

Presentation title:

Sentencing levels are (still) unknown

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When asked general and open questions on crime and punishment, the public tend to support stricter sentencing. Yet, studies have shown that this desire often is rooted in clear misconceptions of the actual levels of punishment, which are consistently and greatly underestimated. In the recent study from Norway, we assessed the public sense of justice and actual sentencing levels for six specific offences: rape, nonconsensual sharing of sexual images, domestic violence, street violence, the use and possession of cannabis, and hate speech. As in previous studies, we find public misconceptions of actual sentencing levels. However, we also identify significant differences between the six types of offences, where the difference between the public's suggested sentencing levels and actual sentencing levels are far smaller for sexual and violent offences than for other offences. The finding shows the importance of considering specific offences when referring to the public sense of justice.