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Comment on “delinquency, sex, and family variables” by Andrew

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Comment on "Delinquency, Sex, and Family Variables" by Andrew

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Could the finding by Andrew (*Social Biology*, 1976, Vol. 23, pp. 168-171) that male delinquents come from larger sibships than female delinquents result from failing to control for age of the delinquent? There is some possibility that the delinquencies of males become more severe, and are so regarded, as they grow older, whereas the delinquencies of females, more heavily concentrated in categories such as ungovernability, runaway, and

sexuality, are regarded as more severe the younger the girl. These tendencies could bias the selection of juvenile offenders of each sex for official processing in opposite directions. Since age of parent would be positively correlated with age of child, the older parents of males would have had more opportunity to have additional children than the younger parents of females. Can Andrew provide data on age?

Response to Gordon's Comment

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Gordon has suggested a possible explanation for the finding that male delinquents come from larger families than female delinquents (Andrew, 1976). Boys might have been older than girls when they entered the delinquent sample, be-

cause of differing sex-role expectations. Older children (boys) would have more siblings, creating a spurious relationship between sex and family size, actually due to a relationship between sex and age.

(a) Supporting Gordon's suggestion, the