Preface

The Cambridge Study in Delinquent Development is a prospective longitudinal survey of 411 South London males first studied at age 8 in 1961. The main aim of this book is to advance knowledge about criminal offending careers up to age 56. Forty-two percent of the males were convicted, with an average 10-year conviction career. Only seven percent of the males accounted for half of all convictions. Almost all of the males (93%) reported committing an offense in four age ranges, compared with 29% who were convicted at these ages. There were an average of 39 self-reported offenses per conviction. Group-based trajectory analyses indicated that, while there were distinct groups of offenders who followed different age-crime trajectories between ages 10 and 56, five groups best characterized the criminal careers of the men, with two groups, high adolescence peak and high rate chronic, exhibiting the most offending. Also, the offending trajectories were distinguished by individual and environmental childhood risk factors, with the most chronic offenders (to age 56) having the most extreme scores on childhood risk. Based on these results, risk assessment instruments could be developed and risk-focused prevention could be implemented in early childhood, including parent training, preschool intellectual enrichment programs, and home-visiting programs, in order to prevent chronic styles of offending from being initiated.
Offending from Childhood to Late Middle Age
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Farrington, D.P.; Piquero, A.R.; Jennings, W.G.
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