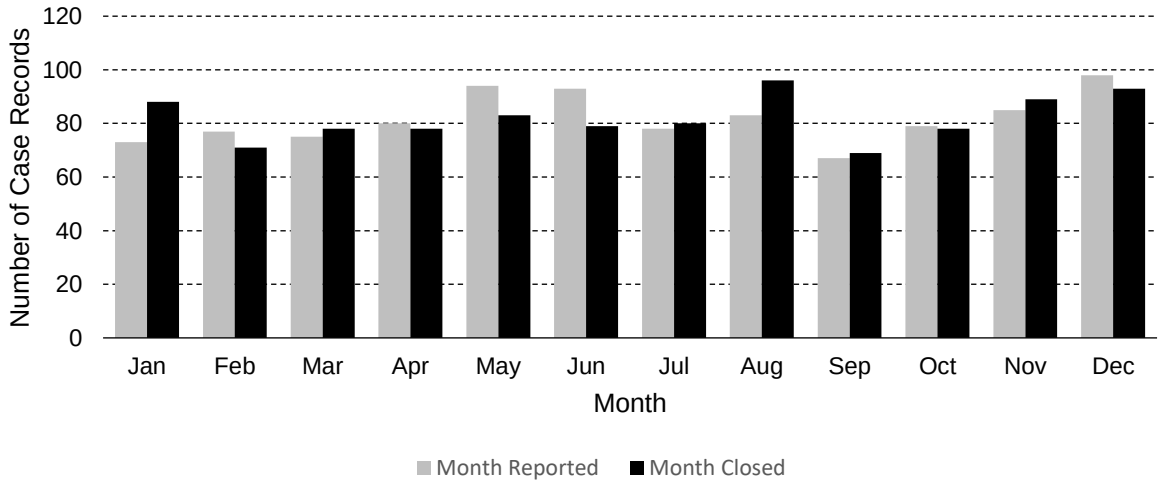
Table 69.
Distribution of domestic violence cases, by year case reported to and year closed by Alaska State Troopers

	Year Closed				
Year Reported	2008	2009	2010	2011	Total
2004	0	1	0	0	1
2005	0	0	0	0	0
2006	2	0	0	0	2
2007	18	1	0	0	19
2008	204	45	6	4	259
2009	0	264	59	3	326
2010	0	0	247	31	278
2011	0	0	0	97	97
Total	224	312	311	135	982

Notes

Figure 5 shows the distribution of DV case records according to the month cases were reported to AST (grey bars) and the month cases were closed by AST (black bars). The months with the highest numbers of reported DV cases were May and June (n=94 and n=93), respectively. The month with the most DV incidents closed by Troopers was August (n=96). Lows for both reporting DV cases and closing DV cases were in September (n=67 and n=69, respectively). Overall, the data presented in Figure 1 suggest seasonality in the occurrence of DV incidents. There was a steady increase in the numbers of DV incidents in fall/winter, slight declines in the spring months, and an upswing during the summer months.

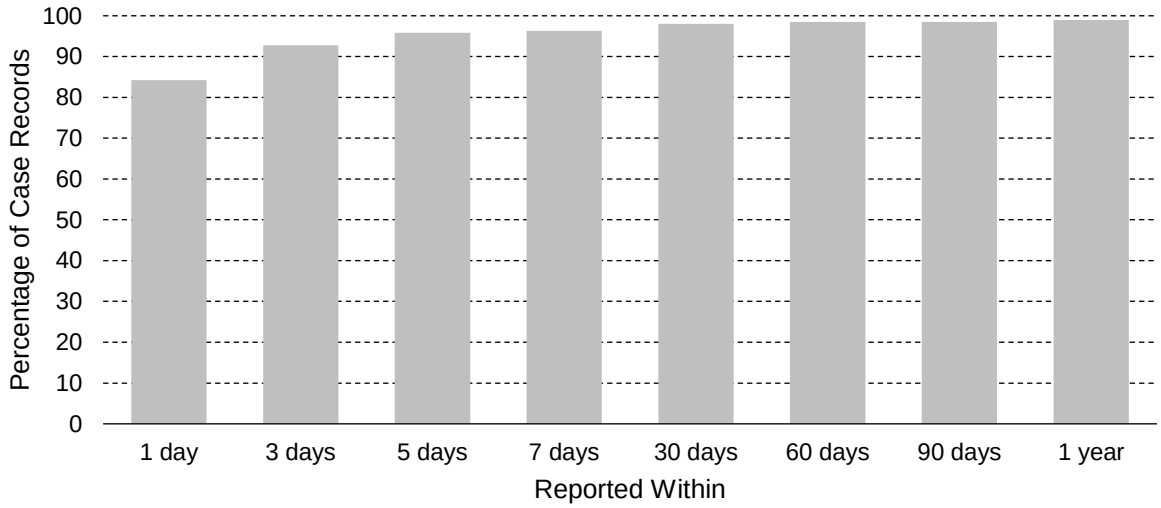
Figure 5.
Number of case records, by month case reported and month case closed



Notes

Time to report. Figure 6 shows the percentage of DV incidents that were reported to AST at progressive time intervals. Nearly 85% (84.2%; n=827) of the DV case records sampled indicated that DV incidents were reported within 1 day of occurrence, 96.3% (n=946) were reported within 1 week, and fully 99% (n=973) were reported to police within 1 year.

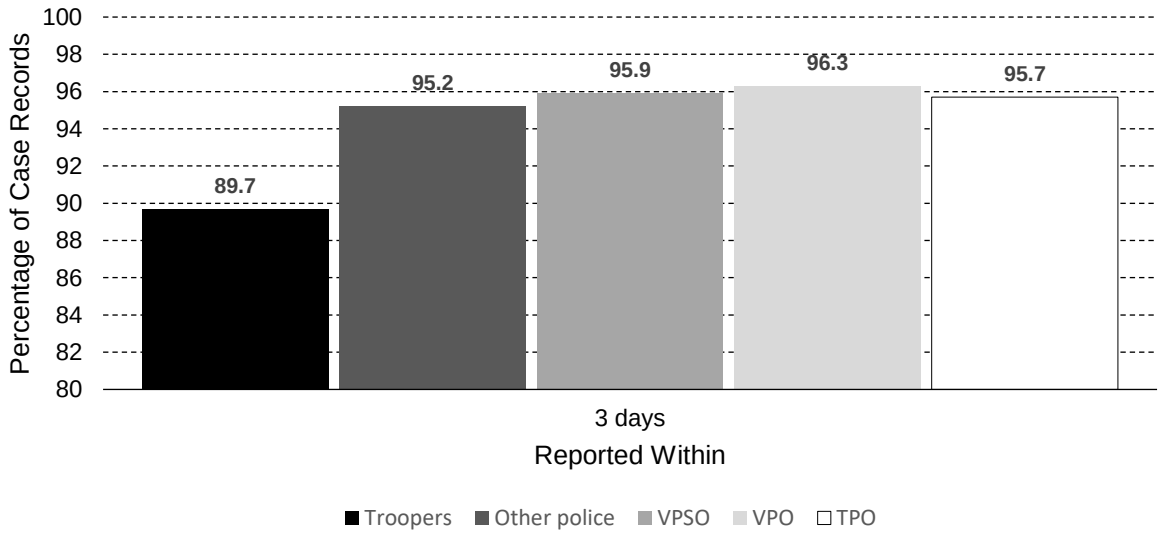
Figure 6.
Percentage of DV case records reported to police, by days to report



Notes

Further analysis revealed that who the first responder was impacted the timeliness of DV incident reports. A significantly higher percentage of DV cases were reported within 3 days of occurrence when the first responder was a VPSO or VPO than when the first responder was a

Figure 7.
Percentage of DV case records reported to police within 3 days, by days to report and first responder



Notes

Trooper (see Figure 7). When the first responder was a VPSO, 95.9% of DV incidents were reported within 3 days, and when the first responder was a VPO, 96.3% of DV incidents were reported within 3 days. In contrast, when the first responder to a DV incident was a Trooper, 89.7% of DV incidents were reported within 3 days. These two differences – VPSO-Trooper and VPO-Trooper were both statistically significant[92]. (None of the other differences shown in Figure 3 were statistically significant.) By 5 days post-incident these differences were no longer statistically significant, and by 7 days post-incident they converged. While high percentages of DV incidents were reported to police at each time interval, the statistically significant differences discovered at the 1-day and 3-day post-incident marks point to the importance of having VPSOs and other paraprofessional police located in tribal communities for the purposes of immediate assistance.

[92] $p<.05$.

Incident Characteristics

Suspect access to victims. A series of nine measures were used to document the various means by which suspects came into contact with victims prior to the DV incident. Table 70 presents the frequencies of each measure.

Table 70.
Domestic violence suspects' means of access to victims

Means of Access	Number	Percent[a]
Forced entry	36	3.7
Entry through open window/unlocked door	36	3.7
Victim pick-up suspect at work/school	1	0.1
Suspect pick-up victim at work/school	0	0.0
Victim invited suspect	50	5.1
Suspect invited victim	65	6.6
Met in public place	43	4.4
Suspect and victim cohabitate	669	68.1
Victim staying at suspect's home	73	7.4
Suspect staying at victim's home	65	6.6

Notes
a. Multiple response items. Percentages will not total to 100%.

The data presented in Table 70 shows that the most common circumstance bringing DV suspect and victims into contact with one another was routine proximity, in general, and cohabitation specifically. In more than two-thirds (68.1%; n=669) of the DV case records reviewed suspects and victims were documented as permanently sharing a residence. Temporary cohabitation was noted in an additional 138 (14.1%) DV case records. Altogether, DV suspect and victims shared a residence (either permanently or temporarily) in 82.2% (n=807) of cases. Suspects were documented as making uninvited entry into a victim's home, either through forced entry (3.7%; n=36) or through an open window or door (3.7%; n=36), relatively rarely. DV victims invited suspects into their home, suspects invited victims to their home, and suspects and victims met in public venues in approximately 5% of cases.

Precipitating/triggering factors. Information was also extracted from each DV case record pertaining to precipitating factors. Precipitating factors refer to circumstances, events, or behaviors that triggered or otherwise led up to the DV incident. These precipitating factors could have immediately preceded the event, or they could have been long-standing/ongoing sources of conflict between DV suspect and victims. Table 71 presents how frequently each factor was documented in case records.

Table 71.
Precipitating factors documented in DV case records

Conflict Trigger	Number	Percent[a]
Controlling activities	140	14.2
Childcare/custody/visitation	57	5.8
Disapproval of drug/alcohol use	84	8.6
Parental discipline of children	54	5.5
Financial	36	3.7
Personal insults	124	12.6
Jealousy/alleged infidelity	135	13.7
Pregnancy	4	0.4
Belonging/household property	135	13.7
Angry/unhappy with relationship	37	3.8
School/employment	6	0.6
Known infidelity	11	1.1
Other (sexual)	23	2.3

Notes
a. Multiple response items. Percentages will not total to 100%.

The most frequently observed sources of conflict in DV cases were controlling behaviors (14.2%; n=140), jealousy/alleged infidelity (13.7%; n=135), belongings and/or household property (13.7%; n=135), and personal insults (12.6%; n=124). Disapproval of drug and/or alcohol use, childcare/custody/visitation, and parental discipline of children were identified as underlying sources of conflict in between 5% and 10% of DV cases. Less commonly observed precipitating factors included financial worries/tensions, general unhappiness with the relationship, miscellaneous sexual disagreements, known infidelity, school/employment, and pregnancy (all less than 5% of DV cases).

Threats, assaultive behaviors, and weapon use. Tables 72 and 73 present detailed data pertaining to the threatening behaviors and assaultive behaviors engaged in by DV suspects. Table 72 lists six threatening behaviors that were documented in DV case records. The most commonly documented threatening behavior – appearing in 23% (n=226) of the sample of case records – was threating to inflict bodily injury on the victim. Threats with guns (6.9%), knives (3.7%), and other weapons (4.3%) were documented much less frequently. Suspects threatened to harm victims' children, family member, or friends in 4.7% (n=46) DV case records. Victims were threatened with sexual assault in 8 DV case records.

Table 72.
Threatening behaviors documented in DV case records

Threatening behavior	Number	Percent[a]
Threaten to sexually assault victim	8	0.8
Threaten victim with other bodily injury	226	23.0
Threaten victim's children/family/friends	46	4.7
Threaten victim with a gun	68	6.9
Threaten victim with a knife	36	3.7
Threaten victim with other weapon	42	4.3

Notes
a. Multiple response items. Percentages will not total to 100%.

The actual assaultive behaviors used by DV suspects are shown in Table 73. Pushing/shoving/grabbing victims was the most frequently documented behavior (44.3%; n=435), followed by punching (41.4%; n=107), and slapping/hitting with an open hand (31.5%; n=310). Choking/suffocating victims was documented in 16.1% (n=158) DV case records. Grabbing/pulling victims' hair, kicking victims, and hitting victims with objects were each observed in approximately 10% of the sampled DV case records. DV suspects threw objects at victims in 8.3% (n=82) of DV incidents. Chasing victims while making threats, biting victims, and the use of knives or guns were each documented in approximately 5% of DV cases.

Table 73.
Assaultive behaviors and weapon use documented in DV case records

Assaultive Behavior	Number	Percent[a]
Chase victim while making threats	51	5.2
Push/shove/grab victim	435	44.3
Grab/pull victim's hair	115	11.7
Throw something at victim	82	8.3
Slap/hit victim with open hand	310	31.5
Bite victim	39	4.0
Punch victim with closed fist	407	41.4
Kick victim	107	10.9
Hit victim with an object	98	10.0
Choke/suffocate victim	158	16.1
Use knife or other cutting instrument	43	4.4
Shoot or hit/strike victim with a gun	44	4.9

Notes
a. Multiple response items. Percentages will not total to 100%.

As the data presented in Table 73 show, the most common forms of assaultive behaviors were not necessarily the least serious or least dangerous. While relatively "minor" acts such as pushing/shoving and slapping victims were among the most frequently documented assaultive behaviors, nearly 1 out of every 2 DV victims was punched with a closed fist and 1 out of every 6 DV victims was choked or suffocated by suspects. In total, two-thirds of the DV cases sampled

(66.7%; n=655) documented assaultive behaviors on the part of DV suspects that were likely to result in significant physical injury to victims: biting, punching, kicking, hitting with an object, choking/suffocating, using a knife or other cutting instrument, or shooting or hitting/striking with a gun.

Stalking behaviors. A total of 28 separate indicators were used to measure the frequency with which DV suspects engaged in stalking behaviors directed at the DV victims identified for each incident. Table 74 shows the frequency with which each stalking behavior was documented in DV case records.

Table 74.
Stalking behaviors documented in DV case records

Stalking Behavior	Number	Percent[a]
Contact victim's employer	0	0.0
File false report against victim	0	0.0
Follow victim	25	2.5
Install/use GPS on victim's vehicle	0	0.0
Break into victim's home	15	1.5
Uninvited visit to victim's home	33	3.4
Leave unwanted/unexpected items	0	0.0
Contact/file report with OCS	0	0.0
Open victim's mail without permission	0	0.0
Abuse victim's pet	0	0.0
Threaten to harm victim's pet	1	0.1
Relocate residence to follow victim	0	0.0
Uninvited visit to victim's workplace/school	4	0.4
Send/give unwanted gifts to victim	0	0.0
Sneak into victim's home to frighten	0	0.0
Install spyware on victim's computer	0	0.0
Send victim unsolicited/unwanted letters	0	0.0
Unwanted phone calls to victim	10	1.0
Unwanted text messages to victim	1	0.1
Unwanted social media messages	0	0.0
Unwanted voicemail messages	0	0.0
Unwanted emails to victim	0	0.0
Other unwanted communications	3	0.3
Photograph victim without permission	0	0.0
Vandalize victim's home	19	1.9
Vandalize victim's car	1	0.1
Vandalize other victim property	36	3.7
Victim express fear about behaviors	31	3.2

Notes
a. Multiple response items. Percentages will not total to 100%.

Only 11 of the 27 stalking behaviors included in the case file review were noted in DV case records: vandalism of victims' property (3.7%; n=36), vandalism of victims' homes (1.9%; n=19), uninvited visits to victims' homes (3.4%; n=33), following victims (2.5%; n=25),

breaking into victims' homes (1.5%; n=15), unwanted phone calls to victims (1.0%; n=10), other unwanted communications (0.3%; n=3) uninvited visits to victims' workplaces/schools (0.4%; n=4), unwanted text messages (0.1%; n=1), vandalism of victims' cars (0.1%; n=1), threats to harm victims' pets (0.1%; n=1). Approximately 3% of DV case records documented victims who felt fear as a result of experiencing one or more of these stalking behaviors engaged in by suspects.

Suspect-victim contact initiation. The data in Table 75 describe the locations where DV suspects and victims initiated contact with one another prior to the DV incident that was reported to police. In a large majority of DV cases, suspect and victim encounters began at an indoor location. Most often, DV suspects and victims initiated contact within a private residence – most often that of the suspect (69.5% of indoor locations; 61.8% of all DV incidents). Contact was frequently initiated in victims' homes as well (19.5% of indoor locations; 17.3% of all DV incidents). Suspect–victim encounters were initiated in outdoor locations in approximately 10%

Table 75.
Locations where encounters between DV suspects and victims were initiated

Location	Number	Percent[a]
Indoors	873	88.9
Home: Suspect	607	
Home: Victim	170	
Home: Other	83	
Hotel/motel	1	
Work: Victim	4	
School: Victim	1	
Dept. of Corrections facility	2	
Public building/location	5	
Outdoors	97	9.9
Adjacent to home (e.g., driveway, yard)	34	
Street/sidewalk	40	
Parking lot	6	
Trail/greenbelt	8	
Vehicle (care, truck, plane, boat)	4	
Adjacent to school (e.g., playground)	1	
Other	4	
Missing/Unknown	12	1.2
TOTAL:	982	100.0

Notes
a. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding error.

of DV incidents. Outdoor locations were typically on a street or sidewalk (n=40), or in an outside area immediately adjacent to a private residence such as a yard or driveway (n=34). Information pertaining to where DV suspects-victims encounters began was missing in 12 case records.

Incident bystanders. Shown in Table 76 are the frequencies with which children were present when DV incidents occurred and when suspects were arrested, and the frequency with which other adults were present when DV incidents occurred. The presence of children when DV incidents occurred was documented in nearly 40% (39.4%; n=387) of case records. Children were documented as being present when DV suspects were arrested in 124 (12.6%) case records.

Table 76.
Presence of children and other adults when DV incidents occurred

Bystander Present	Number	Percent[a]
Child present when incident occurred	387	39.4
Child present when suspect arrested	124	12.6
Adult present when incident occurred	434	44.2

Notes
a. Multiple response items. Percentages will not total to 100%.

More common still was the presence of one or more adults (not including suspects and victims) when DV incidents occurred. AST case records revealed that other adults witnessed DV incidents nearly half the time (44.2%; n=434). Two-thirds (66.3%; n=651) of the DV case records reviewed indicated that either at least one other person (a child or an adult) was present when incidents occurred. (Data not shown.) At least one child and one adult were present in 170 (17.3%) of DV incidents.

Individual Characteristics

Demographic and other individual-level data were collected for a total of 3,747 individuals in the 982 DV case records sampled. Of these individuals, 1,021 (27.3%) were suspects, 1,251 (33.4%) were victims, and 1,475 (39.4%) were witnesses/third parties (see Table 77).[93]

Table 77.
Distribution of individuals identified in domestic violence (DV) case records

Individual Role	Number	Percent[a]
Suspect	1,021	27.3
Victim	1,251	33.4
Witness/third party	1,475	39.4
TOTAL:	3,747	100.1

Notes
a. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding error.

Suspect and victim demographic characteristics. Table 78 presents the racial/ethnic composition of DV suspects and DV victims. Both groups were almost entirely comprised of Alaska Natives/American Indians. 96.2% of DV suspects were identified in case records as Alaska Native/American Indian, as were 96.5% of DV victims. Whites constituted approximately 2% of DV suspects and DV victims.

Table 78.
Race/ethnicity of domestic violence (DV) suspects and victims

	Individual Roles			
	DV Suspects		DV Victims	
Race/Ethnicity	Number	Percent[a]	Number	Percent[a]
Alaska Native/American Indian	982	96.2	1,207	96.5
Asian	3	0.3	6	0.5
Black/African American	4	0.4	2	0.2
Caucasian/White	28	2.7	29	2.3
Missing	4	0.4	7	0.6
TOTALS	1,021	100.0	1,251	100.1

Notes
a. Totals may not sum to 100.0% due to rounding error.

The sex/gender distributions of DV suspects and victims was also skewed, but not as severely as their respective race/ethnicity distributions. Nearly 85% (84.7%; n=865) DV suspects were identified as male, and 70.3% (n=880) DV victims were identified as female in AST case records. Thus, the DV incidents captured in this sample had a discernible sex/gender trajectory: DV suspects were highly likely to be male, and DV victims were most likely female. Despite the these highly gendered distributions, however, it is important to note that roughly 1 in 3 DV

[93] The total numbers of DV suspect and DV victims exceed the total number of DV case records sampled (n=982) due to multiple incidents involving multiple suspects, multiple victims, or both multiple suspects and multiple victims.

victims were male and about 1 in 7 DV suspects were female.

Table 79.
Sex/gender of domestic violence (DV) suspects and victims

	Individual Roles			
	DV Suspects		DV Victims	
Sex/Gender	Number	Percent[a]	Number	Percent[a]
Male	865	84.7	371	29.7
Female	156	15.3	880	70.3
TOTALS	1,021	100.0	1,251	100.0

Notes
a. Totals may not sum to 100.0% due to rounding error.

With respect to age, DV suspects and DV victims were typically of similar age. DV suspects' average age was 31.1 years, while DV victims' average age was 32.1 (see Table 80).

Table 80.
Average age of domestic violence (DV) suspects and victims

	Individual Roles			
	DV Suspects		DV Victims	
Age Measure	Mean	SD	Number	SD
Suspect age	31.1 yrs	10.224	32.1	13.950

Notes
a. SD=standard deviation

In addition to these three demographic characteristics – race/ethnicity, sex/gender, age – information pertaining to potential disabilities of suspects and victims was also collected. Three broad classifications of disability were coded from investigator narratives and other supporting documentation contained in each case record: (1) cognitive/developmental disability, (2) psychiatric/mental health disability or condition, and (3) physical disability. Table 81 presents the frequencies for these items. Of the three forms of disability examined, psychiatric/mental

Table 81.
Disabilities of domestic violence (DV) suspects and victims

	Individual Roles			
	DV Suspects (n=1,021)		DV Victims (n=1,251)	
Disability	Number	Percent[a]	Number	Percent[a]
Cognitive/developmental	4	0.4	2	0.2
Psychiatric/mental health	10	1.0	2	0.2
Physical	1	0.1	4	0.3

Notes
a. Multiple response items. Percentages will not total to 100%.

health disability or condition was the most frequently observed. It was, however, only documented for DV suspects in 10 case records, and for DV victims in 2 case records. The other

two forms of disability – cognitive/developmental and physical – were documented with even less frequency, for both DV suspect and DV victims.

Suspect and victim alcohol and drug use. DV victim alcohol and drug use was measured using two indicators for each group: (1) any alcohol use, and (2) any illicit drug use. These two measures were then used to construct a four-category of combined alcohol and illicit drug use, for both DV suspects and DV victims (see Table 82).

According to the materials contained in AST case records (e.g., investigator narratives, interview statements, etc.) DV victims were twice as likely to have been sober (58.4%; n=731) when the incident occurred than DV suspects (24.5%; n=250). The primary substance used by both DV suspects and DV victims was alcohol, although DV suspects (68.0%; n=694) consumed alcohol at a rate more than twice that of DV victims (32.5%; n=406). DV suspect and DV victims were under the influence of illicit drugs only infrequently.

Table 82.
Alcohol and illicit drug use by DV suspects and victims

	Individual Roles			
	DV Suspects		DV Victims	
Alcohol/drug use	Number	Percent[a]	Number	Percent[a]
Alcohol (only) use	666	65.2	397	31.7
Drug (only) use	6	0.6	3	0.2
Both alcohol and drug use	28	2.7	9	0.7
Neither alcohol nor drug use	250	24.5	731	58.4
Unknown/missing	71	7.0	111	8.9
TOTALS	1,021	100.0	1,251	99.9

Notes
a. Percentages may not total to 100% due to rounding error.

Two additional indicators were used to assess the extent to which DV victims who used alcohol or illicit drugs did so with DV suspects prior to incidents occurring. Results are presented in Table 83. Case records indicated that between one-quarter and one-third of DV victims (26.9%; n=336) drank with DV suspects prior to the DV incident. Only seven DV victims used illicit drugs along with DV suspects prior to incidents occurring.

Table 83.
Frequency with which DV victim used alcohol or drugs with DV suspects

Alcohol/Drug Use	Number	Percent[a]
Used alcohol with suspect	336	26.9
Used illicit drugs with suspect	7	0.6

Notes
a. Multiple response items. Percentages will not total to 100%.

Suspect and victim injuries. A total of 11 items were coded during the review of each DV case record to document injuries sustained by both suspects and victims (see Table 84). A single item

was used to measure whether or not documentation (e.g., forensic medical exams, other medical documentation, interview transcripts, investigator narratives) included within case records indicated that suspects victims sustained any injuries to the genital area. The 10 remaining items captured information pertaining to non-genital injuries. Table 84 presents the results for both DV suspects and DV victims.

Table 84.
Frequency of injuries sustained by domestic violence suspects and victims

	Individual Roles			
	DV Suspect (n=1,021)		DV Victim (n=1,251)	
Injury Type	Number	Percent[a]	Number	Percent[a]
Genital injury	5	0.5	4	0.3
Non-genital injury	167	16.4	781	62.4
Bruising	72	7.1	553	44.2
Lacerations or bite marks	99	9.7	40	3.2
Bone fractures	4	0.4	30	2.4
Strangulation/choking	4	0.4	123	9.8
Bloody nose/lip	13	1.3	130	10.0
Broken/loose teeth	0	0.0	5	0.4
Blackened/swollen eye	13	1.3	172	13.8
Knife wound	4	0.4	20	1.6
Gunshot wound	1	0.1	7	0.6

Notes
a. Multiple response items. Percentages will not total to 100%.

The findings shown in Table 84 make clear that when it came to the risk of experiencing significant physical injury as a result of a DV incident, it wasn't even close. Overall, 62.4% (n=781) of DV victims had one or more documented injuries compared to just 16.4% (n=167) DV suspects. The most common form of injury documented for DV victims was bruising (44.2%; n=553), followed by blackened/swollen eye(s) (13.8%; n=172), bloody nose or lip (10.0%; n=130), and strangulation/choking injuries (9.8%; n=123). Genital injuries, lacerations/bite marks, bone fractures, broken or loosened teeth, knife wounds, and gunshot wounds were each observed in among less than 5% of DV victims. DV victims experience higher rates for every type of injury than DV suspects, save for lacerations or bite marks.

Case records indicated that roughly 1 in 5 DV victims (18.5%; n=231) received medical treatment for their injuries. (Data not shown.)

The most frequently recorded injury among DV suspects was lacerations or bite marks (9.7%; n=99), followed by bruising (7.1%; n=72). All of the remaining forms of injury were experienced by less than 5% of DV suspects.

Victim resistance. The case record review utilized seven items to capture information about the actions and strategies of resistance used by DV victims. The measures used ranged from more

"passive" actions/strategies deployed by DV victims such as cooperating or pretending to cooperate with their attackers, to yelling/screaming for help, to attempting to run away or escape, to physically resisting/assaulting the suspect (see Table 85).

Table 85.
Frequency of acts/strategies of resistance engaged by domestic violence victims

Resistance Type	Number	Percent[a]
Cooperate/pretend to cooperate	140	11.2
Attempt to reason/plead with suspect	219	17.5
Yell/scream for help	89	7.1
Attempt to contact police/authorities	529	42.3
Threaten suspect	35	2.8
Attempt to run away/escape	343	27.4
Physically resist or attack suspect	318	25.4
One or more strategies	962	76.9

Notes
a. Multiple response items. Percentages will not total to 100%.

More than three quarters (76.9%; n=962) of DV victims used one or more of the resistance strategies listed in Table 85. The most commonly used strategy was to attempt to contact police or other authorities, a behavior engaged in by 529 (42.3%) of the DV victims in the sample. DV victims also frequently attempted to flee (27.4%; n=343), physically resist or attack DV suspects (25.4%; n=318), and attempting to reason with or plead with suspects (17.5%; n=219). Less common strategies included yelling or screaming for help (7.1%; n=89) and leveling threats against suspects (2.8%; n=35). In sum, DV victims actively resisted suspects in DV incidents, deploying a variety of resistance strategies to exit the incident and/or stop the violence.

Victim disclosure. The case record review included the coding of 15 separate indicators of victim disclosure prior to police notification (see Table 86). Overall, only about a quarter of DV victims (26.8%; n=335) disclosed to anyone prior to law enforcement being contacted. Among those victims who did disclose to someone prior to police notification, the individuals they chose to share their experiences with were almost exclusively people with whom they shared close, interpersonal ties: parents, other family members, friends, and intimate partners. Outside this circle of intimacy, medical professionals (4.0%; n=50) were the most common recipient of a victim disclosure, followed by teachers or other school employees (n=9) and therapists or counselors (n=8). In sum, the data show that DV victims were unlikely to have told anyone about a DV incident prior to law enforcement being notified.

Table 86.
Frequency of domestic violence victim disclosures

Disclosure To:	Number	Percent[a]
Any disclosure	335	26.8
Intimate partner/spouse	6	0.5
Parent/guardian	93	7.4
Other family member	118	9.4
Friend	103	8.2
Therapist/counselor	8	0.6
Crisis line/advocate	3	0.2
Medical professional	50	4.0
Clergy/spiritual advisor	0	0.0
Employer/co-worker	2	0.2
Child protection/social worker	0	0.0
Other police besides AST	0	0.0
Teacher/school employee	9	0.7
Other authorities	1	0.1
Stranger	8	0.6
Suspect's intimate partner/spouse/family	1	0.1

Notes
a. Multiple response items. Percentages will not total to 100%.

Suspect-Victim relationship. A single multi-category variable was used to collect information pertaining to the relationship between suspects and victims. The measure was coded as the suspect's relationship to the victim. Therefore, the base number used in percentage calculations as the total number of DV suspects included in the sample (n=1,021). Table 87 presents the findings.

Table 87.
Type of relationships between domestic violence suspect and victims

Disclosure To:	Number	Percent[a]
Acquaintance	18	1.8
Friend	11	1.1
Current intimate partner	447	43.8
Former intimate partner	44	4.3
Current spouse	117	11.5
Former spouse	3	0.3
Relative	366	35.9
Authority figure (to victim)	4	0.4
Stranger	2	0.2
Unknown/missing	9	0.9
TOTAL:	1,021	100.2

Notes
a. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding error.

While the Alaska definition of crimes of domestic violence hinges on whether or not offenses are committed by one householder against another householder, the data presented in Table 87 suggest that the incidents of domestic violence included in this sample might be more accurately characterized as "intimate partner violence." A majority of DV suspects (59.8%; n=611) were the current or former intimate partners or spouses of victims. Alternatively, the incidents of domestic violence included in this sample could be characterized as "family violence." More than 95% (95.7%; n=977) of the relationships between DV suspects and victims consisted of current or former intimate partners or spouses or other family. In any case, the data presented in Table 87 show that a defining characteristic of the "domestic violence" incidents in this sample was the intimate partner and familial relationships between suspects and victims.

Investigative activities and outcomes. Detailed information was collected pertaining to the experiences of both DV victims and suspects in the investigative process. Table 88 presents the measures for the data that were collected.

Table 88.
Frequency of investigative activities and outcomes for domestic violence suspects and victims

	Individual Roles			
	DV Suspect (N=1,021)		DV Victim (N=1,251)	
Investigative Activity	Number	Percent[a]	Number	Percent[a]
Interviewed	735	72.0	1,060	84.7
In-person	619	60.6	779	62.3
Telephonically	101	9.9	265	21.2
Interview recorded: Audio	600	58.8	849	67.9
Interview recorded: Video	3	0.3	4	0.3
Statements internally consistent	618	60.5	1,020	81.5
Interviewee uncooperative	102	10.0	62	5.0
Uncooperative with investigation	N/A	- - -	95	7.6
Notified of rights, resources	N/A	- - -	1,008	80.6

Notes
a. Multiple response items. Percentages will not total to 100%.

Case records documented interviews with large majorities of DV suspects (72.0%; n=735) and victims (84.7%; n=1,060). Given an interview, it was equally likely that DV suspects and victims would undergo an in-person interview with investigators (60.6% and 62.3%, respectively). However, telephonic interviews were documented in case records more frequently for DV victims (21.2%; n=265) than for DV suspects (9.9%; n=101). DV victims were more likely to have audio recordings made of their interviews as well. Close examination of case record narratives and interview transcripts showed that a higher percentage of DV victim statements were internally consistent (81.5% vs. 60.5%). Within the specific context of interviews with investigators, interviewee non-cooperation was infrequently documented for both DV suspect and victims. A slightly higher percentage of DV victims (7.6%) were noted by investigators as

being non-cooperative with the investigation as a whole[94]. Finally, the last item included in Table 88 reveals that a large majority of DV victims (80.6%; n=1,008) were informed by investigators of their rights and the resources available to them as crime victims.

Despite the differences noted above with respect to the likelihood of being interviewed and the internal consistency of statements provided to investigators, it is important to note that, in general, the overall patterns of investigative activities and outcomes were quite similar for DV suspects and victims. Large majorities of both groups were interviewed. When interviewed, roughly two-thirds of DV suspects and victims had in-person interviews with investigators. Recordings – either audio or video – were likely to be made. And, non-cooperation (whether perceived or real) with interviews, as well as with the investigation more generally, was uncommon.

Witness/third party characteristics. Witnesses/third parties comprised the largest group of individuals in the sample, totaling 1,475 people (39.4%). This section of the report provides an overall description of these individuals and their role in DV investigations.

Table 89.
Race/ethnicity of domestic violence witnesses/third parties

Disclosure To:	Number	Percent[a]
Alaska Native/American Indian	1,396	94.6
Asian	2	0.1
African American/Black	3	0.2
Caucasian/White	64	4.3
Other	1	0.1
Unknown/missing	9	0.6
TOTAL:	1,475	99.9

Notes
a. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding error.

Table 89 provides a summary description of the race/ethnicity of the witnesses/third parties identified in the case record review. Overall, the racial/ethnic composition of the witnesses/third parties was very similar to the racial/ethnic composition of DV suspects and victims: overwhelmingly Alaska Native/American Indian, with only limited representation of people from other racial/ethnic groups.

[94] During the case record review process interview non-cooperation and investigation non-cooperation were coded separately. In some cases, interviewees were cooperative during interviews, but withdrew their cooperation at later stages of the investigation – for example, telling investigators they would no longer participate in the investigation, telling investigators not to contact them again, refusing to answer the phone or return messages, not answering questions during follow-up interviews with investigators, among others. Both of these variables were coded as "uncooperative" after pre-testing the case record review instrumentation against actual case records and discovering that while investigators only rarely documented cooperation, they frequently made extensive notes detailing perceived non-cooperation with the investigation.

Table 90.
Sex/gender of domestic violence witnesses/third parties

Disclosure To:	Number	Percent[a]
Male	713	48.3
Female	761	51.6
Unknown/missing	1	0.1
TOTAL:	1,475	100.0

Notes
a. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding error.

Witnesses/third parties distinguished themselves from DV victims and suspects when it came to sex/gender composition, however. Whereas DV victims were predominantly female, and SA/SAM suspects were overwhelmingly male, the sex/gender composition of witnesses/third parties was almost evenly balanced with 48.3% male and 51.6% female.

The average age of witnesses/third parties in DV case records is shown in Table 91. On average, witnesses/third parties in DV cases were 34.3 years of age. On average, witnesses/third parties in DV cases were slightly older than either DV suspects (31.1 years) or DV victims (32.1 years).

Table 91.
Average age of domestic violence witnesses/third parties

Age Measure	Mean	Standard Deviation
Witness/third party age	34.3	15.610

Notes

Table 92 shows the distribution of relationships between witnesses/third parties and DV suspects. Among DV witnesses/third parties, the most frequently observed relationship was that of a relative (38.6%; n=569), followed by an acquaintance (23.9%; n=352), and friend (16.0%; n=236). Witnesses/third parties were authority figures to 5.6% (n=82) of DV suspects and strangers to 3.8% (n=56). Witnesses/third parties to DV incidents were rarely current or former intimate partners or spouses of suspects. Information pertaining to the relationship between witnesses/third parties and DV suspects was ambiguous or missing in 10.1% (n=149) of instances.

Table 92.
Type of relationships between domestic violence witnesses/third parties and suspects

Witness-Suspect Relationship	Number	Percent[a]
Acquaintance	352	23.9
Friend	236	16.0
Current intimate partner	21	1.4
Former intimate partner	4	0.3
Current spouse	6	0.4
Relative	569	38.6
Authority figure	82	5.6
Stranger	56	3.8
Unknown/missing	149	10.1
TOTAL:	1,475	100.1

Notes
a. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding error.

Table 92 presents the distribution of relationships between witnesses/third parties and DV victims. The most commonly observed relationship between witnesses/third parties and DV victims was that of relative (44.9%; n=662), followed by friend (19.3%; n=284), and then acquaintance (16.6%; n=245). Substantially smaller percentages of witnesses/third parties were the current or former intimate partners or spouses of DV victims, or individuals who occupied positions of authority (relative to victims).

While there were some observable differences, in general the pattern of relationships witnesses/ third parties had with DV suspects was very similar to the pattern of relationships witnesses/ third parties had with DV victims. Witnesses/third parties were most likely to be relatives to both DV suspects (38.6%) and DV victims (44.9%), and then either friends or victims of suspects and victims. In sum, witnesses/third parties were relatives, friends, or acquaintances to 78.5% of DV suspects and 80.8% of DV victims.

It was almost as likely as not that witnesses/third parties would directly witness DV incidents. Case records indicated that 47.3% (n=697) witnesses/third parties were “eye witnesses” who personally saw DV incidents occur. Whether or not they were “eye witnesses” to DV incidents, approximately 20% (19.5%; n=287) of witnesses/third parties to DV incidents reported them to police or other authorities (data not shown). DV victims directly shared what happened to them with approximately a quarter (26.4%; n=390) of the witnesses/third parties included in the sample (data not shown).

Charge Characteristics

Charging data were collected from two sources: AST case records, and case file records obtained from the Alaska Department of Law (DOL). The results presented in this section of the report are limited to the data obtained from DOL. Therefore, the findings discussed below are limited to the criminal charges that were formally recognized by prosecutors and that were subject to the criminal legal process beyond the initial inquires of police investigators.

Charge referral. The analysis begins with a summary of the charges that were recorded as "referred" by DOL. Out of the 982 SA DV case records included in the sample, 664 (67.6%) were recorded as referred by DOL. In total, these 664 referred cases included 686 charges. The maximum number of charges referred in a single SA or SAM case was 12.

Table 93.
Distribution of level and class of charges referred to DOL by AST

Charge Level: Charge Class	Number	Percent[a]
Felony: Unclassified	1	0.2
Felony: Class A	7	1.0
Felony: Class B	65	9.5
Felony: Class C	121	17.6
Misdemeanor: Class A	488	71.1
Misdemeanor: Class B	3	0.4
Violation	1	0.2
TOTAL:	686	100.0

Notes
a. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding error.

The distribution of charges included in DV cases at the referral stage of the criminal process was highly concentrated (see Table 93). At referral, more than 70% (71.1%; n=488) of the charges were Class A misdemeanors. Most of the felony charges were Class C felonies (17.6%; n=121), followed by Class B felonies (9.5%; n=65), Class A felonies (1.0%; n=7), and a single unclassified felony offense.

Table 94 presents the distribution of charges according to charge level and offense type. Most DV cases (69.1%; n=474) included at least one misdemeanor assault charge, and more than a quarter (26.2%; n=180) included at least one felony assault charge. Charges for other offenses were included in initial DV case referrals only sporadically.

Table 94.
Distribution of level and offense type of charges referred to DOL by AST

Charge Level: Offense Type	Number	Percent[a]
Felony: Kidnapping	1	0.2
Felony: Assault	180	26.2
Felony: Weapons	2	0.3
Felony: Property	8	1.2
Felony: Other	3	0.4
Misdemeanor: Assault	474	69.1
Misdemeanor: Drugs	1	0.2
Misdemeanor: Property	7	1.0
Misdemeanor: Other	9	1.3
Violations	1	0.2
TOTAL:	686	100.1

Notes
a. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding error.

Charge acceptance for prosecution. In total, 1,547 charges accepted for prosecution by DOL – many more than what was originally referred. This discrepancy is due to charging amendments and charge additions made by prosecutors. Despite the addition of so many new charges, a comparison of the distribution of charges that were referred (Table 93) to the distribution of charges that were accepted for prosecution (Table 95) reveals that, in general, the composition of

Table 95.
Distribution of level and class of charges accepted for prosecution by DOL

Charge Level: Charge Class	Number	Percent[a]
Felony: Unclassified	4	0.3
Felony: Class A	7	0.5
Felony: Class B	106	6.9
Felony: Class C	235	15.2
Misdemeanor: Class A	829	53.6
Misdemeanor: Class B	68	4.4
Violations	298	19.3
TOTAL:	1,547	100.2

Notes
a. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding error.

charges remained quite consistent. Two aspects of the distribution that did change substantially were the percentages of Class A felonies (from 71.1% down to 53.6%) and violations (from 0.2% up to 19.3%). Otherwise, additions to other charge level–charge class groupings occurred at a rate that kept their percentages fairly consistent from referral to acceptance for prosecution.

Table 96 presents the distribution of charges accepted for prosecution according to level and offense type. The most commonly observed offense type in DV cases that were accepted for

prosecution was misdemeanor assault (43.6%; n=675). An additional 19.3% (n=299) of accepted charges were felony assaults. Violations[95] constituted 19.1% (n=296) and miscellaneous misdemeanor offenses comprised 8.7% (n=134) of charges that were accepted by prosecutors. Each of the other offense categories listed in Table 96 represented 3% or fewer of the total number of accepted charges.

Table 96.
Distribution of level and offense type of charges accepted for prosecution by DOL

Charge Level: Offense Type	Number	Percent[a]
Felony: Kidnapping	2	0.1
Felony: Assault	299	19.3
Felony: Weapons	8	0.5
Felony: Property	21	1.4
Felony: Other	21	1.4
Misdemeanor: Assault	675	43.6
Misdemeanor: Harassment	25	1.6
Misdemeanor: Drugs	11	0.7
Misdemeanor: Alcohol	9	0.6
Misdemeanor: Property	46	3.0
Misdemeanor: Other	134	8.7
Violations	296	19.1
TOTAL:	1,547	

Notes
a. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding error.

Charge conviction. In total, 805 of the 1,547 (52.0%) DV case charges that were accepted for prosecution resulted in conviction (see Table 97). More than half of the total number of conviction charges were for Class A misdemeanors (52.0%; n=419). Nearly a third (30.7%; n=247) were for violations. Nearly a tenth (9.6%; n=77) of charge convictions in DV cases were for Class B misdemeanors. Overall, 92.2% (n=743) of the charge convictions in DV cases were misdemeanors and violations. When violations are removed from the analysis this percentage does not change much (down to 88.9% of the 558 remaining conviction charges), but the percentage of conviction charges that were Class A misdemeanors jumps from 52.0% to 75.1%, and the percentage of Class B misdemeanors increases from 9.6% to 13.8%.

[95] Supplemental analysis of "violations," some of which were criminal and some non-criminal, revealed that a many were petitions to revoke probation or parole violations, as well as violations of protective orders.

Table 97.
Distribution of level and class of charges resulting in conviction

Charge Level: Charge Class	Number	Percent[a]
Felony: Unclassified	1	0.1
Felony: Class A	1	0.1
Felony: Class B	8	1.0
Felony: Class C	52	6.5
Misdemeanor: Class A	419	52.0
Misdemeanor: Class B	77	9.6
Violation, non-criminal	247	30.7
TOTAL:	805	100.0

Notes
a. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding error.

Table 98 provides detail about the types of offenses that resulted in conviction. The largest share of conviction charges were misdemeanor assaults (45.8%; n=369). An additional 6.6% (n=53) of charge convictions were felony assaults, bringing the total percentage of assault convictions to 52.4%. Other misdemeanor offenses included harassment (7.8%), property offenses (2.1%), drug and alcohol offenses (0.4%), and miscellaneous other offenses (4.3%).

In addition to assault, other felony-level offenses included weapons offenses (0.3%), property offenses (0.3%), and miscellaneous other felonies (0.8%).

Violations once again represented nearly a third (31.7%) of all conviction charges in DV cases.

Table 98.
Distribution of level and offense type of charges resulting in conviction

Charge Level: Offense Type	Number	Percent[a]
Felony: Assault	53	6.6
Felony: Weapons	2	0.3
Felony: Property	2	0.3
Felony: Other	6	0.8
Misdemeanor: Assault	369	45.8
Misdemeanor: Harassment	63	7.8
Misdemeanor: Drugs	2	0.3
Misdemeanor: Alcohol	1	0.1
Misdemeanor: Property	17	2.1
Misdemeanor: Other	35	4.3
Violations, non-criminal	255	31.7
TOTAL:	805	100.1

Notes
a. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding error.

Case-level outcomes. The charge-level data collected for DV cases from DOL were aggregated into summary case-level measures of case acceptance and case conviction. A DV case was coded "accepted for prosecution" if any of the referred charges were subsequently accepted for prosecution, irrespective of whether or not charges were amended upon acceptance. Similarly, DV cases were coded "convicted" if any charges resulted in a final disposition of conviction. Table 99 presents the percentages of DV cases that were coded as referred by DOL, that were accepted for prosecution, and that resulted in conviction.

Table 99.
Distribution of domestic violence case processing outcomes (n=982)

	Domestic Violence Cases (n=982)	
Charge Level: Offense Type	Number	Percent[a]
Referred for prosecution	664	67.6
Accepted for prosecution	585	59.6
Accepted (conditional probability)		*88.1*
Resulted in conviction	482	49.1
Convicted (conditional probability)		*82.4*

Notes
a. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding error.

Using the DOL measure of case referral (rather than the AST measure of case referral), we find that, overall, 67.6% (n=664) of the DV case records sampled were referred for prosecution. Nearly 90% (88.1%; n=585) of the DV cases coded as referred by DOL were subsequently accepted for prosecution. This represented 59.6% of all the DV cases included in the analysis sample. A total of 482 DV cases resulted in at least one charge conviction. This total was 82.4% of the 585 cases that were accepted for prosecution, 72.6% of the cases that were referred, and 49.1% of all the DV cases in the sample.

APPENDIX A

Alaska Sexual Assault and Sexual Abuse of a Minor Statutes

Alaska Statutes: Sexual Assault

11.41.410. Sexual assault in the first degree.

(a) An offender commits the crime of sexual assault in the first degree if

(1) the offender engages in sexual penetration with another person without consent of that person;

(2) the offender attempts to engage in sexual penetration with another person without consent of that person and causes serious physical injury to that person;

(3) the offender engages in sexual penetration with another person

(A) who the offender knows is mentally incapable; and

(B) who is in the offender' care

(i) by authority of law; or

(ii) in a facility or program that is required by law to be licensed by the state; or

(4) the offender engages in sexual penetration with a person who the offender knows is unaware that a sexual act is being committed and

(A) the offender is a health care worker; and

(B) the offense takes place during the course of professional treatment of the victim.

(b) Sexual assault in the first degree is an unclassified felony.

11.41.420. Sexual assault in the second degree.

(a) An offender commits the crime of sexual assault in the second degree if

(1) the offender engages in sexual contact with another person without consent of that person;

(2) the offender engages in sexual contact with a person

(A) who the offender knows is mentally incapable; and

(B) who is in the offender' care

(i) by authority of law; or

(ii) in a facility or program that is required by law to be licensed by the state; or

(3) the offender engages in sexual penetration with a person who the offender knows is

(A) mentally incapable;

(B) incapacitated; or

(C) unaware that a sexual act is being committed; or

(4) the offender engages in sexual contact with a person who the offender knows is unaware that a sexual act is being committed and

(A) the offender is a health care worker; and

(B) the offense takes place during the course of professional treatment of the victim.

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(b) Sexual assault in the first degree is a class B felony.

11.41.425. Sexual assault in the third degree.

(a) An offender commits the crime of sexual assault in the third degree if the offender

(1) engages in sexual contact with a person who the offender knows is

(A) mentally incapable;

(B) incapacitated; or

(C) unaware that a sexual act is being committed;

(2) while employed in a state correctional facility or other placement designated by the commissioner of corrections for the custody and care of prisoners, engages in sexual penetration with a person who the offender knows is committed to the custody of the Department of Corrections to serve a term of imprisonment or period of temporary commitment; or

(3) engages in sexual penetration with a person 18 or 19 years of age who the offender knows is committed to the custody of the Department of Health and Social Services under AS 47.10 or AS 47.12 and the offender is the legal guardian of the person.

(b) Sexual assault in the third degree is a class C felony.

11.41.425. Sexual assault in the fourth degree.

(a) An offender commits the crime of sexual assault in the fourth degree if

(1) while employed in a state correctional facility or other placement designated by the commissioner of corrections for the custody and care of prisoners, the offender engages in sexual contact with a person who the offender knows is committed to the custody of the Department of Corrections to serve a term of imprisonment or period of temporary commitment; or

(2) the offender engages in sexual contact with a person 18 or 19 years of age who the offender knows is committed to the custody of the Department of Health and Social Services under AS 47.10 or AS 47.12 and the offender is the legal guardian of the person.

(b) Sexual assault in the fourth degree is a class A misdemeanor.

Alaska Statutes: Sexual Abuse of a Minor

11.41.434. Sexual abuse of a minor in the first degree.

(a) An offender commits the crime of sexual abuse of a minor in the first degree if

(1) being 16 years of age or older, the offender engages in sexual penetration with a person who is under 13 years of age or aids, induces, causes, or encourages a person who is under 13 years of age to engage in sexual penetration with another person;

(2) being 18 years of age or older, the offender engages in sexual penetration with a person who is under 18 years of age, and the offender is the victim's natural parent, stepparent, adopted parent, or legal guardian; or

(3) being 18 years of age or older, the offender engages in sexual penetration with a person who is under 16 years of age, and

(A) the victim at the time of the offense is residing in the same household as the offender and the offender has authority over the victim; or

(B) the offender occupies a position of authority in relation to the victim.

(i) by authority of law; or

(ii) in a facility or program that is required by law to be licensed by the state; or

(b) Sexual abuse of a minor in the first degree is an unclassified felony.

11.41.436. Sexual abuse of a minor in the second degree.

(a) An offender commits the crime of sexual abuse of a minor in the first degree if

(1) being 17 years of age or older, the offender engages in sexual penetration with a person who is 13, 14, or 15 years of age and at least four years younger than the offender, or aids, induces, causes, or encourages a person who is 13, 14, 15 years of age and at least four years younger than the offender to engage in sexual penetration with another person;

(2) being 16 years of age or older, the offender engages in sexual contact with a person who is under 13 years of age or aids, induces, causes, or encourages a person under 13 years of age to engage in sexual contact with another person;

(3) being 18 years of age or older, the offender engages in sexual contact with a person who is under 18 years of age, and the offender is the victim's natural parent, stepparent, adopted parent, or legal guardian;

(4) being 16 years of age or older, the offender aids, induces, causes, or encourages a person who is under 16 years of age to engage in conduct described in AS 11.41.455(a)(2)-(6);

(5) being 18 years of age or older, the offender engages in sexual contact with a person who is under 16 years of age, and

(A) the victim at the time of the offense is residing in the same household as the offender and the offender has authority over the victim; or

(B) the offender occupies a position of authority in relation to the victim;

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(6) being 18 years of age or older, the offender engages in sexual penetration with a person who is 16 or 17 years of age and at least three years younger than the offender and the offender occupies a position of authority in relation to the victim; or

(7) being under 16 years of age, the offender engages in sexual penetration with a person who is under 13 years of age and at least three years younger than the offender.

(b) Sexual abuse of a minor in the second degree is a Class B felony.

11.41.438. Sexual abuse of a minor in the third degree.

(a) An offender commits the crime of sexual abuse of a minor in the third degree if being 17 years of age or older, the offender engages in sexual contact with a person who is 13, 14, or 15 years of age and at least four years younger than the offender.

(b) Sexual abuse of a minor in the third degree is a Class C felony.

11.41.440. Sexual abuse of a minor in the fourth degree.

(a) An offender commits the crime of sexual abuse of a minor in the fourth degree if

(1) being under 16 years of age, the offender engages in sexual contact with a person who is under 13 years of age and at least three years younger than the offender; or

(2) being 18 years of age or older, the offender engages in sexual contact with a person who is 16 or 17 years of age and at least three years younger than the offender, and the offender occupies a position of authority in relation to the victim.

(b) Sexual abuse of a minor in the fourth degree is a Class A misdemeanor.