

## The Impact of Polygraphy on Admissions of Victims and Offenses in Adult Sexual Offenders

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*Sexual offenders are extremely reluctant to disclose their offending histories for a variety of psychosocial and legal reasons. The polygraph has shown promise as a intervention for eliciting admissions of past sexual offending behaviors. For 60 adult male sexual offender (35 inmates and 25 parolees), the number of victims and offenses were recorded from the Presentence Investigative Report, Sexual History Disclosure form, and 2 consecutive polygraph examination reports. Dramatic increases in the number of admitted victims and offenses were found for inmates, but not for parolees, across each source. However, there was a substantial decline in the number of victim and offense admissions by the second polygraph examination for both groups, even though 80% of the examination results revealed deception about sexual offending behaviors. Standardized use of sanctions and privileges for deceptive and nondeceptive polygraph results, respectively, are proposed as a way of eliciting full disclosure of offending histories for these offenders.*

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**KEY WORDS:** polygraph; admissions; deception; sanctions.

### INTRODUCTION

Over the last 25 years, the criminal justice system has witnessed a steady increase in the use of polygraph testing in adult sexual offenders for deterring reoffending behaviors (Abrams, 1989, 1991; Abrams & Ogard, 1986; Edson, 1991; English, Pullen, & Jones, 1996), overcoming denial of offending behaviors (Abrams, 1992; Priest & Smith, 1992), and verifying compliance with parole supervision conditions (Matte, 1996). Sexual offenders are extremely reluctant to disclose their offending histories for a variety of psychosocial and legal reasons

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(Blasingame, 1998; Carnes, 1983; Jensen & Jewell, 1988). Several studies utilizing both adult and juvenile sexual offender populations have shown polygraph testing to be an effective process for eliciting additional disclosures of offending behavior beyond traditional self-report methods (Chambers, 1994; Edson, 1991; Emerick & Dutton, 1993; O'Connell, 1998). It is incumbent that convergent research continue to replicate and expound on these findings, thus demonstrating the polygraph is an extremely effective intervention for obtaining accurate offending histories from sexual offenders.

Schwartz and Cellini (1995) point out that carefully executed procedures for ensuring the confidentiality of disclosed sexual paraphilias are sufficient for obtaining valid and reliable admissions. However, a number of factors exist that might compromise the number of disclosures from a sexual offender population. These include, but are not limited to, fear of prosecution of undiscovered crimes and breach of confidentiality to other criminal justice entities (Abel & Rouleau, 1990; Kaplan, Abel, Cunningham-Rathner, & Mittleman, 1990). Kaplan (1985) found that paraphiliacs admitted just 5% of their sexual offending in a criminal justice setting than they admitted in a mental health setting, even though both settings disseminated methods of assuring confidentiality to the participants. Abel and Rouleau (1990) found that a sample of 561 volunteer nonincarcerated sexual assaulters reported a total of 291,737 paraphilic acts, of which there were 195,407 victims. Confidentiality and setting thus appear to be effective components of research for encouraging the disclosure of sexual offending behaviors with a nonincarcerated population. However, it is difficult to control the setting and maintain confidentiality in a criminal justice system that relies heavily on information sharing for establishing public safety.

Emerick and Dutton (1993) demonstrated that the polygraph mediated the effects of deception with a juvenile sexual offender population, thus improving the quality and quantity of information obtained about their offending behaviors. They discovered significant increases in self-reported number of child victims and assaults between collateral file information, clinical interviews, and polygraph examinations. In addition, they found significant increases in information reported between these sources for the degree of force, abuse of both genders, and multiple victim relationships. This sample of adolescents yielded a mean of 77 sexual assault offenses admitted during polygraph from a mean of 27 offenses noted in the file. Chambers (1994) found that, in a sample of 36 juvenile sexual offenders, the total number of disclosures of victims (111) and offenses (not reported) as a result of polygraph testing increased by 210 and 502, respectively. Approximately 50% of the polygraph examinations showed deception.

Polygraph testing has not been accepted or utilized by the majority of sexual offender treatment programs in the United States and Canada due to a variety of complex issues. According to Jones *et al.* (1996) approximately 31% of probation and parole offices surveyed reported the use of specialized caseloads that stressed

the use of polygraphs with sexual offenders. However, only 10% of those offices actually required these offenders to participate in such examinations. Knopp, Freeman-Longo, and Stevenson (1994) reported the more encouraging finding that 24% of programs surveyed use the polygraph with sexual offenders. These findings are discouraging because community safety is paramount, and the polygraph is an available intervention for enhancing the supervision of these offenders in the community (Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers (ATSA), 1997). Colorado has developed standards that require the use of polygraph testing for the behavioral monitoring of these offenders in the community (Colorado Sex Offender Management Board, 1998).

Currently, the integrity of polygraph testing has been attacked on two fronts: lack of process standardization and lack of validation research. Opponents of the polygraph argue that individual differences, such as body mannerisms of clients, amount of examiner experience in testing special populations, quality of examiner training, and various types of therapist/examiner partnerships bias the polygraph results. To some extent, however, all research is biased by these variables if not sufficiently controlled. The American Polygraph Association (APA) has recently released standards for the polygraph testing of sexual offenders. These standards are for postconviction testing and are considered to be the minimum requirements needed by an examiner for APA endorsement (J. Earle, personal communication, August 11, 1998). Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the treatment provider or parole officer to choose competent and experienced examiners who have worked directly with sexual offenders and have been approved by local boards.

A second criticism of the polygraph is that it does not meet standards for educational and psychological testing (as cited in Janes, 1993). Chambers (1994) points out, however, that the polygraph is not a test, but a treatment tool designed to elicit a client's admissions to past behaviors and monitor current behaviors. Many therapeutic interventions that do not meet the standards requiring adequate documentation of practice standardization, reliability, and validity, are nonetheless effectively utilized in the field.

Regarding the above concerns, research has been conducted on the integrity of the polygraph. Forensic Research Inc. (1997) compiled the results of 80 research projects conducted since 1980 aimed at assessing the validity and reliability of polygraph testing for the APA. The 12 field validity studies conducted involved 2,174 exams and yielded a 98% accuracy rate (average over studies). Validity was determined by the examinee's deception being confirmed by confession or truthfulness being confirmed by someone else's confession. Bartol (1983) reported accuracy rates ranging from 70 to 86% in most studies, thus significantly increasing detection of deception over chance (60%). In addition, 11 field reliability studies conducted with independent evidence confirmation yielded a 92% accuracy rate. Reliability was determined by the internal consistency of correct nondeceptive/deceptive relevant questions. Because these validation studies did not target sexual

offenders, future research needs to assess the validity of deception to sexual history baseline behaviors and identify any mitigating factors associated with polygraph testing in this special population. Meanwhile, because preliminary studies have begun to establish the reliability and validity of the polygraph, its use is justified for attempting to obtain more accurate sexual history information from these offenders.

The present study will describe the effects of polygraph testing on the disclosure of sexual offending behaviors among multiple data sources in known criminal justice settings.

## METHOD

### Participants

The participants were 109 identified adult male sexual offenders under the jurisdiction of the Colorado Department of Corrections (CDOC). Fifty-nine were incarcerated at a minimum-restricted facility, and 50 were supervised on parole under intensive supervision or regular programs. The incarcerated offenders voluntarily participated in sexual offender treatment in the facility, whereas the paroled offenders were mandated to participate in sexual offender treatment in the community. Parolees who chose not to participate in treatment were revoked back to prison.

A subsample of 60 sexual offenders (35 inmates and 25 parolees) was selected for data analysis. (Selection criteria will be identified in the results section.) Twenty-seven of the inmates (77%) were Anglo/white, 6 (17%) Hispanic, and 2 (6%) African American. Sixteen of the parolees (64%) were Anglo/white, 2 (8%) Hispanic, and 7 (28%) African American. The average age of the inmates was 39 and the parolees, 36. The inmates had received an average of 27 months of intensive treatment in the facility, whereas the parolees received an average of 17 months of less intense treatment. In this sample, none of the parolees had received treatment in the facility. The facility treatment program is a cognitive/behaviorally based Therapeutic Community (TC), which operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Offenders on parole attended community based treatment groups for 2 hour sessions, 1 to 2 days a week.

### Measures

Data were collected on the inmates and parolees between October 1995 and September 1998. Key data consisted of the number of separate sexual abuse victims and offenses, prior to being admitted to the TC or placed on parole, for multiple data sources. Aggregate past victim and offense data were recorded for child and adult, male and female sexual assault, among stranger, acquaintance, relative,

and position-of-trust relationship categories. In addition, these data were recorded for theft of undergarments, obscene telephone calls, voyeurism, exhibitionism, frottage, and production/sale of pornography categories. Only victims and offenses quantified by the offender were used in data analysis. Thus, data presented in the results section may well be an underrepresentation of the true number of victims and offenses. Disclosures of high-risk behaviors and age of first known sexual offending were also collected as a second and third type of admission during this process. In addition, when the offense information was disclosed and if the polygraph results were inconclusive, nondeceptive, or deceptive were also captured for analyses.

The multiple data sources included the Presentence Investigative Report (PSIR), Sexual History Disclosure form (SHD), and polygraph examination(s). The PSIR is a comprehensive summary of a convicted offender's criminal and social history, which is utilized by the court for determining an appropriate sentence to CDOC or probation. The SHD form is a 30-page self-report questionnaire that covers sexual development and offending history. Polygraph examinations consisted of using a "utility test" or mixed issue test format.

### Apparatus

Polygraph testing was conducted by six independent examiners from various locations in the state. The equipment utilized was the Axciton Computerized Polygraph System and the Lafayette Instrument LX-2000, both using the Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory Polyscore computer scoring algorithm for purposes of score reliability and validity confirmation. All of the examiners had been approved by the Colorado Sex Offender Management Board (1998).

### Procedures

The PSIR was available in the offender's departmental file. Participants completed the SHD typically during the first 90 days after admission to the TC or parole and then were scheduled for their first polygraph. The TC examinations would take place in an office outside of the offender's living unit. Parolees were administered the polygraph test at the examiner's office. The examinations took on average about 2 hours to complete. Both inmates and parolees were typically tested about every 4 to 6 months. Informed consent procedures were followed for all participants. The CDOC paid for the offenders' polygraph examinations.

The polygraph examination process contained pre- and posttest components. The offender's therapist and parole officer worked closely with the examiner in developing appropriate polygraph questions for confirmation of the disclosed number of victims and offenses, discovery of new offenses, and/or compliance

with treatment or parole conditions. This study examined only the number of past victim and offense admissions data. The pretest established which questions the examiner would ask based on the offender's self report of new admissions of past offending or the absence of accountability statements for known offending behaviors identified in the SHD. Polygraph testing consisted of measuring the offender's cardiovascular, respiratory, and galvanic skin resistance to three or four relevant questions (Control Question Test; Reid & Inbau, 1977) regarding their past sexual offending behaviors. The posttest consisted of the examiner reviewing the information obtained throughout the examination and addressing areas of deception with the offender. The offender was then given the chance to disclose any additional victims and offenses to the examiner or therapist, which was then documented in an addendum to the SHD.

Consequences for deceptive responses were not standardized or consistently applied for inmates or parolees. Generally, inmates would be confronted about the deception in their treatment groups and required to write an addendum about the behaviors in question. In addition, the deception might be presented to the parole board during the inmate's hearing. For parolees, deception might result in a surprise home visit by the parole officer, increased office visits for the parolee, or serve as aggravating evidence in a parole revocation hearing. The benefits of a nondeceptive examination consisted of positive progress reports filed with the parole board for inmates and retention of the offender's present level of supervision for parolees.

## RESULTS

The criterion for inclusion in the following analyses was participation in at least two polygraph examinations. Of the identified 109 sexual offenders, 60 (35 inmates and 25 parolees) met the above criterion. Of the inmates who only received one polygraph exam, 10 were expelled from treatment, 4 were discharged from CDOC, and 6 were paroled or progressed to community corrections. In addition, 6 parolees were revoked to CDOC and 18 discharged from CDOC. Five of the participants continued with no status change, but had received only one polygraph because of the scheduling process. Out of the 169 polygraphs administered, 135 (80%) were deceptive, 26 (15%) were nondeceptive, and 8 (5%) were inconclusive. The data were analyzed from a within-subjects research design.

### Number of Victim and Offense Admissions

The first data analysis examined the number of victim and offense admissions for both inmates and parolees between the four data sources: PSIR, SHD, 1st polygraph, and 2nd polygraph. Table I shows significant differences in the mean number of admissions by source. Means are probably better indicators of

## Polygraphy

Table I. Admitted Number of Sexual Crime Victims and Offenses for Total Sample Mean (Median)

Inmates & Parolees (N = 60)		
Source	Victims	Offenses
PSIR	2 (1)	5 (1)
Sexual history	50 (8)	234 (20)
1st Polygraph	99 (10)	308 (22)
2nd Polygraph	110 (11)	318 (23)

Friedman two-way ANOVA

Victim  $\chi^2(3, N = 60) = 130.20, p < .01$

Offense  $\chi^2(3, N = 60) = 138.65, p < .01$

Table II. Admitted Number of Sexual Crime Victims and Offenses by Inmates and Parolees Mean (Median)

Source	Inmates (N = 35)	Parolees (N = 25)
	Victims	Victims
PSIR	2 (1)	2 (1)
Sexual history	83 (21)	4 (2)
1st Polygraph	165 (24)	6 (3)
2nd Polygraph	184 (26)	7 (3)
	Offenses	Offenses
PSIR	7 (1)	3 (1)
Sexual history	394 (50)	10 (4)
1st Polygraph	511 (95)	23 (5)
2nd Polygraph	528 (95)	23 (5)

Friedman two-way ANOVA

Victim (inmate)  $\chi^2(3, N = 35) = 91.98, p < .01$

Victim (parolee)  $\chi^2(3, N = 25) = 38.30, p < .01$

Offense (inmate)  $\chi^2(3, N = 35) = 94.57, p < .01$

Offense (parolee)  $\chi^2(3, N = 25) = 44.21, p < .01$

impact on the community, whereas medians are better indicators of the frequency of victimizing behavior (Abel *et al.*, 1987). The data analyzed were positively skewed. The range was 2,593 for the number of victims and 6,094 for the number of offenders, with average standard deviations of 366.2 and 973.9, respectively. A Friedman two-way ANOVA revealed significant overall differences for mean number of admissions of victims and offenses between sources. Visual inspection of the means and medians suggest substantial increases in victim and offense admissions between each succeeding source.

The second data analysis examined the number of victim and offense admissions for inmates and parolees separately between the four data sources. Table II shows significant increases in the mean number of admissions for each offender group by source. These data show parolees admitted substantially fewer victims

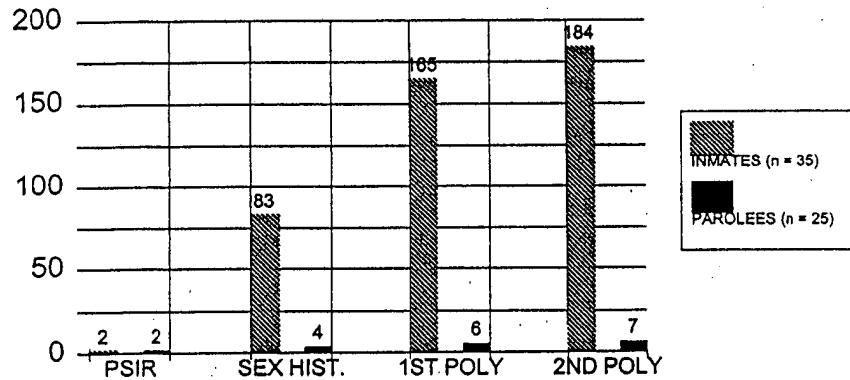


Fig. 1. Admitted number of victims (Mean).

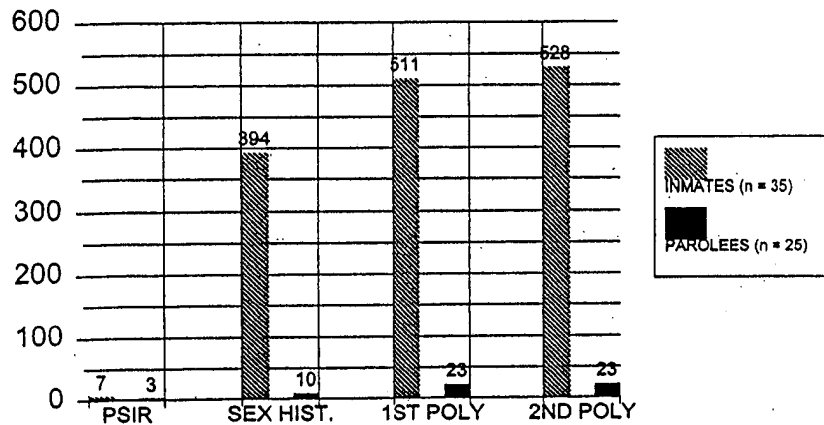


Fig. 2. Admitted number of offenses (Mean).

and offenses than inmates. Mean difference tests for inmates and parolees by source were not computed because of the obviously large differences, as shown in Figs. 1 and 2.

The third data analysis examined the number of victim and offense admissions for both inmates and parolees between the four data sources by crime type: sexual assault, additional paraphilia, and frottage. Table III shows significant increases in the mean number of admissions for each crime type by source, except for victims of frottage. All 60 offenders had at least one sexual assault identified in the PSIR. However, only two offenders had identifiable additional paraphilias and one offender had an act of frottage recorded in the PSIR.

Table III. Admitted Number of Sexual Crime Victims and Offenses by Crime Type for Total Sample Mean (Median)

Source	Inmates & Parolees		
	Sexual assault <sup>a</sup> victims (N = 60)	Addit. paraphilia <sup>b</sup> victims (N = 37)	Frottage victims (N = 26)
PSIR	2 (1)	n.a.	n.a.
Sexual history	11 (4)	37 (7)	47 (7)
1st Polygraph	48 (5)	48 (9)	49 (7)
2nd Polygraph	49 (6)	53 (10)	59 (7)
Source	Inmates & Parolees		
	Sexual assault <sup>a</sup> offenses (N = 60)	Addit. paraphilia <sup>b</sup> offenses (N = 38)	Frottage offense (N = 26)
PSIR	5 (1)	n.a.	n.a.
Sexual history	185 (9)	51 (10)	51 (8)
1st Polygraph	225 (11)	84 (13)	54 (10)
2nd Polygraph	227 (12)	87 (13)	64 (10)

<sup>a</sup>Includes child and adult, stranger, acquaintance, relative, and position-of-trust sexual assaults.

<sup>b</sup>Includes voyeurism, exhibitionism, theft of undergarments, and obscene telephone calls.

Friedman Two-Way ANOVA

Victim (sex. assault)  $\chi^2(3, N = 60) = 117.96, p < .01$

Victim (addit. paraphilia)  $\chi^2(2, N = 34) = 28.18, p < .01$

Victim (frottage)  $\chi^2(2, N = 17) = 5.64, p = n.s.$

Offense (sex. assault)  $\chi^2(3, N = 60) = 130.08, p < .01$

Offense (addit. paraphilia)  $\chi^2(2, N = 35) = 28.00, p < .01$

Offense (frottage)  $\chi^2(2, N = 21) = 9.29, p < .01.$

Table IV. Age of First Known Sexual Offense for Inmates and Parolees Mean (SD)

Source	Inmates (N = 35)	Parolees (N = 25)
PSIR	28 (7.11)	28 (8.27)
Sexual history	13 (5.54)	25 (8.27)
1st Polygraph	12 (5.16)	23 (8.72)
2nd Polygraph	12 (5.16)	23 (8.31)

Note. Overall significant differences were found for age of first known sexual offense across source for inmates and parolees:  $F(3, 239) = 9.78, p < .01.$

#### Age of Onset for Sexual Offending Behaviors

The fourth data analysis examined the age of first known sexual offending behavior for inmates and parolees between the four sources. Table IV shows significant differences in admitted age for inmates and parolees between sources, as determined by a two-way ANOVA. At the PSIR, the average inmate and parolee age of first sexual offending was 28, but by the second polygraph the average age for inmates had decreased to 12, while for the parolees the average age only decreased to 23.

**Table V. Admitted Number of Sexual Crime Victims and Offenses by Polygraph Result for Total Sample Mean (Median)**

Inmates & Parolees		
Source	Nondeceptive victims (N = 17)	Deceptive victims (N = 87)
	PSIR	2 (2)
Sexual history	72 (2)	59 (5)
1st Polygraph	74 (5)	95 (10)
	Nondeceptive offenses (N = 16)	Deceptive offenses (N = 87)
	PSIR	6 (2)
Sexual history	545 (6)	285 (13)
1st Polygraph	546 (6)	339 (20)

Note. Inconclusive polygraph test results occurred in five cases.

### Polygraph Results and Admissions

The fifth data analysis examined the number of victim and offense admissions for both inmates and parolees by exam results through the first polygraph ( $N = 109$ ). Table V shows substantial increases in the mean and median number of admissions for both result types. Although the mean number of victim and offense admissions tapered off between the SHD and first polygraph for the nondeceptive group, the mean number of admissions continued to dramatically rise for the deceptive group. Comparisons between the result types on the number of admissions were not made because of substantially fewer nondeceptive offenders ( $n = 17$ ).

The sixth data analysis examined the combined 1st and 2nd polygraph results by type of admission for inmates and parolees separately. Only 5% of inmates with deceptive results admitted nothing, whereas 21% of parolees admitted nothing. When inmates with deceptive results did admit, 50% admitted both high-risk behaviors and past sexual offenses, as compared to 26% of parolees. In addition, 40% of parolees admitted only high-risk behaviors, as compared to 27% of inmates. Finally, 12% percent of parolees and 18% of inmates admitted only past sexual offending behaviors. For both inmates and parolees, there were significantly more admissions during the pretest than not admitting at all, admitting in the posttest, or admitting in the pre- and posttest.

### Number of Victim and Offense New Admissions

The seventh data analysis examined the number of new victim and offense admissions for inmates and parolees separately between the four data sources. Table VI shows significant decreases in the mean number of new victims and

**Table VI. Admissions of Sexual Crime Victims and Offenses Differential by Inmates and Parolees Mean (Median)**

Source	Inmates (N = 35) Victims	Parolees (N = 25) Victims
	Sex hist.—PSIR	81 (17)
1st Polygraph—Sex hist.	82 (2)	2 (0)
2nd Polygraph—1st Poly	18 (0)	0 (0)
	Offenses	Offenses
Sex hist.—PSIR	387 (36)	8 (0)
1st Polygraph—Sex hist.	117 (2)	13 (0)
2nd Polygraph—1st Poly	17 (0)	1 (0)

*Wilcoxon Matched-Pair Signed-Ranks Test (one-tailed)*

Inmate-victim (P2-P1 & P1-SH)  $z = -1.01, p = n.s.$

Inmate-offense (P2-P1 & P1-SH)  $z = -2.12, p < .05$

Parolee-victim (P2-P1 & P1-SH)  $z = -2.22, p < .01$

Parolee-offense (P2-P1 & P1-SH)  $z = -1.70, p < .05.$

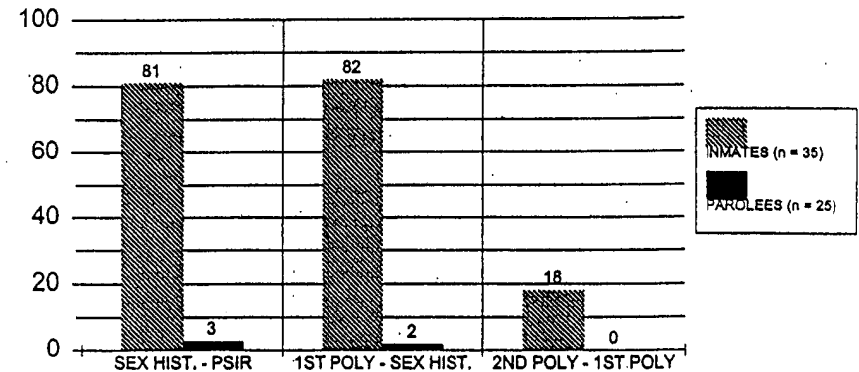


Fig. 3. Victim gain differential (Mean).

offenses, except for inmate victims, as determined by a Wilcoxon Matched-Paired Sign-Ranks Test. The differentials (difference in information gained score) were computed by subtracting the succeeding source victim and offense frequencies from the previous source's frequencies. For both inmates and parolees there was a substantial decline in information gained from the first to the second polygraph as shown in Figs. 3 and 4.

### DISCUSSION

The present study revealed significant differences in the number of admitted past victims and offenses of sexual abuse between the PSIR, SHD, and two

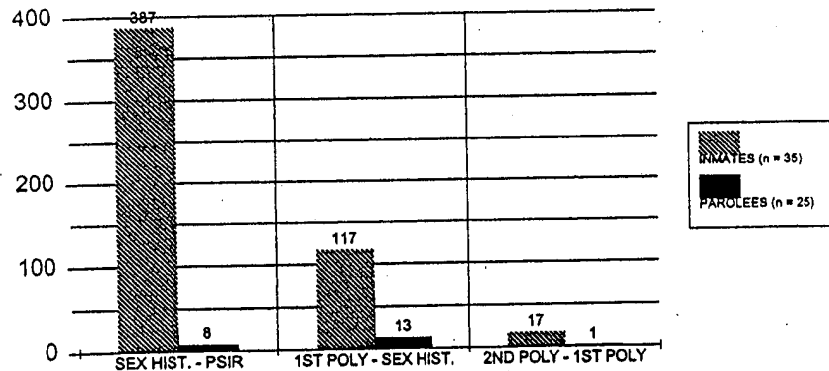


Fig. 4. Offense gain differential (Mean).

consecutive polygraph examinations among inmates and parolees. Visual observation of the data confirmed that these differences were linear and increased between sources. These findings replicate similar trends found in previous research (Chambers, 1994; Edson, 1991; Emerick & Dutton, 1993; O'Connell, 1998). In addition, these trends were confirmed when the analysis was delineated by sexual assault, additional paraphilias, and frottage categories. Comparatively, conclusions cannot be made on the frequency of sexual offending for inmates and parolees, because of the unique external confounds present for each setting. However, conclusions can be drawn on the effectiveness of the polygraph within each setting. These analyses demonstrate that the polygraph examination process effectively elicits a greater number of admissions of offending behavior in both settings. However, the degree of its effectiveness is relative to the setting for inmates and parolees.

A major issue in this study is the high rate of deception (80%) among the polygraph examinations. Eighty-four percent of the inmates, and 74% of parolees, had deceptive results. If any question's response was scored as deceptive, the exam was coded as deceptive, regardless of the question's content. This approach was employed because of the complexities discerning specific nondeceptive responses, relative to deceptive responses, during the same examination. However, an 80% deception rate for the initial polygraph examination may not be unusually high with a population that has a strong emotional and social investment in denial of their offending behaviors.

Embedded within the deception is the true utility of this process. Polygraph questions are constructed so that deception indicates the offender actually does have more victims or offenses than previously disclosed in the pretest. Deception indicates there are more victims and offenses than the offender previously disclosed during the exam. When confronted with the results, offenders may admit to more

previously undetected offenses because they believe the polygraph has revealed their lie. The research to date is beginning to support the polygraph as a reliable and valid instrument (Forensic Research Inc., 1997). Thus, any placebo effects of polygraphy are extremely valuable for obtaining these disclosures. The goal of this process is to obtain accurate sexual histories, and any admissions help achieve this goal.

Inmates admitted to a greater number of victims and offenses, on average, than parolees. Although parolees admitted less, significantly more information was still obtained between sources. This finding suggests a strong environmental effect for parolees not to disclose information about their offending history, even though the parolees had a slightly lower deception rate than the inmates.

Substantial decreases in age of first known sexual offending behavior were found for inmates, but not for parolees. These data support the utility of the polygraph process for eliciting disclosure of diverse offending information. Where parolees did not admit to juvenile sexual offending, inmates' age of first known sexual offending decreased from an average onset at 28 to 12 across sources. Treatment intensiveness and education about sexually assaultive behaviors might account for these differences.

The major limitations in this study were the unique confounding effects which voluntary/mandatory treatment participation, amount and intensity of treatment received, and perceived threat had on the amount of disclosures for inmates and parolees. Although prior sexual criminal history was not specifically controlled, both inmates and parolees had similar numbers of sexual victims and offenses identified in the PSIR. Because parolees were mandated as a condition of parole to participate in treatment, they may have had a higher level of denial than inmates, who actively sought treatment and admitted their sexual offending behavior. Parolees also had on average not only less time in treatment, but less intensive treatment than inmates. Inmates were treated in a TC, which encouraged and supported this type of disclosure. In addition, parolees may have feared being revoked back to prison for disclosing their previously undetected crimes, whereas inmates feared remaining in prison for not disclosing their undetected crimes and obtaining deceptive polygraph results. Because available consequences for deception were not consistently applied, their impact on disclosure, especially for parolees, was more than likely minimal. These factors support the finding that parolees admitted to less sexual offending behaviors than inmates. Future research will need to address these speculations before any conclusions can be drawn about their influence on disclosure for inmates and parolees.

Offenders who were nondeceptive on the first polygraph had substantially more admitted numbers of offenses than offenders who were deceptive. This may be a result of responding honestly to all SHD and examination questions, as opposed to group differences regarding the magnitude of offending. This speculation is supported by the fact that both groups possessed similar prior sexual offending

histories at the time of the PSIR. In addition, the observation that the nondeceptive group reached a plateau on victim and offense information disclosed through first polygraph, whereas the deceptive group continued to steadily increase, also supports this speculation. Future research will need to examine individual differences in these groups that may account for the deception and failure to disclose offending behavior, such as social desirability.

For deceptive results, inmates admitted both to more high-risk and past sexual offending behaviors, whereas parolees admitted more to just high-risk behaviors. In addition, more parolees than inmates admitted nothing for a deceptive polygraph. There were also significantly more admissions in the pretest than no admissions and admissions in both the pre- and posttest for the combined inmate and parolee samples (Abrams, Hoyt, & Jewel, 1991). More admissions in the pretest, in relation to a high rate of deception, suggests that offenders are disclosing only part of their offending histories even though they are aware they will be tested on this information. Admitting to high-risk behaviors during the pretest may be employed as a strategy for avoiding deception by reducing anxiety associated with any current more serious inappropriate behaviors. In addition, offenders in treatment may be trying to minimize their offending behaviors by admitting to related high-risk behaviors concurrently with the offenses, regardless of whether they have engaged in the behaviors before or after entering treatment.

Of substantial importance was the discovery that for inmates and parolees, significantly less victim and offense information was gained by the second polygraph. This finding was complicated by the fact that the majority of the polygraph results were deceptive. The assumption is that these offenders are continuing to not disclose a large number of their victims and offenses. The decline in disclosure may be related to the type of questions asked on the second polygraph. For inmates, the second polygraph is typically a maintenance examination. The questions on this type of exam address behaviors since the offender's last examination. Specifically, 26% of inmate and 28% of parolee exams did not include questions on past sexual offending behaviors. However, the pretest usually covered past sexual offending behaviors and the offender did not know what questions would be asked until after the pretest interview. In addition, the therapists explained to the inmates that all deception found in the previous exam would be addressed in future polygraph examinations. Another explanation for the decline in admissions is that the offenders possibly realized the lack of consistently applied consequences for deception and refrained from disclosing any additional offense information. Because the presence of anxiety is necessary for valid testing, no real consequences for lying would mitigate the effectiveness of this process. It appears after the initial examination the placebo effect of the polygraph may be diminishing. Future research will need to examine the impact sanctioning and awarding privileges might have on these types of admissions.

Because these offenders may be likely to disclose less over time and have such a high rate of deception about either offending or high-risk behaviors, sanction and privileges could be explored as a way of either eliciting full disclosure of offending behaviors or deterrence of such behaviors. We are working toward the development of a grid for establishing standardized sanctions at different phases of the polygraph examination. In addition, we have begun identifying appropriate privileges inmates could earn for nondeceptive examinations. Consequences for deception may include freezing an offender at their present treatment level or withholding special leisure activities, or the converse for nondeception.

The present results support the polygraph as an effective intervention for eliciting admissions of past sexual offending behaviors from offenders that no other process seems to be able to equally impact. These admissions are crucial to break down denial, facilitate offender accountability, and promote change in the therapeutic process. The implementation of sanctions and privileges is expected to encourage offenders to continue disclosing their sexual offending and high-risk behaviors. Although the impact of this intervention on admissions was less for parolees than inmates, the polygraph greatly enhanced the treatment and supervision practices of these offenders in diverse criminal justice settings.

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