

RESEARCH ARTICLE

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## PROFILE OF ADOLESCENTS DEPRIVED OF THEIR LIBERTY AND OFFENSES COMMITTED

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### ABSTRACT

**Objective:** To describe the profile of adolescents deprived of their liberty and offenses committed in the macroregion of central-south Piauiense. **Material and method:** Cross-sectional and documentary study, conducted between August / 16 and July / 17. Seventy-six medical records were evaluated, the variables were grouped and analyzed by the Microsoft Excel version 2010 and the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 2010. The program was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Federal University of Piauí, with opinion number 2.056. 848. **Results:** of the evaluated, there was a predominance of males, aged 15 and 17 years and about 5 to 7 years of study. Living with a monthly household income of less than one minimum wage, the mother was the main responsible for most respondents. The prevalence of at least one type of drug was identified and its associations. Burglary / theft were the crimes most committed by the adolescents studied. **Conclusion:** More consistent adolescent protection policies that fully support them in a multidisciplinary and intersectoral logic is an alternative that, besides guaranteeing rights, potentially reduces risk factors and contributes to assisting the particularities of this population.

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### INTRODUCTION

According to the World Health Organization <sup>(1)</sup> adolescent is every person between 10 and 19 years old. The Child and Adolescent Statute (ECA), through Law No. 8.069, of 1990, defines adolescence as an age group of 12 to 18 years old <sup>(2)</sup>. It is characterized by profound changes in an individual's life and physical and mental changes make adolescents more vulnerable to alcohol consumption and illicit drug use, among other risks <sup>(3)</sup>. In general, the vulnerabilities of children, adolescents and their families manifest themselves in daily violence in the context of family, school and society. The lack of quality education, low wages and unemployment directly

affect the lives of many people, forcing them to enter the labor market and / or illicit activities such as drug trafficking at an early age, for example <sup>(4)</sup>. Data from the 2013 Annual Survey, consolidated by the General Coordination of the National Socio-Educational Service System<sup>(5)</sup>, indicate a total number of 23,066 adolescents and young people (12 to 21 years old) deprived of their liberty, internment and provisional internment. From 2011 to 2013, Piauí reported about 62, 44, 61 and 26, 31, 45 adolescents in and outpatient care, respectively <sup>(5)</sup>. In this sense, the proportion of adolescents deprived of liberty by federative unit, pointed out the state of Piauí with a population of 0.3 adolescents deprived of liberty for every 1000 adolescents in 2013 <sup>(5)</sup>. Although the number of

adolescents deprived of their liberty is not so alarming, it is a considerable number of people deprived of other important needs to grow and develop (health, education, leisure) in detention settings. Thus, it is considered healthy to identify risk factors that condition adolescents to immersion in the offense context and the lack of studies and research that address this problem in the reality of Piauí. From this perspective, the study aimed to describe the profile of adolescents deprived of their liberty and the infractions committed in the macroregion of central-south region of Piauí.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

Documentary cross-sectional study<sup>(9-10)</sup> conducted in a macroregion of central-south region of Piauí from August 2016 to July 2017, at the Citizenship Defense Complex (CDC), Educational Center that welcomes adolescents in conflict with the law, to comply with socio-educational measures (SEM). The population consisted of 106 medical records of adolescents who complied with SEM from January 2015 to January 2017. From the total of medical records 12 presented incomplete information and 18 were not accessible and, therefore, were excluded from the study. The variables were chosen and grouped taking into account socioeconomic conditions, education level, family structure, drug use and the reason for admission and reentry. Data were collected through a structured form, whose descriptive analysis of the variables was made by calculating absolute and relative frequencies and measures of central tendency and appropriate dispersion. Data were grouped in Microsoft Excel version 2010 and Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20, presenting them as tables and graphs. The study was approved by the UFPI Research Ethics Committee, with Opinion No. 2.344.645 and met all the criteria established in Resolution No. 466/2012 (11).

## RESULTS

In the characterization of the sample, it was identified male predominance (74; 97.4%), aged 15 to 17 years (84.1%), between 5 and 7 years of study (55.3%), monthly family income of up to one minimum wage (75.0%), as shown in the Table below.

**Table 1. Sociodemographic characterization of adolescents complying with socio-educational measures, Picos, Piauí, Brazil, 2017. (n = 76)**

Variables	F	%
Sex		
Male	74	97,4
Female	2	2,6
Age		
13 to 14 years old	11	14,6
15 to 16 years old	42	55,2
17 to 18 years old	23	30,2
Other states	12	15,8
Years of study		
Not literate	6	7,9
2 - 4 years	12	15,9
5 - 7 years	42	55,3
8 - 9 years	11	14,4
10 - 11 years	5	6,5
Family Income		
0 (not listened)	9	11,8
< 1 BW	36	47,4
1 BW	21	27,6
> 1 BW	10	13,2

Source: Own Authorship (2017)

\*BW: basic wage

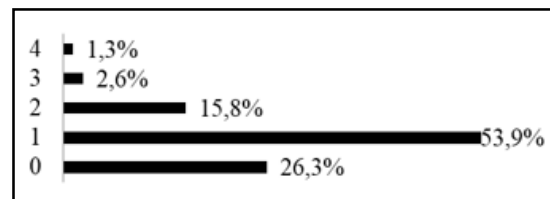
Table 2 shows the relationship with the family, where 41 (53.9%) of the records indicated that the adolescents had a good relationship, 28 (36.8%), a regular relationship, and their legal responsibility, predominantly assumed by the mother. (67.1%).

**Table 2. Characteristics of risk behaviors of adolescents deprived of their liberty, Picos, Piauí, Brazil, 2017 (n = 76)**

Variables	f	%
Family Relationship		
Bad	4	5,3
Regular	28	36,8
Good	41	53,9
Great	3	3,9
Legal Responsible		
Mother	51	67,1
Father	12	15,8
Grandfather/Grandmother	4	5,3
Uncle/Aunt	2	2,6
Brother/Sister	2	2,6
Tutelary Council	1	1,3
Others	4	5,3
Drugs Users		
Not listed	20	26,3
Yes	56	73,7

Source: Own Authorship (2017)

Regarding drug use, 56 adolescents (73.7%) reported being a drug user. As for the others, this information was not included in the proceedings.



**Graph 1. Amount of drugs used by adolescents deprived of their liberty. Picos, Piauí, Brazil, 2017 (n = 76)**

We highlight the record of the use of up to four concomitant drugs. Marijuana was the most commonly used drug followed by cocaine, crack, cobbler glue, loló and heroin. Regarding the time elapsed between the first admission and the reentry, it was identified that 67 adolescents (88.1%) returned to the socio-educational system less than two years after the first admission (Table 3). Considering the 76 adolescents, the average time to first reentry was less than one year.

**Table 3. Time (years) after the first admission of the offending adolescents in the educational center to comply with socio-educational measures. Picos, Brazil, 2017. (n = 76)**

Time	f	%
< 1 year	27	35,5
1 - 2 years	40	52,6
2 - 3 years	6	7,9
3 - 4 years	1	1,3
4 - 5 years	2	2,6

Regarding the number of reentries, adolescents with up to five reentries were found, and the average of all re-arrivals was less than one year from the last entry (Table 4). The study revealed theft / theft (56.6%) as the main reason for entering the provisional detention system, followed by illegal possession of a weapon (22.4%) and aggression and / or bodily injury (13.2%).

**Table 4. Information (reason and time) about (re) entry of adolescents deprived of their liberty. Picos, Piauí, Brazil, 2017. (n = 76)**

Time* (mean ± SD)	Entry		1st reentry		2nd reentry		3rd reentry		4th reentry		5th reentry	
	F	%	F	%	f	%	F	%	f	%	f	%
			0,7 ± 0,5		0,5 ± 0,3		0,4 ± 0,3		0,5 ± 0,1		5 months	
Reasons												
Aggression / Bodily harm	10	13,2	2	2,6	1	1,3	-	-	-	-	-	-
Threat	7	9,2	3	3,9	2	2,6	2	2,6	-	-	-	-
(Attempted)Stealing / Theft	43	56,6	11	14,4	3	3,9	3	3,9	1	1,3	-	-
Contempt	2	2,6	1	1,3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Damage	2	2,6	3	3,9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kept in semiliberty	1	1,3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Violence against women/ DomesticViolence	2	2,6	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1,3	-	-
Rape	3	3,9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Illegal possession of firearm	17	22,4	-	-	1	1,3	-	-	-	-	-	-
(Attempted) Homicide	7	9,2	-	-	2	2,6	1	1,3	1	1,3	1	1,3
(Attempted) Robbery	6	7,9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mutilation / Animal abuse	1	1,3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Receiving	2	2,6	1	1,3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Drugs Dealing	3	3,9	1	1,3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kidnapping / False Imprisonment	1	1,3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Outlaw	-	-	1	1,3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Extortion	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1,3	-	-

\* Time elapsed between previous and current ticket

## DISCUSSION

The study aimed to describe the profile of adolescents deprived of their liberty in the macroregion of central-south Piauí and identified a predominance of males aged 16 to 17 years. Compared with data from the National Survey of the National Socio-Educational Care System (SINASE), there was considerable similarity, since it indicates that the highest concentration of adolescents in socio-educational measures (SEM) is concentrated in the age group between 16 and 17 years old. (56%) of adolescents in compliance with socio-educational measures<sup>(12)</sup>. These results suggest that the issue of gender may be related to the higher incidence of boys entering the provisional detention system, compared to girls, given the greater “freedom” that boys, in theory, have for leaving and stay away from home for longer than girls. In addition, the advancing age seems to impute to the adolescent a sense of freedom towards the coming of age, which for many can establish the distance of the family and greater proximity with their peers. In their study, Raising Boys and Girls: Investigating with the Family of a Popular-Class Neighborhood, the authors<sup>(13)</sup> state that the characteristics attributed to boys and girls also guide the way parents talk to sons and daughters because girl to be considered more delicate and the boy to be considered more imposing. The low level of education found in this study is worrying, given that most had between 5 and 7 years of schooling. By grouping the data related to educational level, there is a sample of 85.6% of the adolescents surveyed between 2 and 9 years of schooling, which confirms the non-completion of elementary school at the recommended age, and rising school dropout that enhances including the deficit in the educational system, as well as the serious implications for adolescent development. Thus, it is considered that, in general, low education is associated with low socioeconomic standard, a factor that may predispose the adolescent to misconduct, violence and other infractions subject to legal penalties.

Similar results were found in Santa Maria / RS, showing that 96.3% of inmates do not have completed elementary school. For the authors<sup>(14)</sup>, in recent times, school has not been attractive to these adolescents who, in their majority, cannot keep their education compatible with the age group.

As for the monthly family income most live with an income below one minimum wage which may represent, among others, a sum of deprivations of what the individual requires to grow and develop healthily. The restricted family composition does not characterize the reality of the juvenile offenders, since they have a large family nucleus. In this context, it is clear, therefore, the vulnerability to which they are exposed, since deprived of school, living in unfavorable economic conditions and extended family nucleus are potential factors for the involvement of the minor with drugs and consequent legal infractions. Risk factors for the misconduct of adolescents growing up in poor communities have been identified as a risk factor for the practice of offenses<sup>(17)</sup>. However, it is noteworthy that poverty, although admittedly a strong stressor for harming human development, may not, in isolation, lead to the occurrence of offending behavior. As for the legal guardian of the adolescent, at the time of entry into the provisional detention system, the mother represented the main responsible in 67.1% of cases and the father in only 15.8% of the total. Results such as these were also found<sup>(15)</sup> revealing that the presence of the mother figure still assumes a high prevalence in the families of these young people. According to the author, single parent families headed by women may represent a risk factor for the involvement of adolescents with crimes, since the presence of a single adult responsible for providing financial resources to meet family needs, most of the time becomes insufficient. Regarding drug use, 73.7% of adolescents were users. Highlighted marijuana in isolated use (53.9%) and concomitantly marijuana and cocaine (15.8%). Drugs such as crack, cobbler glue, loló and heroin were also cited albeit to a lesser extent. In this regard, the National Council of Justice<sup>(19)</sup> reveals that 75% of young offenders report drug use, and of these 89% use marijuana and 43% are cocaine users.

The increasingly early use of drugs by adolescents has become a major social and public health problem. Among the risks evidenced in adolescence, we can highlight the experimentation regarding the use of chemical substances and the involvement in behaviors considered deviant from the laws of society<sup>(20-21-22)</sup>. In addition, social and psychological aspects such as financial and family relationship difficulties, family violence, low self-esteem, insecurity and lack of boundaries

also relate to initiation of drug use. It is noteworthy that the influence of peers is considered one of the main factors for the beginning of use, encouraged by the desire to belong to a group, characteristic of the adolescent population<sup>(23-24)</sup>. It is inferred that the researched adolescents are implicated in the conditions mentioned above which is believed to have fostered drug use, the practice of infractions and the consequent loss of freedom. Regarding the time elapsed from the adolescent's first admission to the provisional inpatient unit and the re-entry it was possible to verify that the highest prevalence was from 1 to 2 years with 52.6% of admissions, followed by those who had less than 1 year of admission. First ticket with 35.5%. This interval of up to less than 2 years was more prevalent, given the period chosen for collection. However, in the study, other time intervals appear, this was due to the fact that some adolescents are complying with measurements in the defined collection period, but that their first entry was before the determined collection time. While criminal responsibility is primarily concerned with repression and punishment, statutory responsibility has as its main objective the education of adolescents, since it is determined according to pedagogical needs, prioritizing those aimed at strengthening family and community ties as mentioned in art. 100 of the Child and Adolescent Statute (ECA)<sup>(15)</sup>

Verifying the situations that motivated the admission of adolescents in the provisional detention unit, the attempted stealing/ Theft was highlighted with 56.6% of cases, followed by illegal possession of firearm with 22.4%. The attempted murder drew attention not for the incidence (9.2%) and prevalence, but for the violent form and severity of the offense committed by individuals at such an early age. When comparing these results to those of the annual survey made by SINASE<sup>(12)</sup>, there was an approximation, mainly, in relation to attempted stealing/ theft as the main reason for these adolescents to enter the socio-educational system, representing 48.95% at Brazil level. Regarding to the attempted homicide, the data from SINASE<sup>(12)</sup> present a percentage of 3.46% of the reasons for the entry of the minor into the socio-educational system with considerable discrepancy for the region studied, where homicide is one of the reasons for the highest entry representation for both primary and re-entry, in a percentage of 15.7% of the sample which warns of a growing violence in our country, perpetrated by people who really should be protected by laws (Education, Health, Housing Leisure and other forms). Regarding the average return time to the socio-educational system, this value was less than 1 year. About this, the National Council of Justice<sup>(19)</sup> points out that 54% of adolescents recur in the socio-educational system. These are worrying data that encourage reflection on the current political, managerial and methodological model of the current process of resocialization of adolescent offenders. The creation of specific and isolated measures for the idea of what problem can be solved by some specific way and that, in fact, as solutions, goes around a better organization of the whole society<sup>(25)</sup>.

## Conclusion

Most males, with a prominent age range of 15 to 17 years old and about 5 to 7 years of schooling, have reaffirmed the vulnerability established to the group beyond the low expectation of development, due to school dropout and involvement with drugs and legal infractions. In addition, living in families with a monthly income of less than one

minimum wage, with the mother as the main provider of the household and the sole responsible for the upbringing and support, leads to the fragility of parental relationships and the burden of responsibilities that often do not exist. I was able to keep up with the daily routine of their children, thus strengthening external ties, a factor that could increase the prevalence of drug use and the attempted robbery / theft as the most committed crime as revealed in this study. The recurrence of adolescents to the socio-educational system was impacting, which leads us to reflect on the role of socio-educational measures as a resocialization strategy. Also suggesting a restructuring and better application of these measures, aiming to serve these adolescents not only when deprived of liberty, but also provide assistance when returned to family and social life. Thus, the need to implement more consistent and protective social policies strongly assists this population in a comprehensive way.

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