


Just another statistic: improving policy and popular understandings of knife crime through improved data collection and analysis

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Introduction

1. Policy context
 2. Knife crime: current picture
 3. Sources of data
 4. Problems with data
 5. Key questions/recommendations
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Policy context

Apparent recent increase in knife crime

Move away from explicit focus on knives to gangs

Punitive response at national level – sentencing/sentences

Displacement: acid/dogs

Developmental interventions at local level: YOTS/Police/Non-statutory/Schools

Public interest/high media coverage

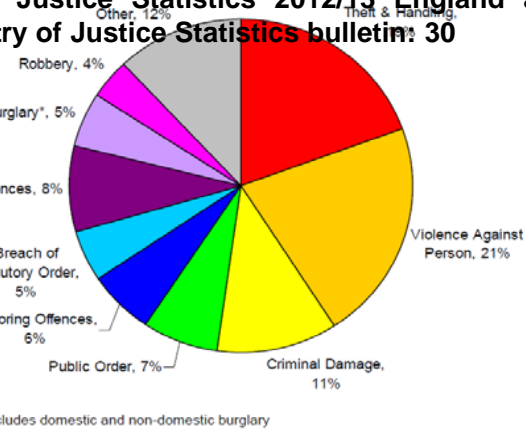
Angels and devils motif

Current picture

Offences recorded by police in which a knife or sharp instrument was used

Police recorded crime: knife possession offences resulting in a caution or sentence 2008 to 2015

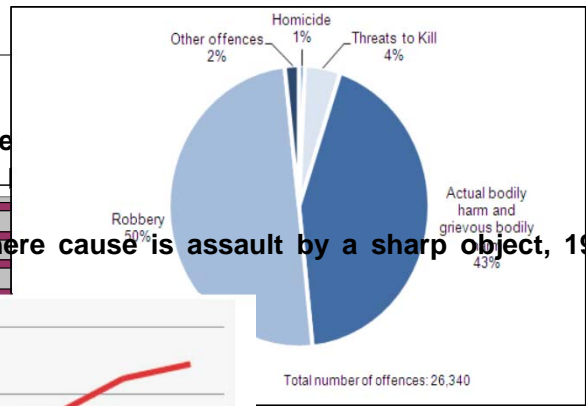
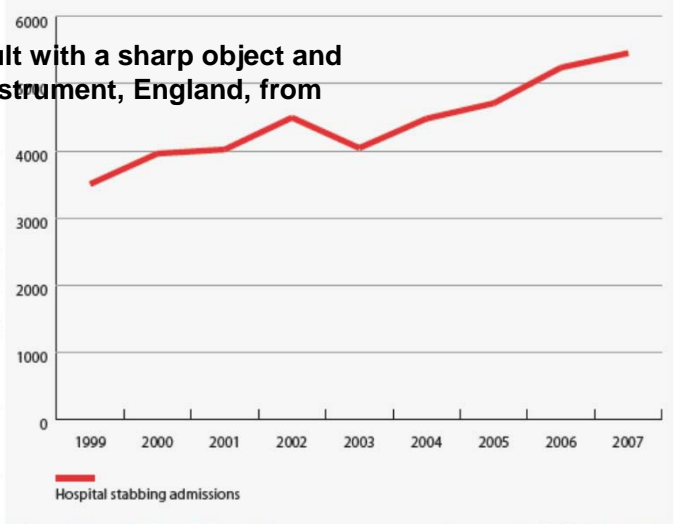
Justice Statistics 2012/13 England and Wales Youth Justice Board / Ministry of Justice Statistics bulletin 30



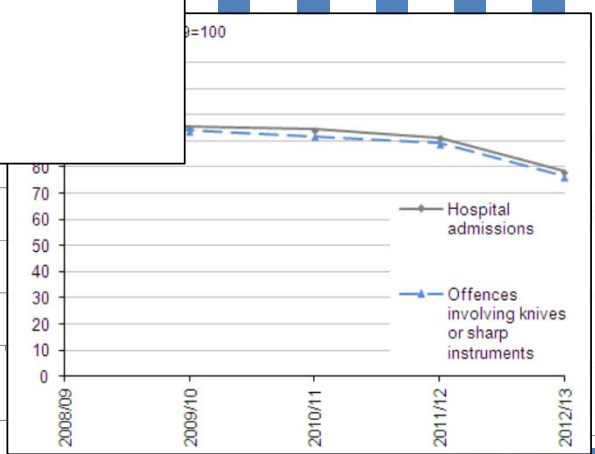
Distribution of knife possession offences in Wales, per 100,000 of the population



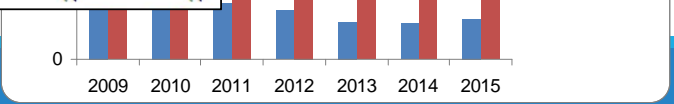
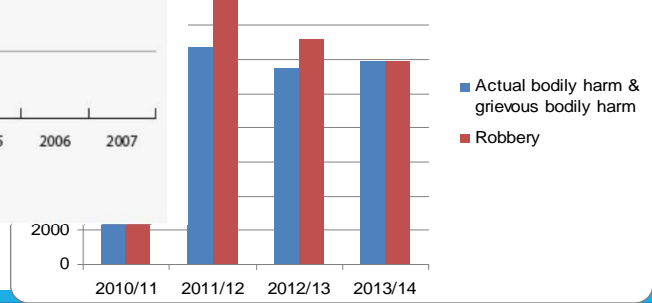
Hospital A&E admissions where cause is assault by a sharp object, 1998/9 to 2006/7



Hospitals with injuries from assault with a sharp object and those involving a knife or sharp instrument, England, from 2008/09 to 2012/13



Offences recorded by police in which a knife or sharp instrument was used, 2013/14



Sources of data

1. Official data
2. Large scale surveys
3. Academic research
4. Other research

Official data

Police recorded crime

Homicide Index

Hospital Episode Statistics

Grey data: local police force/CDRPs/YOTs

Surveys

The Crime Survey for England and Wales

Edinburg Youth Transitions Survey/Glasgow Youth Survey

~~The Offending Crime and Justice Survey~~

~~YJB & MORI Youth Surveys~~

Academic research

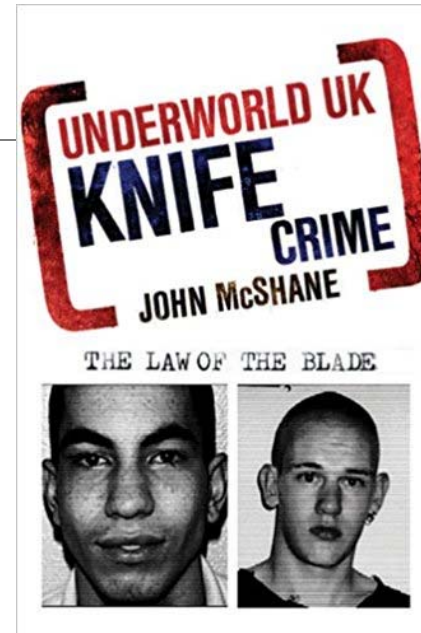
Gang research

Research on knives (UK)

Research on guns (US)

Other research


Journalists/newspapers



Charities



Problems with data!

- Complex
 - Not always comparable across data sets/surveys/periods
 - Questions/answers not always useful
 - Problems of definition and quality of collection
 - Large amounts of unpublished data
 - Lack of context
 - Out of date
 - Lack of qualitative data
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Out of date research

Self-report surveys and knife carrying	Sample	Year of survey	Total % of sample	Males	Females
2009 Youth Justice Board survey	4,855 primary and secondary school pupils aged 11 to 16 in England and Wales	2009	23%	32%	13%
2006 Offending, Crime and Justice Survey	5,353 10 to 25-year-olds across England and Wales	2006	3%	5%	2%
Glasgow Youth Survey	1551 primary and secondary school pupils aged 11-18 year olds across Glasgow	2003	20%	31%	8%

Hard to reach groups

An estimated distribution of crime victims amongst the population as represented by the Crime Survey for England and Wales

Based on household property crime in selected sweeps of the BCS/CSEW, 1992 – 2006/7.

Victim type	Percentage of population	Percentage of victimisation
Immune	80.00	23
Vulnerable	19.70	70
Chronic	0.03	7

Reference: Hope, T (2015) *We need a different crime survey*, Centre for Crime and Justice Studies

Key questions

1. Why does it matter?
2. Who/what do we collect data for?
3. Who should be responsible for data?
4. What form should the data take?

Why does it matter?

Knife crime: deaths and injuries continue

High profile in media

Multiple victims

Creates fear in communities

Creates uncertainty about how to respond

Allows 'unhelpful' reporting (Eades et al., 2007)

Who/what do we collect the data for?

Policy makers

Police and others involved in governance

The public

Insight/understanding

Effective responses

Who should collect/collate/analyse data?

ONS/Central government/Home Office/MoJ

CDRPs/Police

Youth Offending Service

Universities/Funding Councils

Public health England/Health Authorities/Hospitals

Charitable sector



What form should the data take?

Quantitative data: requires better collation and updating

Qualitative data: not enough

Level of focus: knives/weapons/gangs/violence

Some suggestions

1. Single point of entry for all data: low level of input but would require regular updating
2. Contextualisation/analysis of existing data: medium level of input perhaps biannual reports
3. Collections/conduct of primary data: high level of input - significant financial/human resources

A recommendation: Victimisation survey/repository

1. Amended/enhanced CSEW
2. Regular analysis of data from CSEW
3. Supported by regular qualitative surveys/interviews

Thank you for listening!

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