



Exploring the frequency of alias DOBs in the Wisconsin CCH

To date, scant research has been conducted into the use of aliases by criminals and what exists has generally focused on subsets of inmate populations and their use of alias names (Forger, 1977; Hartman, 1951; DeLisi, et al., 2013). The use of alias dates of birth (DOB) has not been thoroughly investigated. This is unfortunate as DOB is important not only for the identification of a specific individual, but also crucial in identifying the age of a person at the time of offense. All 50 states use some variation of age at the time of offense in relation to the age of majority to determine several key paths in the criminal justice system, such as whether a person can be found criminally culpable, as well as whether a person should be adjudicated through the juvenile system or the adult one (James, 1960). Age at the time of offense is also a key factor in determining future criminogenic risk (Cottle, Lee, & Heilbrun, 2001) and is used in sentencing (United States Sentencing Commission, 2018), programmatic assessment and treatment needs.

While some researchers have explored and hypothesized why some name aliases have been used (Maclin, Maclin, & Garcia, 2004), it is still to be determined if those same explanations apply to the use of alias DOBs. However, before that is entertained, a more important question relates to the frequency of alias DOBs. Specifically, how often are they used and what can a cursory analysis tell us about them? The purpose of this research was to understand and explore the use of alias DOB's by arrestees in Wisconsin.



1,590,715

Unique People



1,718,251

DOBs

Methodology:

All DOBs contained within the Wisconsin Centralized Criminal History Repository (CCH)¹ with creation or modification dates before 1/1/2020 were included in the analysis. The DOBs were tied to a specific person² through their State Identification Number (SID). The SIDs were then used to group the DOBs to specific people. Any date of birth after the first for a given SID was considered an alias DOB.

¹ The Centralized Criminal History Repository (CCH) is the authoritative source of arrests in Wisconsin. Local law enforcement agencies are required by state statute to submit all felony and most misdemeanor arrest records to the CCH via the Wisconsin Department of Justice.

² The CCH is fingerprint based and each "person" is identified by a unique set of fingerprints

Results:

There were 1,590,715 unique people with 1,718,251 DOBs identified in the CCH database. Almost all of the people have only one DOB listed (93.23%), just under six percent (5.85%) have two DOBs listed and less than one percent have more than two DOBs.

Of the people with two DOBs listed, thirty percent (27,677 people) have DOBs with the same month and day, but a different year, forty five percent (41,433 people) have DOBs with the same month and year, but a different day and two percent (1,559 people) have transposed months and days but the same year.

Almost half (46%) of the people with two DOBs that have the same day and month have DOBs that were within a year of each other. This is followed by fifteen percent with DOBs that were two years apart and nine percent that were three years apart.

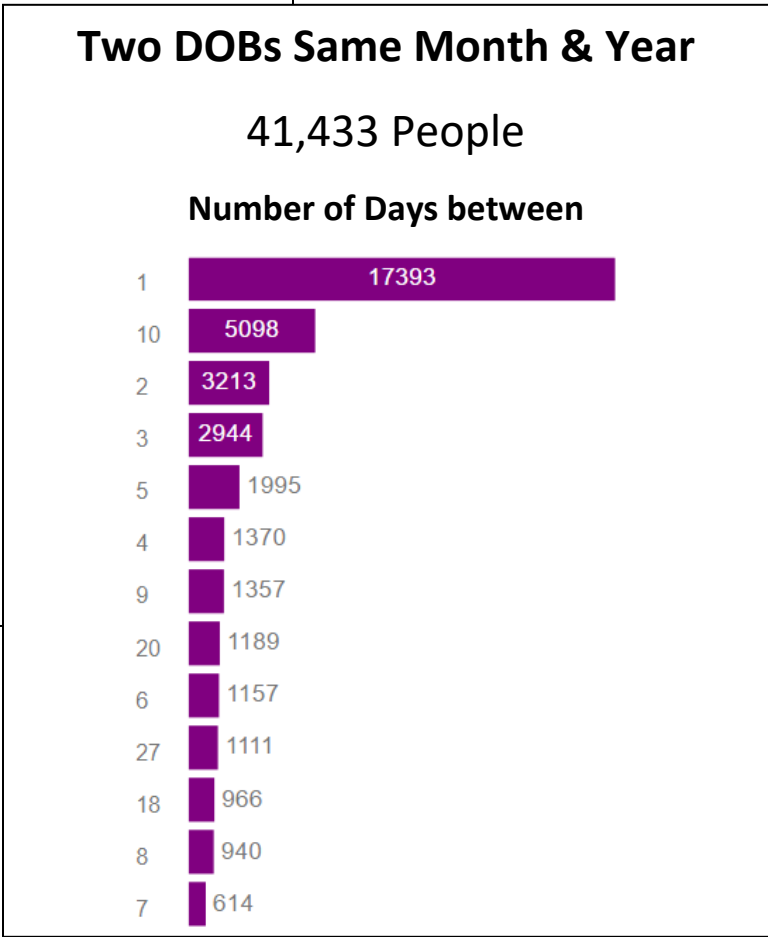
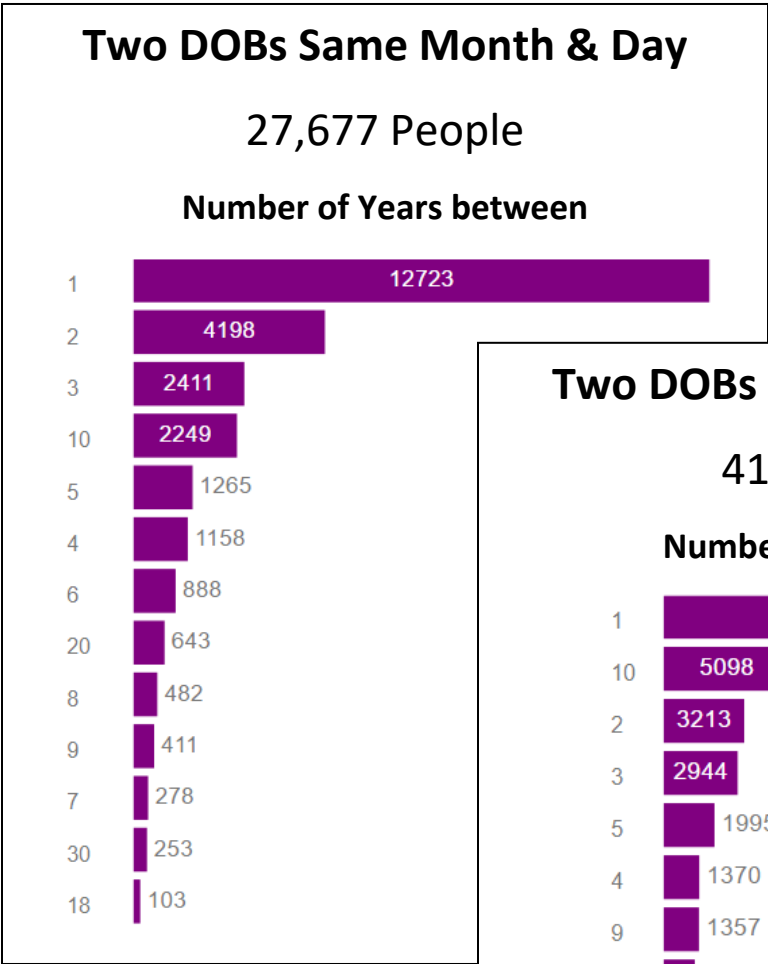
Forty two percent of the people with two DOBs that were the same month and year had DOBs that were only one day apart, followed by twelve percent where the DOBs were ten days apart, eight percent that were two days apart and seven percent that were three days apart.

Number of DOBs	Number of People	Percent of People
1	1,482,972	93.25%
2	93,068	5.85%
3	11,336	0.71%
4	2,316	0.15%
5	633	0.04%
6	219	0.01%
7	86	0.01%
8	39	0.00%
9	16	0.00%
10	17	0.00%
11	4	0.00%
12	3	0.00%
13	4	0.00%
14	1	0.00%
18	1	0.00%

Discussion:

Colloquially, most people probably associate aliases with the intent of arrestees to deceive law enforcement. For DOBs, an arrestee could be trying to conceal his/her identity by providing false information or could be trying to make him/herself appear older or younger than they really are. As there is limited research into the use of alias DOBs, it was hard to know what to expect in terms of their use for arrestees in Wisconsin. However, based on what was found it appears very unlikely that a person in the Wisconsin CCH would have an alias DOB and if they did, it would likely only be one. Understanding if an arrestee provided an alternative DOB to make it harder to identify them is beyond what was possible with this research but could possibly explain the six percent of arrestees that had more than one DOB listed.

While another possibility could have been the arrestee attempting to make himself/herself older/younger, the results seem to counter that, at least for some. Almost half of the people with two DOBs would have been the same age at the time of the offense if either DOB was used. For those with two DOBs who would have been older or younger, the results suggest that it would have likely only been a year. Understanding what specific ages those were (e.g. 17/18; 20/21) and maybe what types of crimes they're associated with, might be another exploratory point.



Clerical error on the part of law enforcement entering the DOB when submitting to the CCH could be an explanation for some of the multiple DOBs for a single person as well. This is probably especially true for the DOBs that are the same year, but have the days and months transposed in numerical format.

Limitations:

Conceptually, the largest limitation to this analysis is how the information is gathered by law enforcement to begin with; it's largely based on self-report or captured from an ID where there is no guarantee that it belongs to the person holding it, or the information is accurate. Officially, there is no

authoritative source for an arrestee's DOB. That is to say, there is no way to know for sure that any of the DOBs in the CCH are the true DOBs of the person they're attached to.

Implications:

There are a few implications of this research and how it might inform further studies. Knowing which DOB to use for an offender to calculate age at the time of a criminal justice event could have been challenging if there were a significant number of offenders with multiple DOBs. However, because almost all offenders in Wisconsin only have one DOB listed in the CCH, this shouldn't really be of significant concern for other research models where offender age is an important variable. Future research could explore the six percent of offenders who had at least one alias DOB to further understand if one of the DOB's was used more than the other(s) at an arrest. This might help to identify a primary DOB, which could be used to calculate age at the time of criminal justice event for those people. Future research could also explore why six percent of offenders had more than one DOB listed; was it a clerical error or was it intentional on the part of the person? Both of which might need to be addressed in future policy or procedure changes.

References

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