Exploring Current Behaviors and Social Service Needs for Chinese Juvenile Delinquents in Hong Kong

Cindy Davis
The University of New South Wales

Catherine Tang
Janet Ko
The Chinese University of Hong Kong

The purpose of this study is to examine the current behaviors and social service needs among Chinese male and female juvenile delinquents in Hong Kong. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 398 (183 female and 215 male) Chinese juvenile delinquents between 12 - 18 years of age in Hong Kong. Findings revealed that a majority of the participants had engaged in delinquent behaviors, and that females had higher rates of delinquent behaviors in many salient areas. Results also revealed that over 50% of participants needed assistance with the continuation of studies, job placement, academic studies, provision of social activities, and vocational training. The importance of these findings is discussed in the context of Chinese norms and values. Recommendations for social work interventions and services are discussed.

Delinquent behavior during adolescence is a social problem that is experienced in cultures around the world. Researchers in the area of psychology, sociology, social work, and criminology have conducted many studies to explore the issues associated juvenile delinquency, particularly in North America and Europe (e.g., Dishion & Andrews, 1995; Hawkins, Catalona & Miller, 1992; Jessor et al., 1995; Luthar, 1991; O'Donnell, Hawkins & Abbott, 1995: Werner & Smith, 1992). Hence, results from these and similar studies have provided us with different theoretical explanations for the cause and occurrence of juvenile delinquency including numerous psychological, sociological and biological theories (Tro-

Requests for reprints should be sent to Cindy Davis, Department of Social Work, The University of New South Wales, 13/323 Bondi Road, Bondi, NSW 2026, Sydney, Australia. [cyn_steve@msn.com]