# **Trajectories of Offending from Childhood to Early Adulthood** in Girls With and Without Mental Health System Involvement

Maryann Davis, PhD, Steven Banks, PhD, Bernice Gershenson, MPH, William Fisher, PhD, Albert Grudzinskas, Jr., JD, Center for Mental Health Services Research

## Abstract

Criminology literature is overwhelmingly based in studies of males, though studies of gender differences or of females are rapidly accumulating Rates of psychiatric disorder are typically higher in females involved with justice systems compared to males. However, the juvenile or criminal justice involvement of girls in mental health systems, or with serious mental health conditions is greatly understudied. Identifying their arrest risk onset, peak, and offset provides practitioners information about when to intervene and with whom. The goal of the present study is to describe within-individual longitudinal arrest patterns from ages 8-24 in this population, and determine whether their arrest patterns differ from general offender females in ways that have practice implications.

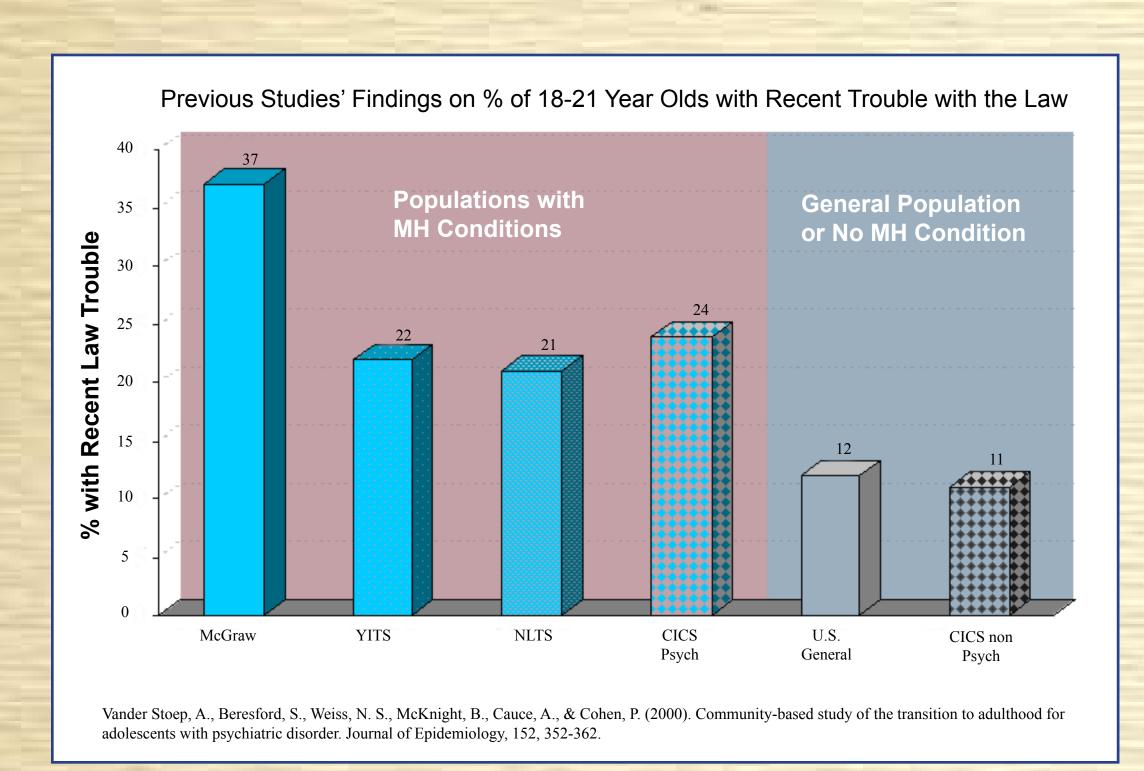
Methods: Using statewide administrative data from the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health (DMH) and Massachusetts' juvenile and vas constructed that contained juvenile and criminal arrest histories to age 25 for females born 1976-79. DMH ervice users (n=738), Non-DMH females had no DMH database records (n=34,436), Massachusetts Census 2000 provided the size of the general female population. Developmental trajectory modeling was used to group individuals' patterns of offending over time (trajectories) into "clusters" of those whose trajectories are similar, and describe trajectories. Trajectory comparison methods minimized the greater Non-DMH cohort size.

Results: DMH females were far more likely to be arrested by age 25 than Non-DMH females (46% vs. 22%) and to be arrested at multiple revealed eight justice system trajectories among those with multiple ages of arrest. Trajectories varied on level of involvement and timing of onset/offset/peaks. Non-DMH females comprised at least 93% of each trajectory cluster, though several clusters showed significant over- or under-representation of DMH females.

Conclusions: Concern about justice system involvement of female youths in intensive MH services is justified. Among girls with multiple ages findings for timing and type of intervention will be presented

# Introduction

Why look at arrests in the transition age group with serious mental health conditions?

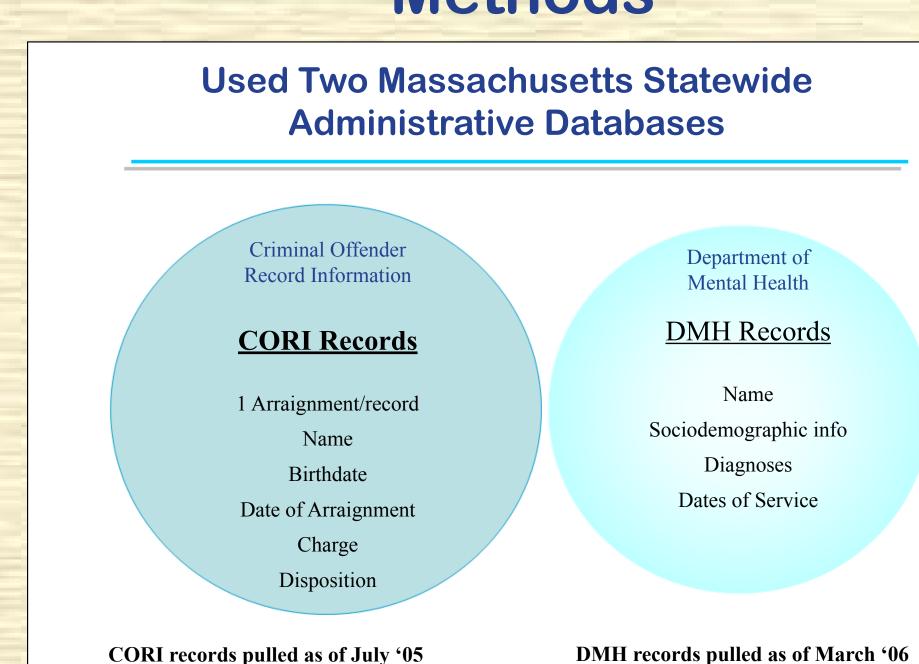


### Goal

Develop Knowledge to Help Prevent/Minimize Justice System Involvement of Youths in MH Services

- Good target for prevention reduction; high risk and in services
- Need more specific information; when, what, who?

For additional information contact: Maryann Davis, PhD Phone: 508-865-8716 E-mail: maryann.davis@umassmed.edu

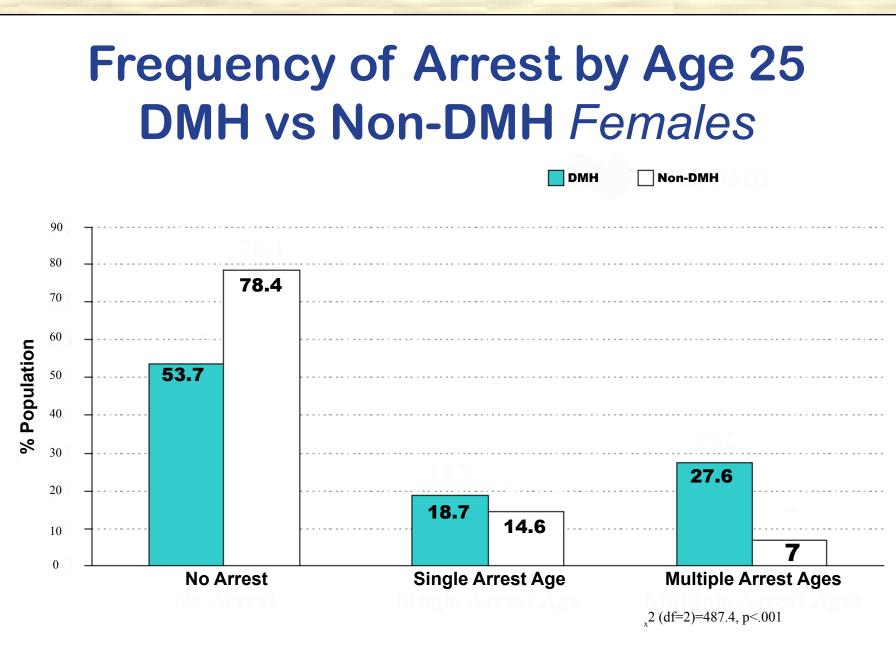


Non Arrested Non-DMH MA Female Population As per 2000 Census N=125.284

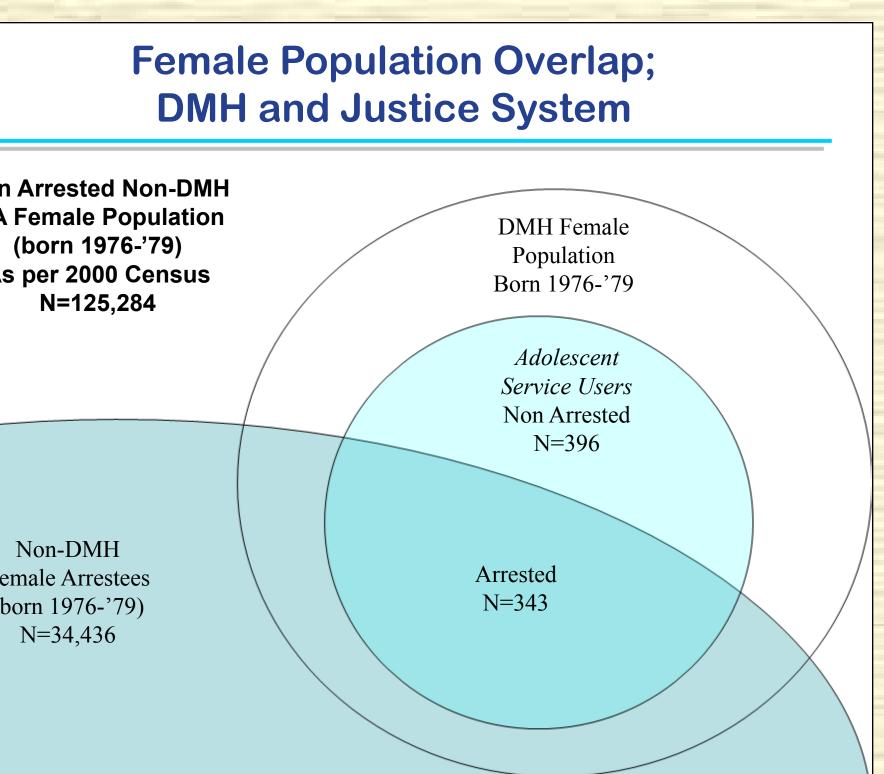
Non-DMH Female Arrestees (born 1976-'79) N=34,436

**Developmental Trajectory Modeling describes groups of individuals with** similar longitudinal arrest patterns over time, and describes those arrest patterns.

(try to split big groups) 3. Found 4 in each



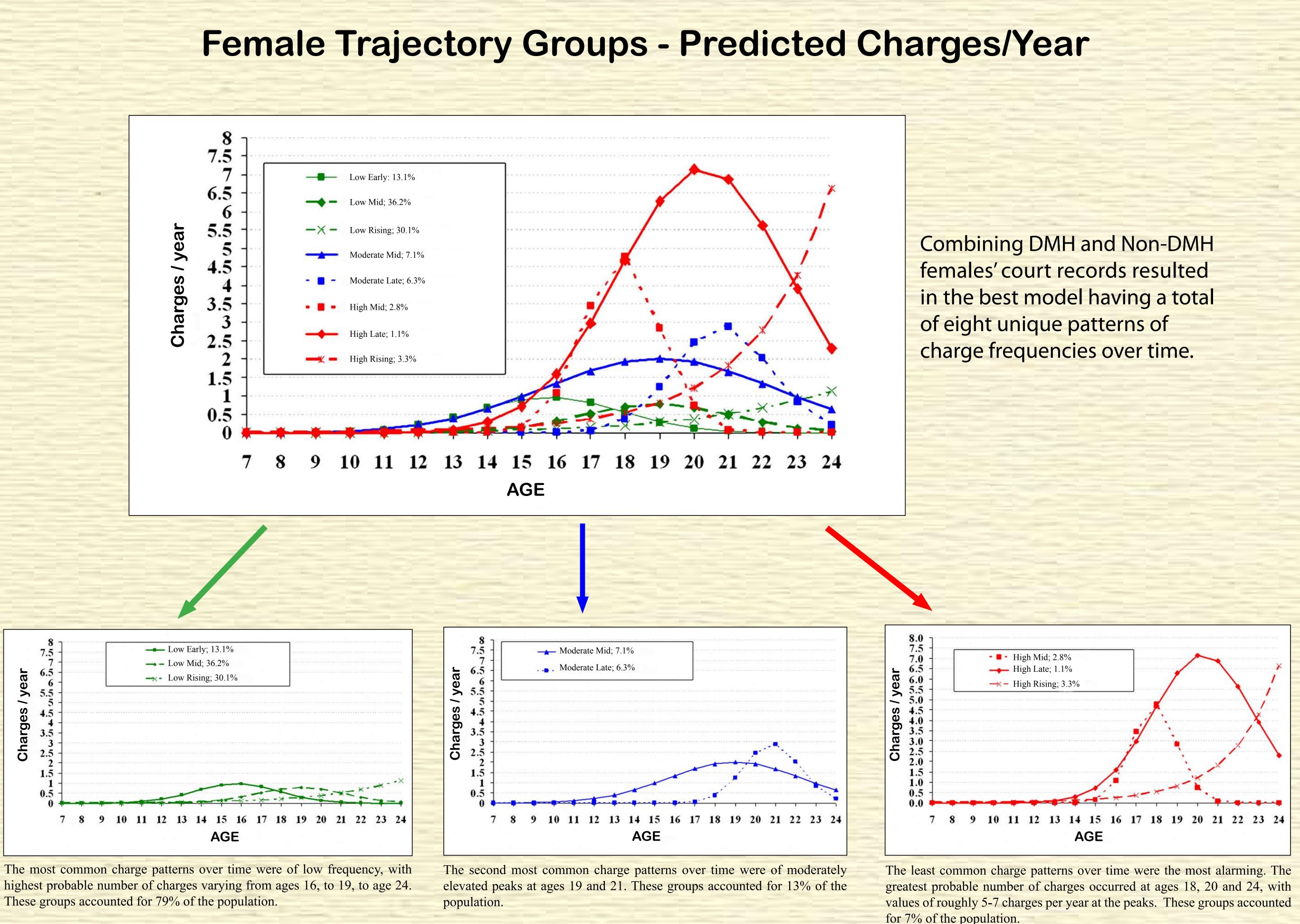
### Methods



### **Comparative Trajectory Approach**

- . Analyze DMH and Non-DMH females separately
- 2. Determine ideal number of groups and pattern within those groups
- 4. Combined the populations, used starting values
- 5. Determined ideal number of groups and pattern within those groups (try to split big groups)

Trajectories of charges were analyzed in those females with an arrest in more than one year of age (28% of DMH females and 7% of Non-DMH females).



These groups accounted for 79% of the population.

# Conclusions

### **Summary of Trajectory Findings**

- There are no trajectory patterns that are unique to either group
- The impact of DMHness is primarily expressed in the proportionality of their presence in each trajectory group
- The trajectory groups that are most common are among the patterns least concerning (1,5,7)
- Different trajectories have different prevention timing implications

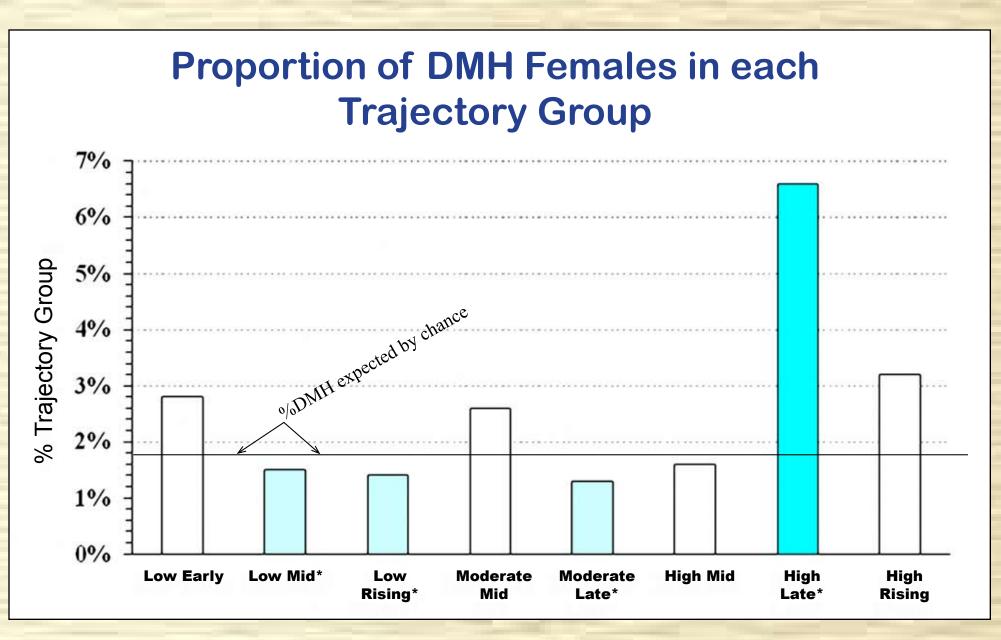
# Results

### Acknowledgement

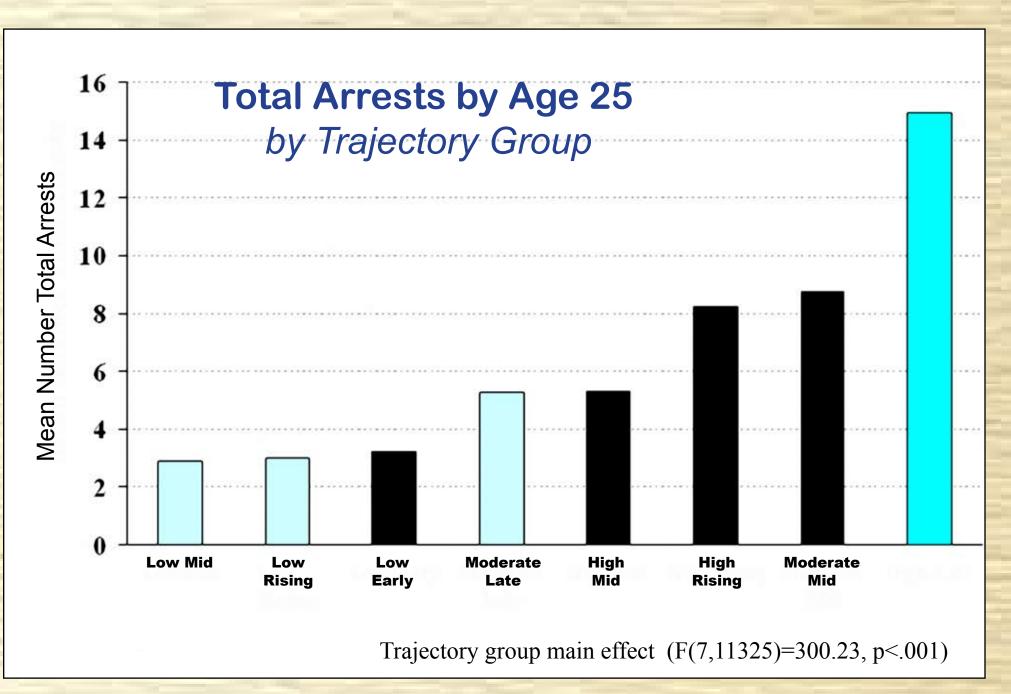
The data analysis presented here would not have been possible without the perseverance, guidance and consistently congenial mentoring of our beloved colleague, Dr. Steven Banks



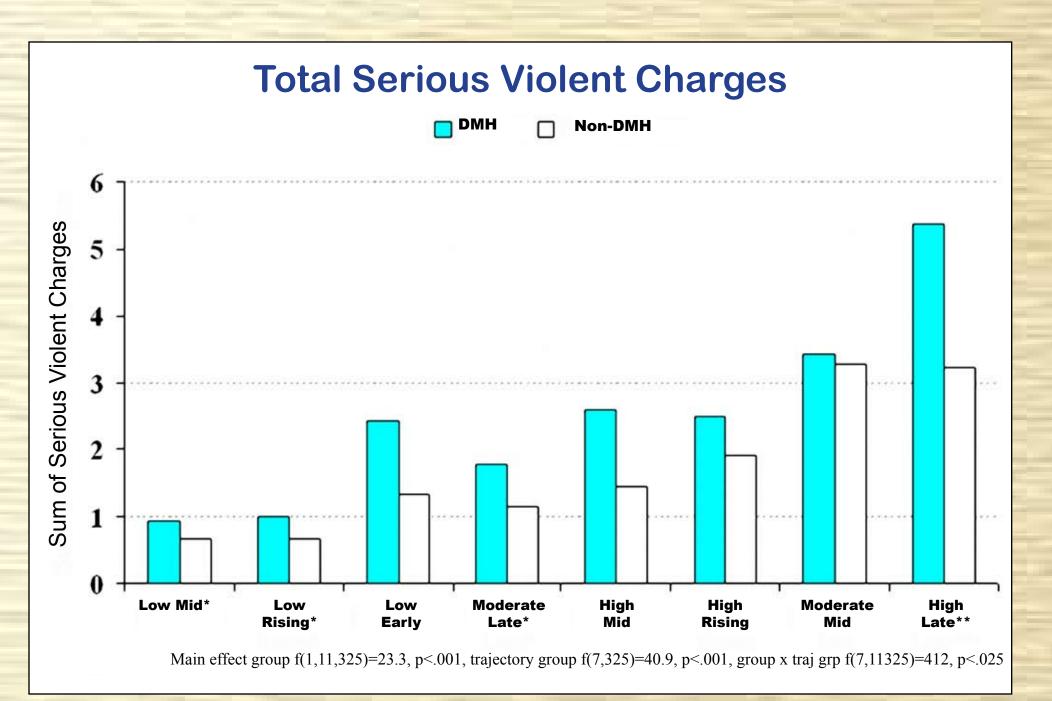




was over-representation of the DMH population in one of the most concerning, and smallest groups (High Late), and under-representation in two of the least concerning, and one of the moderate groups



The group in which DMH females were overrepresented accumulated the highest number of arrests of any group, the groups in which they were under-represented were among those with the lowest accumulation of arrests.



All trajectory groups had some serious charges. The DMH females in some trajectory groups accumulated many more of the serious violent charges than Non-DMH females, while in other trajectory groups they accumulated some more than Non-DMH females, and in one trajectory group the two were similar.