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A Review of the Nature and Extent of Uncleared Missing Persons Cases in British Columbia

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Executive Summary

Missing persons are those who have disappeared from their normal patterns of life. While certain groups of people, such as youth and sex trade workers, are at an increased risk of going missing and being harmed, the majority of disappearances do not involve foul play. People may disappear as a result of mental health issues, life pressures, or conflict with others. While many people are located by police or return on their own, others have never been found, and their cases remain open and uncleared by police. Research into missing persons has studied the characteristics of missing persons, the reasons why they go missing, and the risk factors for particular outcomes. More recently, research has focused on improving the police response to missing person cases. The current study reviews the literature available on missing persons, and provides an analysis of uncleared missing person cases in British Columbia since the 1950s.

The most basic categorization of missing persons involves the distinction between those who are voluntarily and involuntarily missing. Those who can be said to be voluntarily missing include youth who run away from their primary residence due to conflicts or to escape a violent situation, such as caregiver abuse. Adults may also voluntarily run away, for instance, as a result of a relationship breakdown or financial pressures. Among those who involuntarily leave are children who are abducted, older persons who suffer from age-related mental illness, such as Alzheimer's, and sex trade workers who fall victim to foul play. Generally, the reasons why people go missing are categorized as wandering off, to commit suicide, as a result of an accident, or under suspicious circumstances.

Family members and friends are among the most common sources of those who report a person missing to the police. Generally, these people report the missing person to the police out of concern for the well-being of the loved one. Alternatively, those who have a legal responsibility over an individual will report that person missing. For instance, care providers in youth homes or staff at senior residential homes may be under a legal obligation to report a person missing. In other cases, persons who are missing may not be officially reported as missing to the police. This may be due to the involvement of the family in the disappearance or some other illegal activity (e.g. abuse of a youth), past experience, such as repeat runaway children, those who are not identified as missing, such as sex trade workers, the homeless, and those of certain minority cultural backgrounds.

Police are often overwhelmed with missing persons cases. Depending on the size of the jurisdiction, police agencies may receive nearly 100 missing person reports a day. Although police must always consider the potential for foul play, many of the cases involve missing youth who have run away many times before whom often return home on their own. Given the sheer volume of missing person cases, police must have an effective way to sort priority from non-priority cases. Priority cases typically involve those where the disappearance is out of character, where the individual suffers from some form of vulnerability, whether

mental health or age related, and where there appears to be evidence that the person went missing under suspicious circumstances.

Sharing information across jurisdictions would enable police to more effectively investigate these disappearances. People who go missing may appear in another jurisdiction, only to be unrecognized by police in that jurisdiction given the lack of shared information. Similarly, human remains may be found in one jurisdiction, but not identified as belonging to a missing person in another jurisdiction given the lack of shared information. As such, there have been recent calls for the development of national databases to provide information on missing person cases to a wide range of police agencies.

Police forces in British Columbia and Alberta are currently developing a shared database containing information on unidentified remains and missing person cases. In developing such a uniform database, it is important to review the characteristics of persons who are missing. By identifying common characteristics and risk factors for the different types of missing persons, police can develop a database that is more applicable for their specific needs. Furthermore, a database that is developed using the data collected from a wide range of police forces will assist police in better designing a centralized database that is relevant to, and accepted by, all Canadian forces.

The current study provides an analysis of uncleared missing person cases from 1949 to 2008 in British Columbia. In total, 1,907 files were involved in the final analysis. When compared by district, approximately one-third of cases were from the Lower Mainland, while slightly less than one-third originated from the North District, slightly more than one-fifth were from the Island District, and the remainder came from the South East District. The vast majority of cases involved males, and while nearly three-quarters of these uncleared missing person cases involved Caucasians, slightly less than one-fifth involved Aboriginal people. However, there was an overrepresentation of cases involving Aboriginal females and females missing from the Lower Mainland District.

The mean age of the sample was 39.1 years old; nearly half of the sample was between 19 to 35 years old at the time they disappeared. A small proportion of uncleared missing person cases involved children under 12, youth between 12 to 19, and older adults over the age of 65 years. Males were significantly younger than females at the time they went missing.

There was a wide variation in length of time a person was missing before being reported to the police, with reports being filed within 24 hours to up to 32 years after the disappearance. On average, people were missing for 106 days before being reported to the police; however, half of all cases were reported within 24 hours, and three-quarters were reported within one week. The length of time between disappearance and the official report being made to the police was significantly longer for females than males. This result was likely due to sex trade workers in the uncleared cases, as females who were involved in

the sex trade were missing for a significantly longer period of time before being reported to the police than were females not involved in the sex trade or males.

While the last person to see the missing person before their disappearance was commonly a friend, more often it was a family member who reported the person as missing to the police. In effect, reporting a person as missing was commonly done either by a family member growing concerned or suspicious, or a witness to an event, such as a boating accident, that directly led to the disappearance.

The most common probable cause for why these people went missing was an accident. Slightly more than one in ten cases was identified as missing due to a suicide. Abductions by parents or strangers were very uncommon in this sample. Similarly, few cases involved runaways or those who had wandered off, likely because they had returned home again. Nearly one-fifth of uncleared missing person cases were identified as having an unknown cause for the disappearance. In relation to gender, substantially more cases involving females were related to a kidnapping or abduction compared to males. Moreover, many of the cases involving prostitutes involved an "unknown" determination of reason for missing, and foul play was suspected in nearly all of these cases. In turn, males were more commonly identified as missing due to an accident.

Several important findings emerged from this analysis. The age of missing persons in the current study was substantially older than commonly identified in the research literature. This is likely the result of the current analysis focusing on uncleared cases as opposed to all missing person cases which include cases that have also been solved, just as the large proportion of youth who temporarily run away, but are classified as missing and cleared. Furthermore, the profile of missing person cases in British Columbia has evolved over the past several decades from involving fishermen who were lost at sea to a higher proportion of cases with unknown probable causes involving prostitutes. The results of this study suggest that police should develop specific protocols for dealing with cases of missing prostitutes given that they tend to involve certain unique characteristics. For instance, very few sex trade workers were immediately reported as missing; nearly one-third were not reported missing until a year after their disappearance. As such, it may be beneficial for police to form partnerships with other agencies who may be the recipients of the original reports of missing sex trade workers from concerned acquaintances.

Despite the increasing proportion of sex trade workers in uncleared missing person cases, it must be noted that the development of a centralized uniform database would also assist in improving the police response to non-sex trade missing person cases. In effect, the sharing of information regarding missing persons across jurisdictions is necessary for the successful conclusion of these cases. It is only through the willing cooperation of all Canadian police forces that information on missing person cases can be effectively be used to solve these cases.

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Introduction

Given the recent history in many industrialising and advanced capitalist states, public interest in missing persons has been increasing. Driven, in part, by the growing numbers of women, especially those involved in the sex trade, who have disappeared, the study of missing persons and the implementation of various police and social strategies to respond to missing persons has been developing. For example, several provinces in Canada, such as British Columbia and Alberta, as well as countries, such as the United States and England, have long suspected that female sex trade workers were being preyed upon by serial killers. These suspicions have been supported by a number of key arrests and convictions. In Vancouver, British Columbia, Robert "Willy" Pickton was recently convicted of five counts of second degree murder, and has been charged in the murders of an additional 20 women involved in the sex trade (Ward, 2007). In Edmonton, Alberta, Thomas Svekla has been charged with the deaths of two sex trade workers, and is suspected of killing six other sex trade workers (Kleiss, 2008). In Ipswich, England, Tom Stephens and Stephen Wright were arrested in late 2006 in connection with the disappearance of five drug addicted sex trade workers (BBC News, 2006). The disappearance of these women has led police to warn sex trade workers to stay off the streets whenever possible (Sapstead, 2006). Despite these warnings and arrests, women involved in the sex trade continue to disappear at an alarming rate (Culbert, 2008; Sinoski, 2008). However, although sex trade workers may be at an increased risk of disappearing and falling victim to foul play, many other people go missing on a daily basis.

Previous research has identified the characteristics of missing persons, studied the reasons for why people go missing, and has attempted to identify particular risk factors for outcomes, such as homicide, suicide, or never finding the missing person. More recently, research has begun to focus on improving the police response to missing person cases by reviewing police policies and practices and providing recommendations for improving the search for missing persons. This report will begin with a review of the available literature on missing persons and will culminate with an analysis of uncleared missing person cases in British Columbia since the 1950's.

Literature Review

A "missing person" is someone who is "absent from their accustomed network of social and personal relationships to the extent that people within that network define the absence as interfering with the performance by that person of expected social responsibilities, leading to a situation in which members of the network feel obliged to search for the missing person and may institute official procedures to identify the person as missing" (Payne, 1995: 335). In other words, missing people are those observed to be missing from their

normal patterns of life. They may be observed to be missing from home, work, and/or other social situations. As suggested by the above definition, missing people may or may not be reported missing to an official agency, such as the police. In effect, the circumstances by which a person goes missing, while important to be aware of in terms of locating the missing person, are irrelevant to defining a person as missing; what matters is that their whereabouts are no longer known by others (James, Anderson, and Putt, 2008). As such, a homeless man who is suddenly no longer seen on the streets of a downtown city is just as missing as a married mother who disappears while running errands for her family.

Reasons for Going Missing

There are several ways that persons can be categorized as missing by the police. The most basic is to simply distinguish those who are voluntarily missing from those who are involuntarily missing. Voluntary missing includes youth or adults who have voluntarily run away from home, whether temporarily or permanently (James et al., 2008). In contrast, involuntarily missing may include older adults suffering from dementia, Alzheimer's, or another state of altered consciousness (e.g., Lucero, 2002). The category of involuntarily missing also refers to individuals who have been the victim of a crime; until found deceased, they will remain categorised as missing.

Some researchers have criticized the use of "voluntarily" and "involuntarily" missing, given that persons experiencing mental health issues or who are being abused in their home life may not necessarily be truly voluntarily missing. James and colleagues (2008) instead referred to a continuum of "missingness", running from *Intentional* missing, characterized by *decided* and *drifted* individuals, to *Unintentional* missing, characterized by an *unintentional absence* and *forced* disappearance. Decided reasons to disappear may include the failure of a relationship, personal issues such as financial problems, problems related to mental health, or the experience of violence. *Drifted* refers to not only those living as a transient, but also those who basically fall out of contact with their families and friends. Unintentional absences tend to involve those with age-related mental health issues, including Alzheimer's or dementia, as well as those who go missing as the result of an accident, or who are unintentionally missing due to a lack of, or incorrect, communication. Finally, those who are missing due to force may be those who are the victim of crime, such as a homicide or an abduction (Biehal, Mitchell, & Wade, 2003; James et al., 2008).

James and colleagues (2008) also discussed the reasons why people may go missing in a criminal and non-criminal context. Criminal sources may include children who have been abducted by their parents, adults who have been kidnapped by others, or individuals who have experienced abuse or violence. Non-criminal contexts may include social issues, such as substance-related problems, school problems, or mental health issues. These social

issues may be non-criminal (e.g., Alzheimer's, alcoholism, issues with peers or teachers, schizophrenia) or criminal (e.g., domestic violence or child abuse).

Reasons why people go missing are generally classified into categories, such as homicide, suicide, accident, kidnapped or abducted, wandered, displaced by war, escaped from a negative home situation or from an institution, or missing during travel (James et al., 2008). General risk factors for persons going missing include mental health issues, substance abuse problems, authority conflict, family violence, suicidal ideation, sexuality issues, financial problems, relationship problems, or other life stressors (James et al., 2008). These factors often vary depending on the particular reason the individual went missing.

As discussed above, too often, the terms 'voluntarily missing' and 'involuntarily missing' are conflated in the literature; there are a wide range of risk factors that may contribute to a person being missing, and some of these, such as mental health issues, cannot necessarily be considered as resulting in a voluntary disappearance (Hirschel and Lab, 1988). These factors may also differ between younger and older missing persons. In a recent review by James and colleagues (2008), the reasons for adults to be missing tended to differ slightly from young persons. For instance, mental health issues, especially those related to anxiety and depression appeared to feature more prominently in adult cases. Specifically, in South Australia and New South Wales, over one-quarter of missing adults experienced mental health problems. The data also indicated that adults who wandered off or got lost were typically 65 years old or older. These individuals were, therefore, more likely to be suffering from some form of age-related mental health issue, such as dementia or Alzheimer's. Adults were also more likely than younger people to experience substance abuse issues (James et al., 2008).

In the past, the first response by police to a missing person's case involved classifying the missing person as vulnerable or not. Factors that might lead to identification of a missing person as vulnerable vary, and may include the presence of a mental illness, physical disability, drug or alcohol issues, being young (under 18 years old), being older (65 years old or older), or being missing for a longer period of time (Newiss, 1999). However, Newiss was critical of this approach and argued that nearly all missing persons could be classified as vulnerable using these categories (Newiss, 1999). Further, he stated that there were four additional conditions of missing that might lead to a person being identified as vulnerable; these included the condition of the natural elements (e.g. being lost in a snow storm or on a cold night), being the victim of an accident, being suicidal or at-risk for self-harm, or being the victim of a serious crime. Therefore, he questioned the utility of classifying a missing person as vulnerable or not in determining the level of a police response to each case.

Suicides

Some of those who go missing may do so intentionally for reasons such as a desire to commit suicide. Foy (2006) reviewed 357 missing person cases and identified several factors related to cases of suicide. Those at risk of being reported missing and later found to have committed suicide were more often adult males between the ages of 41 and 65 years old. These males were likely married and/or a parent. They were slightly more likely to commit suicide during the summer months, and were often last reported seen during the day. These cases tended to involve individuals for whom disappearing was uncharacteristic; however, the person reporting the individual as missing often suspected that the missing person had committed suicide, perhaps due to a history of depression and/or suicide attempts (Foy, 2006).

Wanderers

Missing persons who wandered off typically has escaped or intentionally left an institutional setting, such as a long-term care facility. Lucero (2002) referred to wanderers who intentionally left a care facility as "exit-seekers" who desired to leave due to the perception of responsibility to take care of their own family and household. Typically, these patients suffered from some form of dementia. However, these individuals often retained some form of higher functioning, continuing to be able to communicate with others, and appear normal, if only for short periods of time. However, the exit-seekers also tended to experience short-term memory loss, poor reasoning and judgment, and a lack of perceived safety awareness, which increased the potential for harm to occur (Lucero, 2002).

There were generally four periods of the day during which exit-seekers were most likely to attempt to leave a facility. These included shortly after all three meals and during the afternoon shift change. As Lucero (2002) noted, finishing a meal was a trigger to get up and continue on with one's day; therefore, the end of mealtime signified to the patient that it was time to return home to continue with the rest of their daily household activities. Alternatively, patients may perceive the afternoon shift-change as a parallel to the end of day. In effect, seeing the nurses and doctors pack up and prepare to go home at the end of their shift signaled to the patient that it was time for them to also return home.

According to Lucero (2002), there are two categories of exit-seekers, both of which may characterize older persons experiencing the middle stage of dementia. The first category of exit-seekers is the "eloper". These individuals tend to be comfortable in a long-term care facility as they perceive themselves to simply be visitors and not residents. As such, elopers become upset when denied exit from the facility and are, therefore, at-risk for slipping out unnoticed by staff. In contrast, the second category of exit-seekers is the "runaway"; these are patients who are aware that they are being held in a long-term care facility and who are

fearful or angry about this. As such, while elopers tend to settle fairly well into their life in the facility, at least over the short-term, runaways quickly perceive that they are being held against their will and desire to escape, often trying to leave numerous times over the first few days in the facility.

Running Away

As will be discussed in the review of international research, running away tended to contribute a substantial proportion of missing person cases. Although this primarily occurs among children and youth, adults also run away; for instance, from relationships, from work, or from stresses, such as financial pressures.

Recently, James, Anderson, and Putt (2008) collected data from multiple sources in Australia in order to provide a comprehensive description of missing persons, including higher risk populations, effective prevention measures, police response, and areas for future research. The authors collected data from the Australian police, in addition to two non-governmental organisations[1] involved in missing person cases. Interviews were also conducted with family members of missing persons, organizational representatives, and key stakeholders.

According to the authors, the reasons for missing persons to run away were varied. Young persons who ran away were more likely to do so if they were living in care. In particular, a chaotic home life, characterized by abuse, violence, or other dysfunction, may contribute to young people going missing. However, young people also go missing for reasons related to mental health and substance abuse, although not to the same degree as adults. School-related factors played an important role in the reasons why young people ran away, as bullying or issues with peers or teachers may contribute to the desire to escape a negative peer or social situation (James et al., 2008).

Earlier research by Hirschel and Lab (1988) indicated that some of the reasons why young people go missing could be divided by age. According to the authors, while a single parent home was common among children and youth who ran away, other factors had particular salience during different age periods. More specifically, children between the age of 8 and 12 years old more often went missing for reasons related to a poor or negative home environment, while youth between the ages of 12 to 15 years old more often went missing as a result of school related problems. Hirschel and Lab (1988) also divided the reasons for children and youth to go missing between child-centered and parent-centered reasons. In effect, a child or youth may go missing due to problems they experienced outside the home, due to negative emotional states, such as being lonely, or due to a desire to be independent.

[1] The two non-governmental organisations were The Salvation Army Family Tracing Service and the Australian Red Cross Tracing Service.

With respect to the parental influence, Hirschel and Lab (1988) argued that parental rejection of the child, parental abuse of the child, or parental authority conflicts with the child may all result in that child running away and being reported missing.

Abductions

Children abducted by a parent or other family member are often quite young, frequently in pre-school years. Alternatively, they may suffer from some form of vulnerability, such as a developmental disorder. The fact that these children are more often abducted than older and less vulnerable children is likely due to the greater ease with which these children can be taken, given that they cannot speak well or otherwise defend themselves (Johnston, Girdner, & Sagatun-Edwards, 1999). In contrast, when older children were abducted by a parent, they tended to participate somewhat willingly, due to fear or anger towards the custodial parent.

Previous research identified a profile for parents who were at greater risk of abducting their child or children. Johnston, Girdner, and Sagatun-Edwards (1999) compared the parents in abducting families with parents who were in litigation for custody of their children. They identified that parents who were at a greater risk of abducting their children tended to have greater concerns about their child being exposed to a negative (i.e. neglectful, criminal, or otherwise endangering) environment by the other parent and about their child being exposed to sexual abuse. In addition, parents in the abducting families tended to distrust the law and had less respect for authority than parents in litigation. This may be due to the influence of mental illness (e.g. suspiciousness of authority figures) or it could be the result of prior involvement with the criminal justice system. Similarly, parents in abducting families were reluctant to involve the courts to solve their custodial issues. However, this may be the outcome of being unable to pay legal fees, as the research results indicated that these parents tended to be less well-off financially than parents involved in litigation. Additional analyses suggested that abducting parents were also more likely to be disadvantaged socially and economically, in terms of having lower incomes, being unmarried, lacking in education, and belonging to a minority ethnic group (Johnston et al., 1999). Overall, the five primary factors that increased the risk for abduction were identified as: perceptions and allegations by the abducting parent of neglect or abuse by the custodial parent; narcissistic or sociopathic personality traits; being unmarried; having a low socioeconomic status; and belonging to a minority ethnic group (Johnston et al., 1999).

Foul Play / Suspicious Circumstances

Despite the emotional and psychological stress experienced by friends and family members of the missing, only a small proportion of those who go missing are subsequently found dead. Newiss (2004) recently reviewed factors that increased the likelihood that a victim reported as missing had, in fact, been killed. By analyzing 98 cases in which the victim was originally reported as missing and subsequently found to be the victim of a homicide, Newiss (2004) identified that gender played a significant role. In effect, females (68 per cent), whether they were adults or children, were at a comparatively higher risk than males (32 per cent) to be the victim of homicide when first reported as missing. Although this was the case for both adults and youth, it was particularly true for youth between the ages of 14 to 18 years old, where females were 14 times more likely than males to be the victim of a homicide.

Similarly, two-thirds (67 per cent) of missing persons who were later identified to be the victims of a homicide were over the age of 18 years old; this is in contrast to the typically high rates of children and youth under the age of 18 years old who tend to contribute the majority of missing cases reported to police. In other words, Newiss reported that while youth between the ages of 10 and 18 years old composed approximately one-quarter of the missing persons found to be victims of homicide, they tended to contribute around two-thirds of missing person cases. Specifically, in this study, those at greatest risk of being the victims of homicide were adults between the ages of 19 through 24 years old; this age group was twice as likely to be the victims of homicide when compared to children less than four years of age. Adults between 25 and 29 years of age comprised the second highest risk group followed by children between the ages of five and nine years old (Newiss, 2004).

Similarly, Foy (2006) identified several risk factors that commonly appeared in cases where foul play was involved in the disappearance of an individual. Those more likely to be the victim of foul play were more often females between the ages of 18 and 25 years old, tended to be single and without children, and were often involved in prostitution. Alternatively, Foy also identified that many of these women were involved in white collar professions. These individuals tended to go missing during weekend evenings (Saturday nights in particular), often during the summer. Many of these individuals were last seen in a public place. For many, disappearing was uncharacteristic, and they lacked many of the risk factors more commonly associated with persons running away, including a general lack of mental health issues or substance abuse problems (Foy, 2006).

Newiss (1999) identified that there was an association between prostitution and going missing, particularly for young runaways. This proposed relationship may be due to a young person running away from their home and being forced to become involved in prostitution in order to survive on the streets (Newiss, 1999). It is also possible that the

relationship between prostitution and going missing was the direct result of the nature of the profession. Prostitution is a particularly risky profession, given that these women, who are often addicted to substances, leave the streets with strangers. Thus, they travel and spend time alone with a person who is unknown to them, especially with respect to the person's history of violence. Given this, it is not surprising that in many jurisdictions throughout the world, in recent years, prostitutes have been disappearing from the streets in increasing numbers (Patterson, 2005).

Sex Trade Workers

Sex trade workers are at an increased risk of disappearing. Many are addicted to hard drugs and, in order to support their habit, are involved in prostitution. Given their "transient" nature, prostitutes who disappear may not be officially reported as missing as police may suspect that they have simply moved to another area (www.missingpeople.net). Furthering this complication, police note that locating prostitutes who have moved to another jurisdiction is difficult given that, in Canada, prostitutes arrested for solicitation are typically not fingerprinted. Given this, prostitutes who have simply moved to another community may not be traced back to where they originally went 'missing' resulting in them being defined as an uncleared missing person case in the databases of the police in their original jurisdiction. In addition, given the lack of fingerprint identification, police may be unable to identify the recovered remains of sex trade workers who fall victim to offenders (www.missingpeople.net).

Between 1971 and 2002, at least 25 women involved in the sex trade, many of whom were drug addicted, disappeared from the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver, British Columbia (Ward, 2007). Many of these women had been missing for years before they were officially reported to the police. For instance, one sex trade worker missing since late 1993 was not reported to the police as missing until early 1999. In effect, the increased publicity surrounding the extent of missing women from the Downtown Eastside and the subsequent police investigation encouraged families who had been out of contact with loved ones for many years to make an official report (www.missingpeople.net).

Given the numbers of sex trade workers disappearing over the last several decades, police in several jurisdictions have recently formed task forces to look into these disappearances. In Alberta, Project KARE was created through the combined efforts of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, together with the Edmonton and Calgary police departments. This taskforce was specifically created to investigate the disappearance of "high risk" missing persons, including those involved in the sex trade (www.kare.ca; Kleiss, 2008). Similarly, the Vancouver Police Department and Royal Canadian Mounted Police established a joint missing women's taskforce in 1998; this team was tasked with the review of unsolved missing persons cases as early as 1971 (Ward, 2007).

Despite the enhanced police attention to this issue and the arrests of several suspected killers of sex trade workers, prostitutes continue to disappear. According to Jamie Lee Hamilton, a Downtown Eastside activist, 26 women have gone missing or been found murdered since convicted serial killer Robert "Willie" Pickton was arrested in 2002 (Sinoski, 2008). Similarly, in the Fraser Valley of British Columbia, several sex trade workers have recently gone missing and been found murdered. Davey Mato Butorac has since been charged with two of these murders and is a potential suspect in a number of other disappearances (Culbert, 2008). These disappearances have led Hamilton to propose the need for an urban safety commission to better protect sex trade workers given their increased risk for victimization.

Despite the tendency to classify missing persons into one of several possible categories, James and colleagues (2008) cautioned that the reasons for going missing were not always accurately recorded in official agency data. They referred specifically to cases in which a young person went missing as the result of experiencing abuse and neglect, and suggested that this sensitive information may not be shared by families with the police. Therefore, this information would not necessarily be found in police files. Similarly, the stigma surrounding mental health issues could preclude the sharing of this information with police or other agencies. With respect to the Australian Indigenous population, James and colleagues (2008) noted that unofficial means, such as social networks, may be used to locate the missing person, rather than relying upon the police. This occurrence would also likely restrict the information known to the police about the missing person.

In conclusion, the reasons for people to go missing are varied, particularly with respect to the age of the missing person. Children and youth were more likely to go missing for reasons related to abuse by members of their family, or conflict with family. In contrast, adults often run away or otherwise go missing due to mental health problems, such as Alzheimer's, or addiction to substances.

Reporting a Person Missing

Family members and friends of a missing person are among the most common sources of those who report a person missing to the police (e.g. James et al., 2008; Tarling and Burrows, 2004). In Tarling and Burrows' (2004) review of 1,008 cases in the United Kingdom, family members contributed nearly half (44 per cent) of the reports, while nearly another one-quarter (23 per cent) were reported by a medical doctor[2] and one-fifth were reported by a person in a position of authority (e.g. foster parent or care worker) over the missing individual. While Newiss (1999) identified that reports made by family and friends often stemmed from a genuine concern for the wellbeing of the individual, others report a person as missing due to legal requirements. For instance, when children or youth go

[2] In response to a patient leaving a hospital or other care facility.

missing from a foster home or an institution, the staff may be under a legal obligation to officially report the person as missing to the police (Newiss, 1999).

In some cases, people who go missing are not reported as missing to the police (James et al., 2008). For instance, research in the United States suggested that only approximately one-fifth of young people who go missing were reported to the police. The reasons for lack of reporting a missing youth included parental desire to avoid the involvement of official agencies such as the police, or past experience in reporting their child missing (Hammer, Finkelhor, & Sedlak, 2002). Other sub-groups who were not commonly reported to the police as missing included the homeless, those with an intellectual disability, individuals from minority ethnic and cultural backgrounds, and those with an alternative sexual orientation (i.e., gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgendered) (James et al., 2008).

Location of Missing Persons

Missing persons may be located by the police or another tracing agency, or they may return on their own. Newiss (1999) documented that of those persons reported missing in 1997 and 1998 in the United Kingdom, over one-third (37.1 per cent) returned on their own. Tarling and Burrows (2004) contended that this occurred because the individual fulfilled their emotional or psychological need to disappear and were ready to return to their regular life. Nearly one-fifth (17.3 per cent) of other persons located were found by the police.

Many of those who were located were found in relatively good physical health. In Tarling and Burrows' (2004) review of 1,008 cases of missing persons in the United Kingdom, nearly all (96 per cent) individuals were found safe. A minority of cases were either not found at all (approximately 1 per cent), were found dead (1.5 per cent) or otherwise harmed or injured (1.4 per cent). Tarling and Burrows (2004) also reported that approximately half of the missing persons returned to the area where they were first reported missing from; typically their primary place of residence.

Many of those who went missing were located within a short period of time. According to Tarling and Burrows (2004), nearly half (46 per cent) of missing persons reports were solved within 24 hours, and over three-quarters (76 per cent) were solved within a two day period. Less than one in ten cases (approximately 8 per cent) remained outstanding after a one-week period (Tarling and Burrows, 2004). Similarly, research in Australia suggested that only 2% of missing persons remained missing after a six-month period (James et al., 2008). Only a minority of cases remained outstanding after a year.

Newiss (2005) recently analyzed the characteristics of persons who remained missing over one year. He reviewed 1,111 cases of persons who had been missing between one and nine years in the United Kingdom. The results indicated that persons who had been missing for

an extended period of time differed in important ways from persons who were reported as missing and quickly located. Those who were missing for an extended period of time were more likely to be male adults from a minority ethnic background. Compared to the proportion of missing persons cases reported to the police that were solved in under one year, three-quarters (74 per cent) of those missing for an extended period of time were aged 19 or older. This finding was contrary to other research which indicated that many of those reported missing were under the age of 18 years old.

Similarly, as the duration of time the person was missing continued to increase, the proportion of males in the sample also increased. After five years elapsed from the date the subject was reported missing, two times as many males were missing than females; this increased to 100% of missing persons being male after nine years of being missing. Finally, members of ethnic minorities were substantially more likely to be missing for extended periods of time when compared to their proportion of the general population. For instance, while Afro-Caribbean's composed approximately 2% of the general United Kingdom population, they comprised approximately 17% of the extended missing persons. Similarly, while Asians comprised 4% of the general population, they represented one-tenth of those missing for an extended period of time. Thus, those who were missing for an extended period of time were eight times more likely to be Afro-Caribbean and two times more likely to be Asian (Newiss, 2005).

Tarling and Burrows (2004) also reviewed the characteristics of 30 individuals who had been missing for over a year. Their analyses indicated that two-thirds of these people were women, and half of the cases involved foreign maids reported as missing by their employer. In effect, 17 of these 30 cases involved immigration issues. Given this, it is likely that many of these missing persons either left the United Kingdom or had otherwise disappeared into society's underground.

Profile of Missing Persons – International Research

Australia

A substantial proportion of the research conducted into missing persons has been conducted in Australia. The data collected in the recent study discussed above (James, Anderson, & Putt, 2008), suggested that approximately 35,000 people (approximately 1.7 per 1,000 Australians) were reported missing in Australia between 2005 and 2006. However, the authors cautioned that this was likely an underestimation given that it was difficult to count certain sub-groups of the missing, such as homeless individuals, members of the indigenous population, or members of a sexual minority orientation (James et al., 2008).

In terms of the profile of missing Australians, the results indicated that males and females were nearly equally likely to be reported missing. However, with respect to young adults

between the ages of 13 and 17 years old, which was the majority of cases, females were more likely to be reported missing than males. In fact, youth between the ages of 13 and 15 years old were the most likely age group to be reported missing (James et al., 2008).

Despite the higher frequency of young people going missing, adults were more likely to be missing for greater periods of time (James et al., 2008). In fact, only 2% of missing persons in Australia remained missing for more than six months; of those who were missing for these longer periods, they were more likely to be adult males (James et al., 2008; Newiss, 2005).

An earlier study in Australia identified that most of the 505 people who were reported missing in a one-week period in Australia were subsequently located alive within one week (86 per cent) (Henderson, Henderson, & Kiernan, 2000). In this study, only three individuals were found deceased, and only two remained missing one year after the study. These findings were similar to previous results reported by Henderson and Henderson (1998) in which only 2% of missing persons remain missing after six months.

Data collected in Australia suggested that adults who went missing experienced a number of specific risk factors, such as desiring to escape a negative life situation, family conflict, substance abuse, or mental health issues. As mentioned above, in 2005 and 2006, police in two jurisdictions (New South Wales and South Australia) identified that over one-quarter of persons who had gone missing appeared to have a mental health issue. Furthermore, many adults over the age of 65 years old who had gone missing were classified as having gotten lost or wandered off suggesting the possible influence of age-related mental health problems (James et al., 2008).

Considering the profiles of missing persons from the research conducted in Australia, the vast majority of those who were missing could be said to be young persons who ran away from their families and/or schools, or adults experiencing mental health issues who had left negative life situations, such as family or relationship conflict or additional pressures, such as those related to finances. Still, most of these missing persons were subsequently located by their families or the police within a short period of time.

The United Kingdom

The United Kingdom has also contributed to the available literature on missing persons. The rate of missing persons in the United Kingdom was approximately 3.5 per 1,000 people (n = 210,000) in 2005 (James et al., 2008). James et al. (2008) noted that, until recently, slightly more than half of those missing in the United Kingdom were young people. For instance, in Greater Manchester, two-thirds (67 per cent) of the missing person cases in 1997 and 1998 involved children and youth under the age of 18 years old, while in the

Metropolitan police force, missing person cases for people in this age range accounted for over three-quarters (78 per cent) of missing persons reported to the police (Newiss, 1999).

Newiss (1999) identified a multitude of reasons why persons may go missing, including problems in their relationships, a desire to leave an institution, or the involvement of another person. However, Newiss' report focused particularly on two instances of missing persons: those involving repeat runaways and those involving suspicious circumstances.

In this study, repeat runaways were defined as those who had been reported missing four times within one month or six times within two months (Newiss, 1999). Newiss documented that the relationship between the police and these repeat runaways, who were typically youth, was frequently poor. The police did not usually see these youth as victims. Instead, the police perception was that these youth were not vulnerable individuals, these youth were more likely to be a perpetrator than a victim of a crime, and the police believed that they had limited response options once the youth were found and returned to their primary home. The police felt that frequently these youth left their homes again immediately. As such, four of the nine participating police forces had adopted an unofficial or official policy whereby the reporting of these youth as officially missing would be delayed anywhere from a few hours to an entire 24 hour period (Newiss, 1999).

Only a small proportion of missing person cases dealt with by the police involved suspicious circumstances. For instance, in reviewing the police files of missing persons for 1997 and 1998 from nine police forces, Newiss (1999; 2004) identified that only 0.3% were subsequently found dead; this included not only homicide victims, but also those who took their own lives and those killed in an accident.

In the United Kingdom, Newiss (1999) discovered that suspicious cases were often identified by police through a "gut feeling" based on the officer's experience and intuition. Many of these cases involved persons who would not normally be considered vulnerable. This can lead to problems for police forces if the subsequent victim of a violent crime was a repeat runaway youth whose official reporting of their disappearance was delayed for 24 hours (Newiss, 1999). Despite their relatively low numbers, when a person goes missing under suspicious circumstances, a quick and efficient police response is obviously desired. Therefore, police must have a reliable method by which to determine which cases should receive priority attention.

The United States of America

In 2005, 834,536 people, or 2.8 per 1,000 persons, in the United States went missing (James et al., 2008). A substantial proportion of those missing in the United States were

children and youth, many of whom had ran away from their parents[3] (Hirschel and Lab, 1988). According to James and colleagues (2008), nearly 90% of all missing person cases reported to the police in the United States involved young people. Primarily, these cases involved older youth. Research by Hammer, Finkelhor, and Sedlak (2002) identified that only one-quarter of missing youth were aged 14 or younger; the remaining three-quarters were aged between 15 and 17 years old. There was no difference in terms of race or gender; however, many of the children and youth were from low-income families and/or blended families.

The documented characteristics of children and youth who went missing in the United States suggested that these individuals experienced many risk factors. For instance, Posner (1992) found higher rates of depression, abuse (physical and sexual), substance use problems, delinquency, school issues, and peer issues among youth who had run away. Other research suggested that youth who went missing had often been exposed to, or had directly experienced, violence (Kipke, Simon, Montgomery, Unger, & Iversen, 1997)

Many of the missing child and young person cases in the United States involved a child being abducted; this accounted for nearly one-third of the cases of missing young persons in 2002. Nearly three-quarters (71 per cent) of these children were seized by a family member (James et al., 2008). When children were not abducted by a family member, the motivation appeared to primarily be sexual, as two-thirds of non-family abductions in 1988 involved sexual assault against the child (Finkelhor, Hotaling, & Sedlak, 1990).

Earlier American research identified four primary sources for missing children: children missing due to an injury or accident; children missing due to rebellion or delinquency; children who were lost; and children who had gone missing as the result of miscommunication between caregivers (Finkelhor, Hotaling, & Sedlak, 1990). These categories were added to the previously existing categories of children who were abducted by strangers, abducted by family members, or who ran away. These categories have since been revised into the more commonly utilized groups of: 1) runaways or throwaways (rejected by caregiver); 2) non-family abduction; 3) family abduction; and 4) lost and involuntarily missing (James et al., 2008).

Canada

Research into missing persons in Canada has not been as prevalent as that in Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The research that has been conducted often involved cases of missing children. For instance, in 2006, the National Missing Children Service assisted in 129 missing Canadian children, 230 missing American children, and 146

[3] In the United States, running away from one's parents is considered a status offence (James et al., 2008).

international missing children cases (Dalley, 2006). Overall, in 2006, there were 60,461[4] missing children reports filed with the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC). Nearly two-thirds (64 per cent) of these cases were removed within 24 hours of being listed on CPIC. The vast majority (82 per cent) of these cases involved youth between the ages of 14 to 17 years old. Nearly one-fifth (19 per cent) of children and youth missing in 2006 were identified as having substance use issues. Approximately one-third (32 per cent) went missing from their family's residence, while 14% went missing from child care and 20% from foster care. Nearly one-fifth (18 per cent) went missing from an institution, including their school or a youth detention centre. Less than 1% went missing while on vacation, while shopping in a mall, or from work (Dalley, 2006).

In terms of the reason for children to be missing, all categories (run away, stranger abduction, parental abduction, accident, wandered off, unknown, or other) decreased in 2006, apart from "stranger abduction" [5], which increased from 30 to 46 between 2005 and 2006. Female children were more likely (65 per cent) than male children to be abducted by a stranger. Over one-quarter (28 per cent) of these abductions occurred with youth between the ages of 14 and 15 years old, while another one-quarter (26 per cent) involved children under the age of 12 months old. Interestingly, over one-quarter (28 per cent) of missing children had a previous history of going missing. Finally, half of these children went missing from their family home (Dalley, 2006).

Parental abduction was the classification for 326 cases in 2006; this was a decrease from 349 in 2005.[6] Parental abduction occurred slightly more often for female children (54 per cent), most of whom were five years old or younger (48 per cent). A minority (16 per cent) of cases were repeat abductions. The vast majority (73 per cent) of children who were abducted by a parent were taken from their home; only 5% were taken from school and 4% from their foster home. Over half (56 per cent) of the cases did not have a custody order in place at the time of the abduction (Dalley, 2006).

Over three-quarters (77 per cent) of the youth who were missing in 2006 were identified as having run away[7]; more frequently involving young females (53 per cent) than young males, and most frequently occurred among 14 and 15 year olds (53 per cent of females and 45 per cent of males). Most of these youth (82 per cent) had also run away in the past. Youth were commonly reported as missing from their family's house (29 per cent) or from a foster home (20 per cent) (Dalley, 2006).

Only 24 youth in 2006 were missing due to an accident; a slight decrease from 21 in 2005. The accidental category of missing is used to refer to cases where an individual goes

[4] This is a decrease from 66,548 in 2005 (Dalley, 2006).
[5] This category also refered to abduction by relatives or close friends (Dalley, 2006).
[6] Forty-five of these missing children cases occurred in British Columbia (Dalley, 2006).
[7] 9,054 of these missing children cases occurred in British Columbia (Dalley, 2006).

missing as the result of some form of a natural disaster or other displacement, such as an airplane crash, a boating accident, an avalanche, or a fire. In effect, an accidental cause is given until a body is recovered, at which point the victim is removed from the list of missing persons.

The number of children and youth who "wandered off" also decreased between 2005 (704) and 2006 (567). The wandering off category is often used to refer to youth who have left a facility or home and not returned. Dalley (2006) also noted that Canadian law enforcement used this category to refer to children and youth missing from social services care.

While the missing categories of unknown (10,761) and other (2,009) both decreased from 2005 (12,079 and 2,061 respectively), they continued to be very common in 2006. "Unknown" is used when there is a lack of information regarding how the child went missing. In contrast, "other" is often used to refer to a youth who has failed to return to a youth detention centre (Dalley, 2006).

Dalley (2006) also reported on an additional study conducted with 19 parents who experienced the abduction and subsequent return of their child by the other parent. At the time of the abduction, the mean age of the victim was 8 years old. Many of the children were living with their mother at the time of their abduction. All the children were said to have experienced verbal and emotional abuse as a result of the abduction incident. With respect to the recovery of the child, slightly more than half (53 per cent) were found within the first year. Slightly more than one-third (37 per cent) were found in Canada, another 37% were found in the United States, and approximately one-quarter (26 per cent) were found in another country.

In terms of the relationship between the parents, over half were either separated or divorced, and most described their relationship as "poor". Over three-quarters of the parents had a court order in effect at the time of the abduction. Many of the "left-behind" parents described that they perceived the abduction to be caused by the abductor's need to control or have revenge against them. The left-behind parents tended to have a better education and higher income than the abducting parent.

With respect to missing persons in British Columbia, Patterson (2005) reviewed 2,290 missing person cases recorded on CPIC over a period of 54 years (1950 to 2004). In addition to providing a profile of those reported missing, she reviewed the probable cause of the disappearance. Interestingly, the profile of persons missing in British Columbia over this 54 year period did not drastically change. Overall, the profile of a missing person in British Columbia commonly referred to an adult white male. While those reported missing closer to the 1950's had most commonly disappeared as the result of a fishing accident and were presumed drowned, the nature of this profile changed over the years; by the 1990's, missing persons were more likely to be missing from their home as the result of unknown circumstances that likely involved suicide or foul play. This change in profile was likely the

result of an increasing number of prostitutes going missing from the streets of Vancouver, British Columbia. The overall trends identified by Patterson suggested a general shift from missing persons coming from coastal fishing communities to major urban centres. In effect, the trends indicated a decrease in drowning accidents as the primary cause of missing persons and an increased number of runaways, prostitutes, and youth going missing.

Police Response Policies

When considering how to respond to a missing person case, police must consider the notion that the individual may not want to be found; therefore, privacy concerns must be balanced with consideration for the well-being of the missing person (Newiss, 1999). At the same time, police must also consider the fact that the person may have gone missing repeatedly in the past (i.e. repeat runaways), but balance that consideration with the understanding that the current incident may involve suspicious or criminal circumstances. Added to these difficult decisions is the sheer number of missing person cases reported to the police on a daily basis. According to James and colleagues (2008), police jurisdictions in Australia typically received at least one missing person report each day. However, larger jurisdictions, such as Victoria and New South Wales, received between 15 and 25 reports a day. Similarly, research by Newiss (1999) in the United Kingdom indicated that some police forces were simply overwhelmed with reports of missing individuals. For instance, the Metropolitan police force in the United Kingdom averaged 88.5 missing person reports a day in 1997 and 1998, while the Greater Manchester force experienced an average of approximately 30.1 missing persons reported each day. Although police must always consider the possibility of foul play, many of these cases involved repeat runaway youth, and many of the missing persons (37.1 per cent) eventually returned on their own (Newiss, 1999).

Given the large number of persons reported missing on a yearly basis, police must have an effective means by which to sort the priority from non-priority cases. Prior research and evaluations of these policies suggested that priority cases were more likely to involve persons experiencing a vulnerability, whether physical (e.g. diabetes) or mental (e.g. depression or Alzheimer's), who appeared to be missing under involuntary circumstances, or those who ran away from care facilities (Hirschel and Lab, 1988; James et al., 2008).

According to James et al. (2008), police typically separated missing person cases into low, medium, or high priority by considering the age of the missing individual, the harm they may present to themselves or others, and the nature of the disappearance. In effect, children or seniors, violent or suicidal individuals, and those for whom the behaviour is uncharacteristic would more likely be classified as a higher priority case. Low risk cases were more likely to involve those who had repeatedly run away, whether they were youth

or adults. These classifications affected the nature of the police response. Low risk cases were officially recorded, but no additional police work will was typically undertaken, while medium risk cases required an active response. The most intense response was obviously reserved for high risk cases, where police response often involved the immediate deployment of resources, including experienced and high-ranking police officers, air and/or ground searches, and the implementation of a media and press strategy (Newiss, 2004). In a classification by Tarling and Burrows (2004) with 1,008 cases of missing persons in the United Kingdom, nearly three-quarters (72 per cent) of cases were identified as low-risk, another one-quarter (26 per cent) were identified as medium risk, and very few (2 per cent) were classified as high risk.

The decision about the nature and extent of the police's response begins to be shaped immediately upon receiving the report of a missing person. This decision is often made by front-line staff working the desk that may or may not be civilian members of the force (Newiss, 1999). These members may decide to send an officer to take a more detailed report, or they may decide to report the incident to a supervisor who can make a subsequent response decision. Often, the next available patrol officer will then be sent on the call for service (Newiss, 1999). The first steps upon arriving at the scene typically involve taking a statement from the individual who reported the person missing, collecting a photograph of the missing person if available, and possibly searching the surrounding area. Police may also check local hospitals or custody centres to ensure the individual cannot be located in another institution (Newiss, 1999).

Importantly, Newiss (1999) identified that not all police forces necessarily followed the same response. For instance, while some police forces had a search policy in place, others did not and simply made a subjective decision of when, where, and how to search. Similarly, policies documenting what information should be recorded and how it should be recorded were also inconsistent. Classification schemes also varied, with some police forces simply abandoning their use. Other police forces continued to classify missing persons as low, medium, or high priority; however, their definitions of important concepts, such as "vulnerability", varied with some perceiving mental illness to indicate vulnerability and others perceiving youthfulness, older age, substance abuse related issues, or being missing for a longer period of time as indicators of vulnerability (Newiss, 1999). As such, Newiss (1999) recommended that police forces consider adopting similar response strategies. By adopting similar strategies in classifying cases and following similar response procedures, police forces could ensure that the same type of information was being collected in a similar way, which would facilitate the sharing of information between police forces and improve the ability of police forces to successfully work on missing person cases. Newiss (1999) also proposed that police forces should consider adopting electronic forms that could more easily be shared with other forces.

James and colleagues (2008) identified that the sharing of information would improve the ability of the police to respond to missing persons cases quickly and efficiently. While it was essential that police agencies share information regarding missing persons with each other, it was also necessary to include the sharing of information with non-governmental and government agencies, which might have additional relevant information to the case (James et al., 2008). In addition, information should be shared between all levels of government (municipal, provincial, and federal) as well as across provinces, given that persons who go missing do not necessarily remain in the same jurisdiction from which they went missing. As such, the development of national guidelines detailing the nature and extent of information sharing (i.e. what is expected and legal protections) between different agencies should be developed.

Among the national guidelines to be developed are consistent data-related definitions. Within Canada, it is likely that different provinces, and even different agencies within provinces, utilize different identifiers to refer to missing persons. In effect, if an organization attempted to combine two sets of data containing information regarding the same missing people, they would likely face difficulties in matching the information for the same individual. As such, the use of unique identifiers would facilitate the linking of datasets and improve the nature of the information available to police (James et al., 2008). Similarly, national guidelines should outline the method by which information is collected and recorded in datasets so as to facilitate the combining of information from a variety of sources (James et al., 2008). For instance, the data referring to the rates of missing persons each year in different jurisdictions is not necessarily directly comparable, as some jurisdictions will record a person missing multiple times within a one-year period if they repeatedly run away, whereas others will record only the first incident of running away in a one-year period (James et al., 2008). As such, some jurisdictions may be reporting inflated statistics of missing persons each year.

Recently, the United States has been encouraging police forces across the nation to share information on missing person cases. To date, police forces have not utilized shared databases to their full potential, given a range of limitations, such as a lack of resources, a lack of awareness, or a lack of time to do so (Ritter, 2007). According to Ritter (2007), there are four national databases available within the United States that can assist in solving missing person cases. These include the FBI's National Crime Information Center (NCIC) database, the Combined DNA Index System for Missing Persons (CODIS), the Integrated Automated Fingerprint Identification System (IAFIS), and the Violent Criminal Apprehension Program (ViCAP). By comparing a DNA reference of a missing person with the DNA profile retrieved from unidentified remains, police can quickly and efficiently identify those missing persons whose bodies have been recovered. However, obtaining a DNA profile from the missing person's family or from a personal object, such as hair brush,

was not necessarily commonly undertaken (Ritter, 2007); therefore, police were not fully utilizing the resources available to them.

In effect, there is currently a gap in linking missing person cases with unidentified remains. Ritter (2007) argued that, while there were over 40,000 sets of unidentified remains held by medical examiners across America, only 15% of these cases had been entered onto the NCIC database. However, through the provision of resources, such as free DNA collection kits, to police jurisdictions across the nation, the United States is attempting to close this gap. By including information on the characteristics of unidentified remains along with the information on missing person cases, police will be in a much improved position to clear missing person cases.

The Role of Non-Governmental Organizations

Although police are the primary response agency in regards to missing persons, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) may also be involved in missing person cases. For instance, NGOs may play a role in providing counseling and other services to family members and friends of the missing or by becoming involved in the search itself (James et al., 2008). Newiss (1999) recommended that for certain cases, such as those involving children missing from care, females involved in prostitution, or members of minority ethnic groups, police should work together with additional agencies, such as social services. Given that these agencies would likely have relevant information on these individuals, sharing information with them would improve the efficiency of the official police response. In addition, these agencies may be in a better position to track the missing person, given their potential relationships with relevant communities and their pre-established social networks. Thus, given that NGOs may play an important role in tracking missing persons or providing salient information to the police, it is essential that they be involved in any national database designed to enhance the search for missing persons.

The Current Study

Within Canada, police are continually working to improve their response to missing person cases. Given the sheer volume of cases typically reported on a daily basis to many police forces, police agencies must develop efficient response policies. To assist in this, police in western Canada are in the process of developing a shared database of information on missing persons. Such a database will allow police to enter information about cases which can then be compared to unidentified persons who are found in other jurisdictions. While this database is currently being developed with data from Alberta and British Columbia, ideally, it will soon be utilized by police forces across Canada. However, in developing such a uniform database, it is important to review the characteristics of persons who are

missing. By identifying common characteristics and risk factors for certain categories of missing persons, police can develop a database that is more applicable for their needs. Moreover, a database that is developed using the data collected from a wide range of police forces will assist police in better designing a centralized database that is relevant to, and accepted by, all Canadian forces. Still, to date, most of the research is focused on missing persons without specific reference to uncleared missing persons. In effect, there is little known about the characteristics or nature of uncleared missing person cases. To this end, the current study intends to provide a descriptive analysis of all uncleared missing person's cases from British Columbia since the 1950's.

Research Methodology

The methodology for this study consisted of reviewing the police files for nearly all uncleared missing person cases from 1949 to 2007 in British Columbia. More specifically, the study began with a list of files identified through CPIC as being uncleared missing person cases. This original list was updated throughout the study until October 22, 2007 – at which point a total of 2,280 cases were considered for review. However, the actual number of files reviewed for this study was reduced over the course of the project as some cases (n = 227) became cleared. Additional cases were not included in this study (n = 65) as the files were not available for review for a variety of reasons. Finally, another 81 files were originally coded, but not available to the reseachers in time of the analysis presented in this report. These cases will be included in an upcoming companion report examining and comparing uncleared missing person cases in Western Canada.

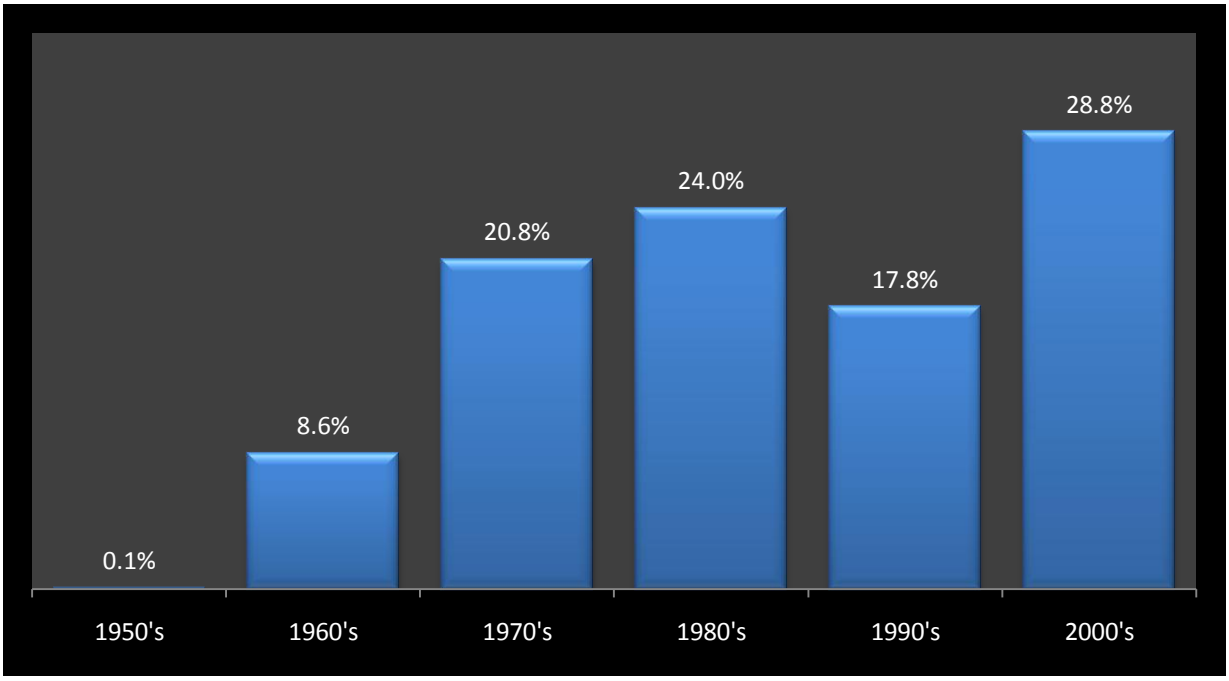
The reviews themselves involved a team of researchers visiting 109 RCMP Detachments and 12 Municipal Police Departments across the province and coding and entering file information on to a major crime reporting form (ED672) and a separate coding form specifically designed for the study (see Appendix A). Coded data from this separate form was subsequently entered into an SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) database for statistical analysis.

Research Findings

General Distribution of Missing Person Cases

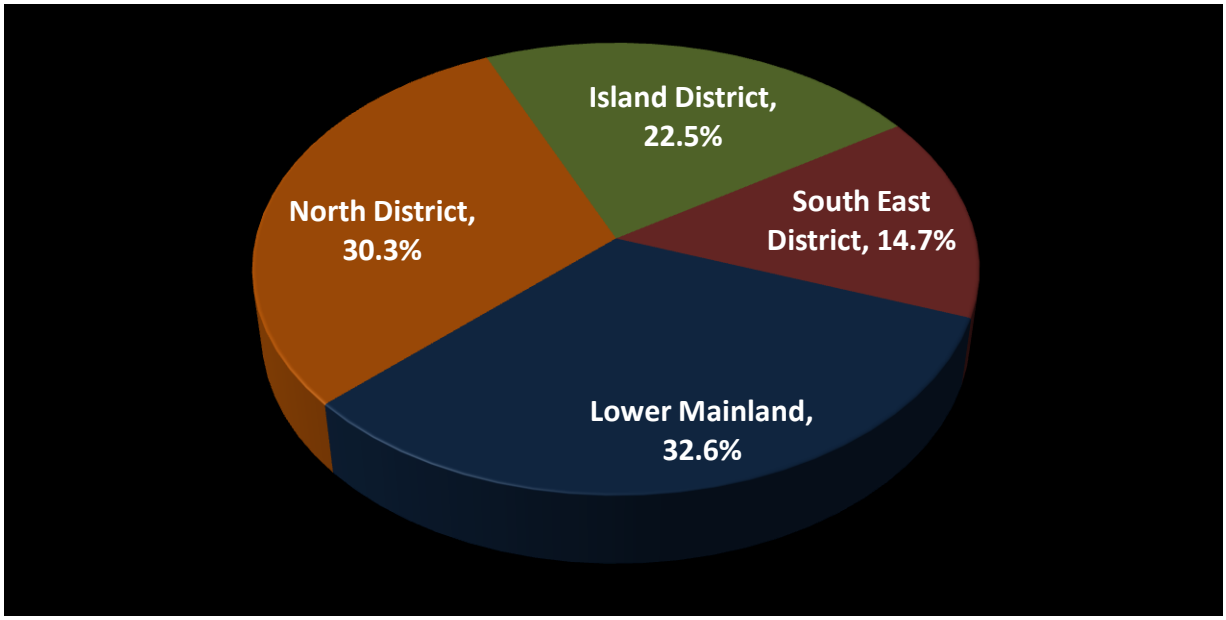
In total, 1,907 files were identified and coded for this study. The earliest file was from 1949 and the most recent file was from 2008. As indicated by Figure 1, with the exception of the 1990's, the distribution of uncleared missing person cases increased over time. In effect, while there were 163 uncleared missing person cases in British Columbia in the 1960's, there were an additional 548 cases (28.8 per cent) that derived from the 2000's. There was only one case from the 1940's and only two cases from the 1950's.

Figure 1: Distribution of Uncleared Missing Person Cases by Decade



All of the participating RCMP detachments and municipal jurisdictions were recoded into one of four regional British Columbia districts. Examining the district level distribution of uncleared missing person cases indicated that nearly two-thirds of the cases (62.5 per cent) were from the Lower Mainland (32.6 per cent) and the North District (30.3 per cent). In effect, the South East district contributed 14.7% of the sample and the Island District provided an additional 22.5% of the cases (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Uncleared Missing Person Cases by District



Given the population distributions in British Columbia, it was not unexpected that the greatest proportions of uncleared missing person cases would be from the Lower Mainland district. However, the proportion of uncleared missing person cases in the Lower Mainland was substantially lower than the district's proportion of British Columbia's overall population. More specifically, while the Lower Mainland District provided one-third of the uncleared missing person cases in this sample (32.6 per cent), this district comprised more than half (58.3 per cent) of British Columbia's population.[8] Conversely, the North District was substantially overrepresented in this sample as this district provided nearly one-third of the uncleared missing person cases (30.3 per cent), but only comprised 8.3% of British Columbia's population. The two districts that were more representative in their contributions to the sample and British Columbia's population were the Island District (22.5 per cent of the sample and 17.5 per cent of British Columbia's population) and the South East District (14.7 per cent of the sample and 15.9 per cent of British Columbia's population).

General Demographic Information of Uncleared Missing Person Cases

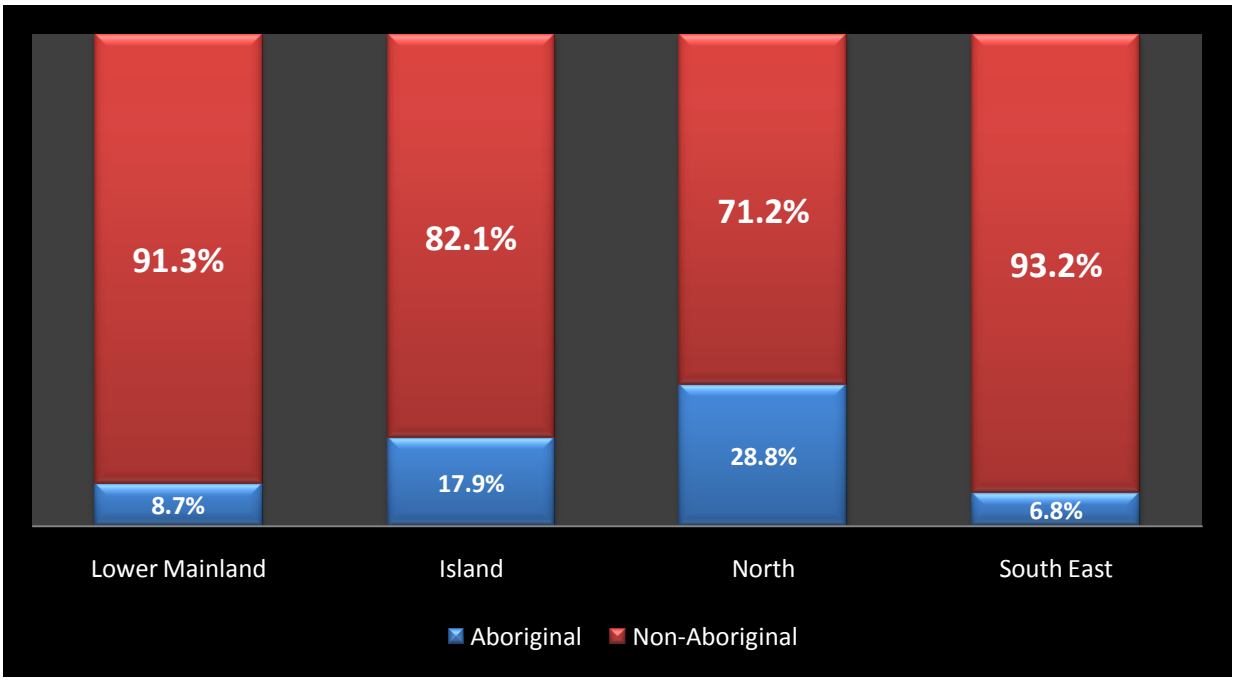
Of the total sample (n = 1,907), a large majority (82.2 per cent) of the uncleared missing persons were male. Similarly, nearly three-quarters (73.6 per cent) were identified as Caucasian. However, nearly one-fifth (16.6 per cent) of the sample were composed of

[8] British Columbia's population numbers were derived from the police jurisdiction populations published by the Police Service Division for 2006.

Aboriginal people.[9] In considering the ethnicity of the missing persons by gender, there was an overrepresentation of Aboriginal females. In other words, while females made up 17.8% of the entire sample, in slightly more than one-fifth (21.2 per cent) of the cases where the missing person was Aboriginal, the victim was female.[10] Moreover, there was an overrepresentation of female missing persons in the Lower Mainland District as females comprised slightly more than one-quarter (26.8 per cent) of the uncleared missing person cases in this district.[11]

In considering the ethnicity of subjects and the case's primary district, it is important to note that more than half (52.5 per cent) of the Aboriginal uncleared missing person cases derived from the North District. In fact, more than one-quarter of all uncleared missing person cases in the North District (28.8 per cent) involved an Aboriginal victim. By contrast, Aboriginal people made up only 8.7% of the uncleared missing persons cases in the Lower Mainland District (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Distribution of Aboriginal Uncleared Missing Person Cases by District

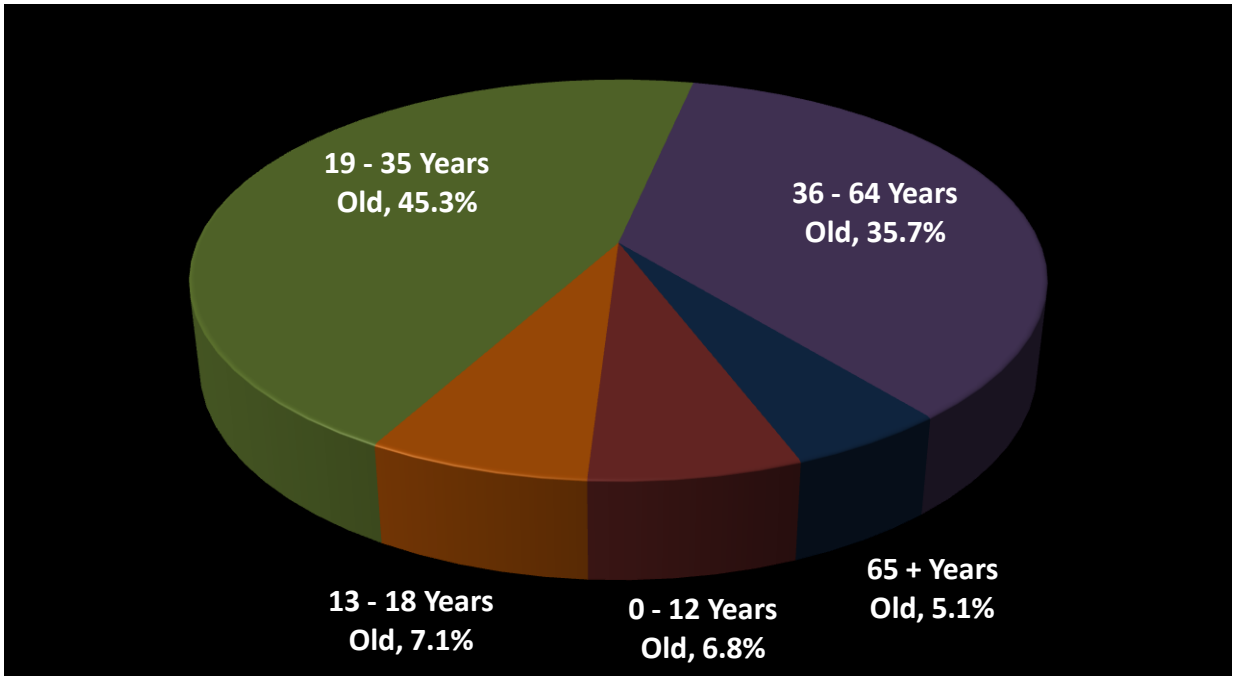


The mean age of the sample at the time of their disappearance was calculated by subtracting the subject's year of birth from the year that their missing person file was

[9] British Columbia government websites estimate the Aboriginal people make up approximately 5% of the population of British Columbia.
[10] There was a statistically significant relationship between ethnicity and gender; x^2 (8) = 22.38, p = .004.
[11] x^2 (3) = 50.62, p = .000

opened. Using this method, the mean age of the sample was 39.1 years old. It should be noted that two subjects were at least one hundred years old at the time their files were opened, while four cases involved subjects less than one year old. Moreover, as indicated in Figure 4, there was a small proportion of children under 12 years old (6.8 per cent) and teenagers, or those between the ages of 12 and 19 years old (7.1 per cent) in this sample. There was also a small proportion of seniors or those over the age of 65 years old (5.1 per cent). In effect, nearly half of the sample was between the ages of 19 to 35 years old (45.3 per cent) and slightly more than one-third (35.7 per cent) were between the ages of 36 and 64 years old. It is likely that this sample is much older than samples reported in previous research given that the current study is examining uncleared missing persons cases, whereas much of the prior research has focused on all missing person's cases, many of which are composed of repeat runaway youth who typically are found within a one-week period.

Figure 4: Age Distribution of Sample



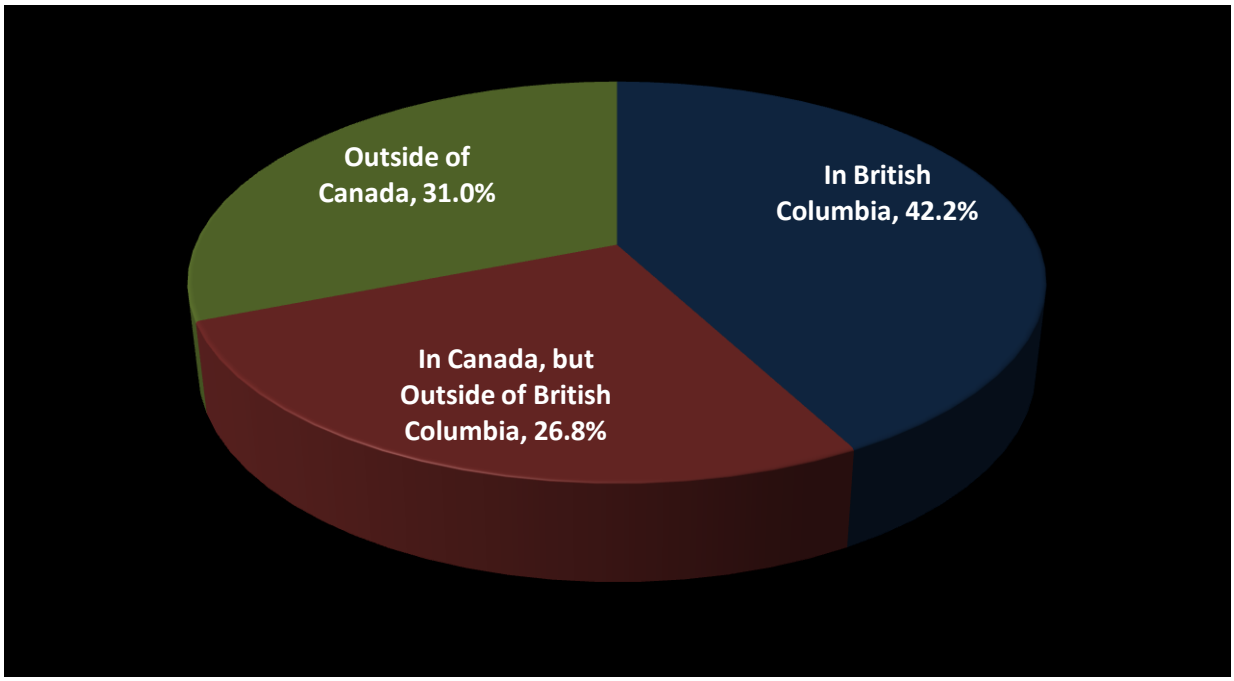
There was a statistically significant difference between the age and the gender of the subjects in this sample as male missing persons were significantly younger than their female counterparts. Specifically, the mean age for males was 32.8 years old compared to 40.4 years old for the females.[12] Similarly, Caucasian missing persons were significantly younger than their non-white counterparts. The mean age among uncleared cases of

[12] t (-6.56) = 1857, p = .000

Caucasian missing persons was 40.2 years old compared to a mean age of 34.6 years old for non-white missing persons.[13] There were no statistically significant differences in the mean age of the sample by district.

As expected, the overwhelming majority of missing persons (87.8 per cent) were Canadian citizens. Although data was only available for 58.7% of the sample (n = 1,120), a minority of uncleared missing persons (42.2 per cent) were born in British Columbia. An additional 26.8% were born in Canada, but outside of British Columbia. Given this, nearly one-third of the uncleared missing person files (31.0 per cent) were for people born outside of Canada (see Figure 5).

Figure 5: Place of Birth of Sample (n = 1120)



Passport information was only available in a very small proportion of files (15.8 per cent). However, in those files where information was available (n = 302), nearly one-third of the files (31.5 per cent) indicated that the subject had a valid passport, and, of those, nearly one-third (31.6 per cent) of the passports were Canadian passports. No other country's passport was represented by more than just a few subjects. Given this information, it would appear that a majority of missing persons were either natural born Canadians who moved to British Columbia or immigrants. This finding was further supported by the fact that, where information was available (n = 379), only 16.4% of the sample had some form of provincial identification. Finally, while driver's licence information was only available for

[13] t (5.51) = 1861, p = .000

less than half of the sample (44.6 per cent), slightly more than two-thirds (68.4 per cent) of the files where driver licence information was available indicated that the subject had a valid driver's licence. Again, where information was available (n = 524), a large majority of driver's licences were issued in British Columbia (84.5 per cent).

Given the mean age of the sample, it was not surprising that only a small proportion of missing persons (15.8 per cent) were attending school at the time of their disappearance. However, where information was available in the files (n = 1,158), slightly more than three-quarters (76.2 per cent) of the missing persons were working. As expected, there was a statistically significant difference in the mean age of those who were working (43.4 years old) and those who were not (30.0 years old).[14] It is interesting to note that nearly one-quarter of the sample (23.5 per cent) were employed in the fishing industry. The fact that this profession contributed so many missing person cases may be due to the relatively common disappearance of fisherman through presumed drowning at sea (see Patterson, 2005). The next most common job was mill work (12.7 per cent). However, among the uncleared missing person cases involving females, the most common jobs were prostitution (42.0 per cent) distantly followed by working in the food service industry (7.6 per cent) and fishing (7.6 per cent). Moreover, nearly one-third of the female prostitutes (30.0 per cent) were Aboriginal.

This sample was not substantially characterized by criminality or police contacts. Specifically, slightly more than one-quarter of the sample (26.5 per cent) had a criminal record and a similar proportion (24.9 per cent) had at least one previous contact with the police. As expected, among those with a previous police contact (n = 369), three-quarters were related to a previous arrest or violation ticket. While there was a statistically significant difference in having a criminal record by ethnicity[15], there were no statistically significant differences by gender or age. In effect, while nearly one-quarter of the sample (24.4 per cent) were classified as non-white, non-whites comprised 30.8% of those with a criminal record. There were no statistically significant differences with any these variables by whether the subject had any previous contact with the police.

One factor which might be related to increasing one's risk for violent victimization, such as abduction or a kidnapping, is frequent use of public transportation. In this sample, only 11% were identified in their files as frequent users of public transportation. There were no statistically significant differences by age, gender, or ethnicity on the frequent use of public transportation.

In terms of the overall health of the sample at the time of their disappearances, information was only available for approximately half of the sample (n = 928). However, for those files in which information was available, nearly two-thirds (65.9 per cent) had at least one

[14] t (10.10) = 1156, p = .000
[15] x^2 (1) = 8.51, p = .004

medical condition and/or disease at the time of their disappearance. There was a slight overrepresentation of females among those who were suffering from some form of medical condition or disease. Again, while females comprised 17.8% of the entire sample, approximately one-quarter (25.8 per cent) of those with a medical condition were female.[16] The most common medical conditions or diseases recorded in the files were: alcoholism (36.6 per cent); diabetes (35.3 per cent); thyroid conditions or diseases (25.2 per cent); and some form of an eating disorder, such as anorexia nervosa or bulimia (20.9 per cent). Interestingly, while the ratio of males to females for these conditions or diseases remained relatively stable at 3:1, when it came to thyroid conditions or diseases, the distribution dropped to nearly 2:1 (56 per cent male and 44 per cent female).

With respect to the sample's mental health, information was only available in slightly more than half (58.4 per cent) of the files. In those cases where information was available (n = 1,117), slightly more than one-fifth (21.9 per cent) of subjects were identified as having a history of mental illness. Nearly three-quarters of those with a history of mental illness (71 per cent) had, at one point, been institutionalized. Information about suicidal thinking and suicide attempts was also available for only slightly more than half of the sample (56.1 per cent). Where information was available, nearly one-quarter of subjects (23.3 per cent) were identified as having previous feelings towards suicide and 12.3% had a recorded previous suicide attempt. While only 10% of the males had attempted suicide, nearly one-quarter (22.9 per cent) of females had a recorded suicide attempt in their files.[17]

In terms of the subjects' sexual orientation, information was known for slightly more than two-thirds of the sample (67.5 per cent). Of those, the vast majority (95.5 per cent) were identified as heterosexual, while only 12 subjects were identified as homosexual and an additional nine subjects were identified as bisexual. Moreover, very few uncleared missing person cases (6.7 per cent) involved subjects who were homeless or known to live on the streets. However, in nearly one-quarter (23.0 per cent) of the cases involving a homeless person or someone who was known to live on the streets, the subject was Aboriginal. Surprisingly, of those living on the street or homeless, approximately half (49.1 per cent) were female.[18] In addition, nearly three-quarters (74.1 per cent) of the uncleared cases involving a homeless missing person derived from the Lower Mainland district.[19]

Of the 1,117 cases in which drug-related information was available (58.6 per cent), approximately one-quarter of the subjects (24.4 per cent) were known to have been involved, at some point, in the drug trade either as a user or a trafficker. Nearly half of these people (53.3 per cent) were in the Lower Mainland district at the time of their

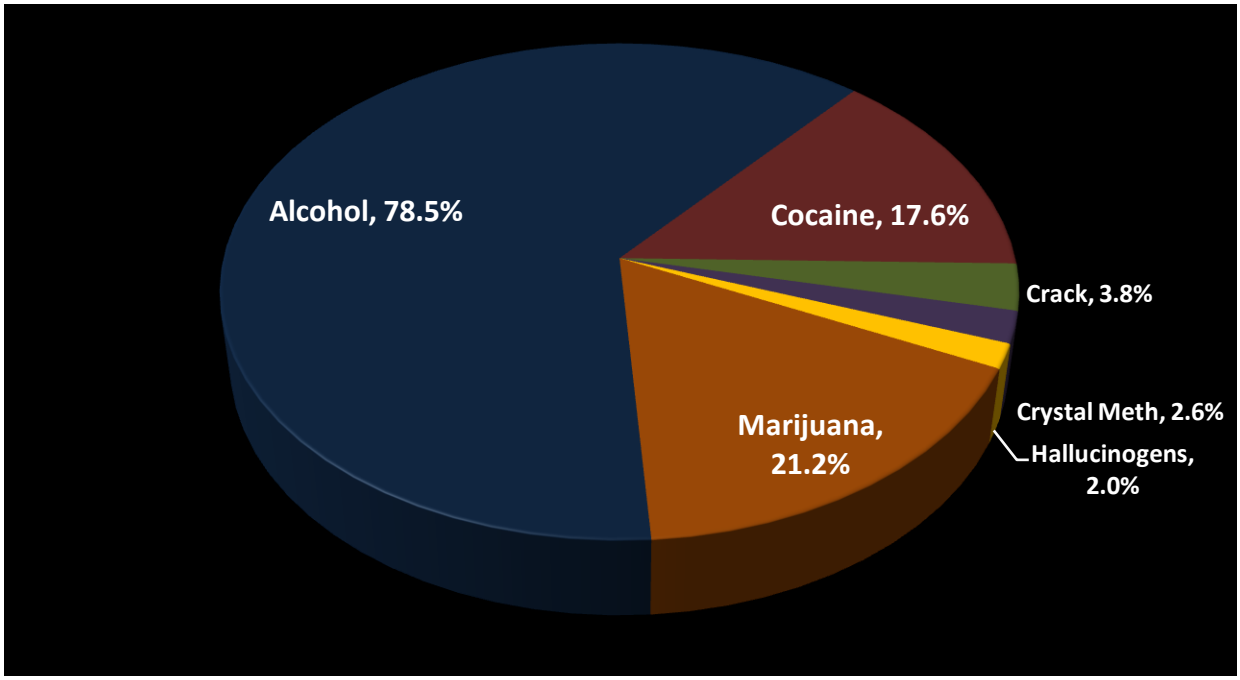
[16] x^2 (1) = 13.34, p = .000
[17] x^2 (1) = 17.79, p = .000
[18] x^2 (1) = 83.66, p = .000
[19] x^2 (3) = 91.76, p = .000

disappearance.[20] A majority were male (58.9 per cent)[21] and nearly one-fifth (18.7 per cent) were Aboriginal.

In considering more specifically the issue of addiction or substance abuse problems, information was available for 53.6% of the sample (n = 1,021). Of those cases where information was available, nearly half (41.8 per cent) were identified as having an addiction or a substance abuse problem. Interestingly, a majority of the female subjects (54.4 per cent), but only slightly more than one-third (38.2 per cent) of males were identified as having an addiction or a substance abuse problem.[22] Moreover, while more than one-third (37.9 per cent) of Caucasians were identified with a substance abuse problem, nearly two-thirds (65.2 per cent) of the Aboriginal missing persons were identified similarly. There were no statistically significant differences by district on the issues of addiction or substance abuse.

Information about the types of substances abused was only found in 27.1% of the files. Where information was available (n = 516), as demonstrated in Figure 6, the most common substance abused was alcohol (78.5 per cent) followed by marijuana (21.2 per cent) and cocaine (17.6 per cent). Very few people were identified as abusing crack (3.8 per cent), crystal meth (2.6 per cent), or hallucinogens (2.0 per cent).

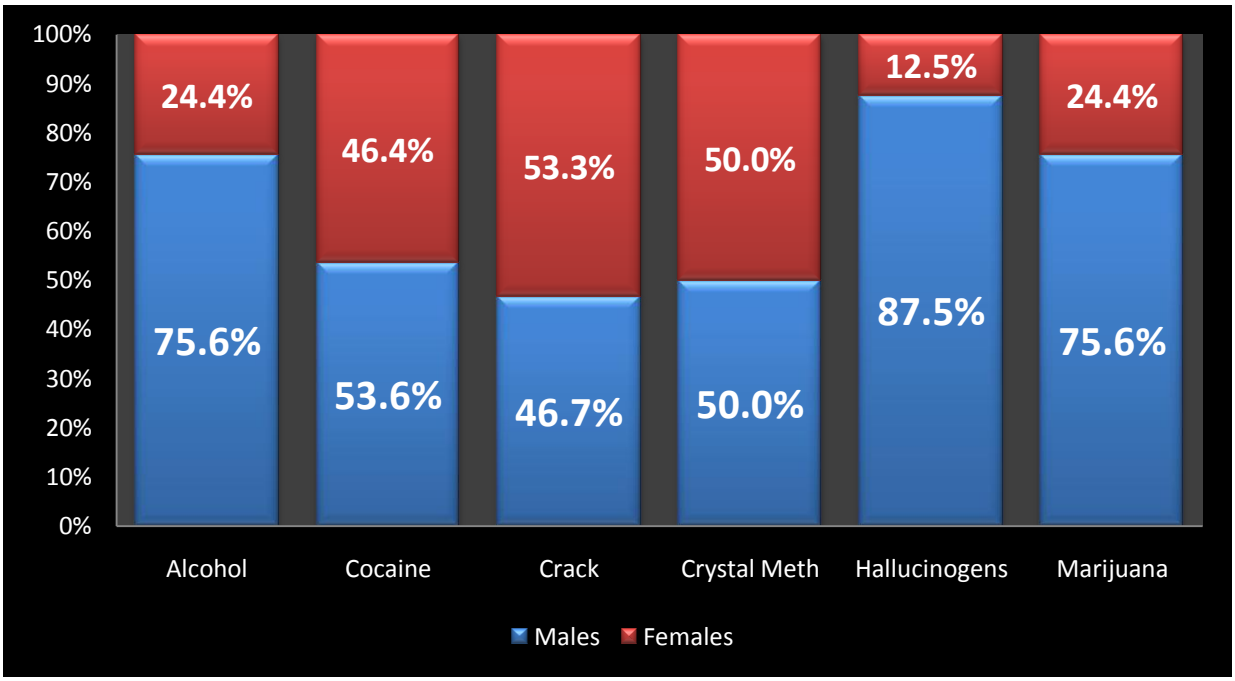
Figure 6: Types of Substances Abused by the Subjects of Uncleared Missing Person Cases



[20] x^2 (3) = 57.55, p = .000
[21] x^2 (1) = 79.63, p = .000
[22] x^2 (1) = 19.74, p = .000

Based on the overall gender distribution of the sample with respect to drug addiction (males = 69.4% and females = 30.6%), it was interesting to note that females comprised a majority of the crack users (53.3 per cent) and made up approximately similar proportions to their male counterparts for crystal meth abuse (50.0 per cent) and cocaine abuse (46.4 per cent) (see Figure 7).

Figure 7: Types of Drugs Abused by Gender



Missing Person Investigations

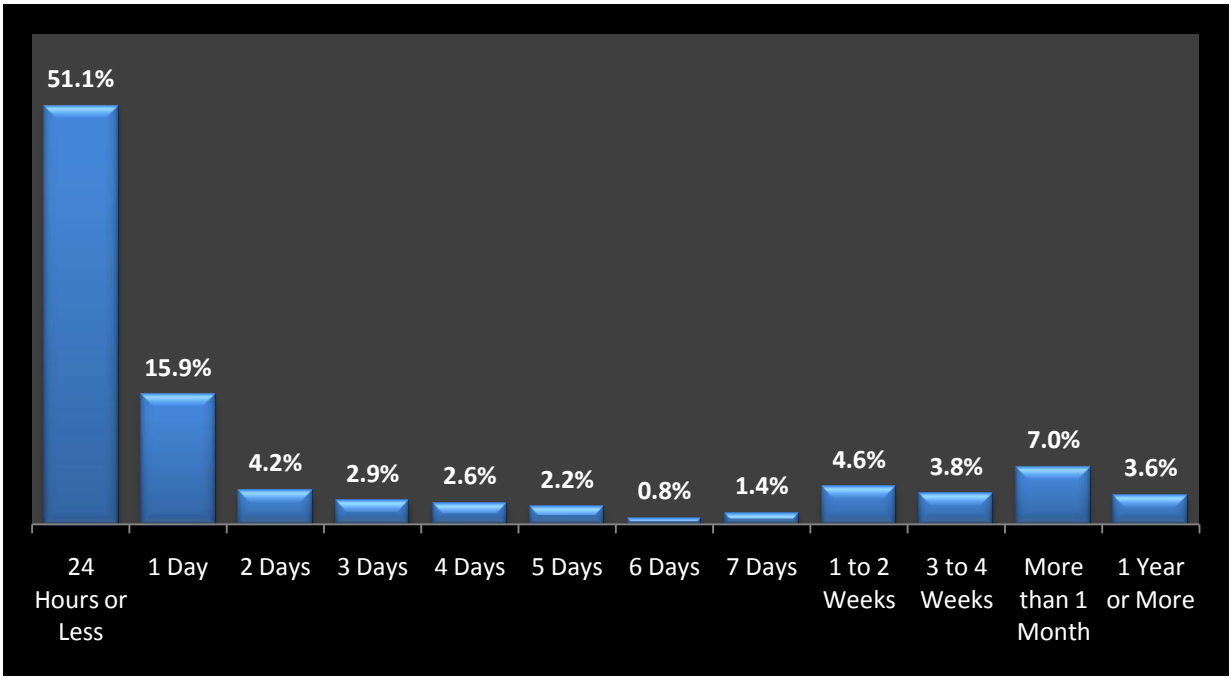
Using the date that the missing person was last seen and the date that the person was reported missing to the police (n = 1,766), the mean number of days that elapsed before the police were notified that a person had gone missing was 105.8 days with a range of within 24 hours to 32 years. While there is no reasonable explanation, as demonstrated in Table 1 there was a nearly eight fold increase in the elapsed time between a subject's last known contact and someone notifying the police that the subject was missing from the 1970's to the 1980's. This large elapsed period of time, while increasing again in the 1990's (175.4 days) decreased somewhat in the 2000's (105.5 days), but was still substantially higher than the mean number of days elapsed from the 1950's to the 1980's.

Table 1: Mean Amount of Elapsed Time between the Subject's Last Contact and the Police being Notified of the Missing Person by Decade

Decade	n	Mean Number of Days
1940's & 1950's	2	3.5 Days
1960's	152	16.8 Days
1970's	367	14.9 Days
1980's	434	116.6 Days
1990's	310	175.4 Days
2000's	501	105.5 Days

Given the large range of elapsed time, considering the mean elapsed time is likely not very useful. Instead, it might be more helpful to recognise that a majority of cases (51.1 per cent) were reported to the police within 24 hours. Moreover, an additional 15.9% of cases were reported to the police within 24 to 48 hours of the subject's last known contact. Conversely, only a small proportion of cases were reported to the police more than one month after their last contact, but less than one year (7.0 per cent) or more than one year after the subject's last known contact (3.6 per cent). In fact, three-quarters of the uncleared missing person cases were initially reported to the police within a week of the person's disappearance (see Figure 8).

Figure 8: Number of Days between Last Contact with Subject and Report to the Police

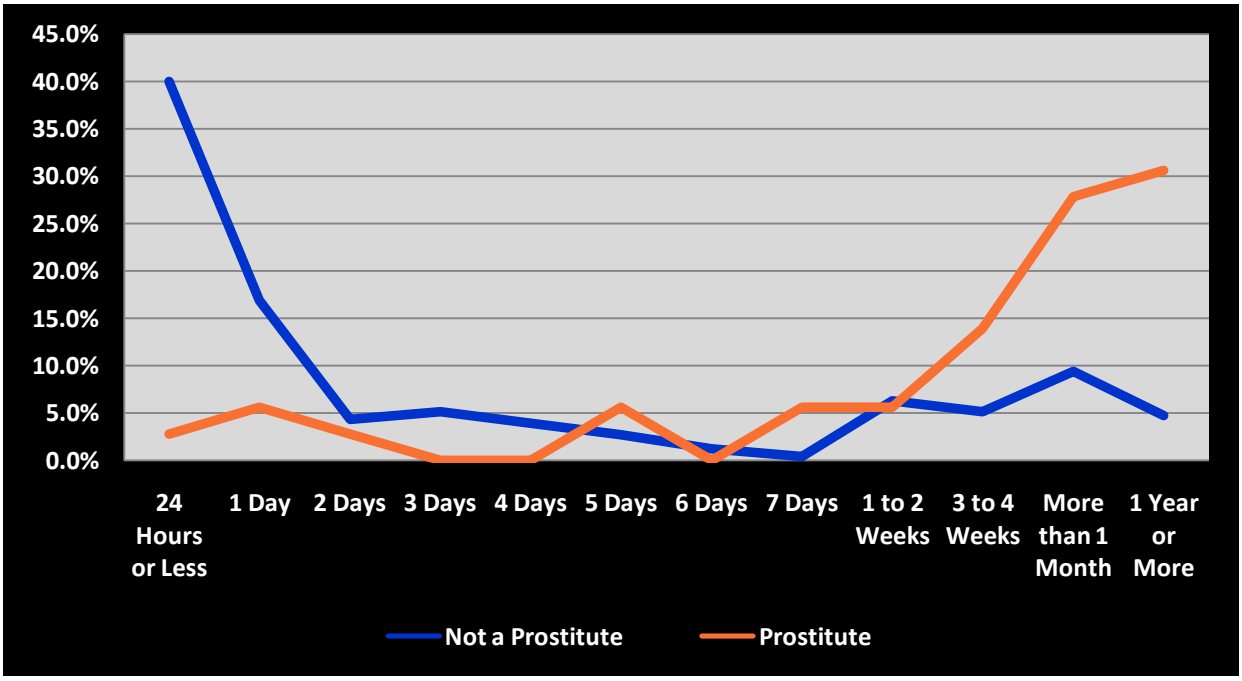


An interesting finding associated with the amount of time it took for a person to be reported missing to the police was that, while a majority of males (54.2 per cent) were reported missing to the police within 24 hours of their disappearance, only slightly more than one-third of females (35.4 per cent) were reported to the police within the same time frame. In fact, the mean amount of elapsed time for a male to be reported missing to the police was 65.4 days compared to 312.6 days for females.[23] Moreover, if one considered the two longest time periods, namely more than one month but less than one year and more than one year, larger proportions of females than males fell into these two categories. Specifically, while 11.7% of females were reported missing to the police more than one month, but less than one year from the date of their last contact, only 6.0% of males fell into this time frame. Similarly, 7.9% of females, but only 2.7% of males were reported missing to the police one year after their last contact date. A possible explanation for this finding could be the fact that many of these women were prostitutes. In just considering females, on average, prostitutes were reported missing to the police 901.9 days after their last contact compared to 229.4 days for females who were not prostitutes.[24] As demonstrated by Figure 9, while 40% of the non-prostitute females were reported missing to the police within 24 hours of their disappearance, only 2.8% of the prostitutes were so reported.

[23] t (-5.13) = 1744, p = .000
[24] t (2.75) = 289, p = .006

Conversely, nearly one-third of the prostitutes (30.6 per cent) were reported missing more than one year after their last contact compared to just 4.7% of the non-prostitutes. In effect, 58.4% of prostitutes compared to just 14.1% of non-prostitutes were reported missing to the police one month or more after their last known contact.

Figure 9: Distribution of the Number of Days between When a Female was Reported Missing to the Police and their Last Contact by Whether the Subject was Identified as a Prostitute



Data on who was the last person to see the missing person was only available in a small majority (58.2 per cent) of cases. Most commonly, the last persons to see the missing person were a friend (40.7 per cent) or a family member (28.9 per cent). Less commonly, it was a co-worker (11.2 per cent), an acquaintance (8.7 per cent), or some other type of person (10.6 per cent) who was the last person to see the subject of an uncleared missing person case. However, in many cases, it was someone other than the last person to see the missing person who reported the individual as missing to the police.[25] In more than one-third of the cases (38.9 per cent) a family member was the person who reported the missing person to the police, while a friend was the reporter in 19.0% of the cases. In fact, a person defined in the police file as a witness was the person who reported the individual as missing to the police in slightly more than one-quarter of the cases (26.8 per cent). Co-workers and acquaintances were the people who notified the police in only a small

[25] The data for this piece of information was much more complete as 93.8% of files had information about who reported the missing person to the police.

proportion of the cases (9.2 per cent and 6.2 per cent, respectively). It would appear, therefore, that either the witness to an event directly related to a person becoming a missing person case or a family member growing concerned or suspicious were the most common ways that the police were made aware of the missing person (65.7 per cent).

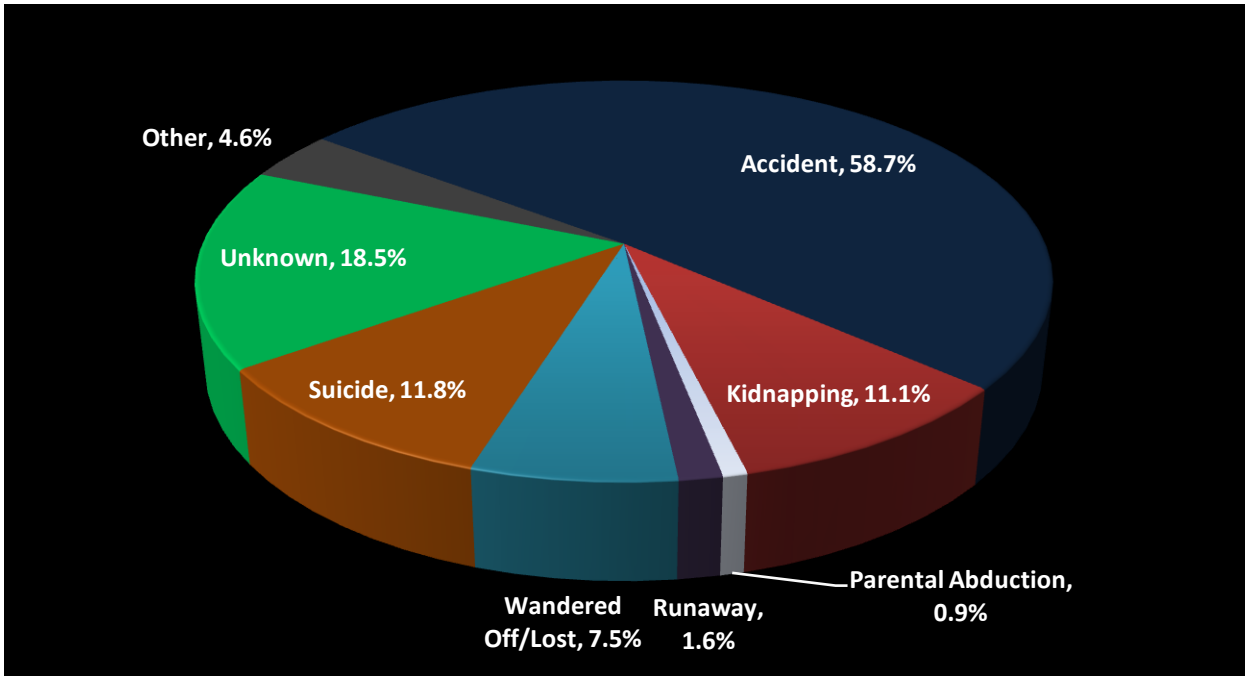
In terms of whether the same type of person was both the last person to see the missing person and was the person who reported that the subject was missing to the police, in slightly less than two-thirds of the cases (63.9 per cent) in which it was a family member who was the last person to see the missing individual, it was also a family member who reported the person missing to the police. In fact, for all of the categories, with the exception of an acquaintance (19.8 per cent), approximately half of the time it was the person who last saw the missing person who reported them missing to the police; friend (49.4 per cent), co-worker (51.6 per cent), and spouse (51.7 per cent).

In very few cases (4.9 per cent) the missing person left a note. However, nearly all of the notes made reference to committing suicide. In very few cases (n = 6), a risk assessment was done by the police to establish the risk level of the missing person. Of these six risk assessments, three put the subject's risk level at low, one was classified as at-risk for escape, and one was a mental health assessment concluding that the subject did not have to go to the hospital. In effect, the files did not contain useful risk assessment information.

Probable Cause Designated to Uncleared Missing Person Cases

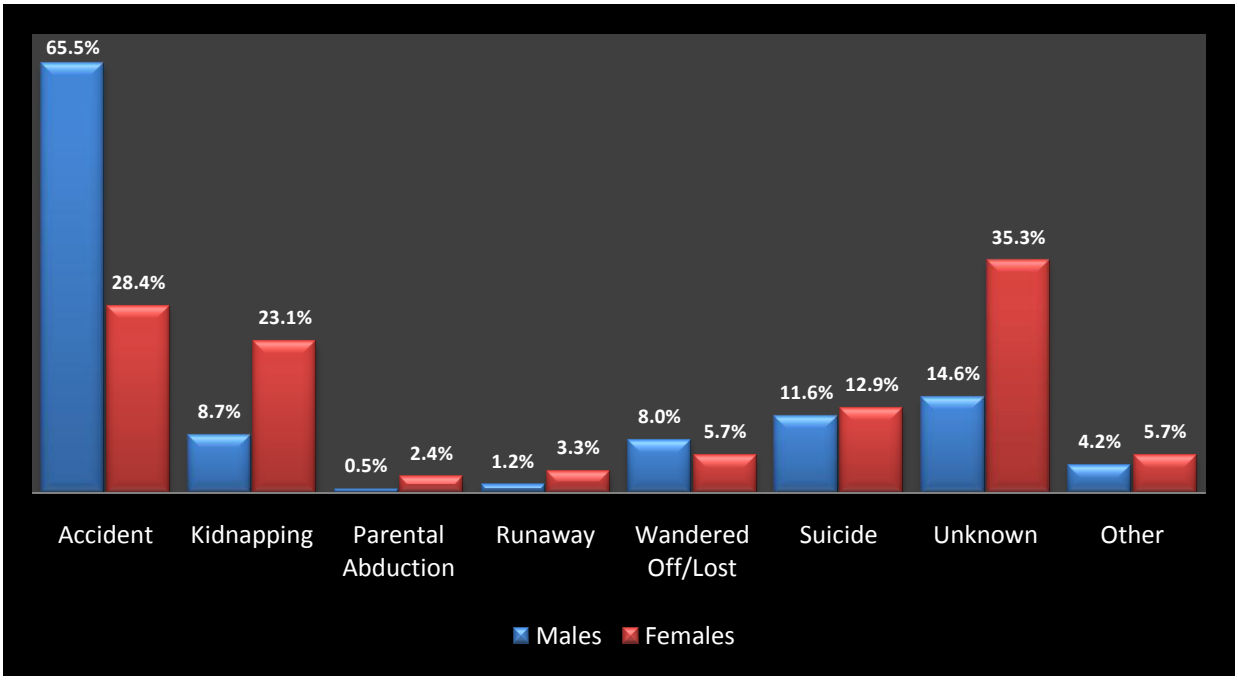
There are many different ways in which an individual could go missing. For example, a person might fall off a boat and disappear under the water or an individual might go hiking in the woods and not return. Others might be abducted by family members or strangers. Police classified all missing person cases into eight possible probable causes. As the police could select more than one probable cause, the 1,907 cases combined for a total of 2,183 probable causes. As demonstrated in Figure 10, the most common probable cause was an accident (58.7 per cent). While 11.8% of cases were classified as possible suicides, nearly one-fifth of cases (18.5 per cent) were classified as probable cause "unknown" by the police. Parental abduction of a child either in the situation of a custody order (0.6 per cent) or without a custody order (0.3 per cent) accounted for less than 1% of all cases. Moreover, there were very few instances of a person being classified as a runaway (1.6 per cent) or missing as a result of wandering off or getting lost (7.5 per cent).

Figure 10: Probable Causes of the Uncleared Missing Person Cases



There were some very interesting variations in the probable causes of the uncleared missing person cases by gender (see Figure 11). For example, while nearly two-thirds of male cases (65.5 per cent) were classified as an accident, only slightly more than one-quarter of female missing person cases (28.4 per cent) were deemed an accident. Moreover, a greater proportion of female uncleared missing person cases were related to a kidnapping or abduction (23.1 per cent) compared to their male counterparts (8.7 per cent).

Figure 11: Probable Causes of Uncleared Missing Person Cases by Gender



Another interesting difference was for cases in which the probable cause was unknown. Approximately one-third of uncleared cases involving a female subject (35.3 per cent), but only 14.6% of cases with a male subject were classified as unknown. Again, the most reasonable explanation for this finding was related to prostitution as virtually all of the female prostitutes (86.0 per cent) had their probable cause classified as unknown compared to slightly more than one-quarter of the non-prostitute females (26.4 per cent) and 14.6% of males.

Prostitution was likely also related to differences in probable causes by district. For example, while a majority of uncleared missing persons cases in the Island (77.4 per cent), North (75.1 per cent), and South East (56.6 per cent) districts were classified as an accident, approximately one-third of cases in the Lower Mainland (31.5 per cent) were similarly classified (see Table 2). Moreover, while slightly more than one-third of cases in the Lower Mainland (37.6 per cent) were classified as unknown, only a very small proportion of cases in the other three districts were similarly classified. Additionally, isolating just those identified as prostitutes in this sample (n = 53), virtually all of the unknown classifications (95.6 per cent) for this sub-group derived from the Lower Mainland District. In effect, while prostitution was a likely cause for the differences between male and female designation of probable cause, prostitution was also likely somewhat responsible for the differences in probable cause across districts.

Table 2: Probable Causes of Uncleared Missing Person Cases by District

	Lower Mainland	Island	North	South East
Accident	**31.5%**	**77.4%**	**75.1%**	**56.6%**
Kidnapping	**14.2%**	**6.5%**	**11.3%**	**10.8%**
Parental Abduction	**1.9%**	**0.5%**	**0.2%**	**0.4%**
Runaway	**3.1%**	**0.9%**	**0.5%**	**1.4%**
Wandered Off	**7.3%**	**4.0%**	**11.0%**	**6.5%**
Suicide	**17.1%**	**11.0%**	**7.1%**	**10.8%**
Unknown	**37.6%**	**6.3%**	**8.5%**	**15.4%**
Other	**6.3%**	**2.1%**	**3.7%**	**6.5%**

There were some interesting findings with respect to probable causes and the age of the subjects. As expected, accidents were the most common probable cause for all age groups; however, for children (12 years old or younger), the two most common probable causes were an accident (72.2 per cent) and kidnapping or abduction (11.9 per cent). For those between the ages of 13 and 18 years old, the most common probable causes were an accident (57.1 per cent) and running away (19.5 per cent). Those between 19 and 35 years old were most commonly missing due to an accident (63.1 per cent) or some unknown cause (20.4 per cent). These two causes were also most common among those between the ages of 36 and 64 years old (59.0 per cent and 19.3 per cent, respectively). Finally, for seniors, the most common causes were an accident (44.7 per cent), wandering off or getting lost (26.6 per cent) or cause unknown (25.5 per cent).

There were also some substantial differences in the amount of time between the subject's last known contact and notifying the police by the probable cause classification of the case. As indicated by Table 3, the types of cases that were reported to the police with the shortest elapsed time were missing persons involving runaways (4.7 days) and accidents (10.1 days). Conversely, cases in which the probable cause remained unknown (413.5 days), kidnapping/abduction cases (397.3 days), and parental abduction cases (181.0 days) had the largest mean elapsed time between the missing person's last known contact and them being reported as missing to the police. While these long elapsed time results might

be understandable for parental abduction cases and cases where the probable cause was determined to be unclear to the police, it is unknown why there was such a long elapsed time for cases involving a kidnapping/abduction.

Table 3: Probable Causes of Uncleared Missing Persons Cases by the Number of Days Before Person Reported Missing

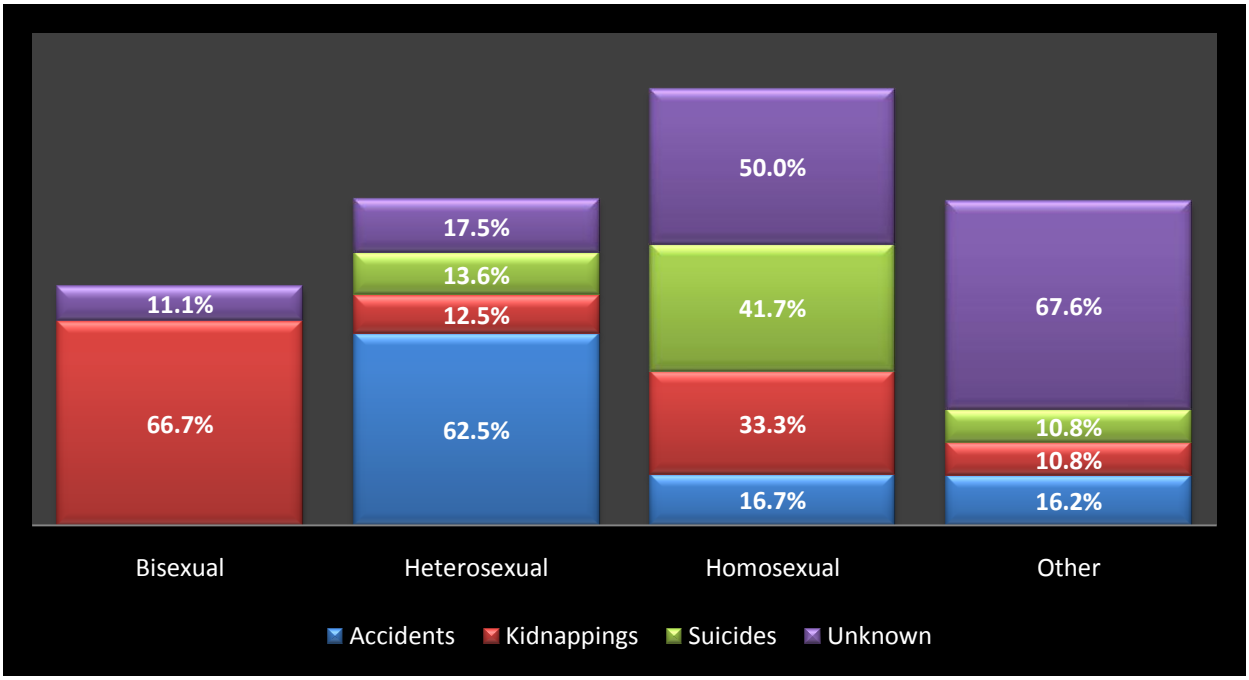
Probable Cause	Mean Number of Days
Accident	**10.1 Days**
Kidnapping	**397.3 Days**
Parental Abduction	**181.0 Days**
Runaway	**4.7 Days**
Wandered Off	**123.3 Days**
Suicide	**60.8 Days**
Unknown	**413.5 Days**

There were also some interesting differences when considering the probable cause by the sexual orientation of the subject. Due to the low proportion of cases that contained information about both sexual orientation and the probable causes of parental abduction (n = 3), runaways (n = 14), and wandering off (n = 82), these causes were not included in the analysis presented in Figure 12. As mentioned above, the large majority of uncleared missing person cases had subjects who were heterosexual (95.5 per cent). Given this, the number of subjects who had both sexual orientation information and probable cause information, and who were not classified as heterosexual was very low (n = 58). In fact, the largest proportion of those not classified as heterosexuals were classified as 'other' (63.8 per cent). In effect, only nine subjects were identified as bisexual and only 12 were defined as homosexual. However, among the small number of homosexuals, half of the probable causes were unknown and nearly half were suicides.[26] Moreover, among heterosexuals, nearly two-thirds of the probable causes (62.5 per cent) were classified as accidents while less than one-fifth (13.6 per cent) were classified as suicides. It would appear, therefore,

[26] Again, because the police files could record more than one probable cause, the total percentage within a sexual orientation category could exceed 100%.

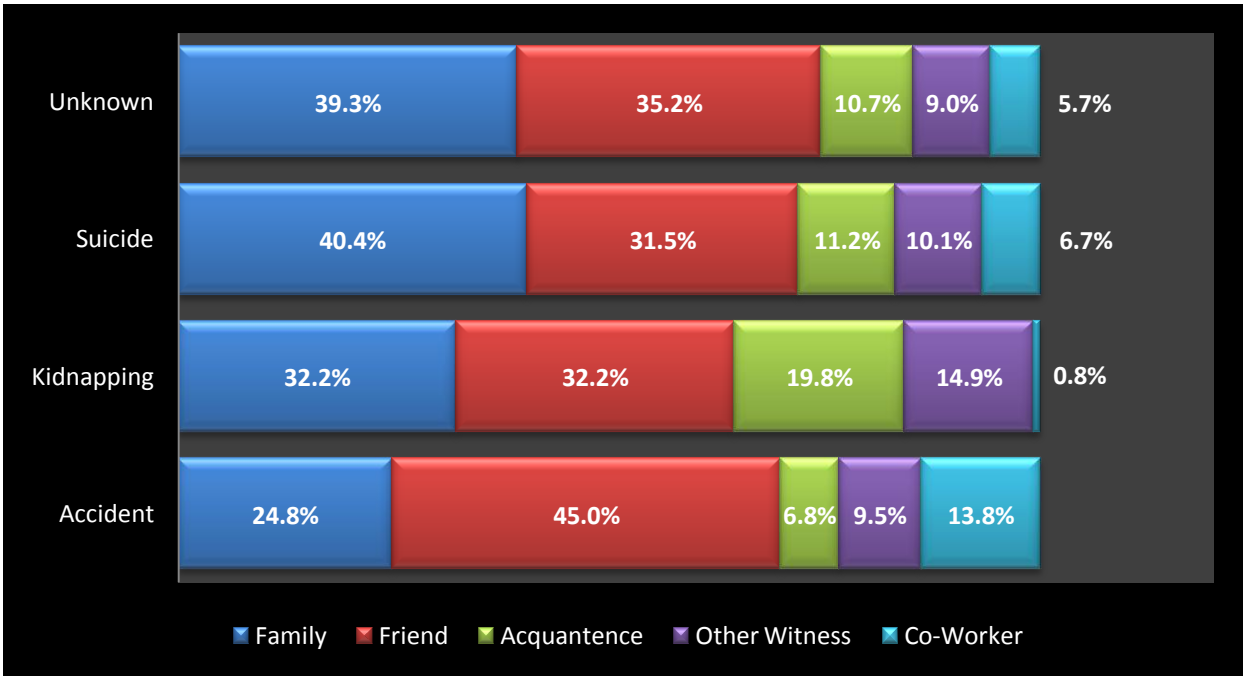
that the probable cause was substantially less likely to be an accident and more likely to be a suicide when the subject's sexual orientation was something other than heterosexual.

Figure 12: Probable Causes of Uncleared Missing Person Cases by Sexual Orientation



While it was expected that in all of the cases where the probable cause of the missing person was a parental abduction it was a family member who notified the police, it was interesting to note that for accidents, in nearly half of the cases (45.0 per cent), it was a friend of the missing person that reported them missing to the police (see Figure 13). This was likely due to who was present at the time of the accident. When the probable cause was a kidnapping, there was an even distribution between family members and friends (32.2 per cent each) notifying the police. There was a generally similar distribution among suicides and cases where the probable cause was unknown with respect to who notified the police. However, the consistent finding throughout this analysis was that, as mentioned above, in most cases, the police were notified about a missing person from friends or family members.

Figure 13: Probable Causes of Uncleared Missing Person Cases by Who Reported the Subject Missing to the Police



As mentioned above, very few cases involved parental abduction. However, of those cases classified as likely a parental abduction of a child (n = 16), in three-quarters of these cases, the mother was the individual who abducted the child or children. In only one case was there a restraining order against the parental abductor. Moreover, in 11 of the cases, the police were aware of where the child or children were taken. For example, in four cases, the child or children were taken to the United States of America, in three other cases, the child or children were taken to Japan. There was also one case each of a child or children being abducted to Croatia, Italy, Germany, and Mexico. At the other end of the age spectrum, 2% of the sample (n = 38) went missing from a care home or geriatric institution.

Foul Play in Uncleared Missing Person Cases

For the entire sample, approximately two-thirds of the uncleared missing person cases (67.6 per cent) had foul play ruled out. A very similar pattern as presented above appeared when examining the differences between those cases in which foul play had been ruled out and those cases where this determination had not been made. For example, there was a statistically significant difference by gender. Specifically, while slightly less than three-

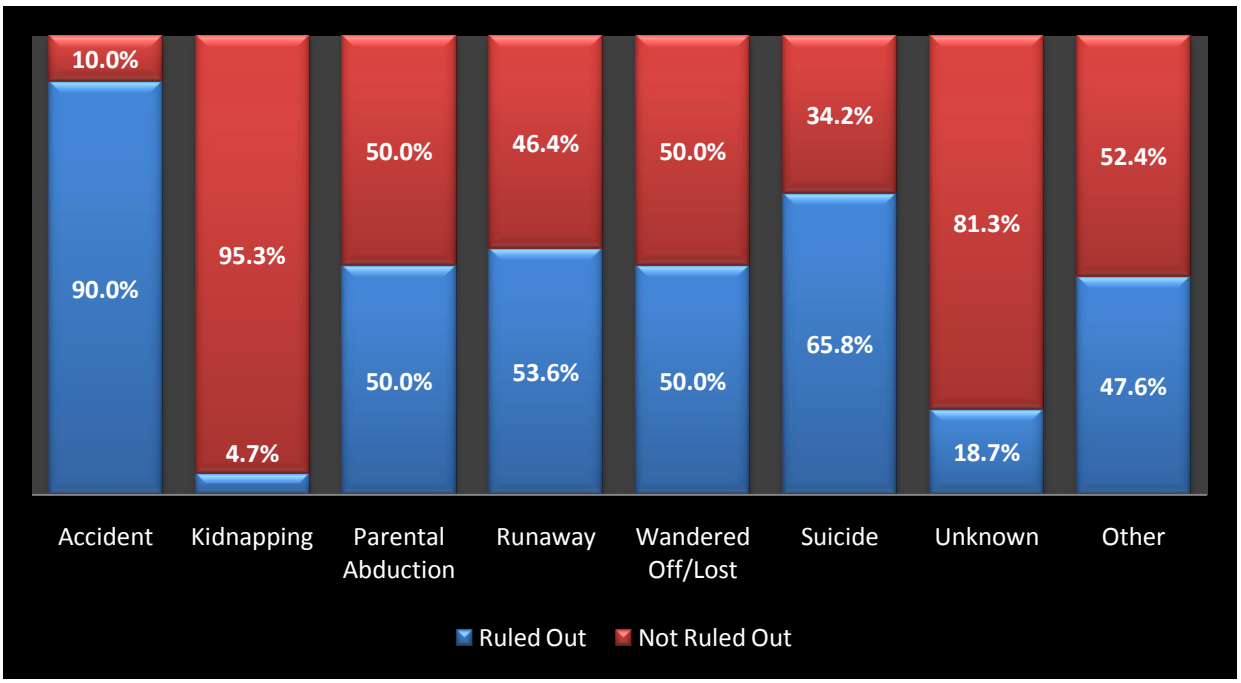
quarters of the uncleared missing person cases involving a male subject (72.9 per cent) had ruled out foul play as a cause, less than half of the cases involving females (44.3 per cent) had ruled out foul play.[27] It should also be noted that for all age groups, other than for children under the age of 12 years old, approximately two-thirds of cases had foul play ruled out. However, for those under the age of 12 years old (n = 121), four-fifths of cases (80.2 per cent) had foul play ruled out.[28] In other words, compared to other age groups, foul play was not considered a probable cause in the large majority of cases involving children.

Moreover, nearly three-quarters of cases involving non-Aboriginal subjects (72.3 per cent) and two-thirds of cases with Aboriginal subjects were determined to not involve foul play; however, this difference was statistically significant.[29] In terms of the districts associated with the missing person cases, a minority of cases from the Lower Mainland (48.5 per cent) had foul play ruled out compared to a majority of cases in the other three districts; Island (85.3 per cent), North (78.6 per cent), and South East (60.2 per cent).[30]

While the large majority of accidents (90 per cent), nearly two-thirds of suicides (65.8 per cent), and a slight majority of runaway cases (53.6 per cent) ruled out foul play, as expected, virtually all of the kidnappings (95.3 per cent) and a large majority of the unknown cause files (81.3 per cent) did not rule out foul play (see Figure 14). Part of the explanation for the large proportion of cases in which the probable cause of the missing person was unknown and foul play had not been ruled out might again be related to the proportion of uncleared missing person cases involving people who were participating in prostitution in the Lower Mainland. In considering just those cases in which the probable cause was classified as unknown by the police and the subject was known to be a prostitute (n = 45), all but one of the cases did not rule out foul play. Moreover, considering just these cases[31], all but two were from the Lower Mainland District.

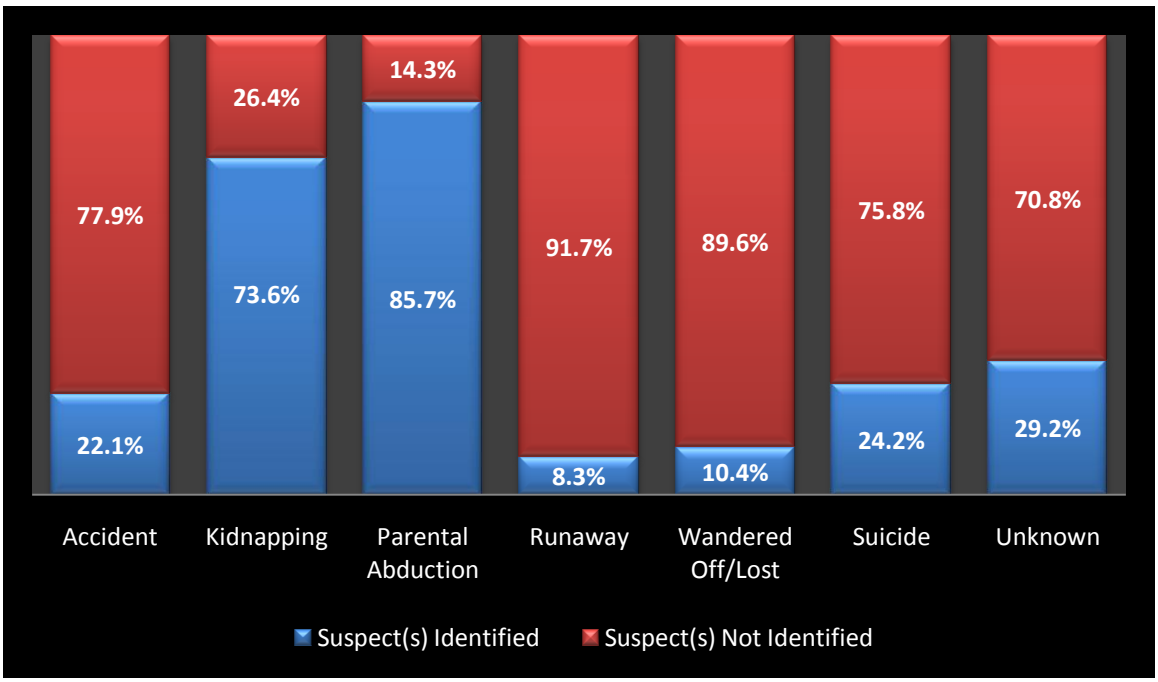
[27] x^2 (1) = 100.04, p = .000
[28] x^2 (4) = 10.44, p = .034
[29] x^2 (1) = 3.83, p = .050
[30] x^2 (3) = 196.10, p = .000
[31] There cases were those in which the subject was a prostitute, the probable cause was unknown, and foul play had not been ruled out.

Figure 14: Proportion of Cases in Which Foul Play was Ruled Out by Probable Cause of Missing Persons Cases



In those cases where foul play had not been ruled out (n = 593), nearly three-quarters (73.5 per cent) of those files recorded information about whether any suspects had been identified. In slightly more than one-third of these cases (37.8 per cent), at least one suspect was identified. While there was no information about the characteristics of the suspects or their relationship to the missing person recorded from the files, there was a predictable pattern with respect to the probable causes of the missing person case and whether a suspect was identified for cases where foul play was not ruled out. As expected, for the most part, in cases of kidnapping (73.6 per cent) or parental abduction (85.7 per cent), the police were able to identify at least one suspect (see Figure 15). However, when the probable cause was unknown or an accident, police only identified a suspect in approximately one-quarter of the cases (29.2 per cent and 22.1 per cent, respectively). Moreover, in cases where the probable cause was a runaway or the subject was deemed to have wandered off, it was rare for the police to identify a suspect (8.3 per cent and 10.4 per cent, respectively).

Figure 15: Proportion of Cases in Which a Suspect was Identified by Probable Cause for Cases Where Foul Play was Not Ruled Out



Repeat Missing Persons

Of the entire sample, 5% were identified as having been previously missing (n = 96). Of these subjects, reliable data was only available in 47 files for how many times the subject had previously gone missing.[32] While the mean number of times that a subject had gone previously missing was 1.96 and the range was from one time to 27 previous times, nearly three-quarters of those with reliable information (72.3 per cent) had previously gone missing only once. Seven subjects had gone missing twice, three subjects had gone missing three previous times, and two subjects had gone missing four times. One subject was recorded as having gone missing 27 previous times.

Given the proportion of females in the sample, it would be expected that one-sixth of those who had previously gone missing would be female; however, more than one-third of previously missing subjects were female (38.5 per cent)[33]. The pattern for whether the subject was Aboriginal was as expected in that, based on their proportion in this sample, it

[32] Several of the files reported the number of previous times a subject had gone missing as several times or a few times.
[33] x^2 (1) = 40.13, p = .000

was expected that 16 subjects who had previously gone missing would be Aboriginal and the actual count was 19 subjects. However, there was a statistically significant difference when considering those who were prostitutes. Given their proportion of the sample, it was expected that 1.6% of the subjects who had previously gone missing would be prostitutes; however, the actual proportion was 6.3%[34].

Investigation Status

In nearly one-quarter of the cases (23.5 per cent), the missing person had been declared deceased by the courts. Of those with information about the date when they went missing and the date they were declared dead by the courts (n = 400), the mean amount of time elapsed was 25 months. However, as indicated by Table 4, there were some interesting differences in how long it took the courts to declare a missing person dead by the probable cause of their disappearance. For example, in cases where the probable cause was determined to be an accident, the mean elapsed time before the courts declared the subject dead was 15 months. Given the nature of many of the accidents and the fact that a witness to the accident was the person who notified the police, it was unexpected that so much time would elapse in these types of cases.

Table 4: Mean Amount of Time between Person Going Missing and Being Declared Dead by the Probable Cause of the Disappearance

	Elapsed Time
Accident	**15.0 Months**
Kidnapping/Abduction	**63.6 Months**
Wandered Off/Lost	**48.6 Months**
Suicide	**49.0 Months**
Unknown	**92.1 Months**

Moreover, those declared dead who were thought to have gone missing as a result of a kidnapping or an abduction (n = 14) were declared dead, on average, slightly more than five years after their kidnapping or abduction. It was also puzzling why the courts waited,

[34] x^2 (1) = 19.16, p = .000

on average, approximately four years to declare a missing person dead when the police believed that the subject likely committed suicide (n = 48). Findings which appeared more reasonable involved subjects who were believed to have wandered off or were believed to have gotten lost (n = 16). In these cases, the courts, on average, waited approximately four years before declaring the subject dead. This result makes sense as the courts would want to make sure that the person was, in fact, dead and would not be found or return on their own volition. Finally, when the cause of death was unknown, the subject was missing, on average, approximately 7½ years before being declared dead.

Police Practice and Procedure

There are a number of standard procedures that police follow in the course of a missing person's investigation. Based on the information available in the files, it was not common for the police to check the subject's: bank account (23.3 per cent); credit card or debit card use (15.1 per cent); welfare activity (13.5 per cent); post office activity (2.5 per cent); tax submissions (3.8 per cent); or e-mail account activity (2.1 per cent).

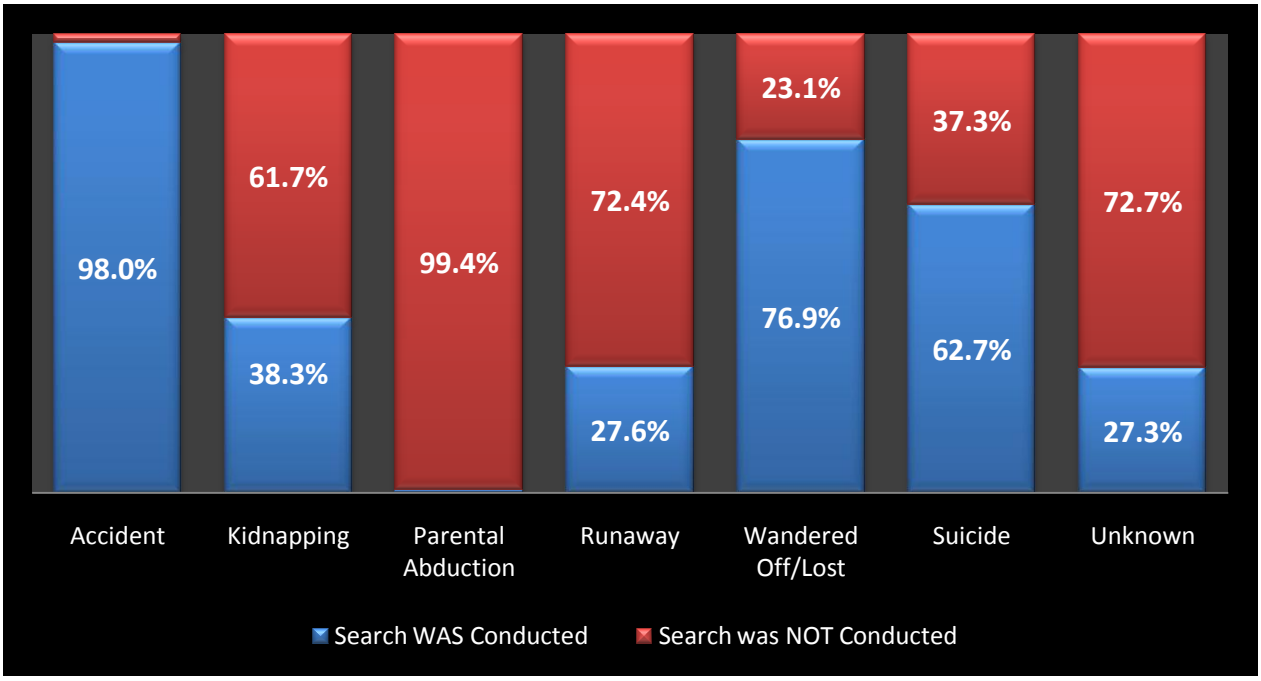
In slightly more than three-quarters of the cases (78.0 per cent), a ground and/or air search was conducted to look for the missing person. There was a statistically significant difference in whether ground and/or air searches were conducted based on gender. While searches were conducted in slightly more than four-fifths of cases involving male subjects (81.9 per cent), only a small majority of cases involving a female subject (57.1 per cent) resulted in a ground and/or air search.[35] One possible explanation for this finding could again be the nature of the work that a proportion of the females in this sample participated in. Of the females in the sample who were identified as prostitutions and had search information in their files (n = 28), only 14.3% had an air and/or ground search conducted. In other words, the vast majority of prostitutes (85.7 per cent) did not have a ground and/or air search to look for them.

Ethnicity did not appear to play a role in whether a ground and/or air search was conducted to search for a missing person as 85.1% of Aboriginal subjects and 76.5% of non-Aboriginal subjects had an air and/or ground search conducted to look for them. However, the district from which the subject went missing did appear to play a role. While a large proportion of missing persons from the Island (89.2 per cent), North (91.4 per cent), and the South East (76.4 per cent) districts had a ground and/or air search, only a small majority of subjects from the Lower Mainland district (55.3 per cent) had a similar search conducted to find them.[36]

[35] x^2 (1) = 81.95, p = .000
[36] x^2 (3) = 245.76, p = .000

It would also appear that the probable causes associated to the missing person case played a role in whether a ground and/or air search was conducted to find the subject. For example, virtually all of those cases in which it was believed that the cause of the missing person case was an accident (98.0 per cent) had a search conducted; however, only slightly more than one-third (38.3 per cent) of cases involving a kidnapping or an abduction had a search. Moreover, only one of the 16 cases involving abduction by a parent had a ground and/or air search (see Figure 16). Interestingly, slightly more than one-quarter of cases (27.6 per cent) that involved a runaway resulted in a search, but more than three-quarters (76.9 per cent) of cases where it was believed that the subject either wandered off or got lost resulted in a ground and/or air search. Finally, in cases where suicide was believed to be a probable cause, nearly two-thirds (62.7 per cent) resulted in a search, but only slightly more than one-quarter of cases where the probable cause was unknown (27.3 per cent) resulted in a search. Again, this last finding may be related to prostitution. It is also interesting to note that in cases where foul play had not been ruled out (n = 495), air and ground searches were conducted less than half of the time (45.9 per cent).[37]

Figure 16: Distribution of Whether a Search was Conducted Based on the Probable Cause of the Missing Person's Case



[37] This finding must be considered very carefully as it is possible that the decision to rule out foul play was only done after a search was completed.

There was specific file information available in 1,248 of the files concerning how long the search for the missing person lasted. The mean amount of time was five days with a range of one day to one year. However, while half of the searches lasted three or more days, the most common length of time was two days. While not statistically significant, on average, the search for a female missing person lasted longer than for their male counterparts (7.1 days compared to 4.8 days).

There were several statistically significant differences between the length of the search and the probable cause of the missing person case (see Table 5). For example, in cases where the probable cause was believed to be an accident (n = 983), the average length of time that the search lasted was 4.3 days; however, in cases where it was believed that the subject was the victim of a kidnapping or an abduction (n = 60), the search lasted, on average, for 17.7 days. Searches were maintained for relatively shorter periods of time when the probable cause was a suicide (3.7 days) or the cause was unknown (5.0 days), but searches were maintained for longer when the subject was believed to have wandered off or gotten lost (10.3 days).

Table 5: Mean Amount of Time of Search Based on the Probable Cause of the Missing Person Case

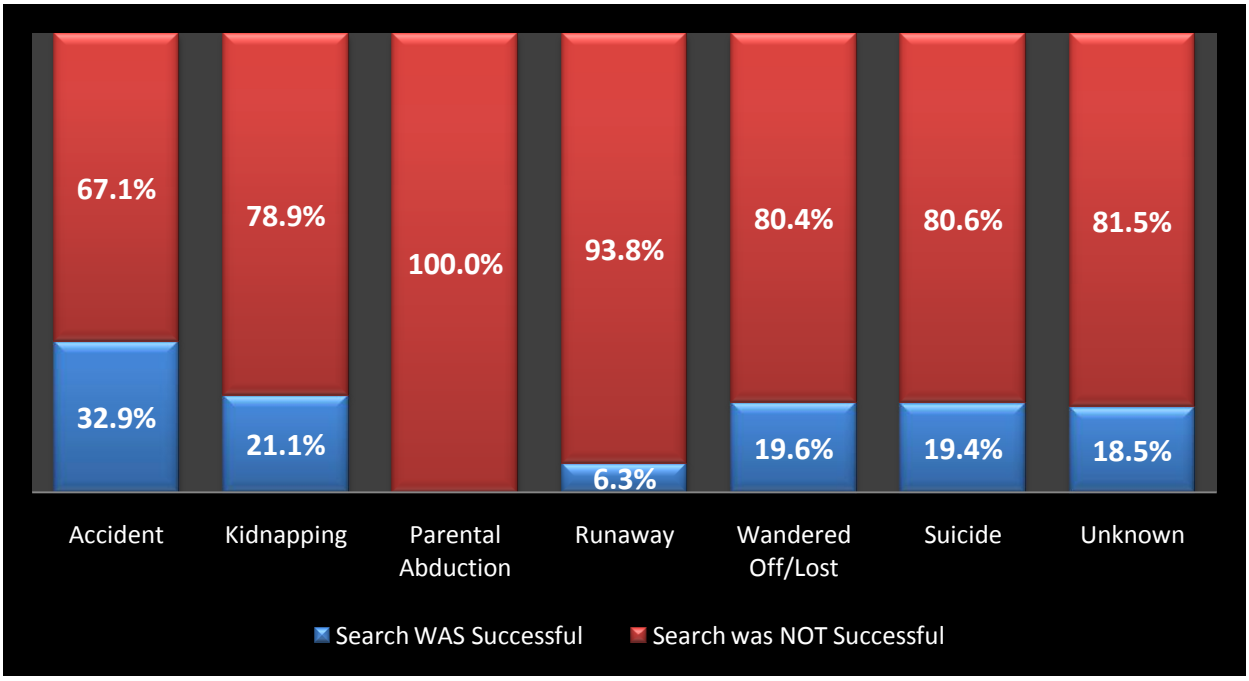
	Number of Days the Search was Maintained
Accident	**4.3 Days**
Kidnapping/Abduction	**17.7 Days**
Wandered Off/Lost	**10.3 Days**
Suicide	**3.7 Days**
Unknown	**5.0 Days**

When searches were conducted, they were successful in finding some evidence approximately one-quarter of the time (28.2 per cent). While the success rates were relatively similar in all four districts, the most successful districts were the North (33.0 per cent) and the Island (30.3 per cent) followed by the South East (26.1 per cent) and the Lower Mainland (21.2 per cent).[38] However, there were some variations in success based on the probable cause of the missing person case (see Figure 17). Searches were most successful in finding some evidence when the probable cause was an accident (32.9 per

[38] x^2 (3) = 16.63, p = .001

cent), a kidnapping or abduction (21.1 per cent), the subject was believed to have wandered off or gotten lost (19.6 per cent), or it was believed that the subject had committed suicide (19.4 per cent). A similar rate was found for cases where the probable cause of the missing person case was unknown. However, searches were rarely successful in uncovering any evidence when the probable causes were either a runaway (6.3 per cent) or a parental abduction (0%).

Figure 17: Distribution of Whether a Search was Successful in Finding any Evidence Based on the Probable Cause of the Missing Person Case

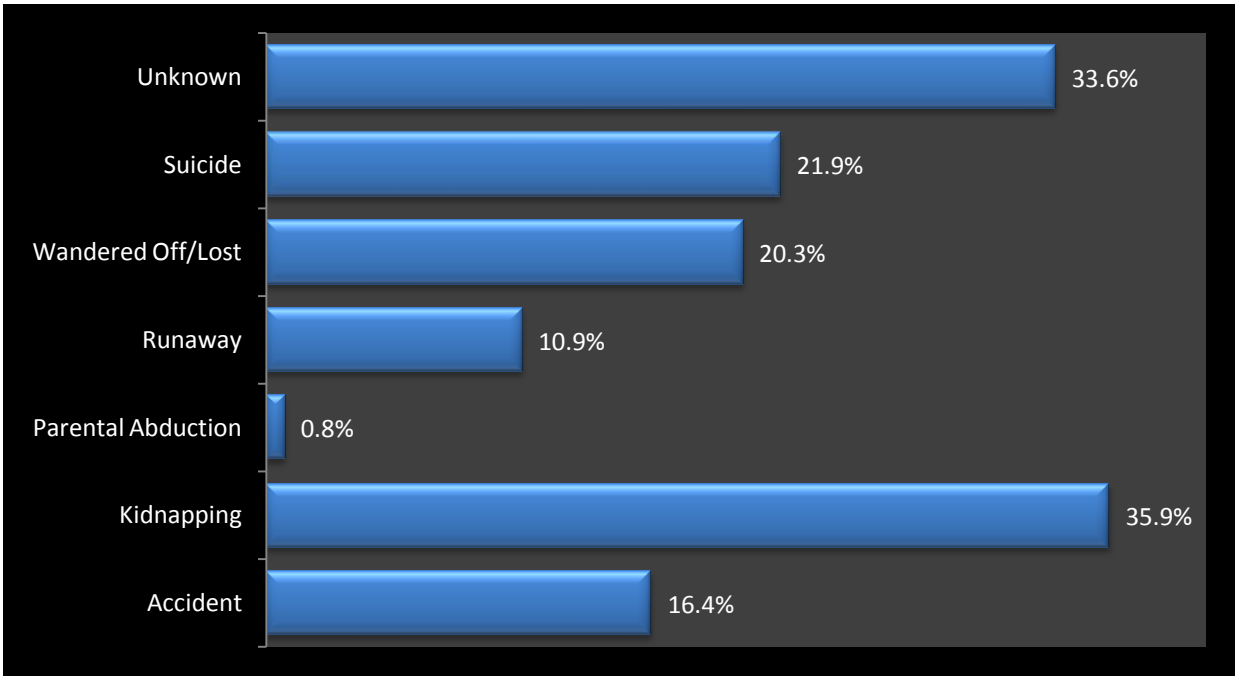


For the most part, the files indicated that there had not been any sighting tips since the initial investigation for the missing persons (92.7 per cent). Of those cases where a sighting tip had been received by the police (n = 128), approximately one-third derived from the Lower Mainland (39.4 per cent) and the North district (31.5 per cent). Based on the proportion of uncleared missing person cases in these two districts in this sample, these proportions were expected. However, somewhat smaller than expected proportions were received in the Island (15.7 per cent) or the South East (13.4 per cent) districts. As will be discussed below, these findings might be related to the probable causes of the missing person cases. Moreover, slightly more than one-fifth (21.9 per cent) were related to an Aboriginal missing person and only one was related to a prostitute.

As demonstrated in Figure 18, approximately one-third of sighting tips since the initial investigation were generated for cases in which the probable causes were either a

kidnapping (35.9 per cent) or the probable cause was unknown (33.6 per cent). There were virtually no sighting tips for cases involving parental abduction (0.8 per cent) and there were very few tips for cases involving a runaway (10.9 per cent). Finally, there were sighting tips for approximately one-fifth of cases involving a suicide (21.9 per cent) or the subject wandering off or getting lost (20.3). A slightly lower proportion was recorded for cases involving an accident (16.4 per cent).

Figure 18: Have There Been any Sighting Tips based on the Probable Cause of the Missing Person Case?



While there is no explanation for the fact that 28 of the files involving cases where the probable cause for the missing person was suicide also had sighting tips since the initial investigation, there was also the additional anomaly that two cases had sighting tips for subjects after they were declared deceased by the court. In these cases, the subjects had been declared dead for 6.8 years and 12.5 years.

Discussion

The intent of the current study was to provide a descriptive analysis of uncleared missing person cases in British Columbia. From the review of these cases, several important findings emerged. Firstly, the age of uncleared missing persons was older than missing person cases reported in previous literature. This is likely the result of the current analysis focusing on uncleared cases as other research has suggested that uncleared cases tended to

involve older persons, while many of the missing person cases typically handled by police forces involve young persons who have run away repeatedly.

An additional finding from this analysis was that the profile of missing people in British Columbia has changed since the 1940's. In effect, while the primary cause of missing person reports was traditionally fishermen who were lost at sea, more recently, these cases involved unknown probable causes. This appeared to be the result of a substantial increase in missing person cases involving prostitutes. In fact, prostitutes had an effect on many of the analyses in the current study. Prostitutes were more likely to go missing from the Lower Mainland district, thereby increasing the number of missing persons from this jurisdiction. Similarly, prostitutes were not usually officially identified as missing to the police until a substantial amount of time had passed. Further, as previously discussed, the reason for prostitutes to go missing was not typically known.

These results have implications for police policy as they indicate that police should develop specific protocols for dealing with cases of missing prostitutes given that they tend to involve certain characteristics. For instance, only a very small minority (2.8 per cent) of prostitutes were reported missing within 24 hours, but half (58.4 per cent) were only reported after one month of being missing and an additional 30% were only reported missing at least one year since last being seen. This is in contrast to non-prostitution involved missing females, most of whom were reported missing within 24 hours. One possible explanation for these results may be that missing prostitutes were not reported immediately to the police because people notified other social service agencies. If this was the case, the prompt sharing of information between other agencies and the police would likely improve the ability to successfully locate these women. However, for this to occur, research should first be completed with social service agencies to determine the extent to which they are the recipient of missing person information.

Given the nature of their lifestyles, it is clear that sex trade workers are at an increased risk for violence and foul play. Therefore, it is not surprising to find that their inclusion in missing person cases as the subject has substantially increased over the past five decades. However, it is important to note that while sex trade workers contributed to a substantial proportion of uncleared missing person cases in British Columbia, the majority of cases did not involve sex trade workers. Yet, the implications suggested above are also relevant to non-sex trade related cases. Social service agencies and NGOs have become increasingly involved in tracing missing children and adults; therefore, the sharing of information between police agencies and these organizations will be necessary to improve the clearance rates of these cases.

As indicated throughout this report, most of the files had a substantial amount of missing data. One of the main benefits of this report is that it can be useful in providing additional credence for the need to create a uniform database to be utilized in all police jurisdictions

across Canada. In order to ensure a missing person database is useful at a national level, it must be built on information directly related to missing person cases. The results of this study indicated that there were several areas in which additional information should be recorded by the police. For instance, one important finding of this study was that many of the cases involving persons of an alternative sexual orientation were identified as potential suicides. However, the analysis of these cases indicated that the recording of a person's sexual orientation was not typical in the files. In effect, asking about a person's sexual orientation and recording it in their missing person files, while potentially a sensitive issue, may help police to appropriately categorise the possible nature and cause of the disappearance.

Conclusion

The current study provided a descriptive analysis of uncleared missing person cases in British Columbia. However, it is only one of many pieces of information required in constructing a national police database on missing persons. The development of a national database has important implications for police jurisdictions across Canada as it could assist police to more effectively and efficiently solve missing person cases. Residents in Canada are free to cross provincial borders; therefore, a person who runs away or goes missing in British Columbia and is found in Alberta may not be linked by the different police forces involved. However, by implementing a uniform, national database of missing persons, police can review information on missing persons and better identify those persons recovered elsewhere.

Currently, the United States is moving towards a similar model of national information sharing. Given this, it will be important for Canada to monitor the Americans progress and be aware of its successes and failures. Certainly, key to the success of a national database in Canada is the willingness of police forces to share information on missing person cases. Therefore, while analyses such as the current study are essential in providing a description of the type of missing person cases dealt with by police in British Columbia, the effective development of a national database will require additional information collecting and analyses to occur throughout Canada. It is only through the willing cooperation of all Canadian police forces that information on missing persons can be effectively used to solve these cases.

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Appendix A

Missing Persons Uncleared Cases

Coding Sheet

Reviewers: Please fill out as much information as possible, if the information is not included in the file, leave a blank. Thank-you.

Case Information

1. Missing Person Reference Number:
2. Year of File:
3. Police File Number:
4. Police Detachment:
5. Assisting Police Detachments:

Missing Person Basic Information

1. Name:
    Surname:
    First Name:
    Middle Name(s):

2. Other names used:
    Nicknames:
    Preferred Name:
    Previous/Maiden Name:
    Alias:

3. Date of Birth (yyyy/mm/dd):

4. Place of Birth (City/Country):

5. Does the Missing Person have a driver's license? Yes No
    If Yes, list all:

    License Number:
    Province/Country of Issue:

    License Number:
    Province/Country of Issue:

    License Number:
    Province/Country of Issue:

6. Does the Missing Person have Provincial Identification such as BC ID?
Yes No
If Yes, ID Number:

7. Did the Missing Person have a valid passport? Yes No
If Yes:
Expiry Date (yyyy/mm/dd):
Country of Issue:
Location of passport:

8. Is the Missing Person a Canadian Citizen? Yes No

9. Did the missing person frequent public transit? Yes No

10. Does the Missing Person have a Criminal Record? Yes No

Or have they had any contact with Police? Yes No
If Yes, briefly explain:

11. What was the Missing Person's occupation?
Work Yes No
Where:
School/College/University Yes No
Where:
Volunteer Work Yes No
Where:
Unemployed Yes No

12. Hobbies that Missing Person was involved in (List all): e.g. sports, recreation, gambling, crafts (This should include activities that were a regular part of Missing Person's life).

Missing Person Physical Information

1. Does the Missing Person speak more than one language? Yes No
   If Yes, what language(s):

2. Does the Missing Person have a foreign accent? (e.g. French, Italian)
   Yes No
   If Yes, what type:

3. Height (in feet/inches): OR (cm):

4. Weight (in pounds): OR (kgs):

5. Sex: Male Female

6. Hair: Length:
   Bald Receding Short Collar length
   Shoulder length Long Wig
   Other:

7. Hair: Colour: (Circle one or indicate in space provided)
   Black Brown Blonde Grey/Partial Grey
   Red/Auburn Sandy White N/A
   Other:

8. Facial Hair: (Circle one or indicate in space provided)

   Moustache Beard Long sideburns
   Clean shaven Goatee
   Other:

9. Build:
   Obese Overweight Stocky Muscular
   Medium Slim

Other:

10. Teeth:

Natural **Dentures** **Dental Appliances**

Other:

11. Eyes: Colour

Black Blue Brown Grey Green Hazel
Pink
Other:

12. Eyes: Sight Aids

Glasses *Contact Lenses*
Other:

13. Did the Missing Person have any vision impairments? Yes No

If Yes, choose all that apply:

Blind - one eye Blind - both eyes Cataract(s)
Cross-eyed Glaucoma
Other:

14. Skin Complexion:

Dark Medium Light Yellow
Ruddy
Other:

15. Did the Missing Person have any scars? Yes No
If Yes, where:

16. Did the Missing Person have any identifying moles? Yes No
If Yes, where:

17. Did the Missing Person have any skin discolorations (include birthmarks)?
Yes No
If Yes, where:

18. Did the Missing Person have any tattoos?
Yes *No*
If Yes, describe what and where:

19. Race: White Non-white

20. Ethnic Appearance:

Aboriginal *Asian* *Black* *Caucasian*
East-Indian Hispanic or Latino Mixed
Other:

21. Was the Missing Person deaf? Yes No

22. Did the Missing Person have or use any artificial body parts/appliances?
Yes No
If Yes, describe:

23. Did the Missing Person have any physical deformities?
Yes No
If Yes, describe:

24. Does the Missing Person have a physical disability?
Yes No

25. Did the Missing Person have any other distinguishing physical characteristics?
Yes No
If Yes, check ☑ all that apply:

❑Cleft Chin
❑Dimple, Chin
❑Dimple, Left Cheek
❑Dimple, Right Cheek
❑Freckles
❑Hair Implants
❑Pierced Abdomen
❑Pierced Back
❑Pierced Ear
❑Pierced Ears
❑Pierced Eyebrow
❑Pierced Genitalia
❑Pierced Lip, Nonspecific
❑Pierced Lip, Upper
❑Pierced Lip, Lower
❑Pierced Nipple, Nonspecific
❑Pierced Nipple, Left
❑Pierced Nipple, Right
❑Pierced Nose
❑Pierced Tongue
❑Stutters

Other:

26. Did the Missing Person have any existing medical conditions and/or diseases at the time of their disappearance?

Yes No

If Yes, check ☑ all that apply:

❑Acne
❑AIDS
❑Alcoholism
❑Allergies (including Asthma)
❑Alzheimer's Disease
❑Arthritis
❑Attention Deficit Disorder
❑Cancer
❑Diabetes
❑Depression
❑Downs Syndrome
❑Drug Abuse
❑Eating Disorders (includes Anorexia Nervosa and Bulimia)
❑Heart or Circulatory Diseases (includes High Blood Pressure, Heart Failure, Heart Attack, Hardening of the Arteries and Circulation Problems)
❑Hematological Diseases (includes Anemia, Hemophilia, Leukemia, and Sickle Cell Anemia)
❑Kidney Conditions or Diseases
❑Liver Disease (includes Alcoholism, Cirrhosis and Hepatitis)
❑Nervous Conditions (includes Seizures, Stroke, Senility and Mental Retardation)
❑Neurological Conditions or Diseases (includes Cerebral Palsy, Epilepsy, Multiple Sclerosis, Parkinson's Disease)
❑Paraplegic
❑Pregnancy
❑Pulmonary (Lung) Disease (includes Cystic Fibrosis and Emphysema)
❑Quadriplegic
❑Schizophrenia
❑Skin Disorders (includes Psoriasis and Eczema)
❑Suicidal Tendencies
❑Thyroid Conditions or Diseases
❑Tourette's Syndrome
❑Tuberculosis

Other:

27. Did the Missing Person have any fractured bones? (Circle one)

Yes No

If Yes, what:

28. Did the Missing person have any healed fractures? (Circle one)

Yes No

If Yes, what:

29. Did the Missing Person have any medical devices and/or body implants?

Yes No

If Yes, check ☑ all that apply:

❑Artificial Elbow Joint
❑Artificial Hip Joint
❑Artificial Knee Joint
❑Artificial Larynx
❑Artificial Shoulder Joint
❑Breast Implants
❑Cardiac Pacemaker
❑Colostomy Appliances
❑Intramedullary Rod
❑Intrauterine Device (IUD)
❑Orthopedic Nail or Rod
❑Orthopedic Plate
❑Orthopedic Screw

Other:

30. Does the Missing Person have any amputations? (e.g. finger, arm)

Yes No

If Yes, what:

Lifestyle

1. Sexuality:

Heterosexual Homosexual Bisexual

Other:

2. Does the Missing Person have a history of mental illness?

Yes No

3. Has the Missing Person ever been institutionalized?

Yes No

4. Has the Missing Person reported having feelings toward suicide?

Yes No

5. Has the Missing Person previously attempted suicide?

Yes ***No***

6. Is the Missing Person homeless or known to live on the streets?

Yes ***No***

7. Was the Missing Person ever involved in the drug trade using or trafficking?

Yes No

8. Was the Missing Person known to use any therapeutic drugs at the time of his/her disappearance?

Yes No

If Yes, check ☑ all that apply:

❑Analgesics (Pain Relievers) Including Darvon, Acetominophen, and Aspirin

❑Anti-Anxiety Medication

❑Antibiotics

❑Anticonvulsants (Seizure Medicines) Including Dilantin, Mysoline and Phenobarbital

❑Antidepressants (Moodlifters) Including Elavil, Triavil, Nortriptylene, Norpramine, and Amitriptylene

❑Anti-Inflammatory Medication;

❑Anti-Psychotic Medication;

❑Bronchial Dilators (including Inhalers)

❑Cardiac (Heart) Medications Including Digitalis and Digoxin

❑Hypnotics (Sleeping Aids) lncluding Barbiturates, Chloral Hydrate, and Glutethemide

❑Insulin

❑Ritalin

❑Tranquilizers Including Valium, Thorazine, and Stellazine

Other therapeutic medications:

9. Was the Missing Person known to have any addictions or substance abuse problems?

Yes No

If Yes, check ☑ all that apply:

❑Alcohol
❑Amphetamines
❑Barbiturates
❑Cocaine
❑Crack
❑Crystal Methamphetamine
❑Glue
❑Hallucinogens
❑Marijuana
❑Narcotics
❑Paint Thinner
❑Ritalin
❑Rohypnol

Other drugs of abuse:

10. Did the Missing Person have any needle ("track") marks?

Yes No

If Yes, check ☑ all that apply:

❑Arm, Left
❑Arm, Right
❑Buttock, Left
❑Buttock, Right
❑Finger(s), Left Hand
❑Finger(s), Right Hand
❑Foot, Left
❑Foot, Right
❑Hand, Left
❑Hand, Right
❑Leg, Left
❑Leg, Right
❑Thigh, Left
❑Thigh, Right
❑Wrist, Left
❑Wrist, Right

Missing Person Investigation

1. When was the Person Reported Missing?
   Date (yyyy/mm/dd):
   Time:
   Source (relationship to missing person):
   Date of last contact (yyyy/mm/dd):

2. Place Last Seen:
   Location:
   Date (yyyy/mm/dd):
   Time:
   Source (who provided this info):

3. Person Last Seen With:
   Relationship to Missing Person:
   Name:

4. Did missing person leave a note?

   Yes No
   If Yes, brief details:

5. Was a risk assessment done to establish the risk level of the Missing Person?
   Yes No

If Yes, what was the risk level?

6. Please use the space provided to describe any and all clothing / jewelry / personal belongings etc. that were known or believed to be in the possession of the Missing Person when he/she disappeared. (Please include distinctive markings, colours, styles, name brands, etc.)

7. What is the probable cause of the missing incident? Select all that apply. If more than one situation applies write brief details in the space provided below.

A Accident (boat, hike, flying, work etc.): the person is presumed drowned in a swimming or boating mishap, or went missing in a airplane accident, fire, avalanche, hiking fall, etc. and the subject's body has not been recovered.

B. Kidnapping/Abduction/Foul Play: the person is thought to be the victim of a homicide or an abduction by someone other than the legal parent or guardian.

C. Parental Abduction/No Custody Order: the child has been abducted by a parent. Neither has been granted custody by a court order.

D. Parental Abduction/Custody Order: the child has been abducted from a parent who has been granted custody of the child by a court order. The parent who abducts the child does not have custody.

E. Runaway (fear, depression, financial, AWOL, family): the subject, is under the age of 18 and it is suspected that he/she has run away from home or substitute home care, e.g. foster home, group home, or shelter.

F. Wandered Off/ Lost (woods, at sea, overdue): persons are categorized in this category when the subject is presumed to have wandered away, in a confused state, from a hospital, mental institution, or chronic care (geriatric) facility. It is also used when the person has become lost in the woods, has not returned home when expected from a hiking, camping, canoeing, or hunting trip; has wandered away or is lost from the family location or has not returned when expected from school, a friend's house, meeting, etc.

G. Suicide: the person is suspected of having committed suicide, or missing was witnessed by someone (e.g. Bridge jumper).

H. Unknown: the police agency has no previous record on the missing person; that is, the person has never run away, walked out or wandered off before. It is used when there is insufficient background information to enable coding the missing person under any of the other causes.

I. Other: used only when the missing incident does not fit into any other category.

J. Details for more than one category:

8. Each Missing Person case is assigned a "Probable Cause" on the CPIC system; this should be indicated in the file. Is the category that you have assigned in question #9 different from that on the CPIC report?

Yes No

If Yes, what was the original CPIC designation?

9. Did the person go missing from a care home/ geriatric institution?

Yes ***No***

10. In the case of a parental child abduction; which parent has run off with the child/children?

Mother Father

Other (i.e.: Grandparent/ sibling):

11. In the case of parental abduction, was there a restraining order against the offender?

Yes ***No***

12. In the case of parental abduction is it known where the child/children were taken?

Yes ***No***

If Yes, where:

13. In the case of parental abduction, if the child/children were taken overseas was contact made with INTERPOL?

Yes ***No***

14. Has the possibility of "Foul Play" been ruled out?

Yes No

15. Has a ViCLAS submission been made?

Yes No

16. Has a Major Crimes ED672 Report been filed since 2004?

Yes No

17. If the Missing Person is thought to be the victim of foul play, have any suspects been identified?
    Yes No

18. Had the Missing Person been previously missing?
    Yes No

If Yes, how many times?

Dates (yyyy/mm/dd):
Where were they found?

Circumstances:

19. Were any of the following checks conducted? (Choose Yes or No. If Yes, fill in date)

Bank:
Yes No Date (yyyy/mm/dd):

Credit/Debit Card use:
Yes No Date (yyyy/mm/dd):

Welfare:
Yes No Date (yyyy/mm/dd):

HRDC (Human Resources Development Canada):
Yes No Date (yyyy/mm/dd):

Post Office:
Yes No Date (yyyy/mm/dd):

Taxes:
Yes No Date (yyyy/mm/dd):

20. Were any of the following record checks conducted: (Choose Yes or No. If Yes, fill in date)

Property Records:
Yes No Date (yyyy/mm/dd):

Phone Records:
Yes No Date (yyyy/mm/dd):

Email Records:
Yes No Date (yyyy/mm/dd):

Computer:
Yes No Date (yyyy/mm/dd):

21. Have these any of these checks been repeated since initial investigation?
(Choose one. If Yes, fill in date)
Yes No Date (yyyy/mm/dd):

22. Are the following supporting documents on file?

Photographs:
Yes No Requested

Fingerprints:
Yes No Requested

Footprints:
Yes No Requested

Medical Records:
Yes No Requested

Dental Records:
Yes No Requested

Identification Tools:
Yes No Requested

23. Are copies of the following documents on file?
Drivers License: Yes No
Passport: Yes No
Birth Certificate: Yes No

24. What Exhibits are on file that are available for Forensic testing/comparison?

Clothing: *Yes* *No*

Hair: Yes No

DNA (specify if from Missing Person or family): Yes No

Source:

Handwriting: Yes No

Other physical evidence:

25. Were ground/air searches conducted to look for the Missing Person?

Yes No

If Yes, over how many days:

Were any of the following involved? (Choose Yes or No for all applicable)

Police Helicopters Yes No

Police Boats or Coast Guard Yes No

Police Service Dogs Yes No

Air Planes Police/Private Yes No

Search and Rescue Yes No

26. If Search and Rescue was involved with the Missing incident are the SAR documents on file?

Yes No

27. Was the search successful in finding any evidence – i.e., clothing belonging to the missing person?

Yes No

If Yes, what:

28. Were border checks done to see if the Missing Person left the country? (Choose Yes or No. If Yes, fill in date)

Yes No Date (yyyy/mm/dd):

29. Did the search cross any international borders i.e. USA/Canada?

Yes No Unknown

30. Have any GPS locations been recorded in the file?

Yes No Unknown

31. Have there been any sighting tips since initial investigation?
    Yes No Unknown
    If Yes, Date (yyyy/mm/dd):

32. Have any remains or belongings of the Missing Person been recovered?
    (Choose Yes or No. If Yes, fill in date)
    Yes No
    What:
    Date (yyyy/mm/dd):

33. Have checks been made with the Coroner Service for matching remains?
    (ChooseYes or No. If Yes, fill in date)
    Yes No Date (yyyy/mm/dd):

34. Has the Missing Person been declared deceased by the Courts?
    Yes No Unknown
    If Yes, Date (yyyy/mm/dd):

35. Have the dental records been updated to the new 2007 system?
    Yes No

36. Is the CPIC file up-to-date and accurate?
    Yes No

37. Has a yearly review of CPIC been done?
    Yes No