

Where have all the young offenders gone?

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The Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

Two key points:

1. The drop in convictions in Scotland since the late 1980s is concentrated in **declines in convictions to young people**
2. This decline is **not evenly split between men and women**. Convictions for **young men** decline between 1989-1999 and then again from 2007-2012, whilst convictions for **young women** only decline from 2007-2012

Research background



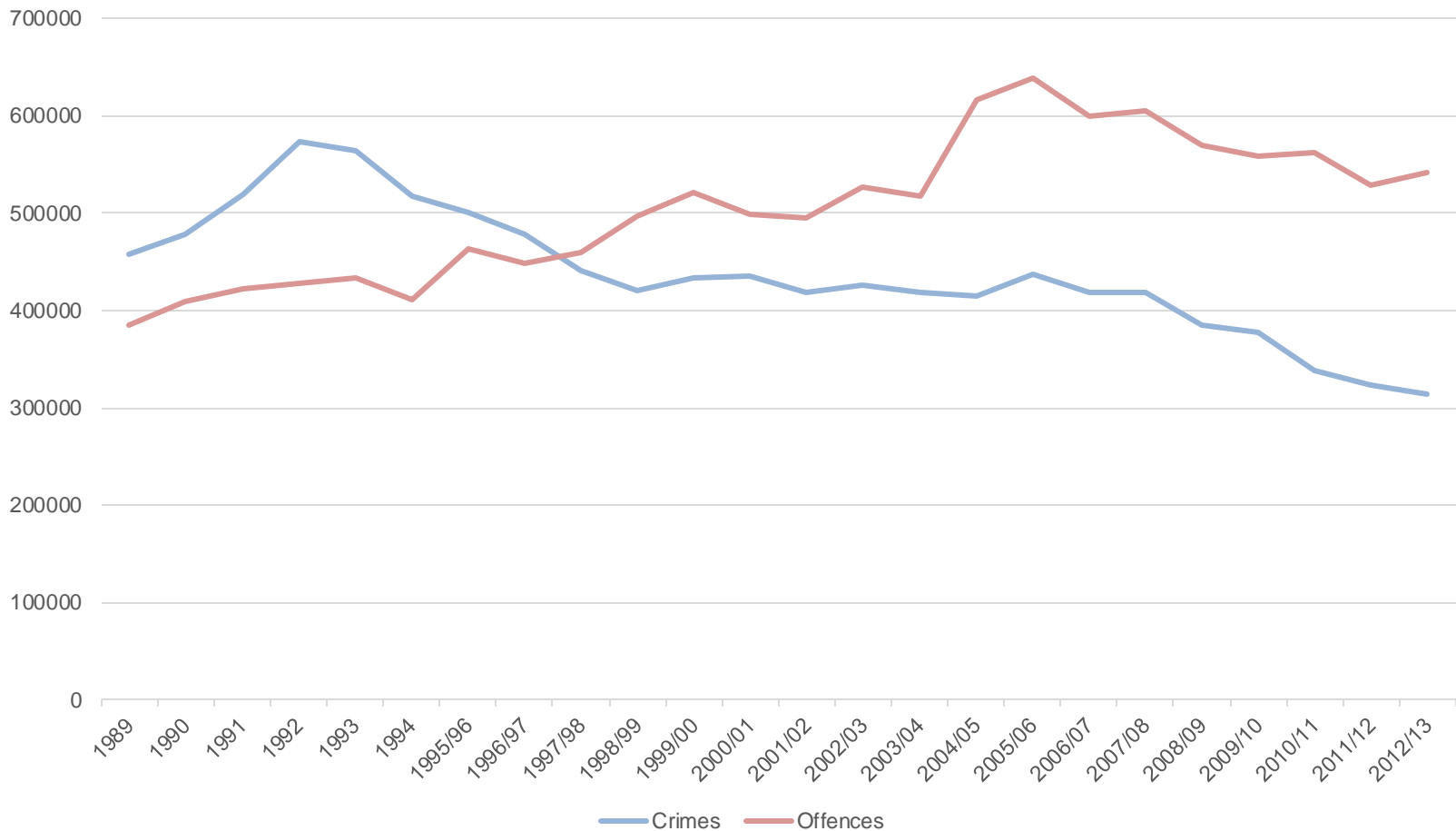
Research Background (1) – Previous Research

- Distinctive patterns of **age and crime**, with more young people than older people offending (Farrington, 1986)
- Also distinctive patterns of **gender and crime**, with more men and women offending (Farrington, 1986)
- Substantial **decline in crime rates** in many countries since the early 1990s (van Dijk and Tseloni, 2012)

- Examining patterns of age and gender over the course of the crime drop in Scotland can give an idea of **who has shown declines in offending**
- Analysis of the distribution of age and crime for men and women in Scotland, for **each year between 1989 and 2012**
- **Descriptive statistics** (Farrington 1986) and **visual analysis** of trends
- Uses **convictions data** from the Scottish Offenders Index

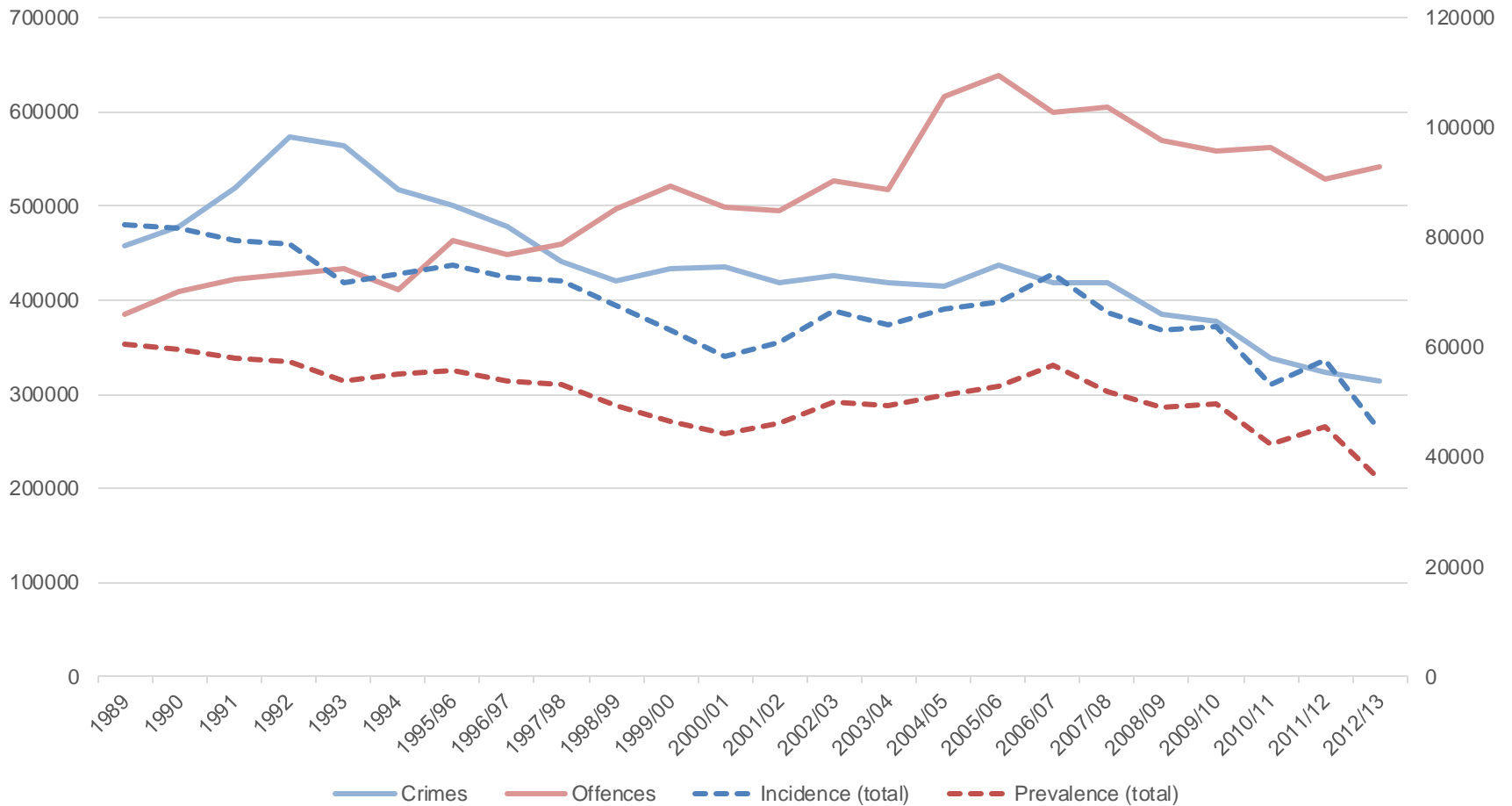
Research Background (3) – The Crime Drop in Scotland

Figure One: Trends in Recorded Crime and Convictions in Scotland 1988-2012 (Scottish Government, 1997; 2002; 2013)



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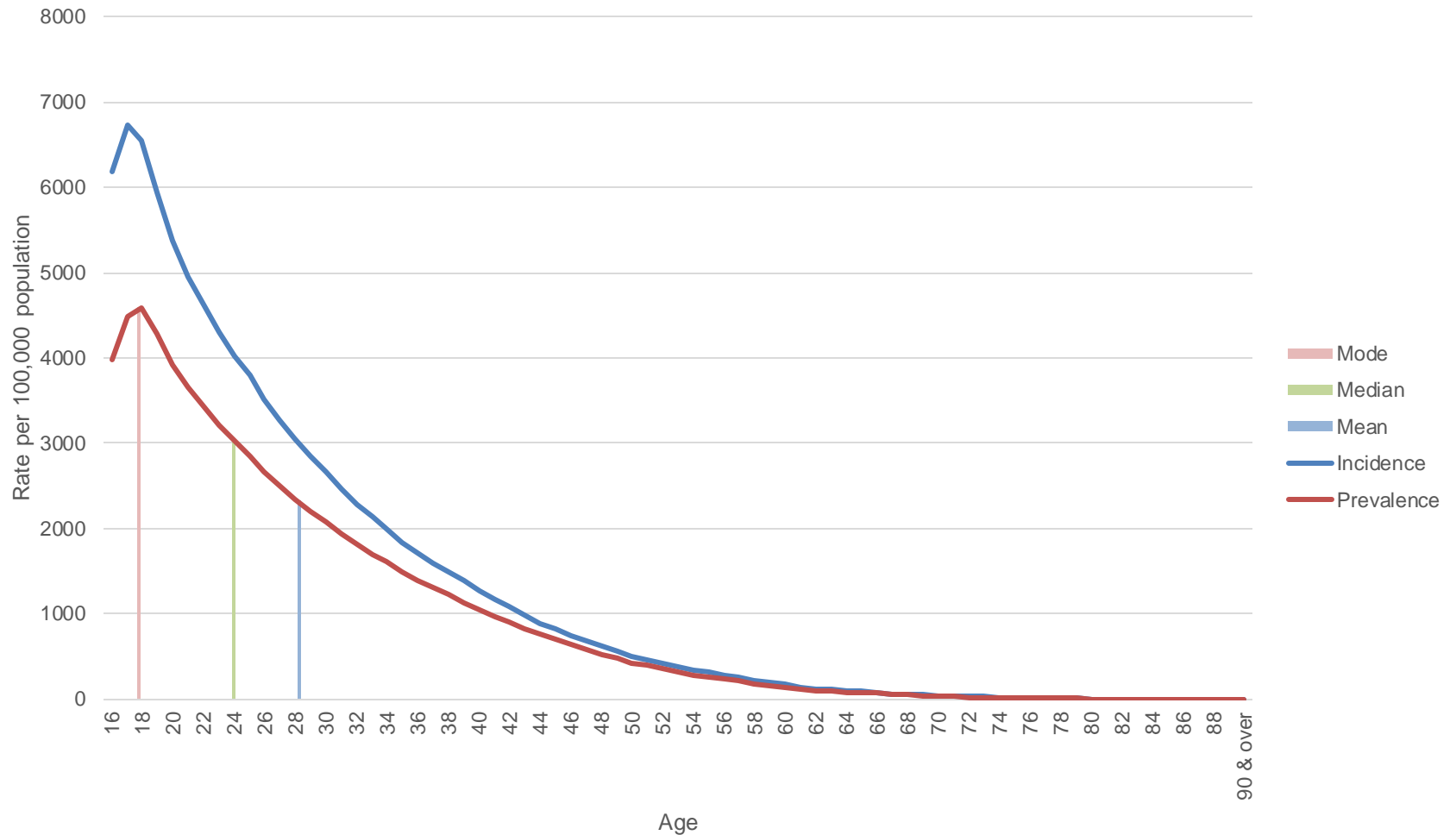


Results (Part One)

The drop in convictions in Scotland since the late 1980s is concentrated in **declines in convictions to young people.**

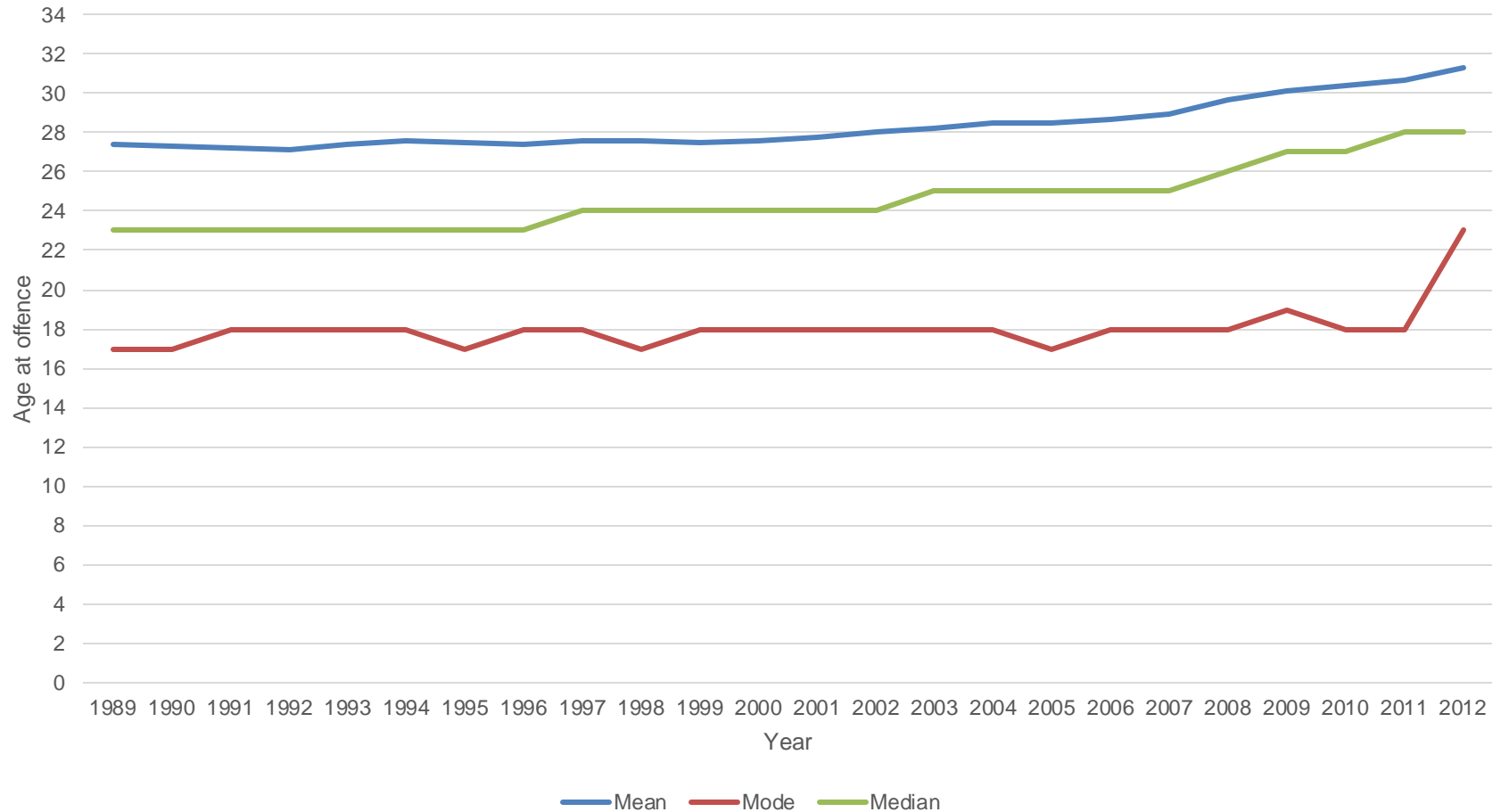
Results (1) – Declining convictions for young people

Figure Two: The overall age crime curve in the Scottish Offenders Index 1989-2012



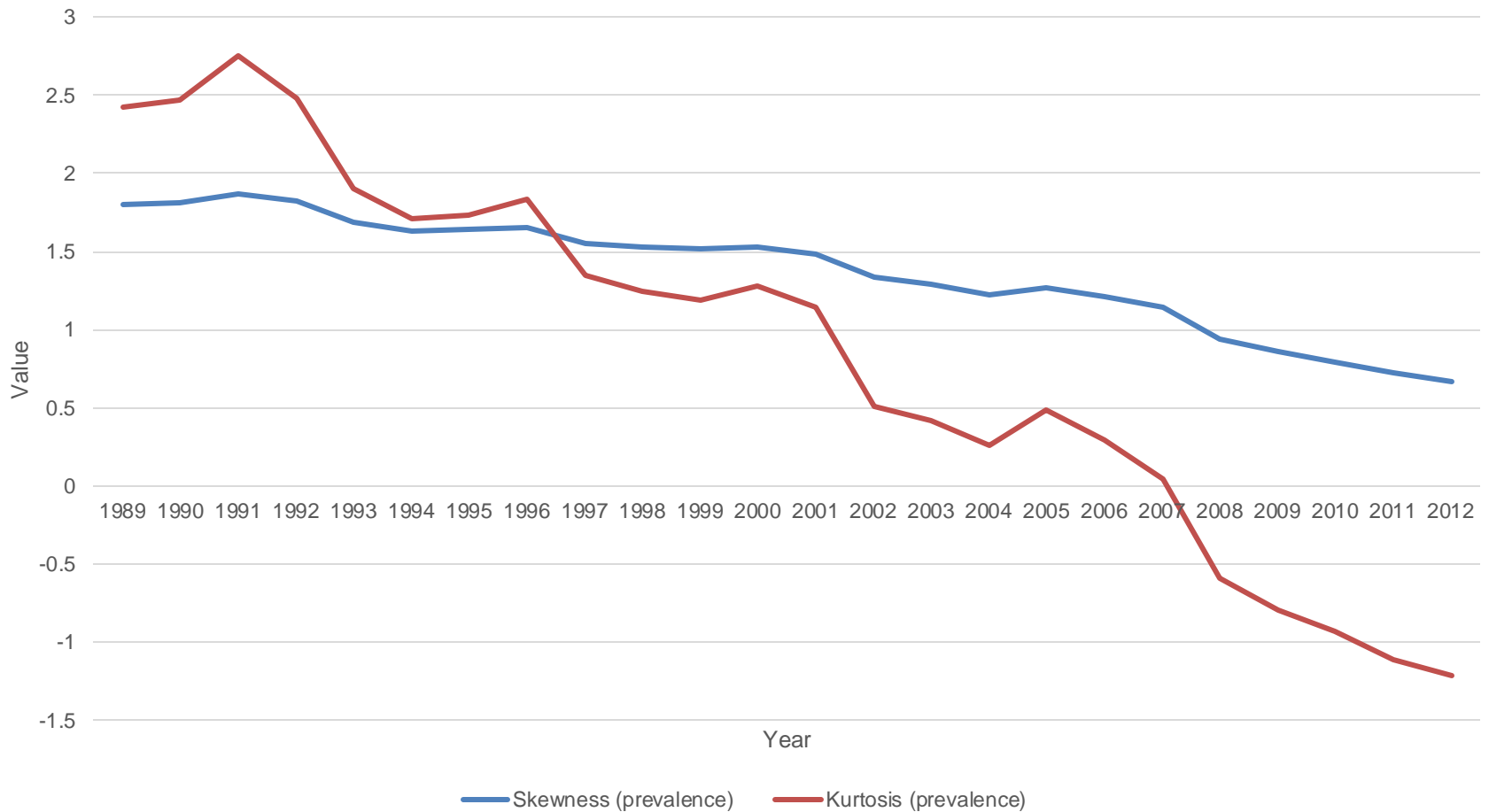
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Figure Three: Measures of central tendency of age-crime curves in the Scottish Offenders Index 1989-2012



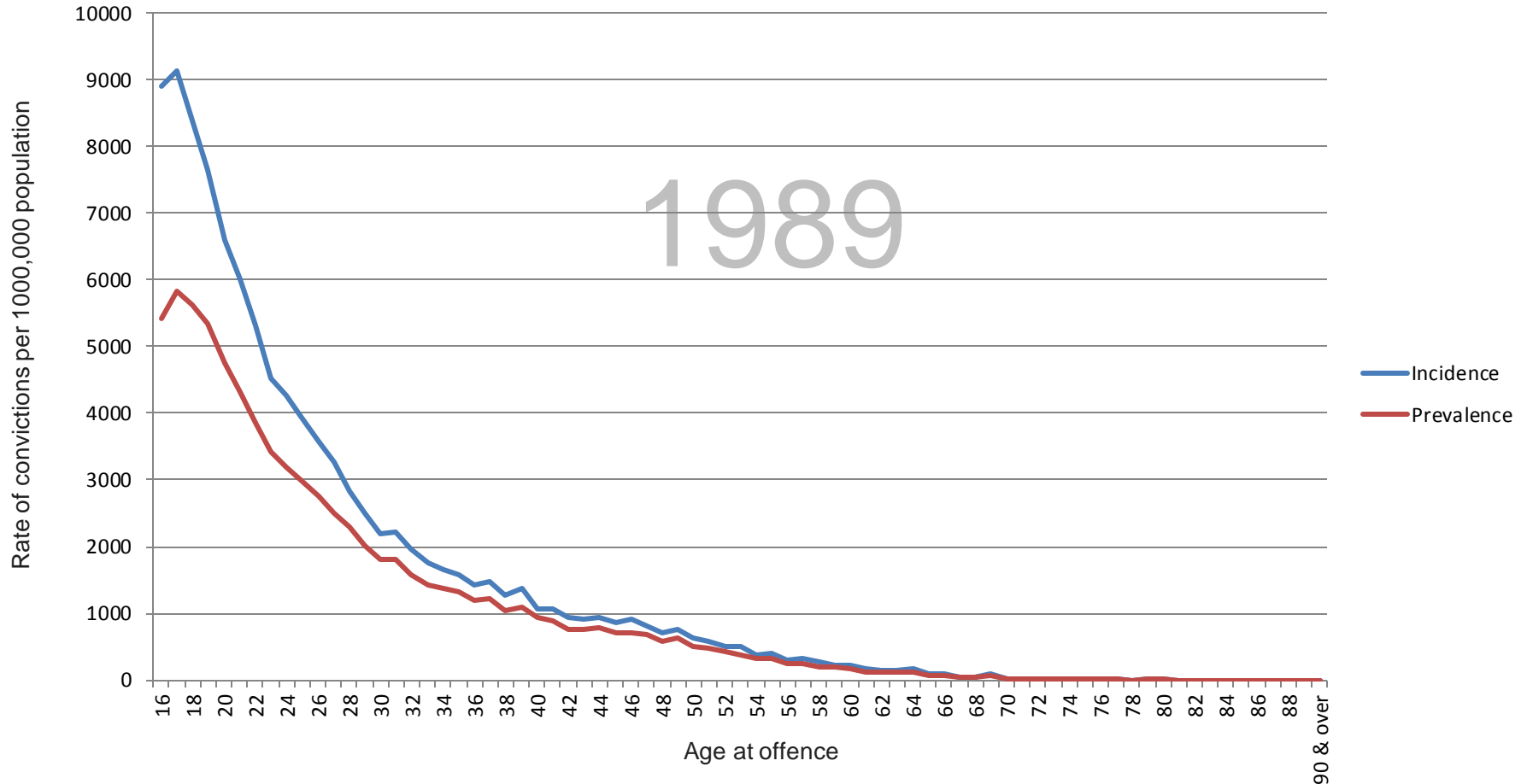
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Figure Four: Skewness and kurtosis of age-crime curves in the Scottish Offenders Index 1989-2012



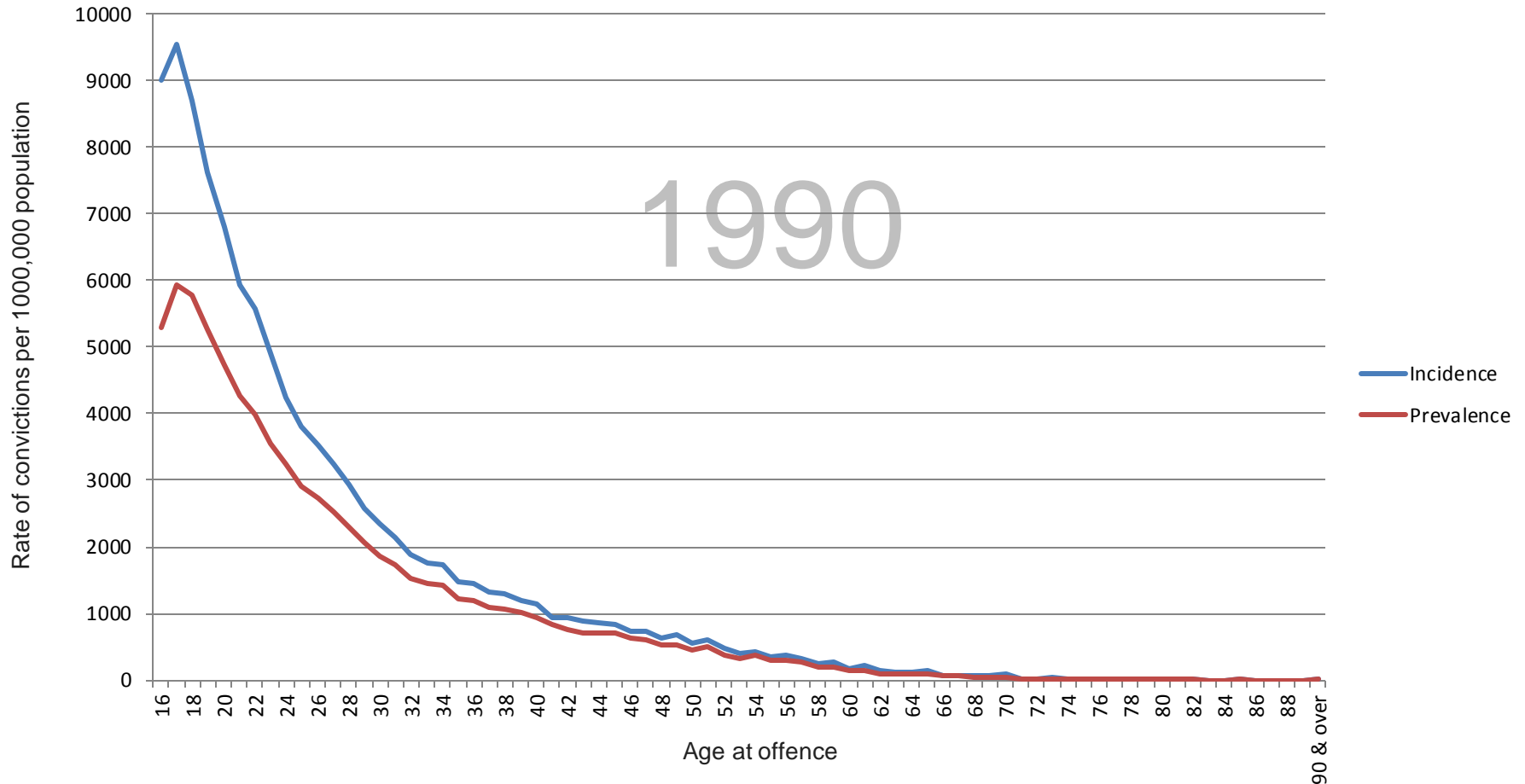
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Figure Four: Change in the age-crime curve in the Scottish Offenders Index 1989-2012



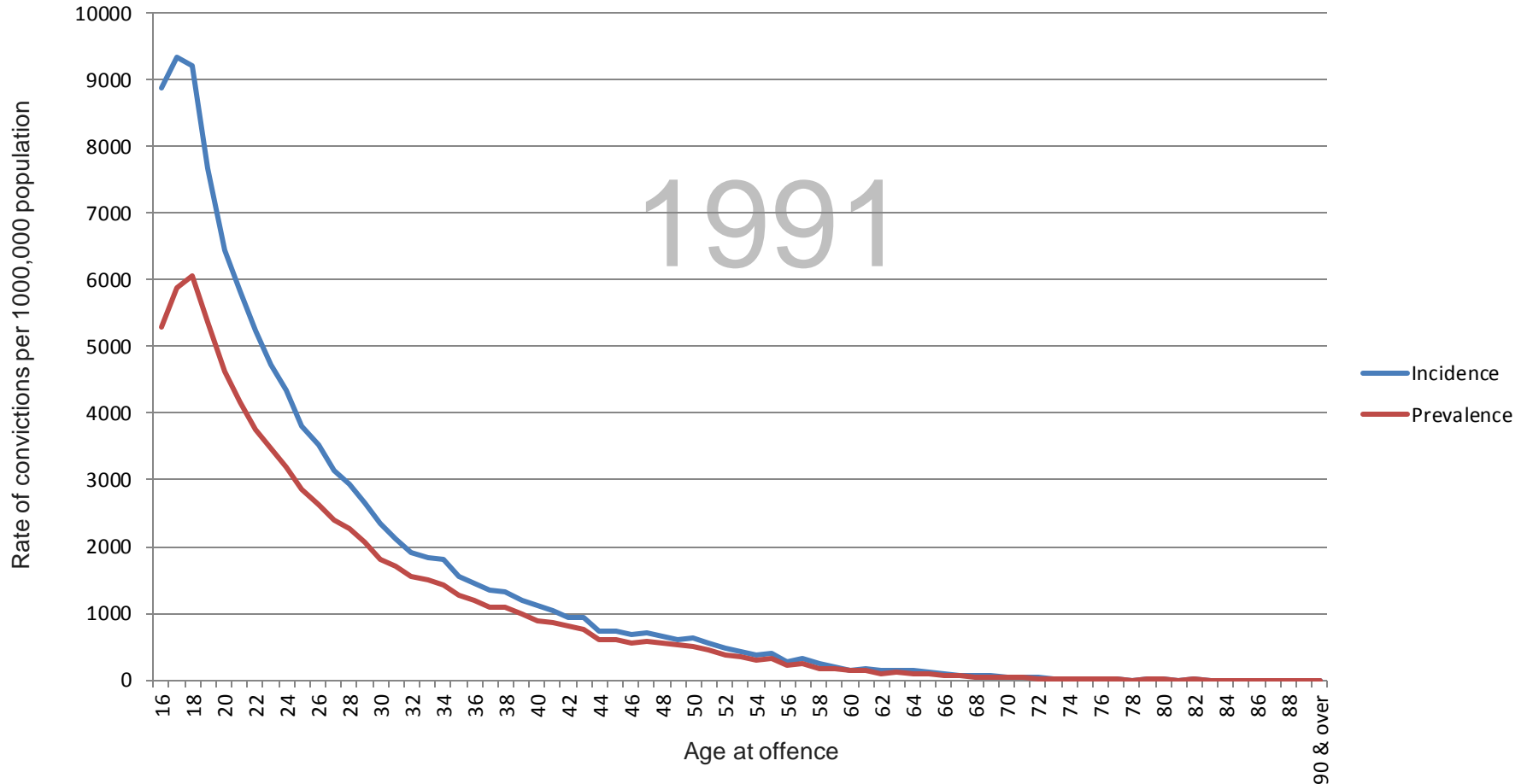
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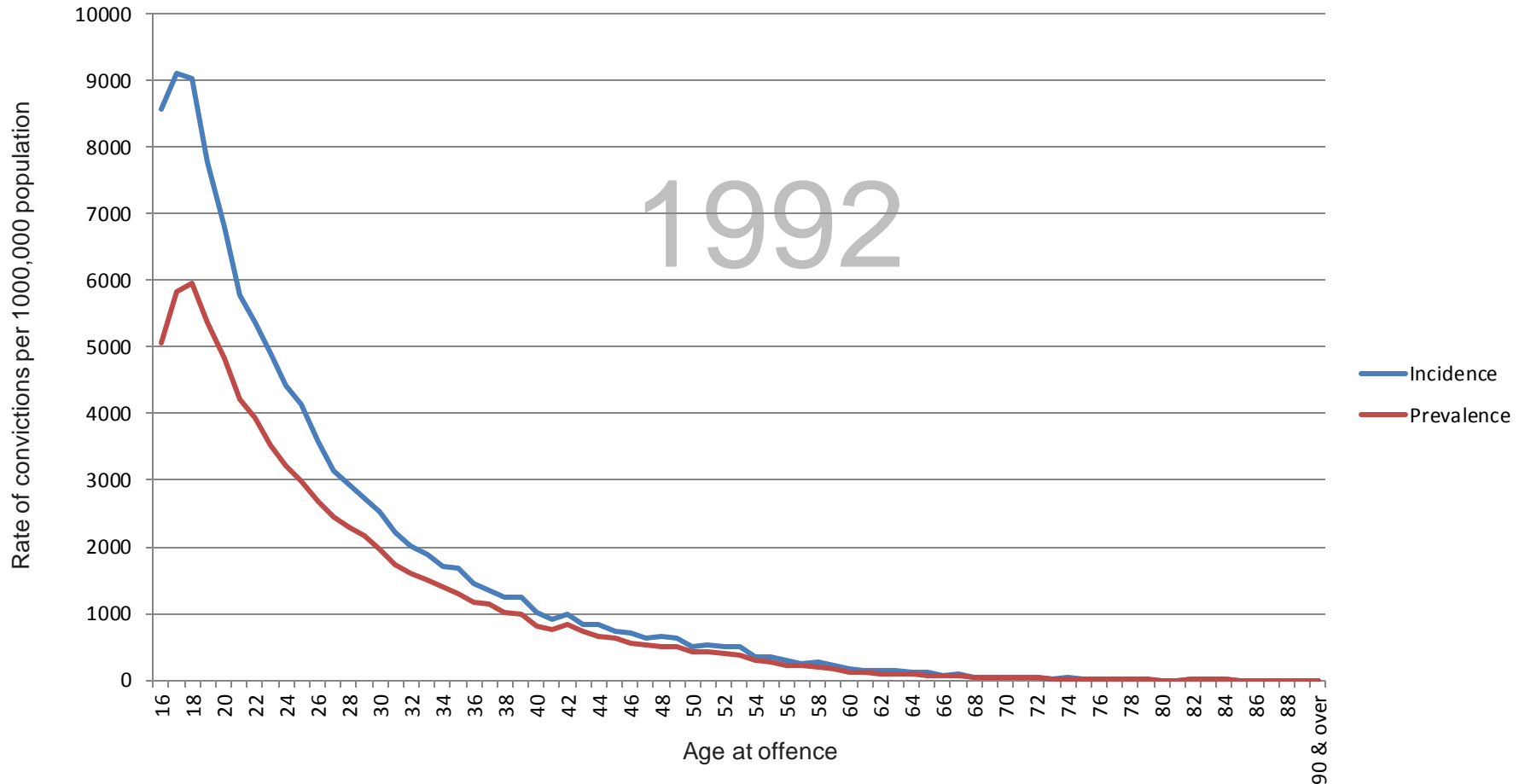
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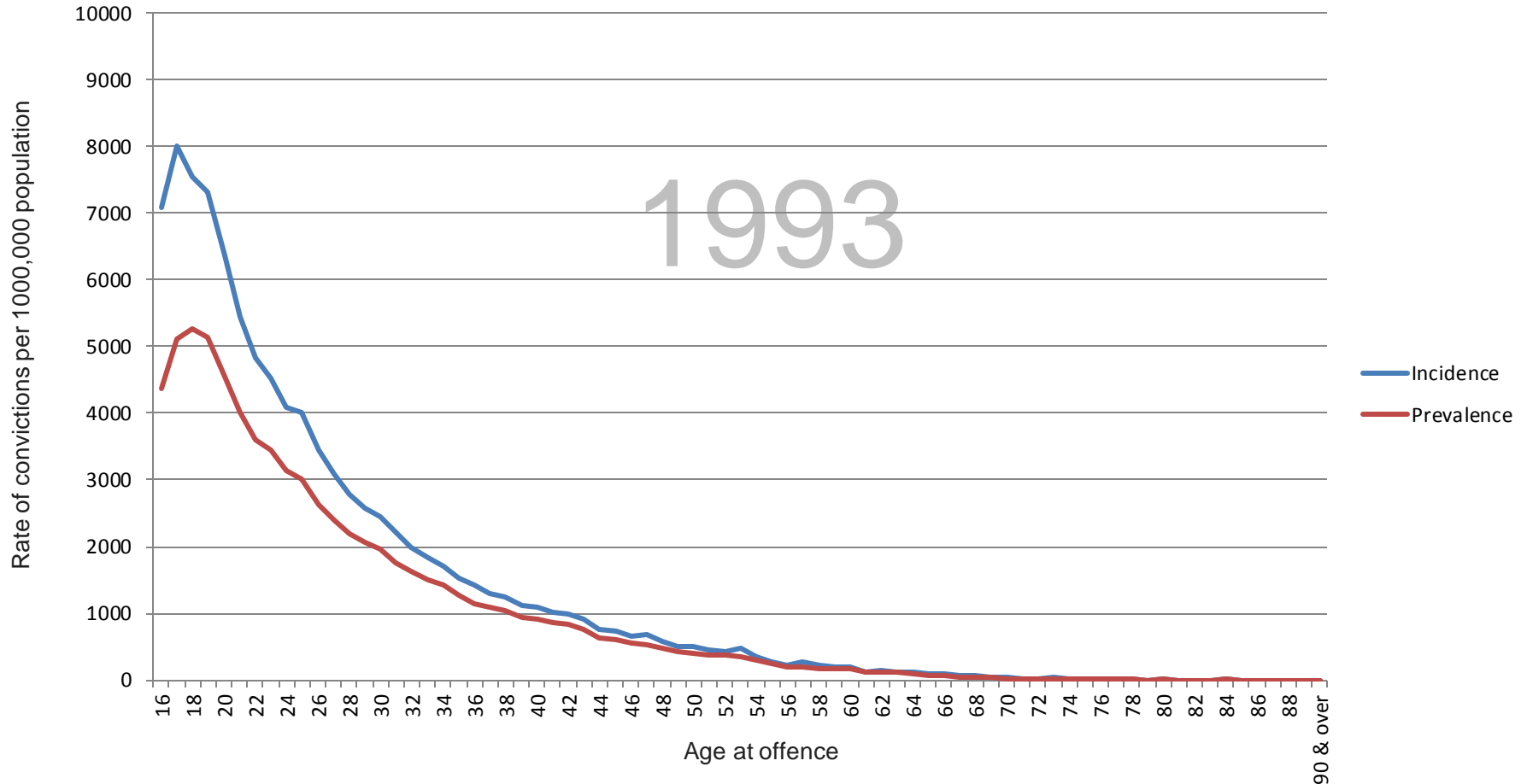
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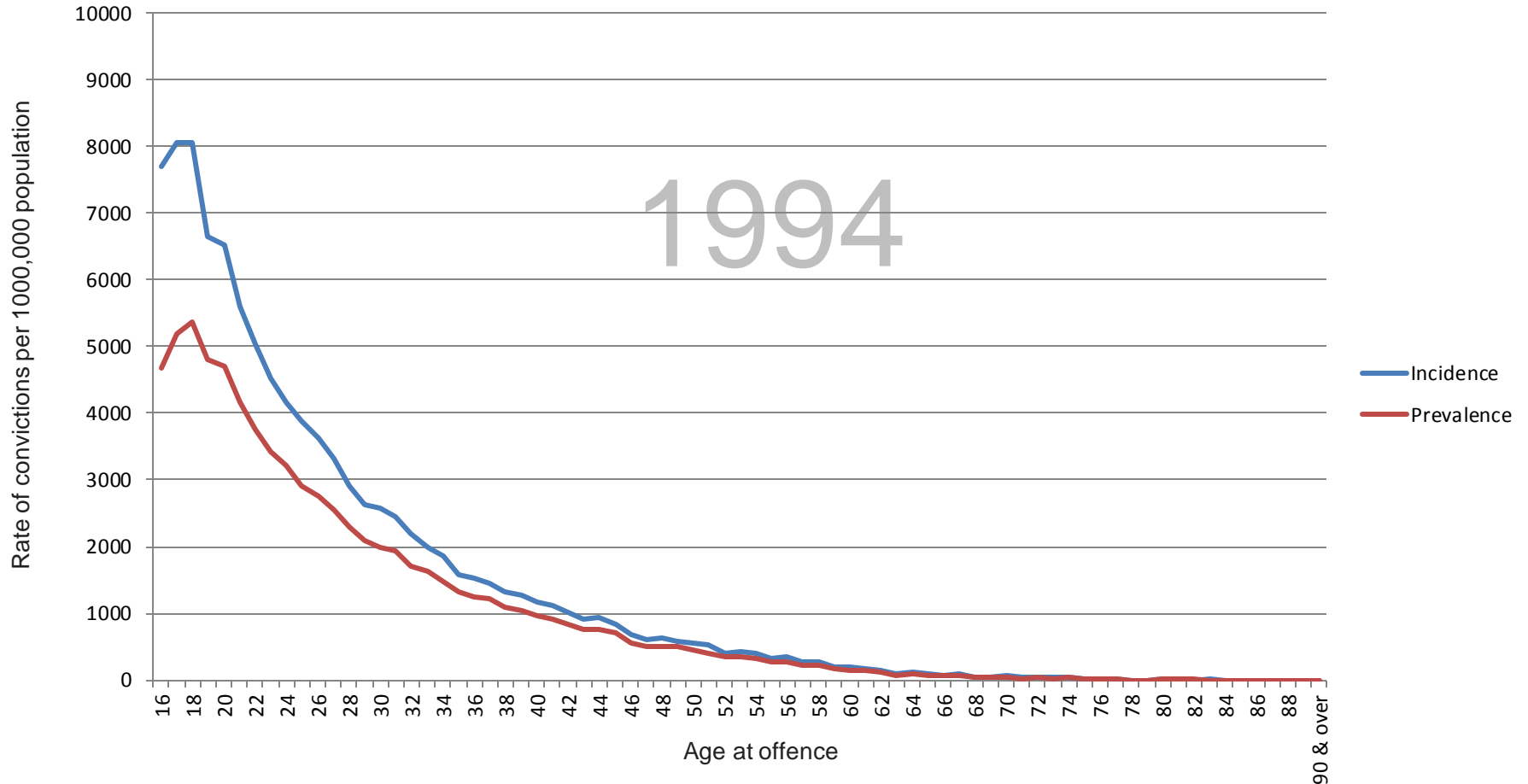
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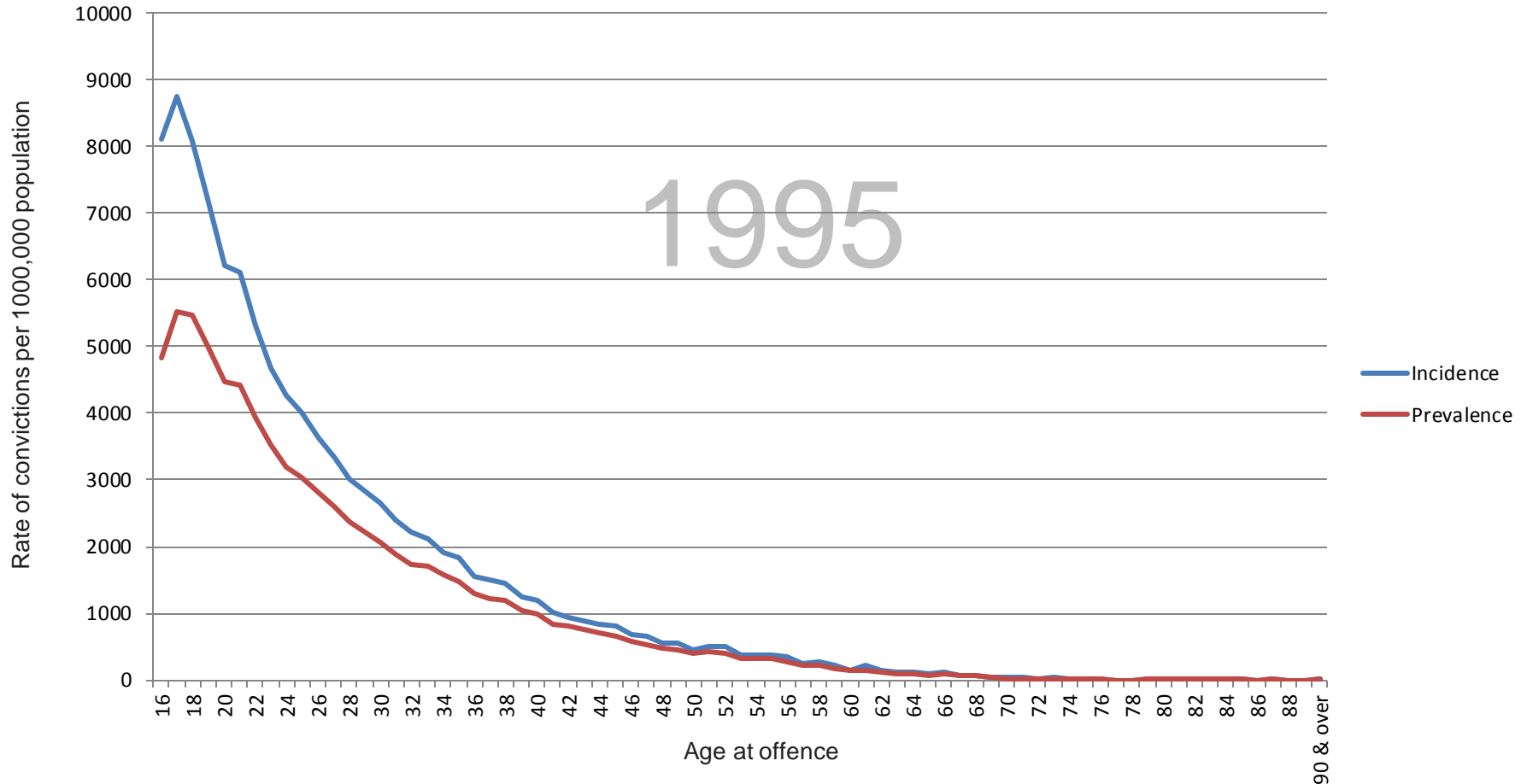
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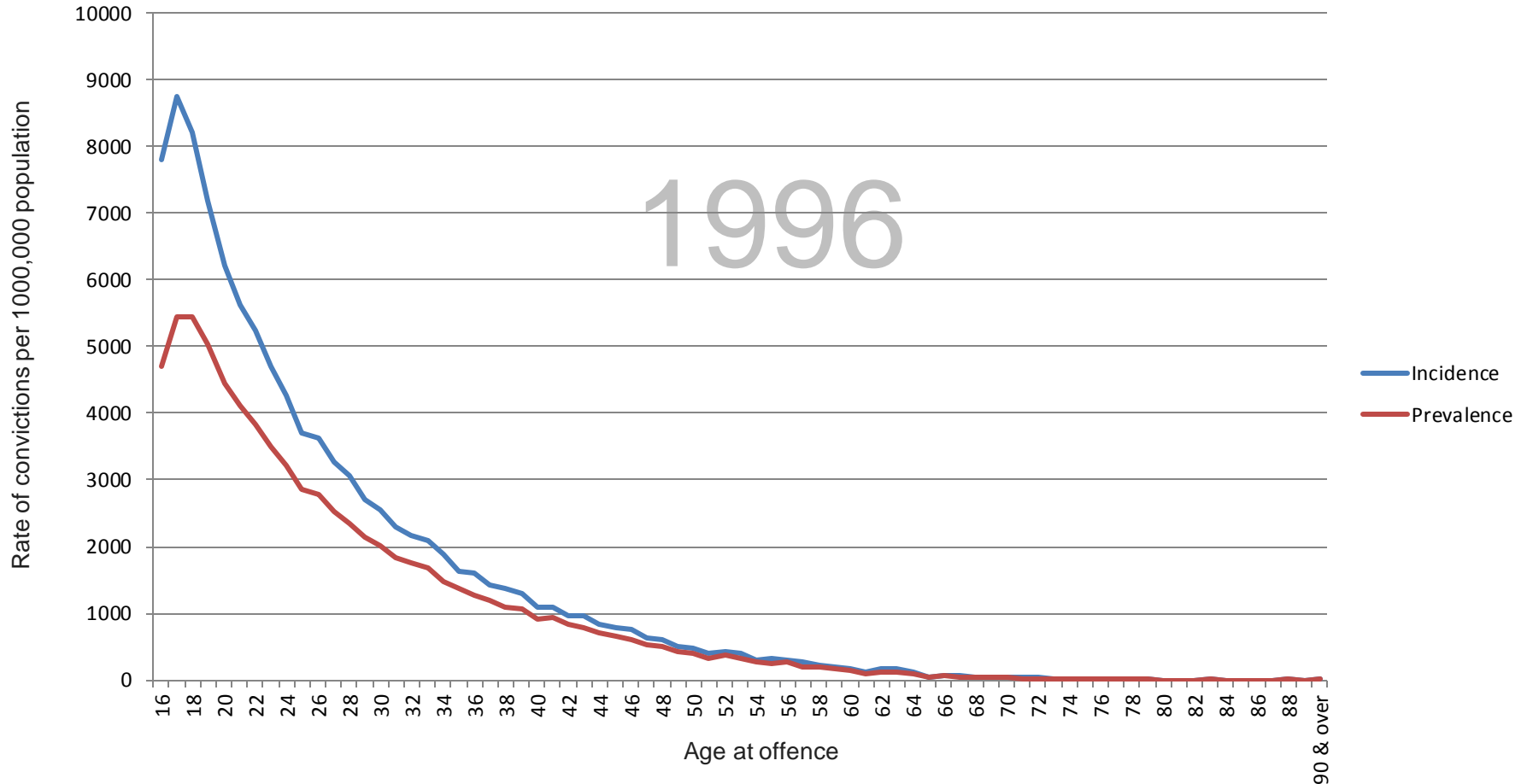
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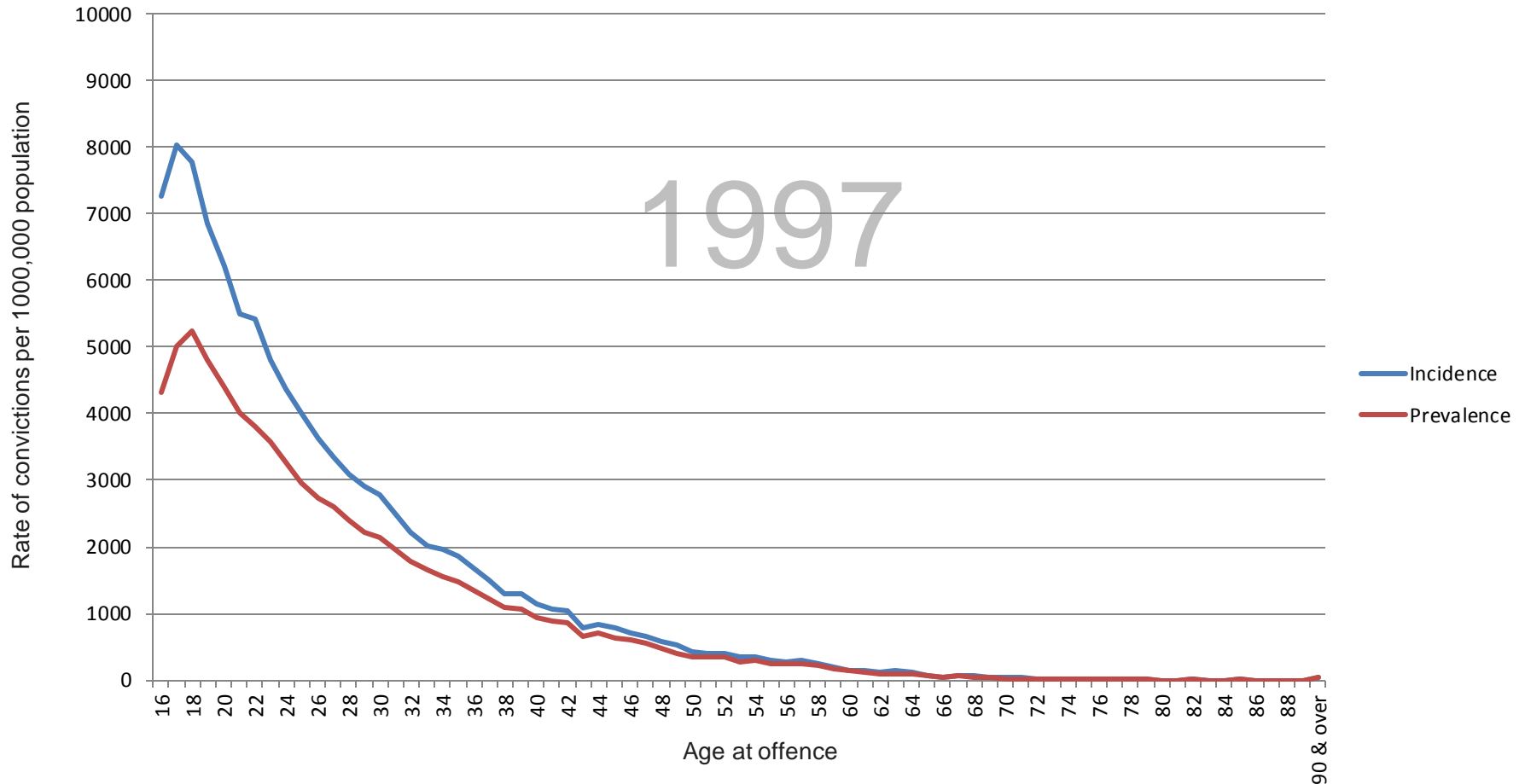
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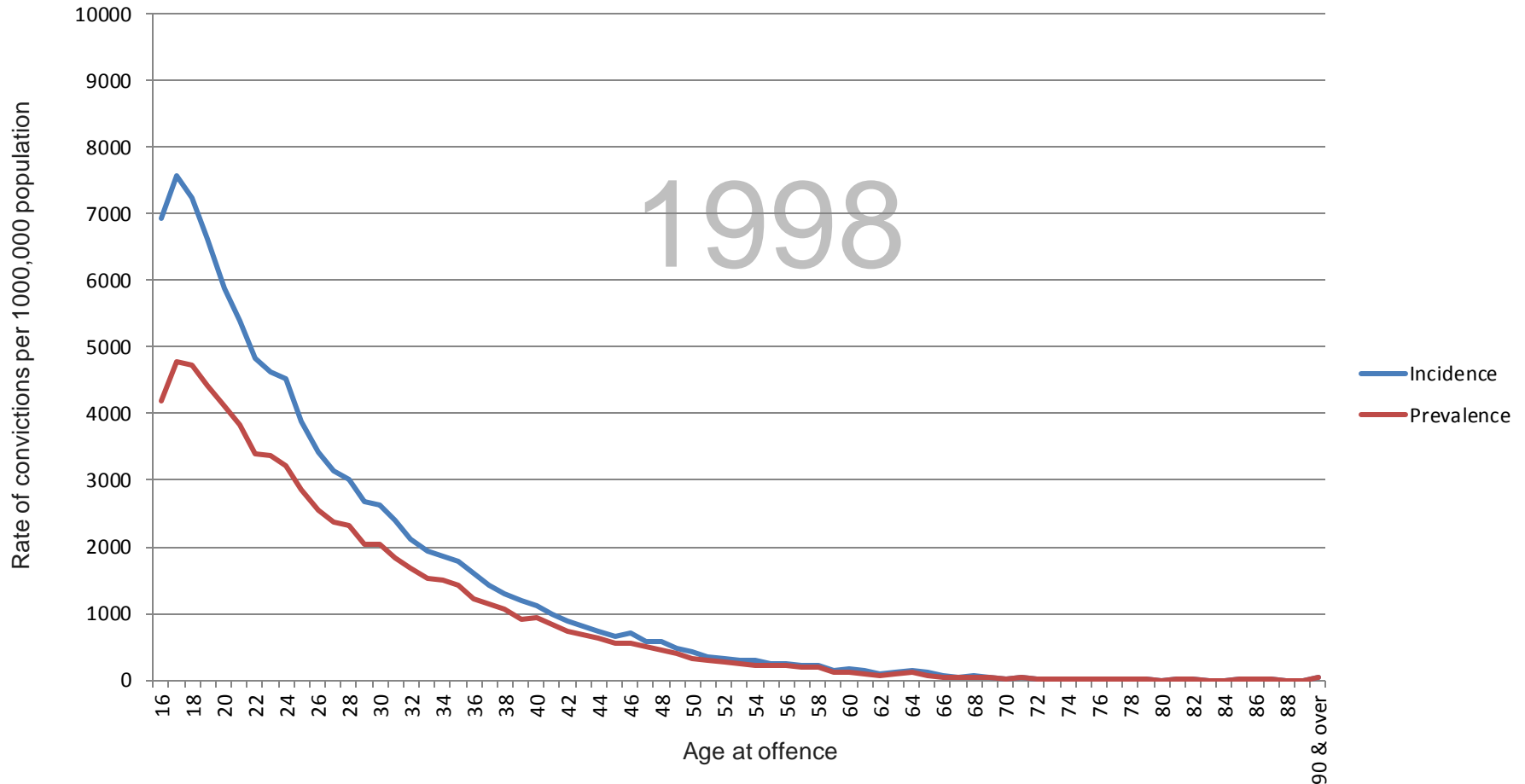
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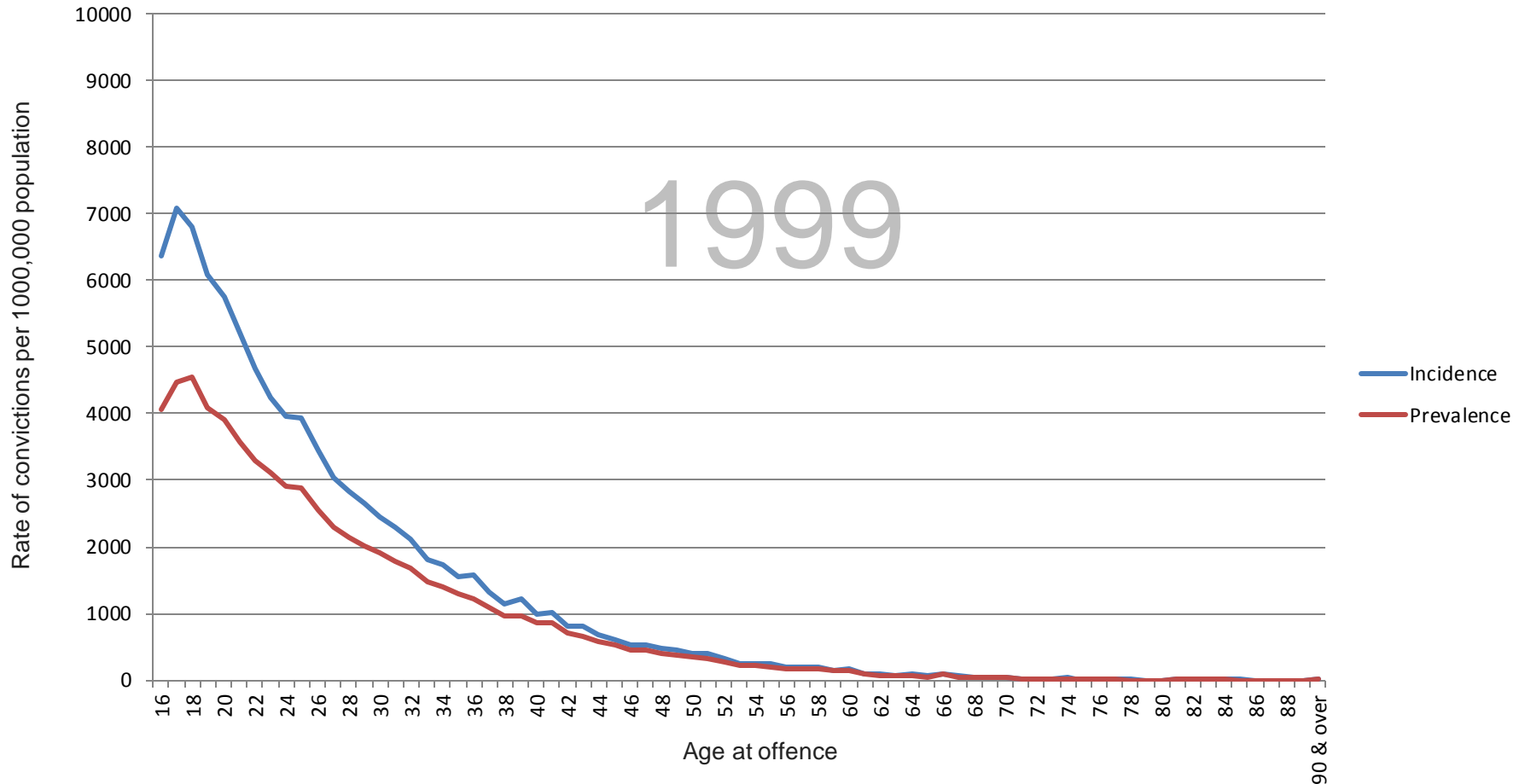
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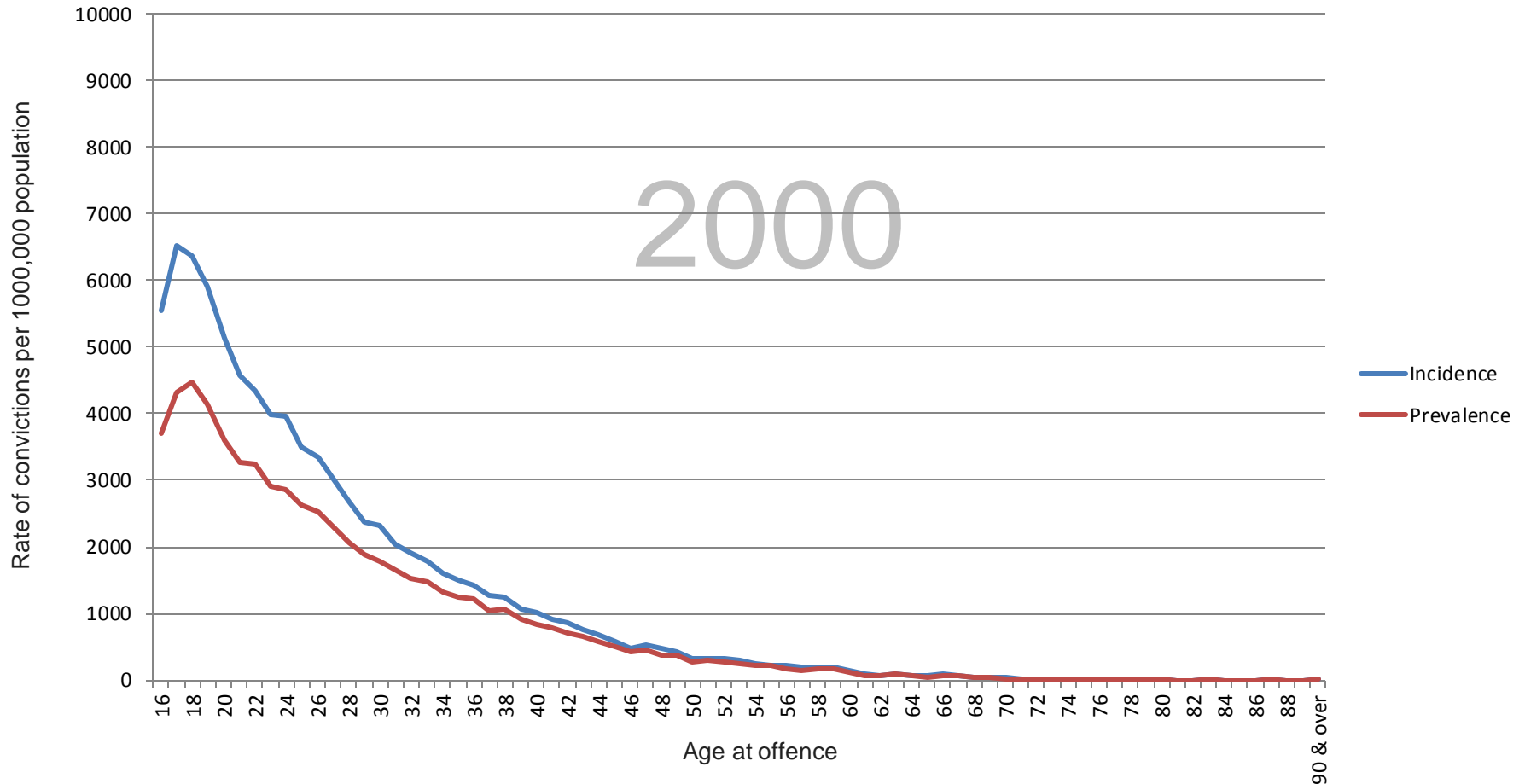
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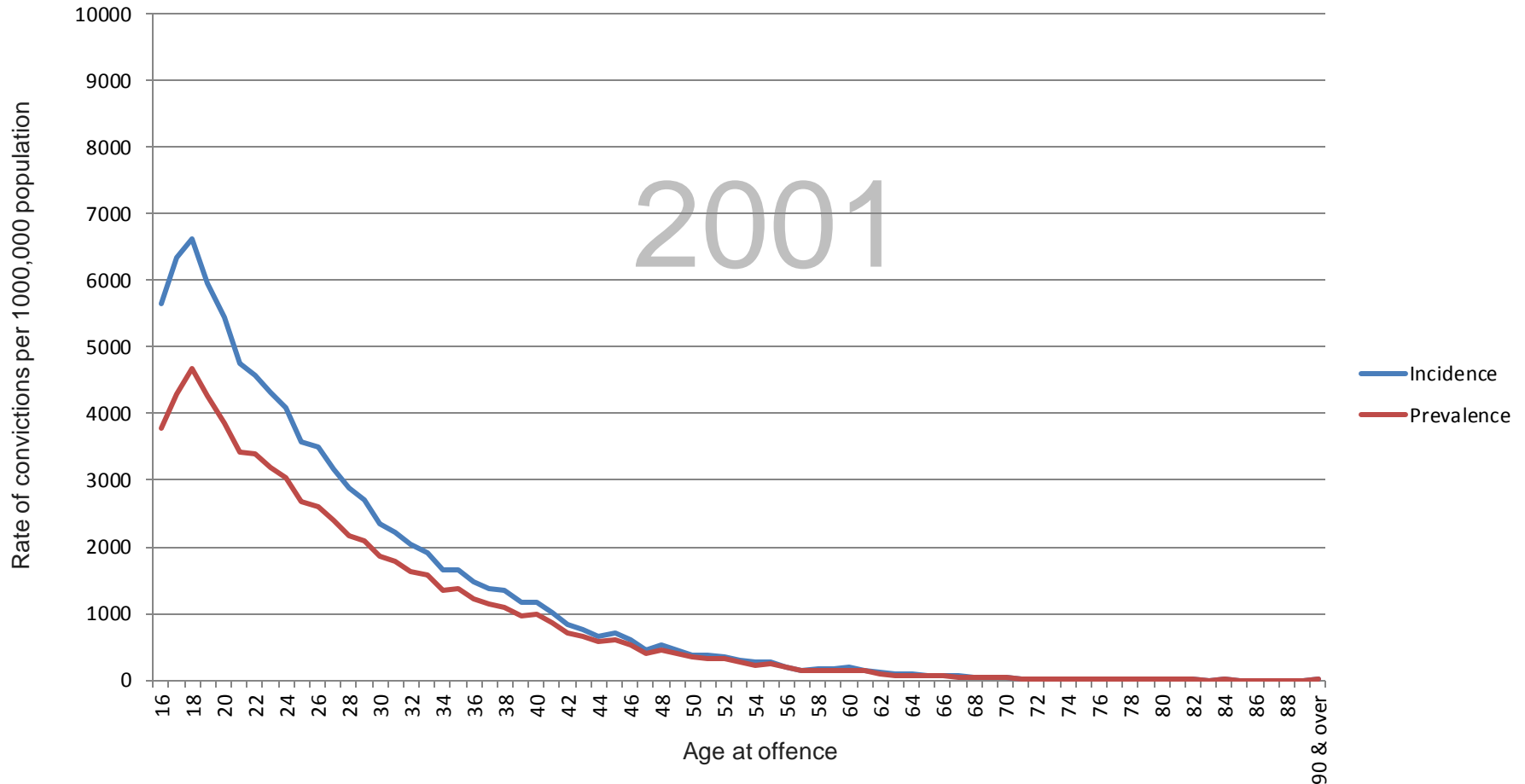
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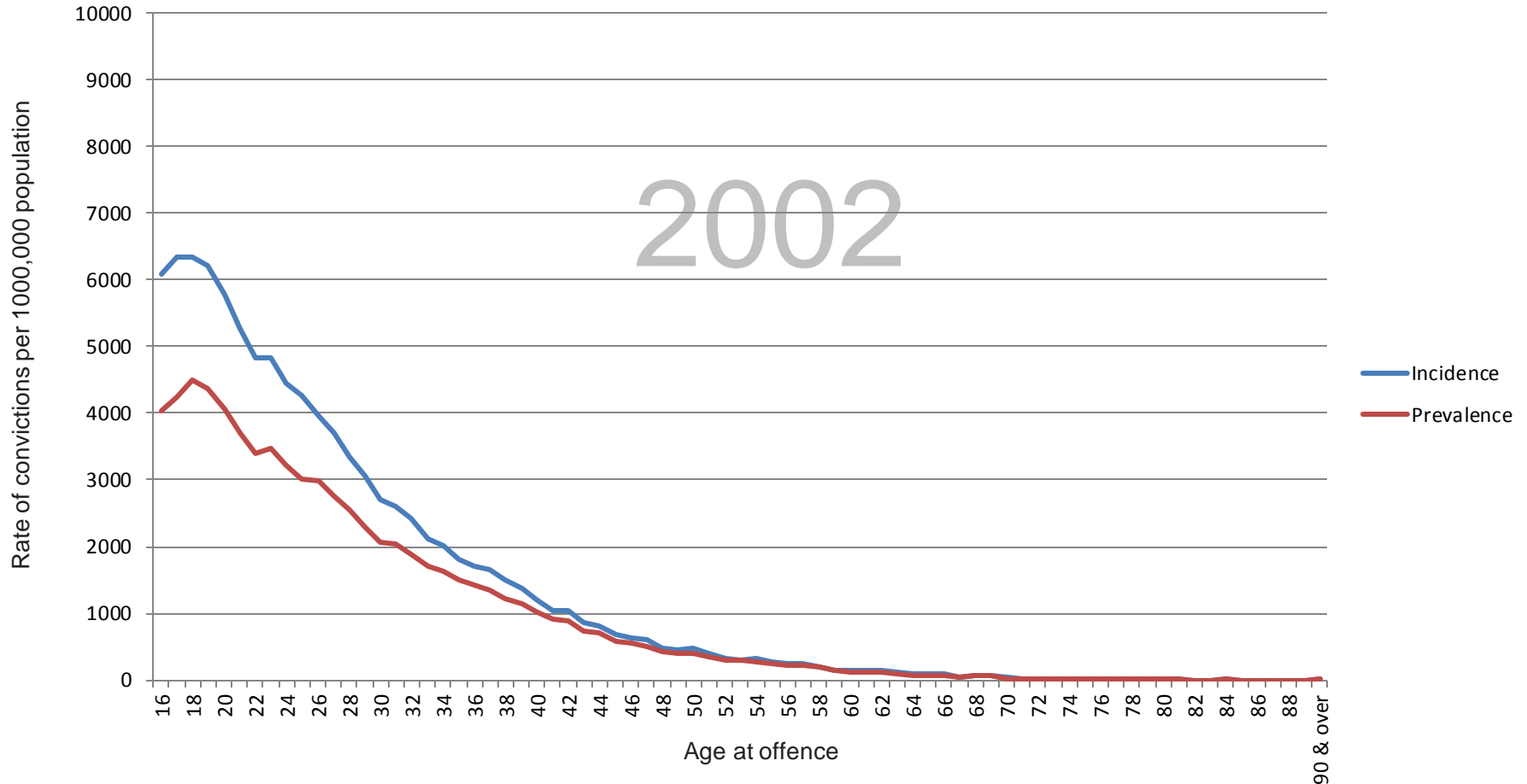
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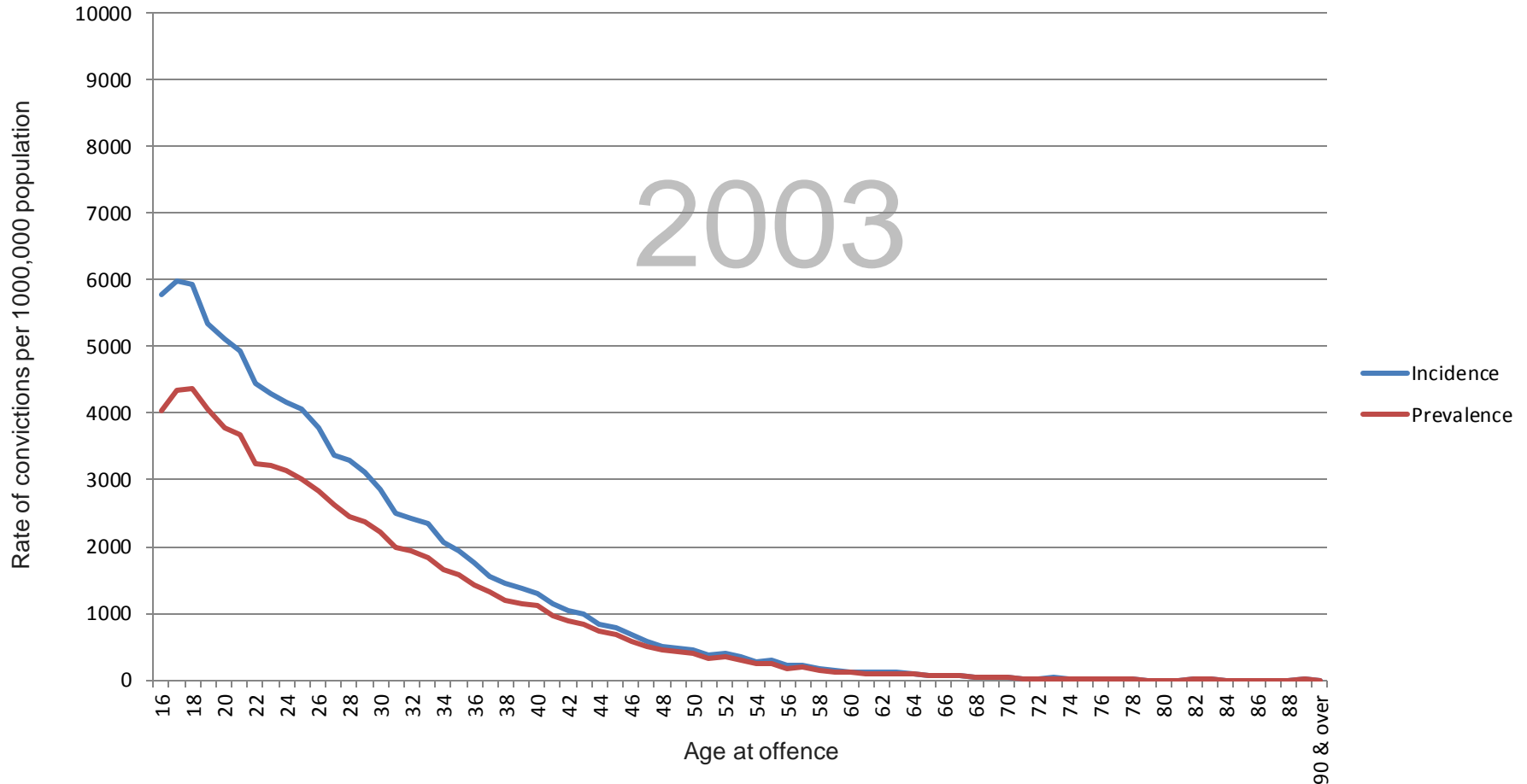
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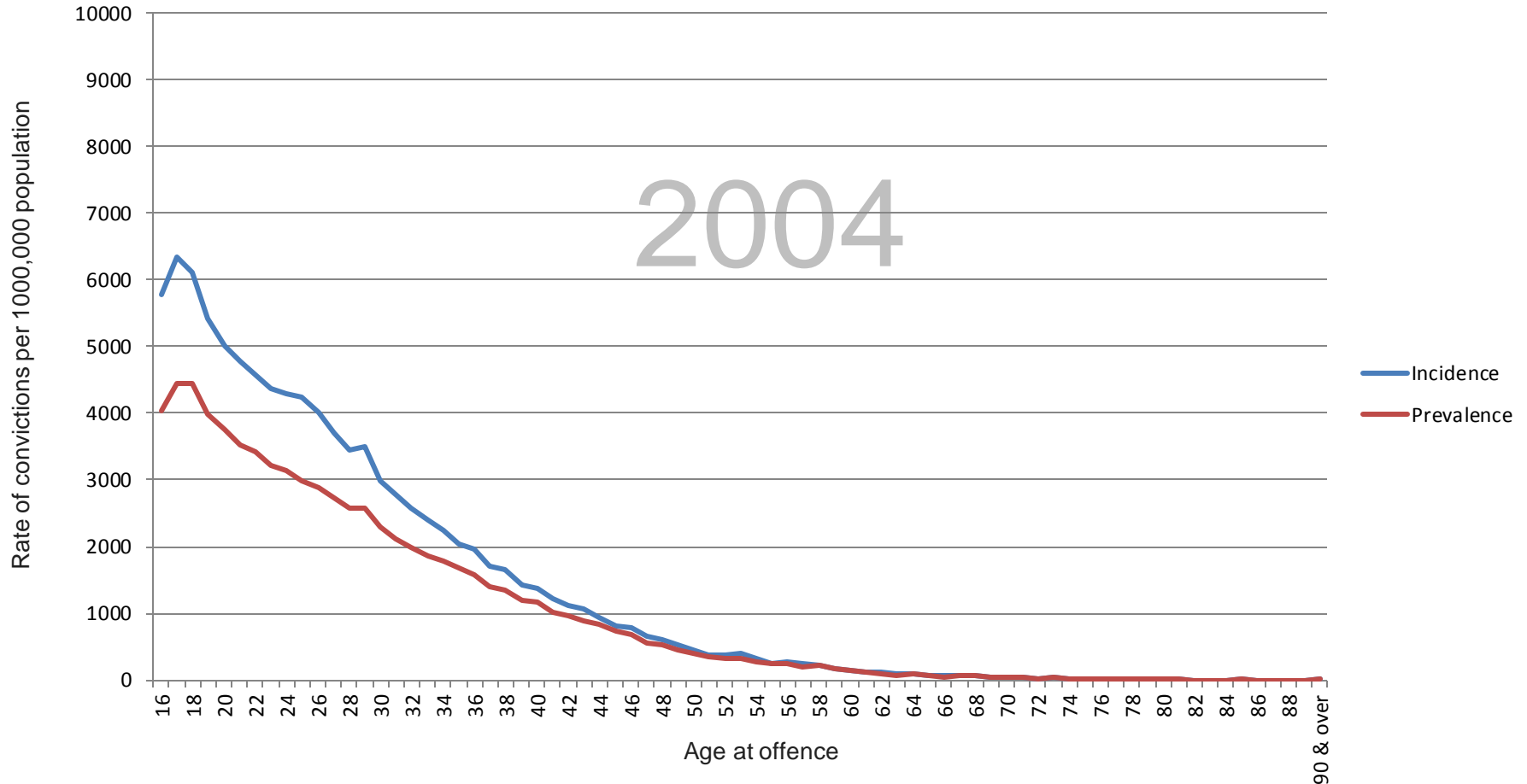
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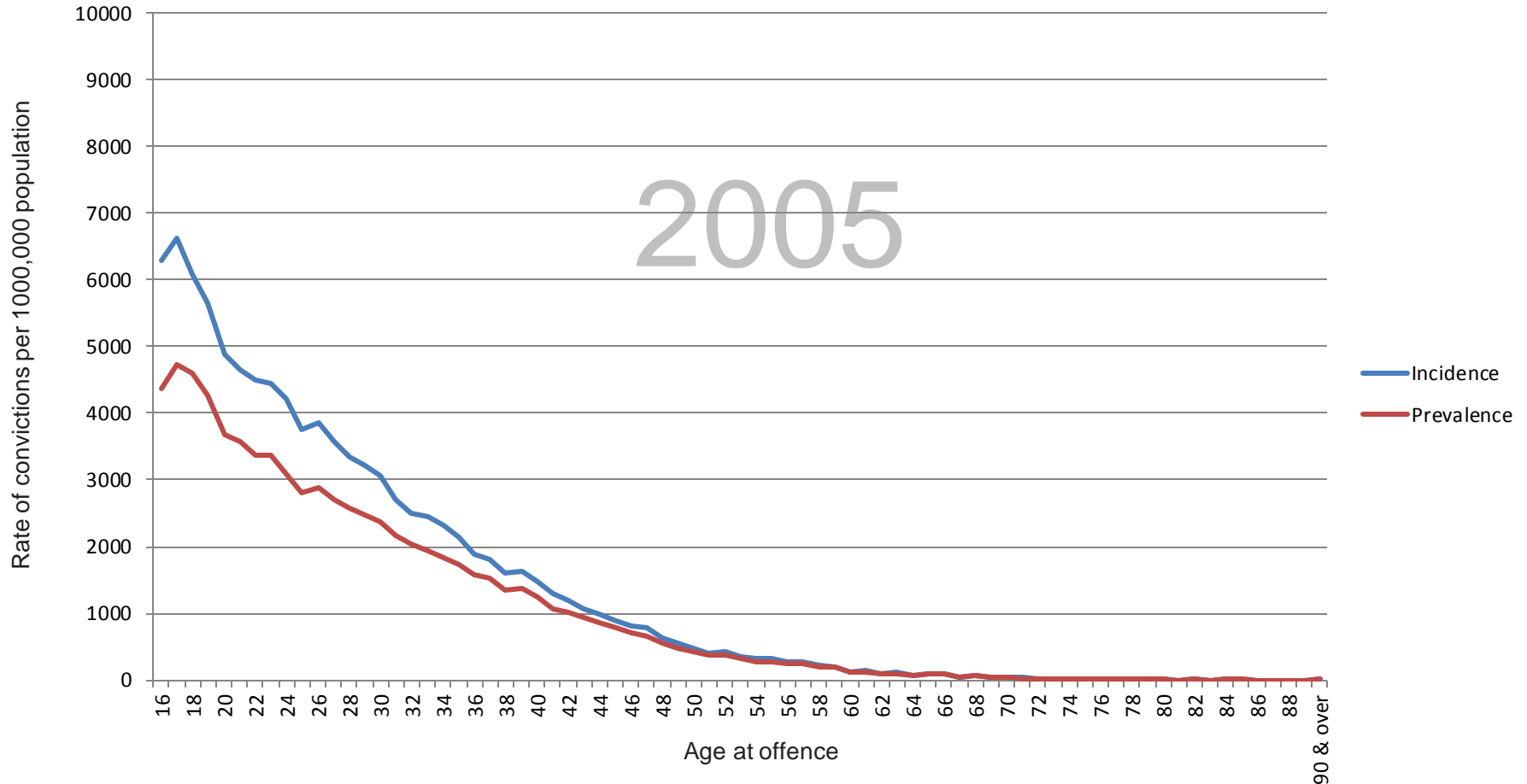
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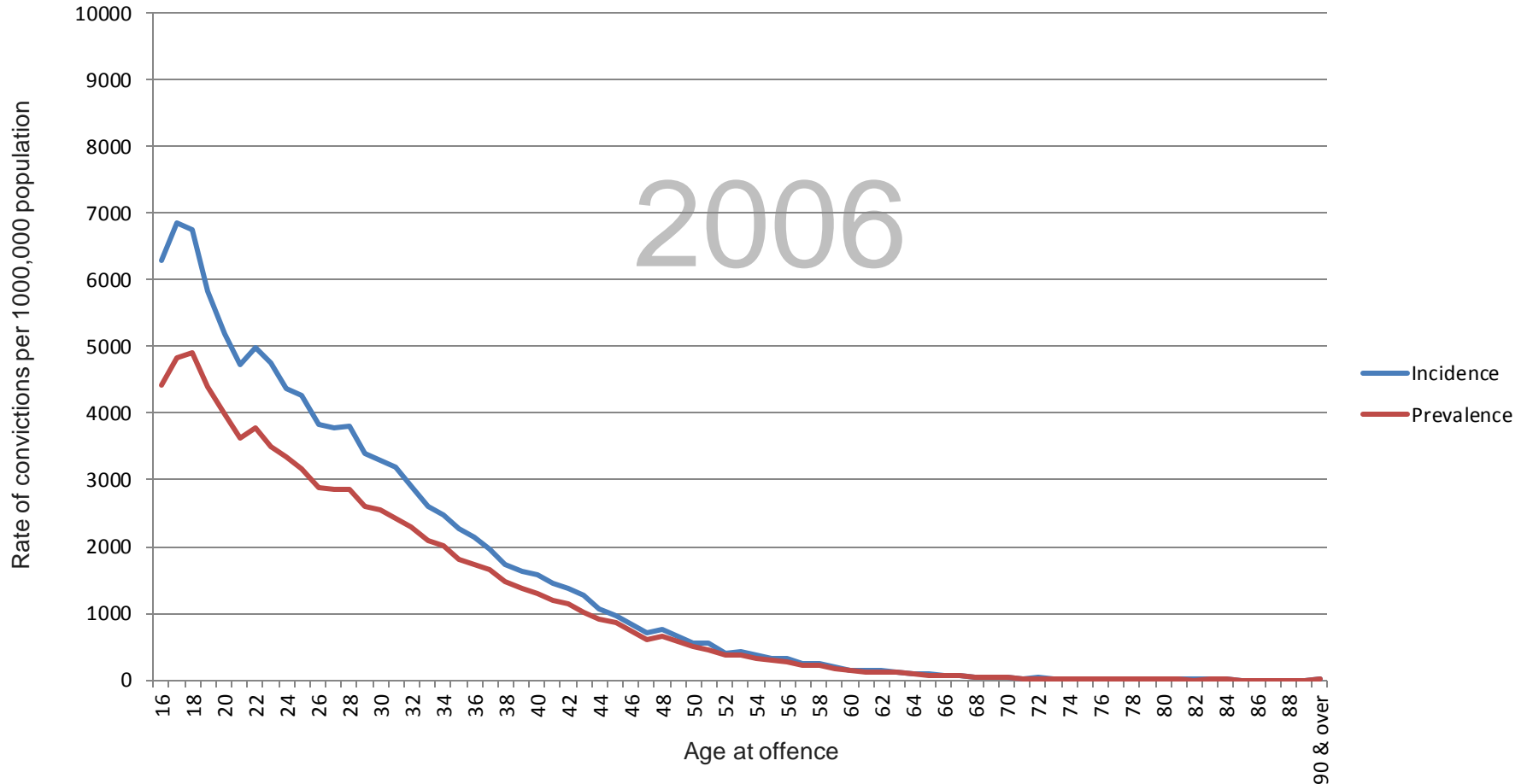
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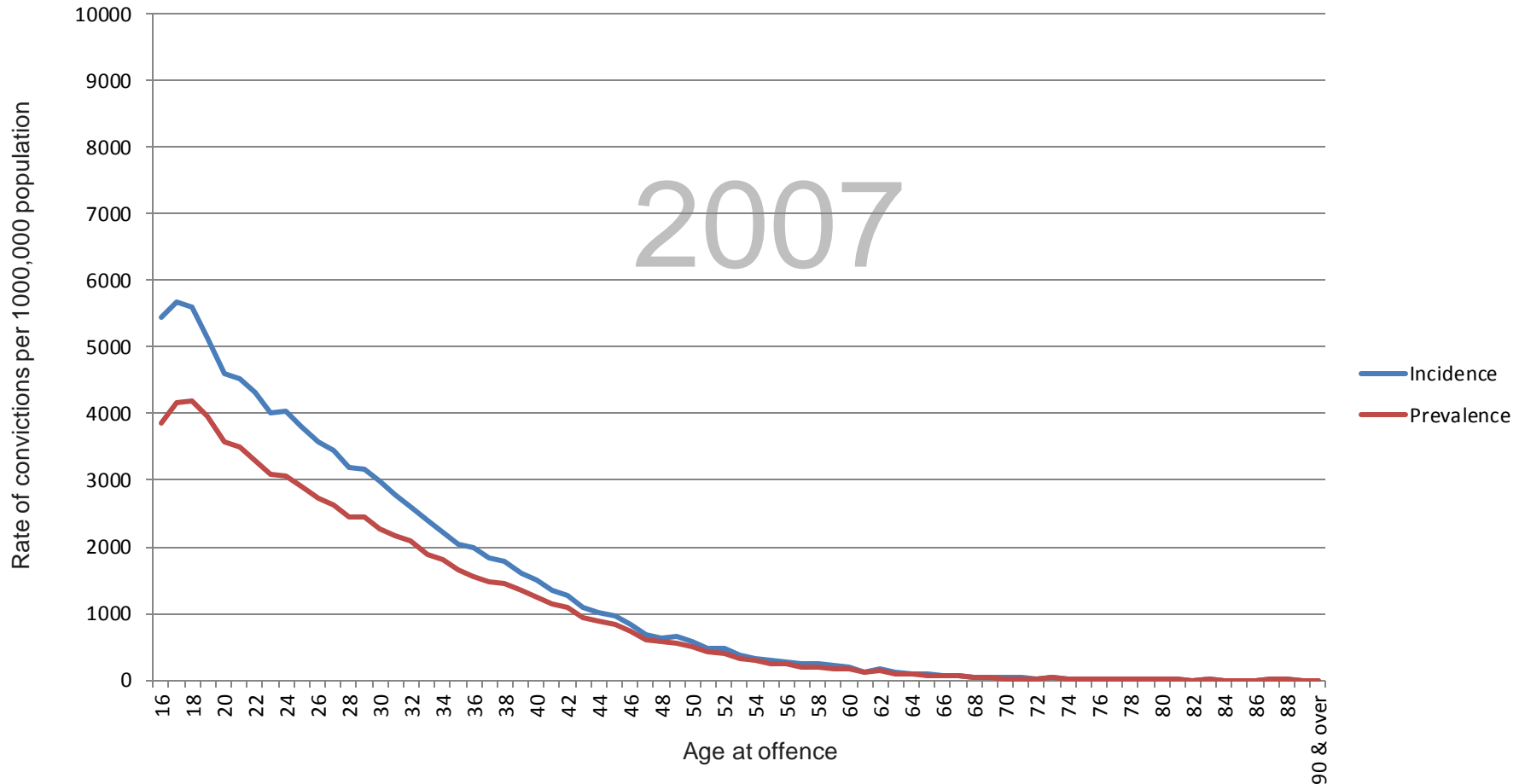
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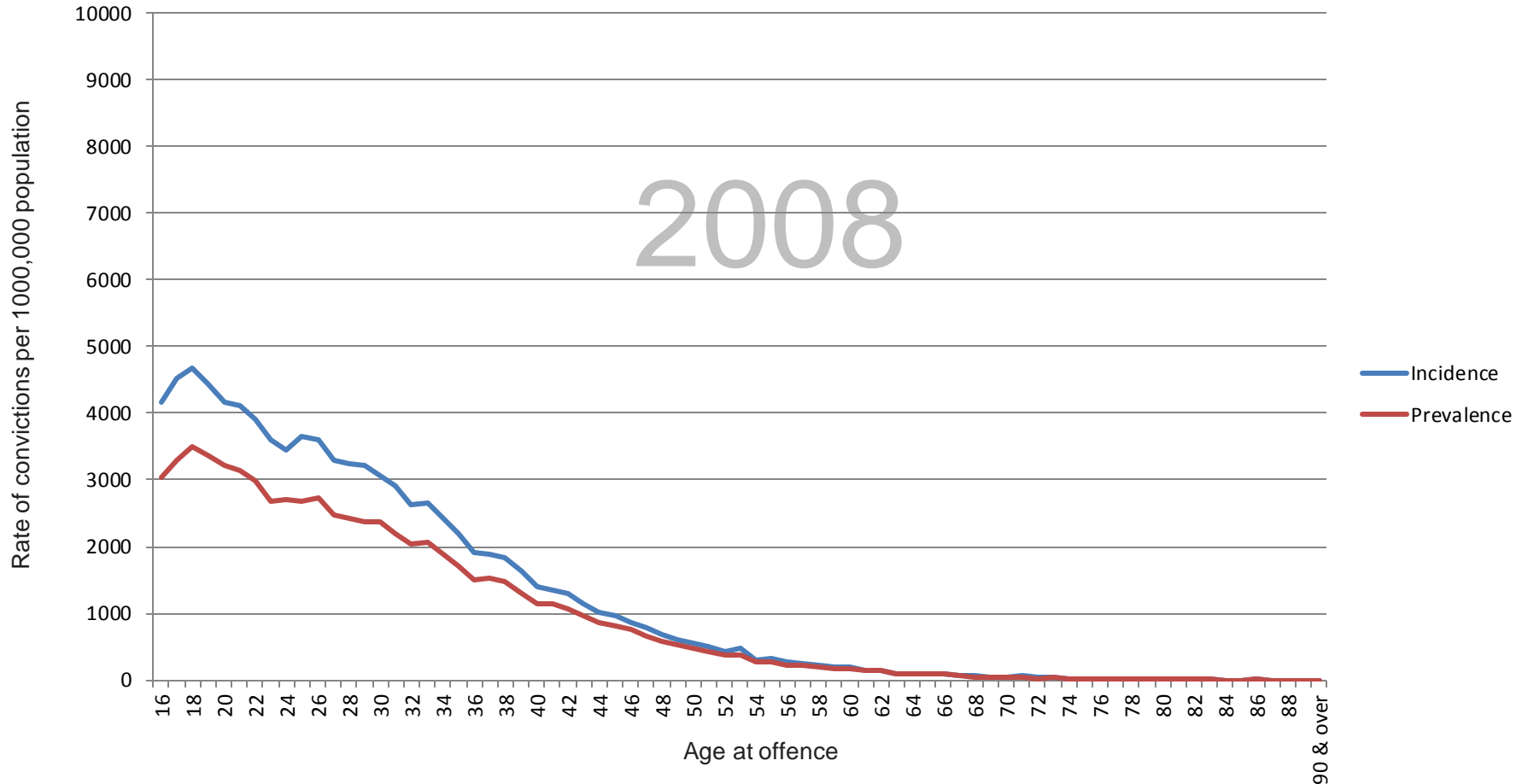
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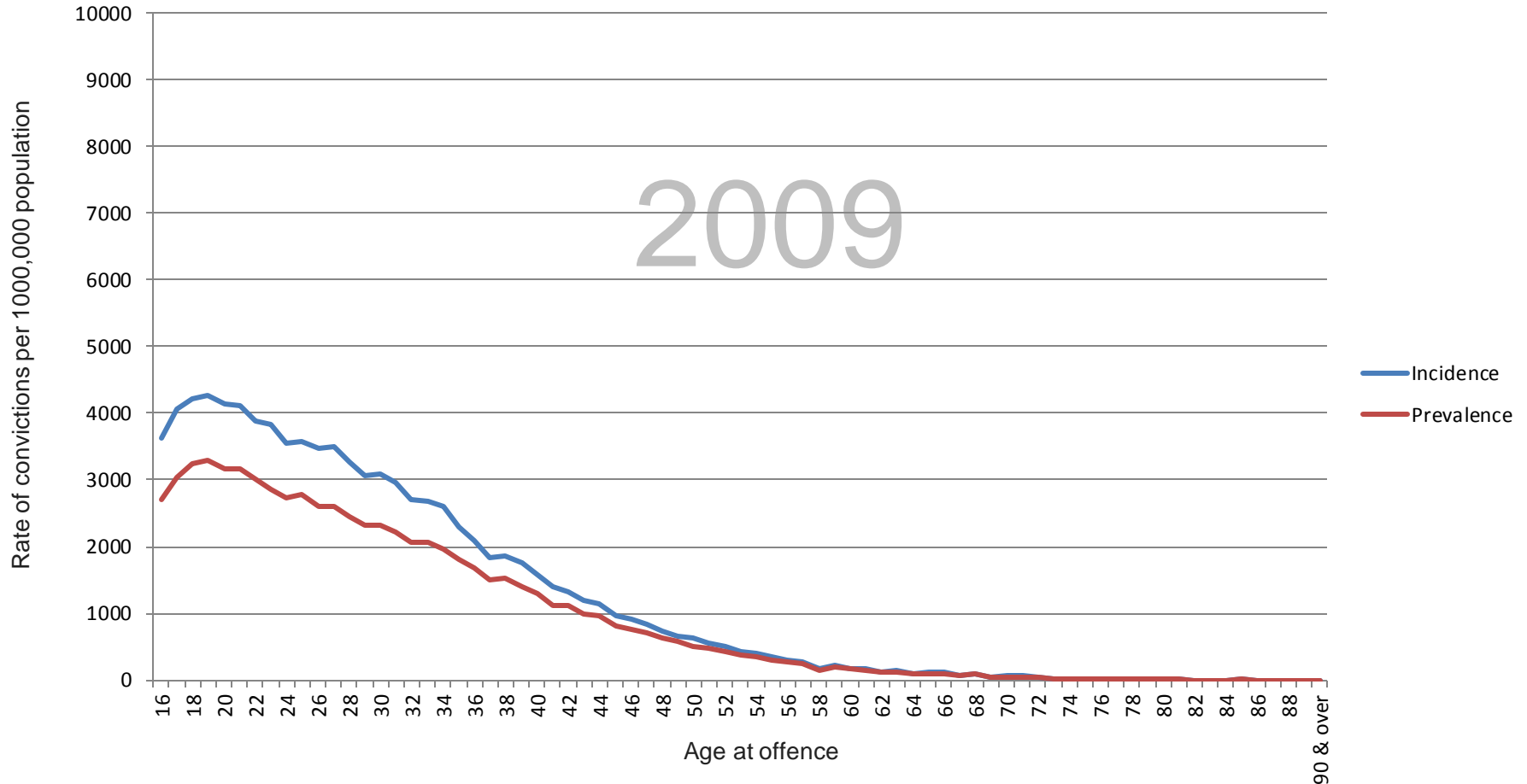
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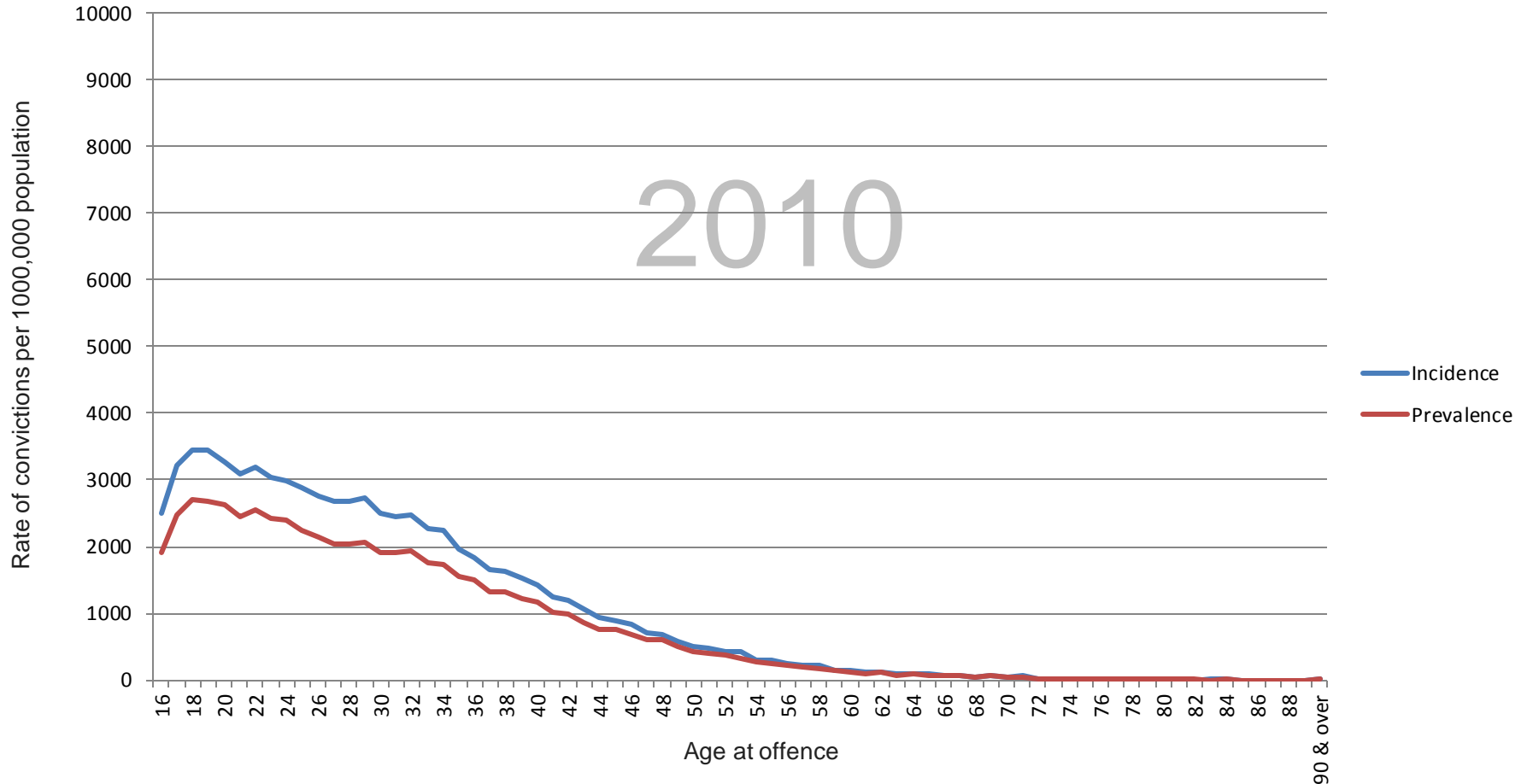
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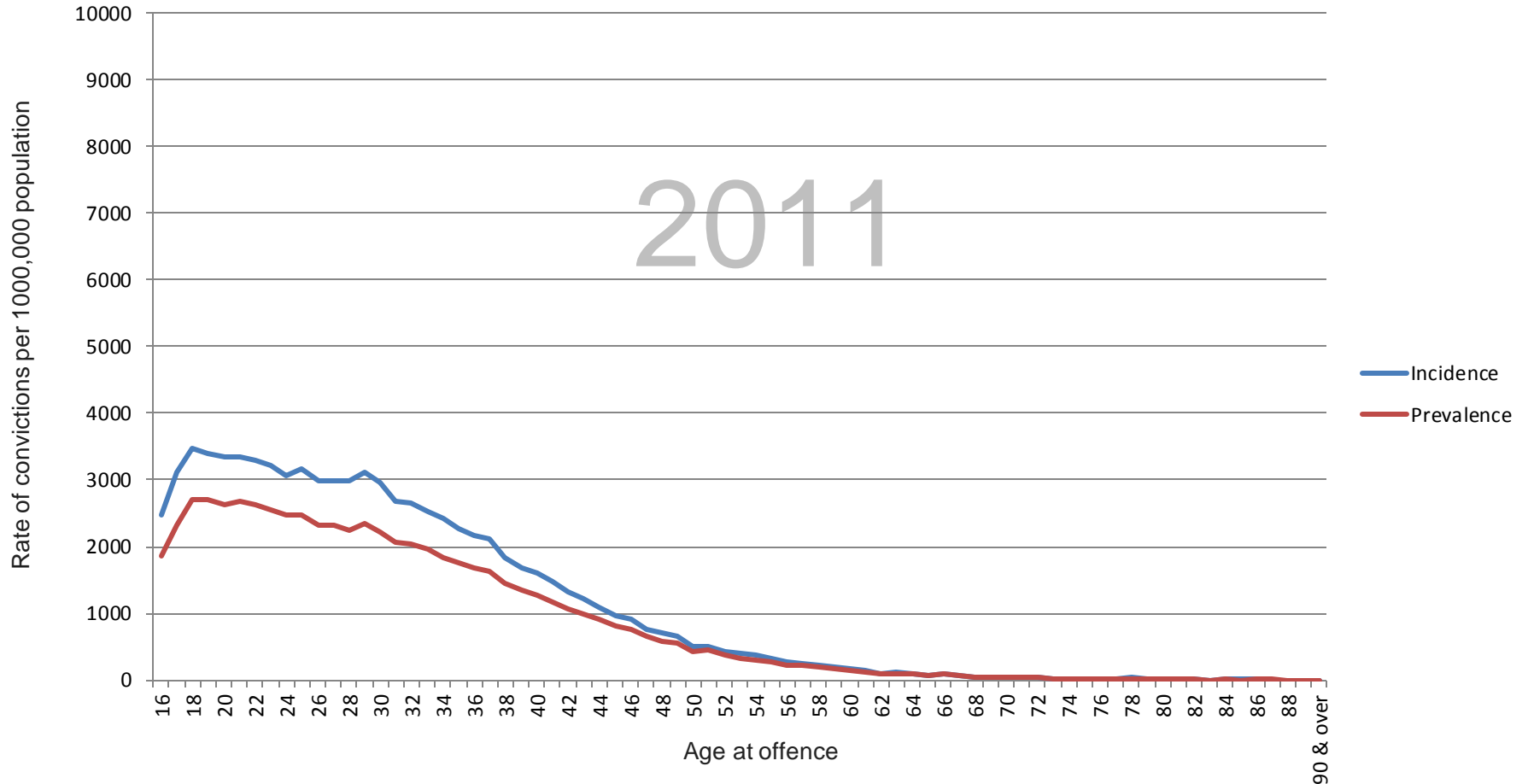
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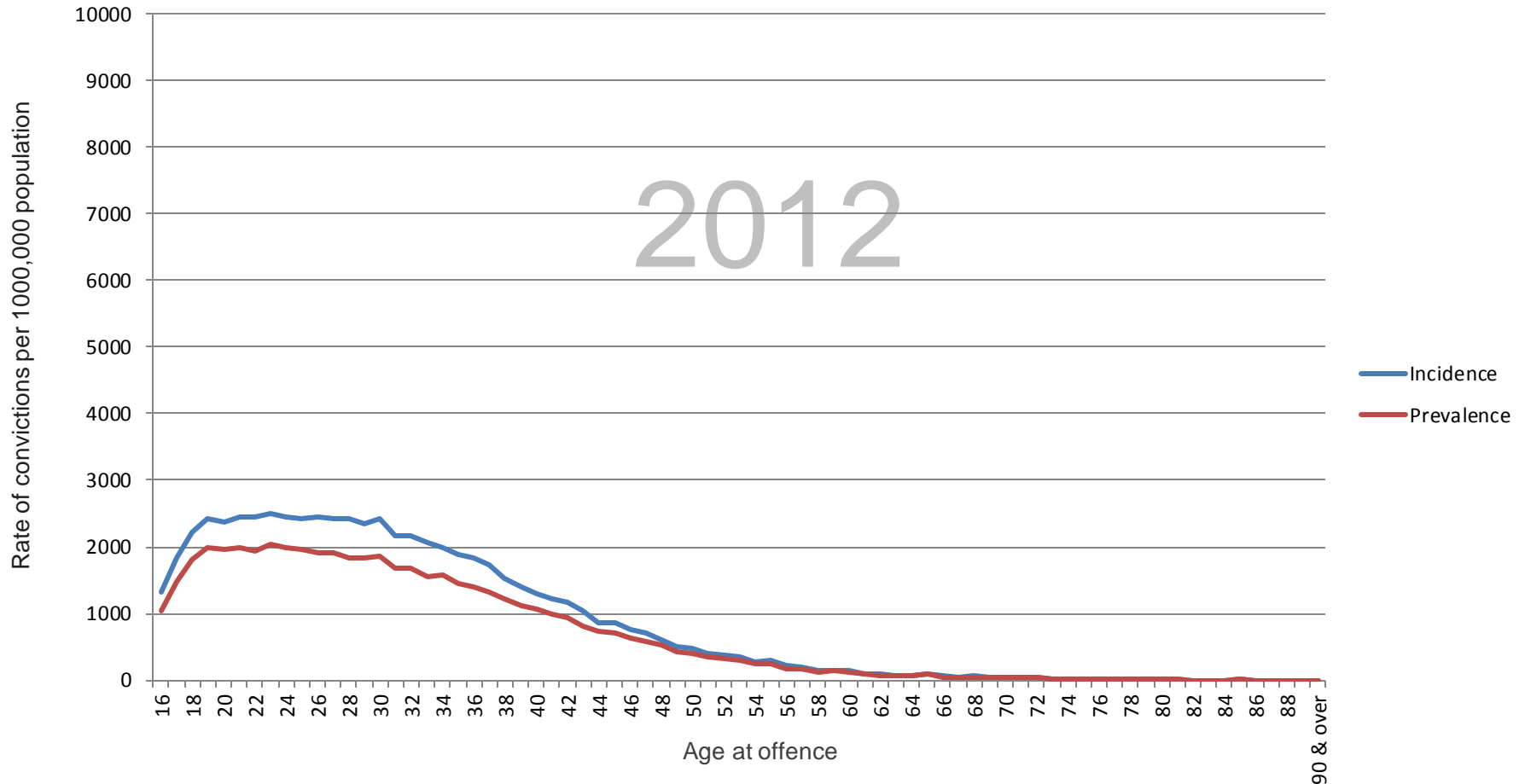
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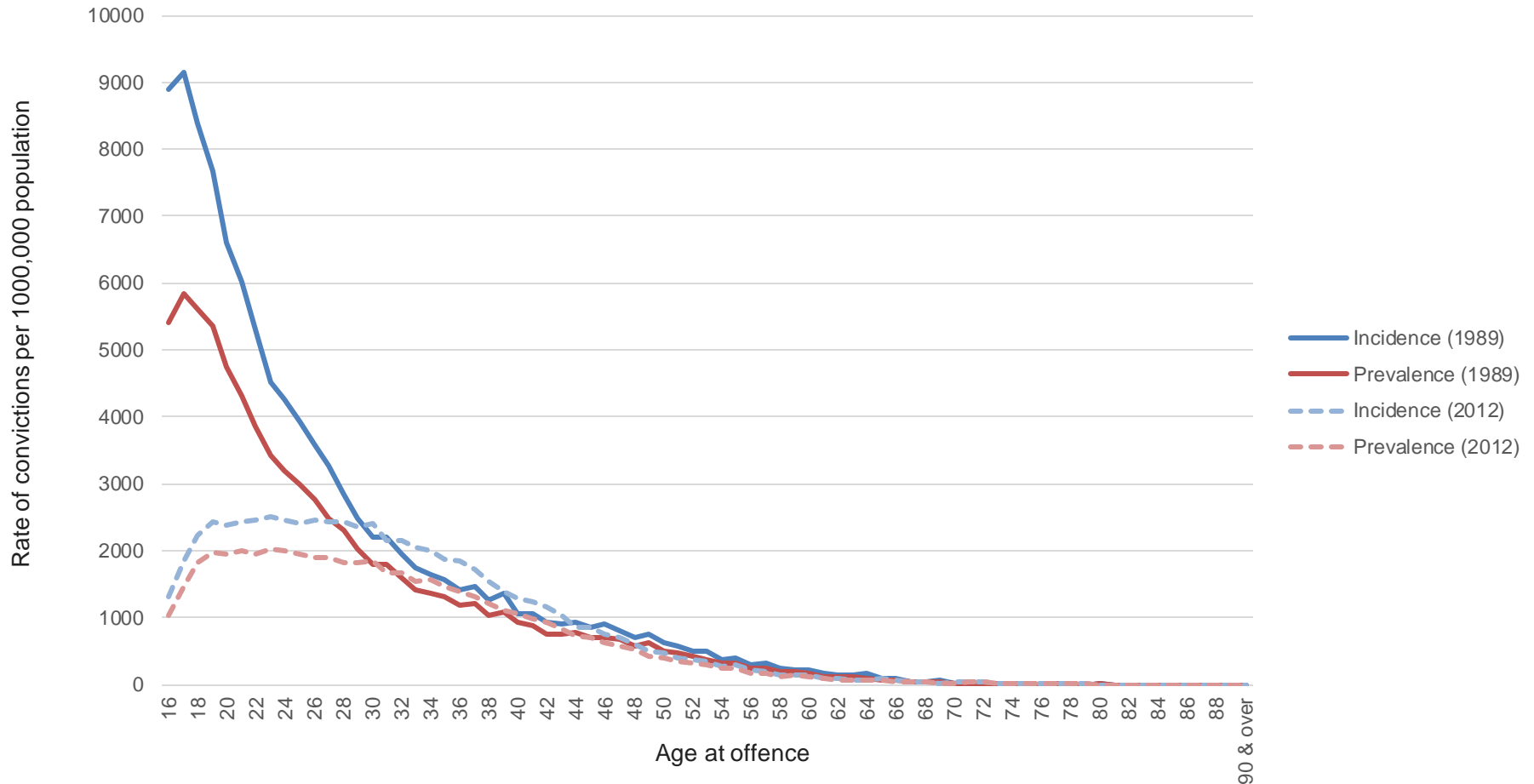
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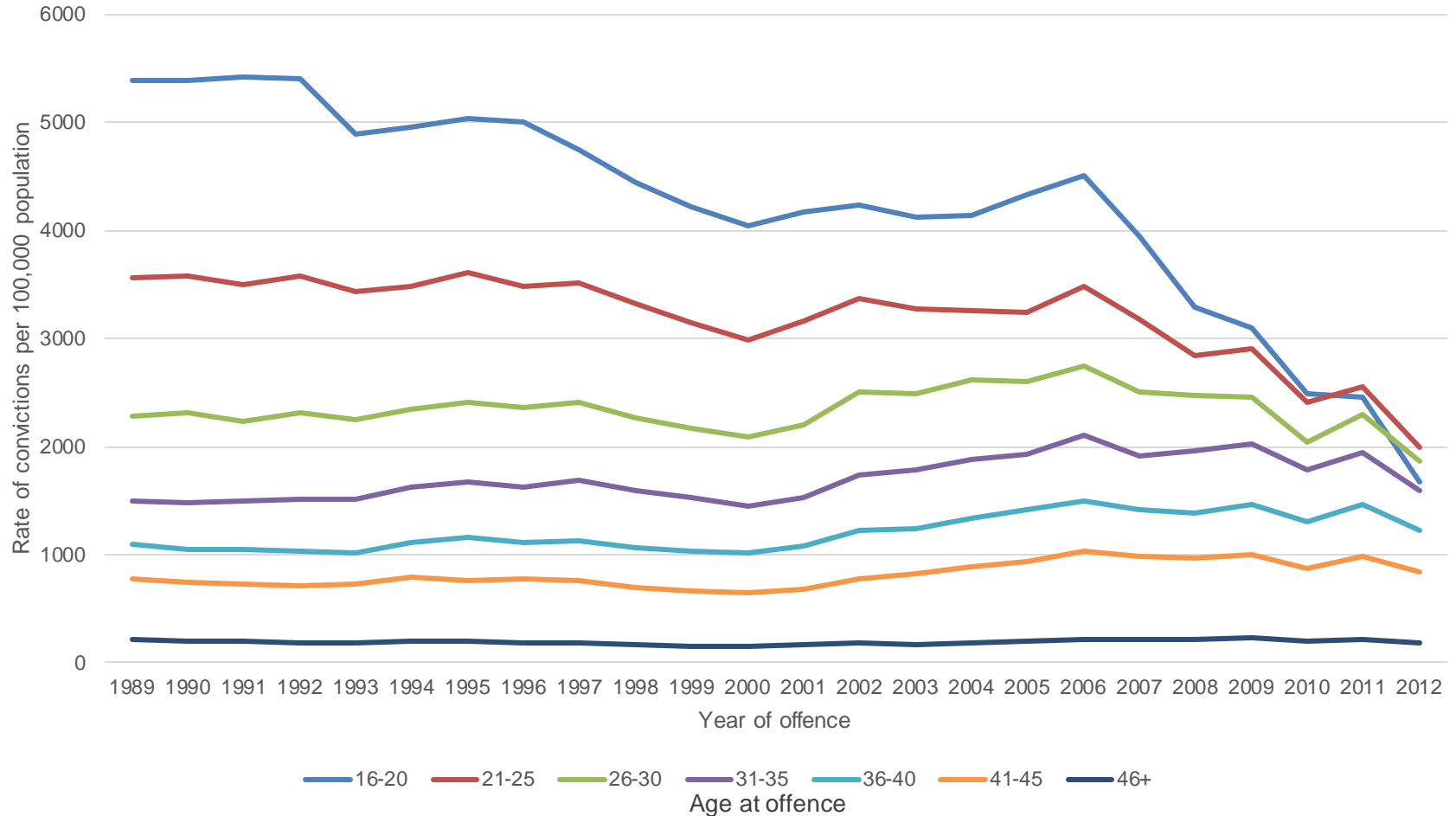
Results (1) – Declining convictions for young people

Figure Five: Comparison of the age-crime curve in the Scottish Offenders Index 1989 and 2012



Results (1) – Declining convictions for young people

Figure Six: Convictions rates in the Scottish Offenders Index 1989-2012 split by age band

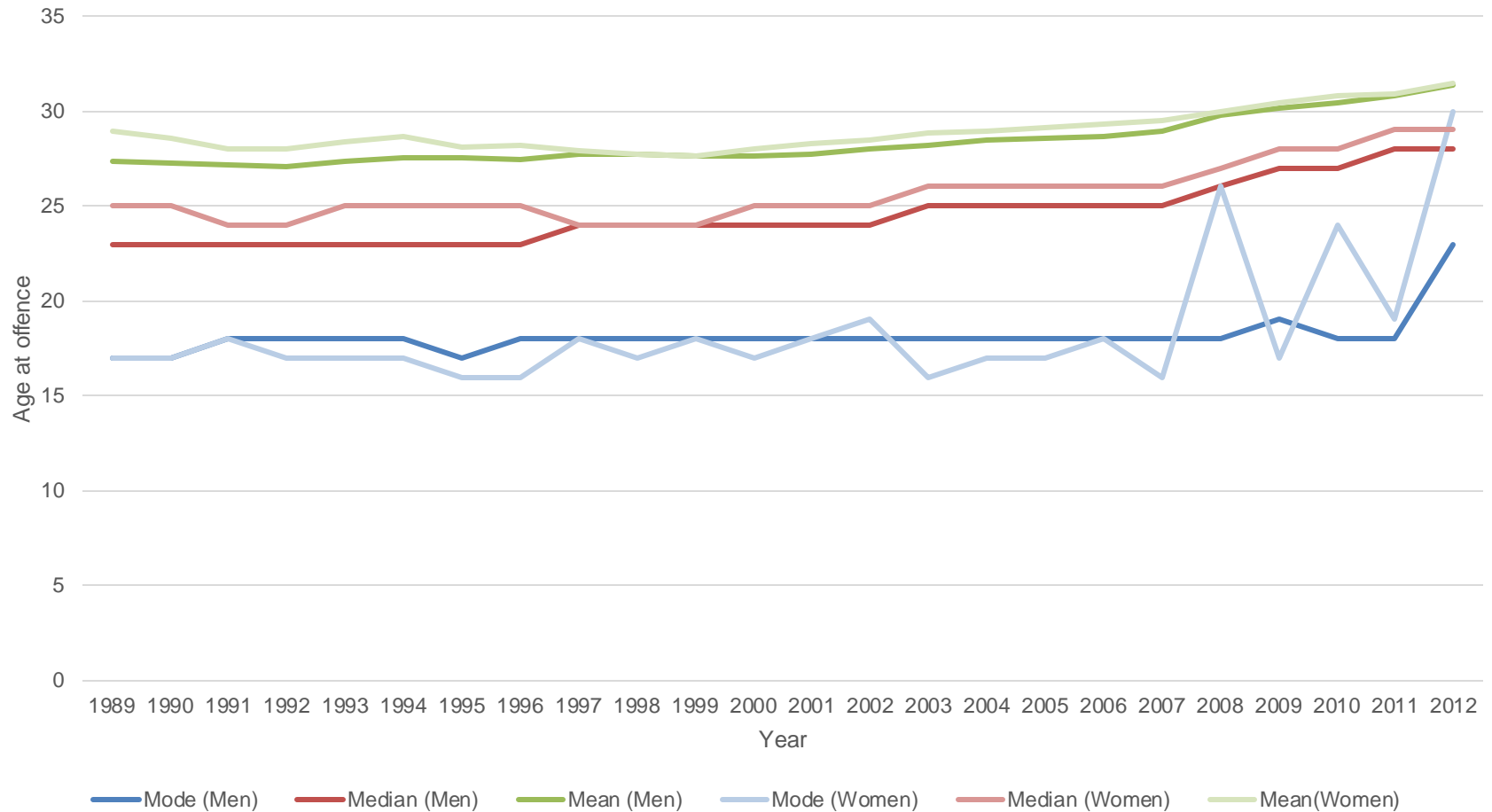


Results (Part Two)

Convictions for **young men** decline between 1989-1999 and then again from 2007-2012.
Convictions for **young women** decline from 2007-2012 but **not** from 1989-1999.

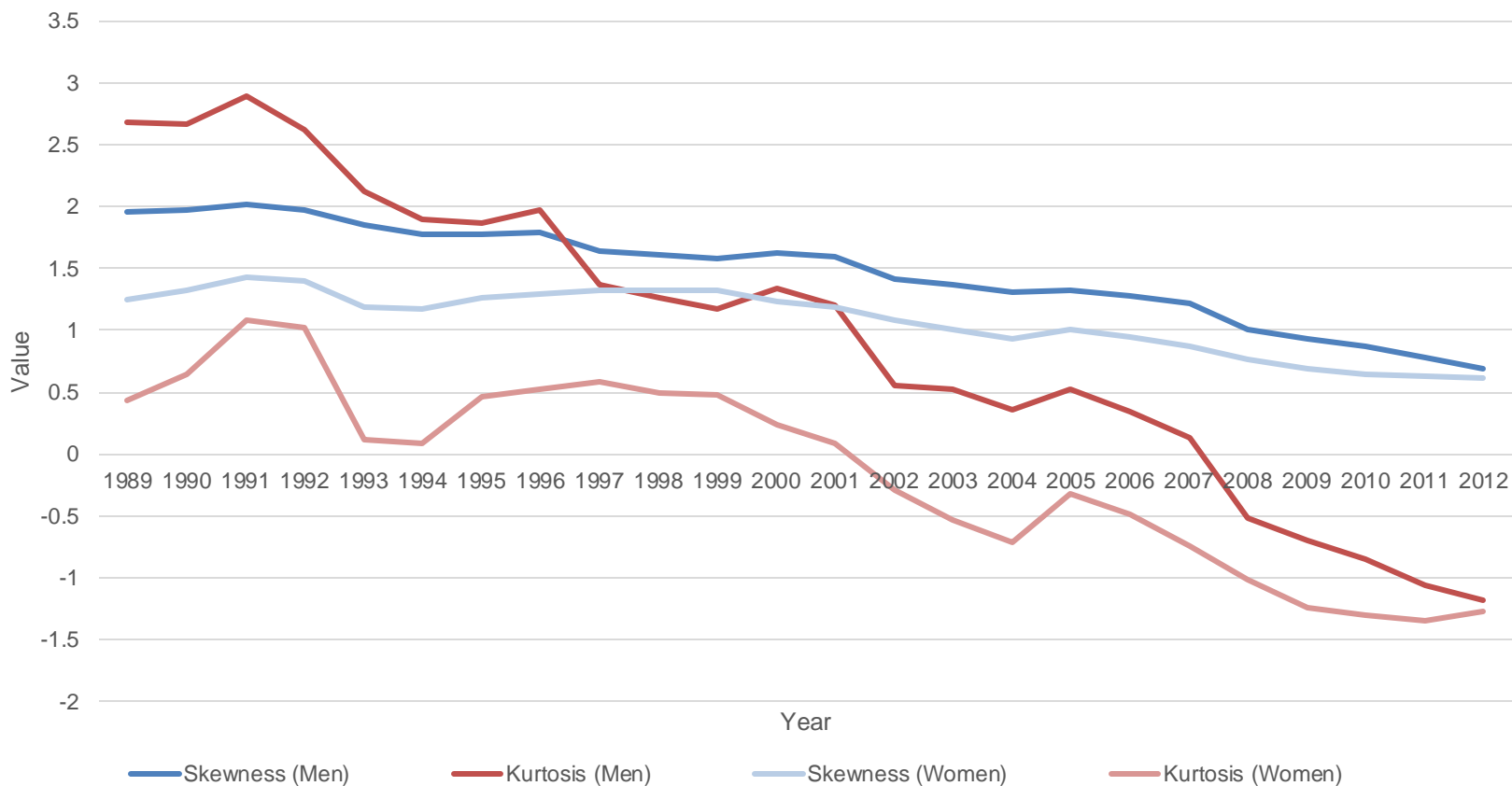
Results (2) – Different trends for men and women

Figure Seven: Measures of central tendency of age-crime curves in the Scottish Offenders Index 1989-2012 split by sex



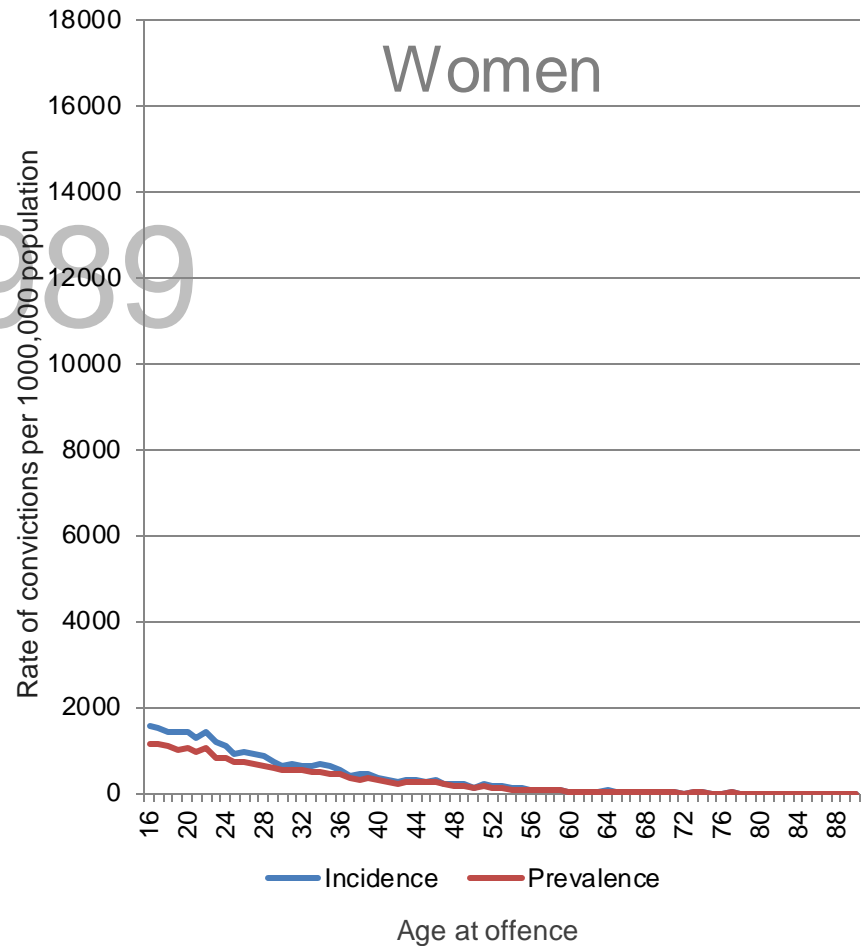
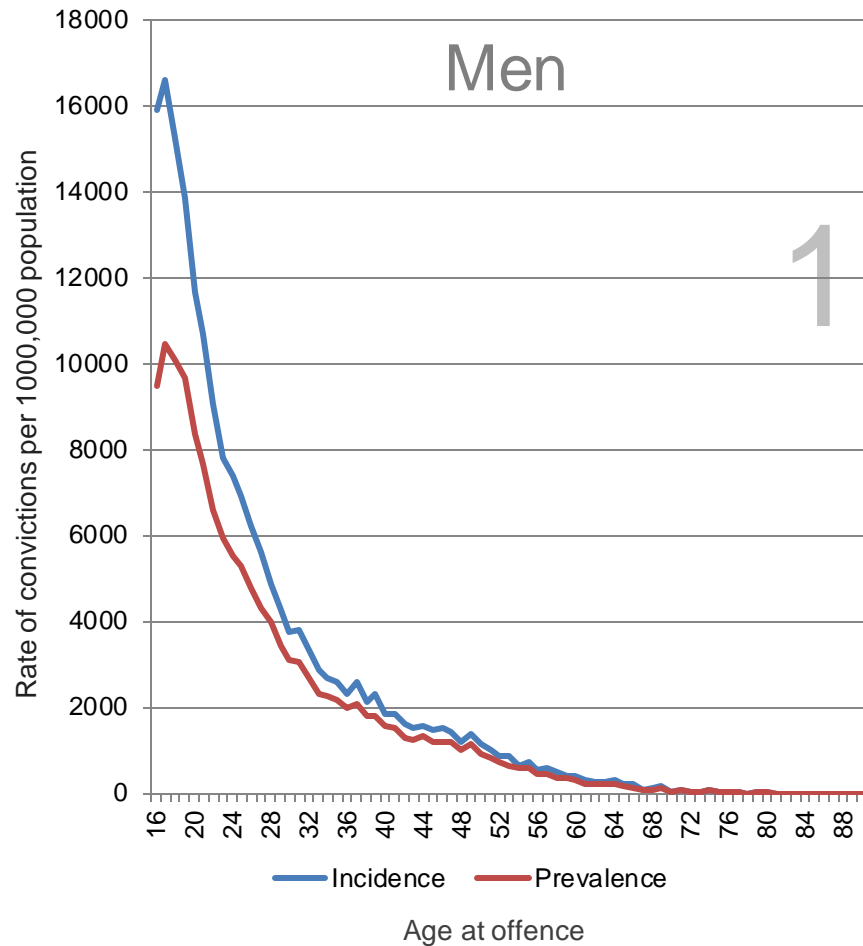
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Figure Eight: Measures of central tendency of age-crime curves in the Scottish Offenders Index 1989-2012 split by sex



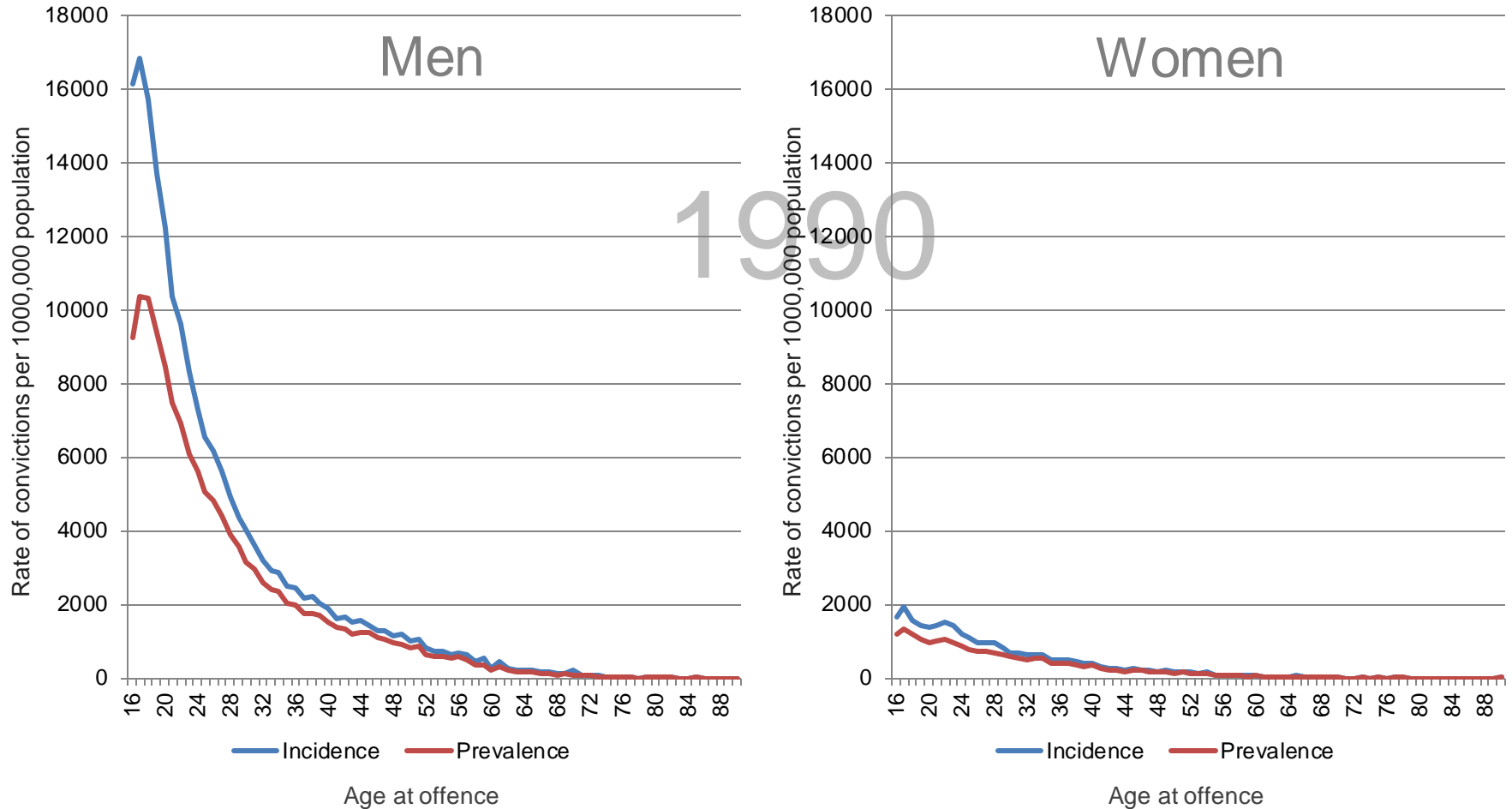
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Figure Nine: Change in the age-crime curve in the Scottish Offenders Index 1989-2012 split by sex



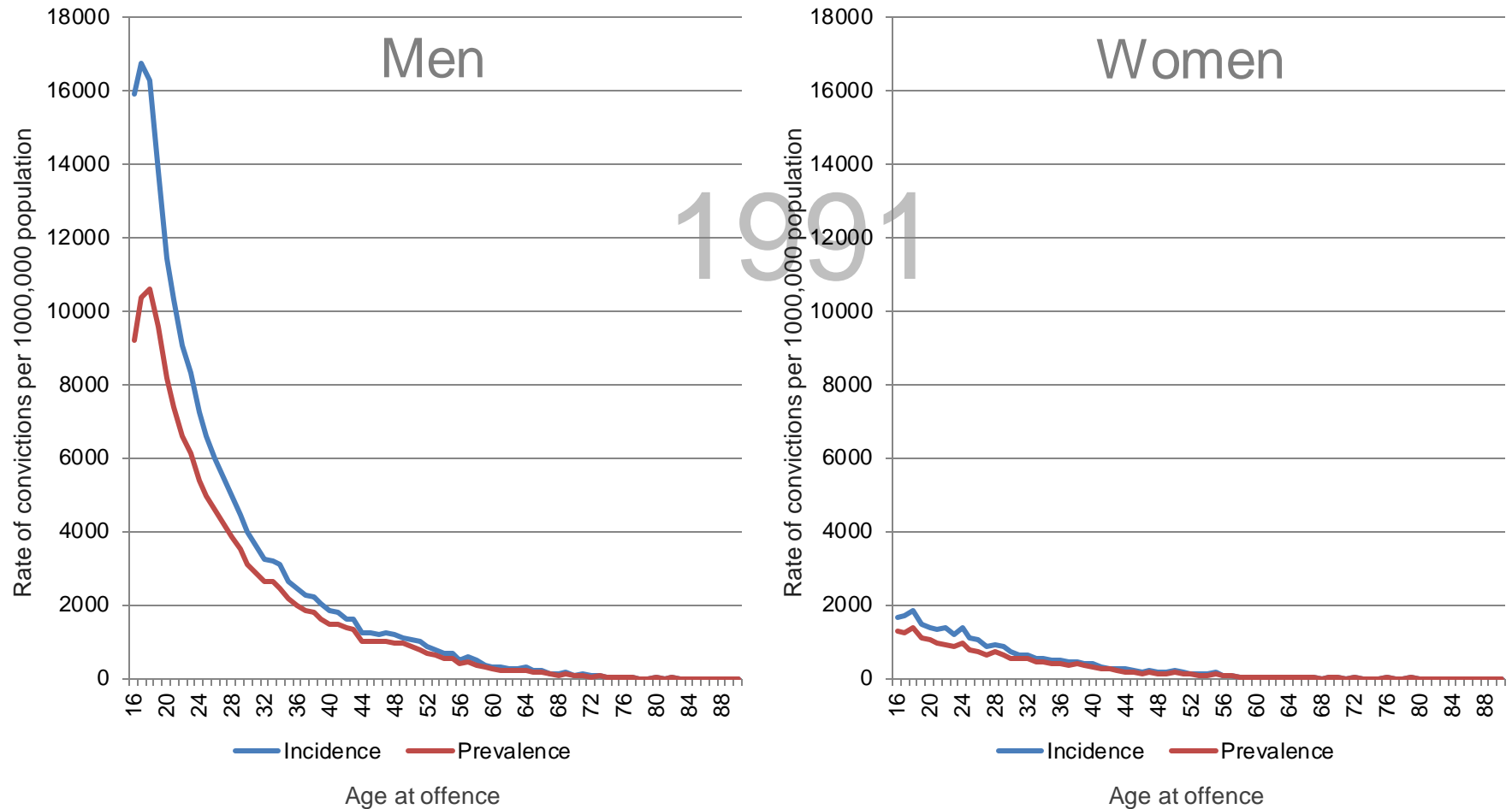
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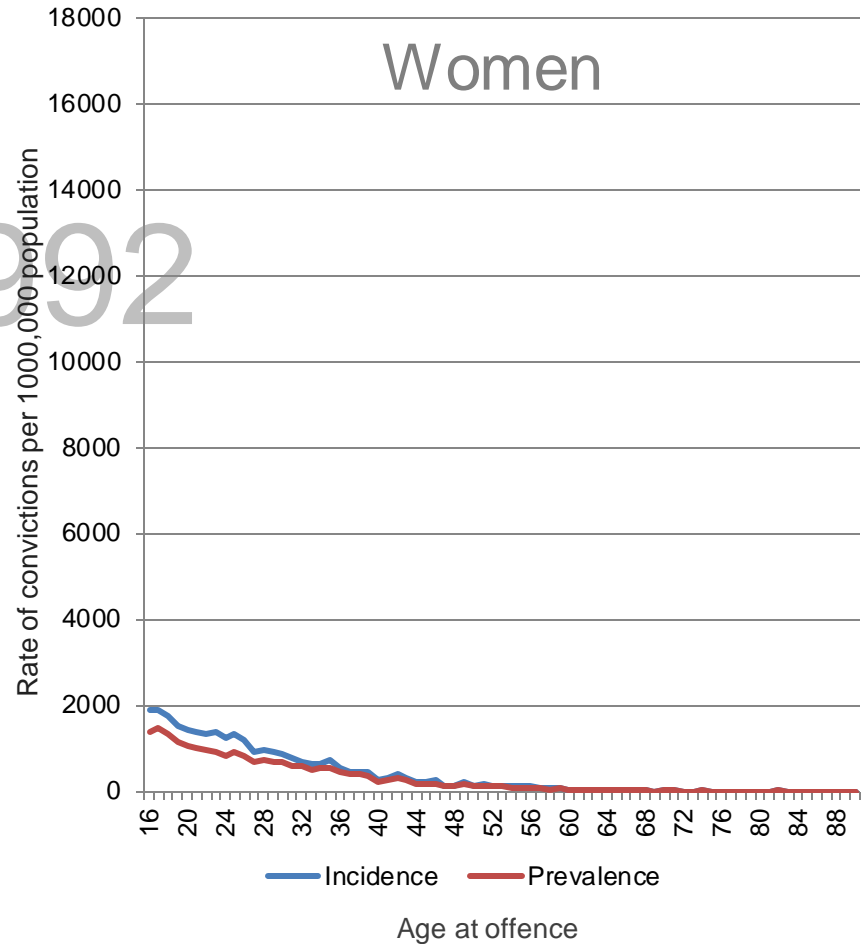
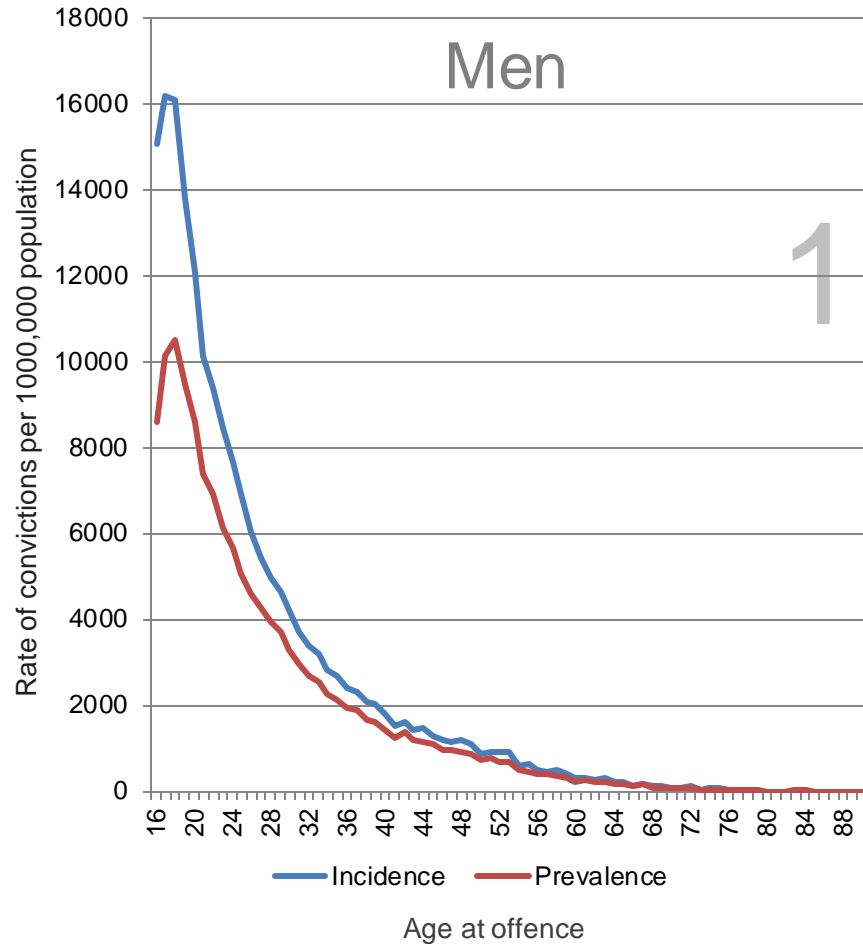
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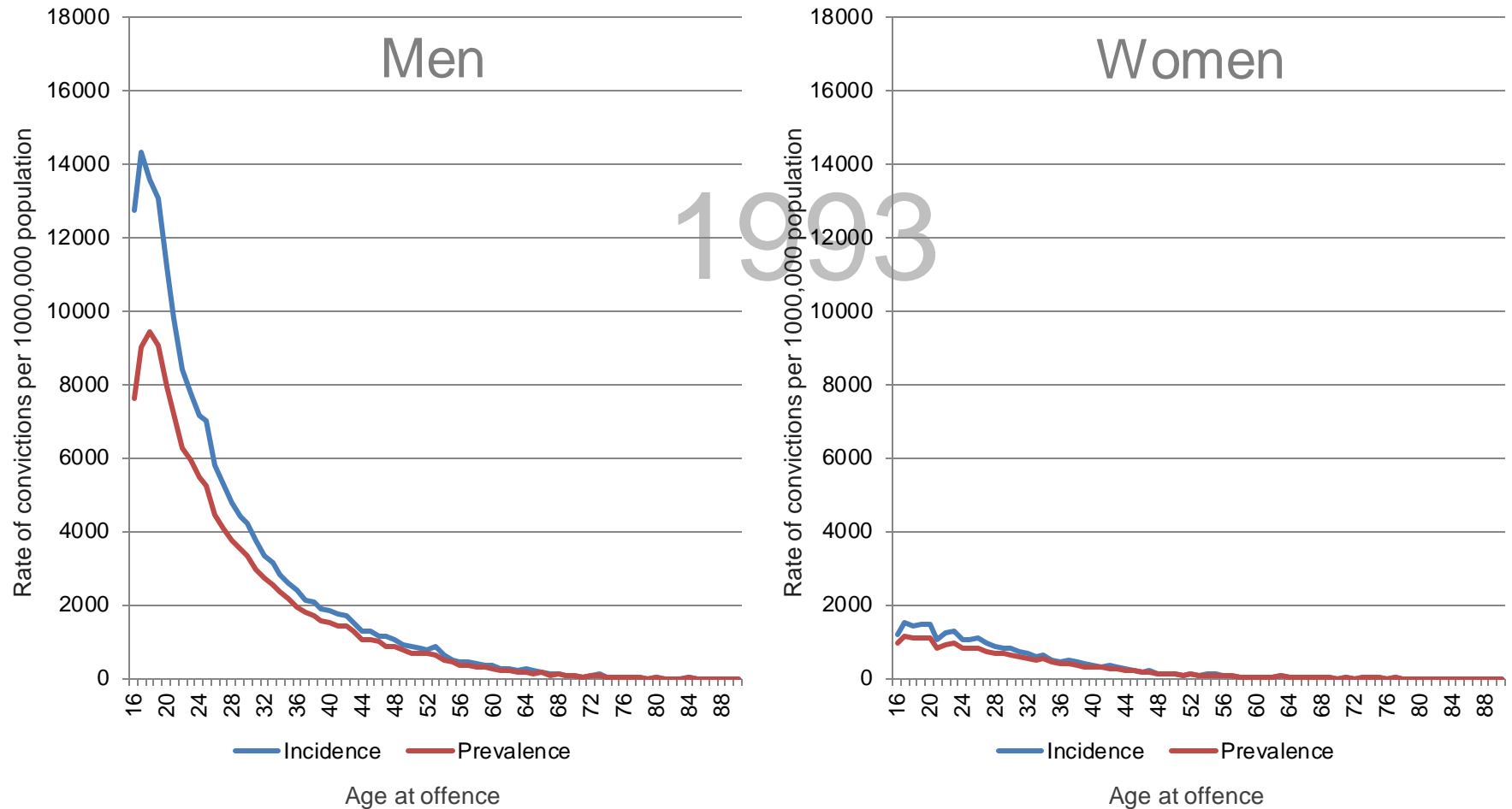
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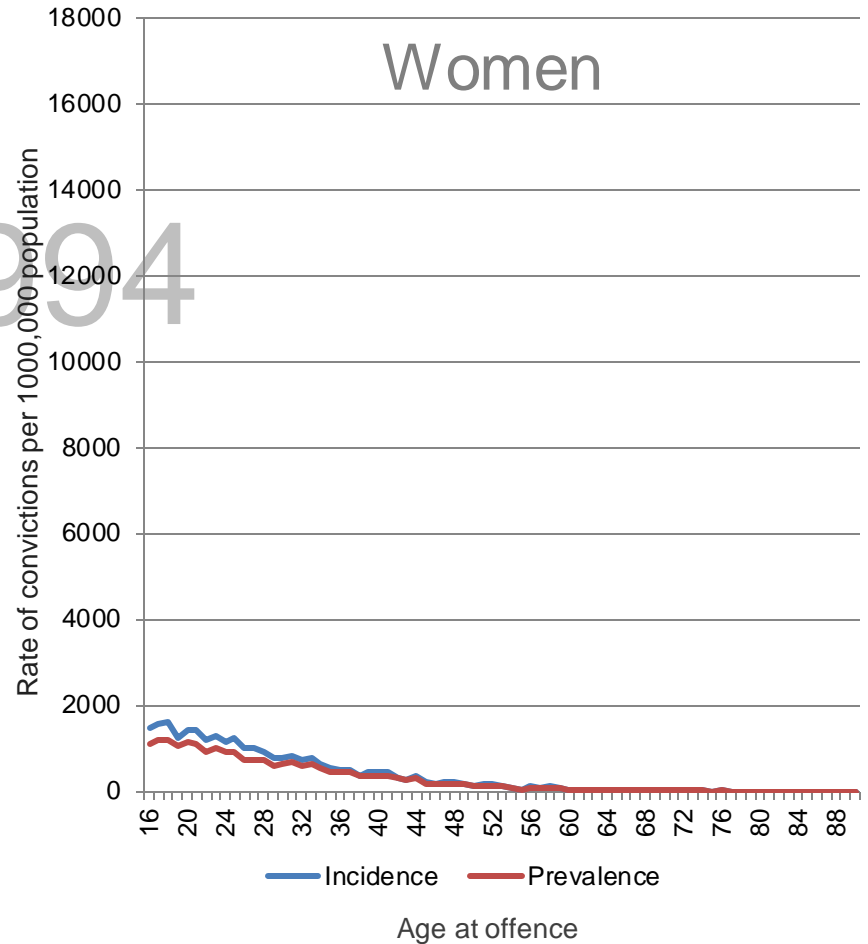
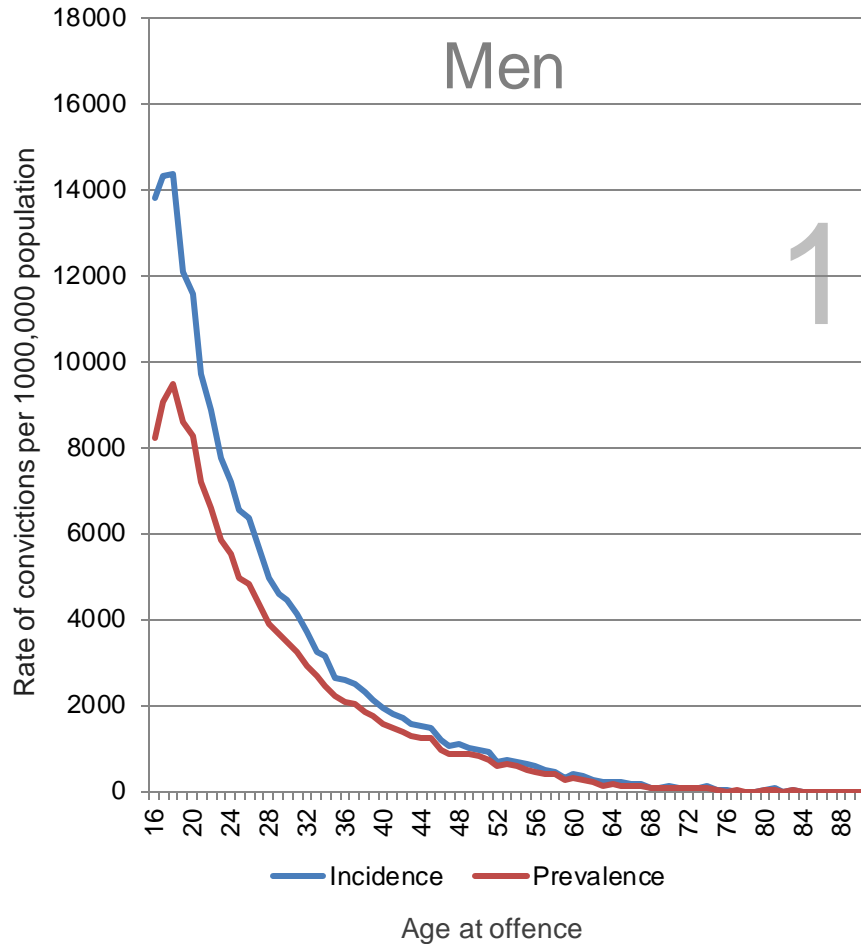
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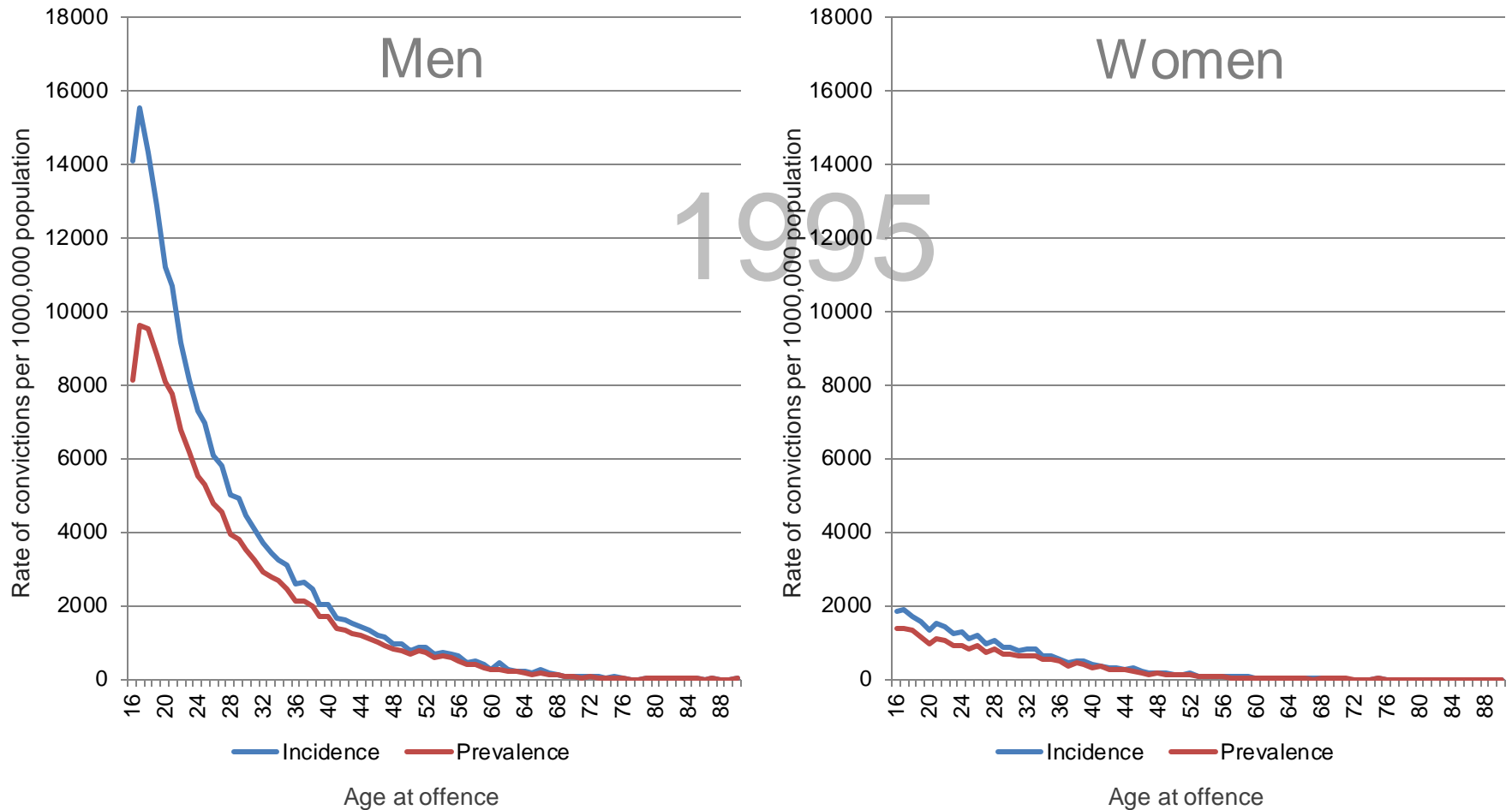
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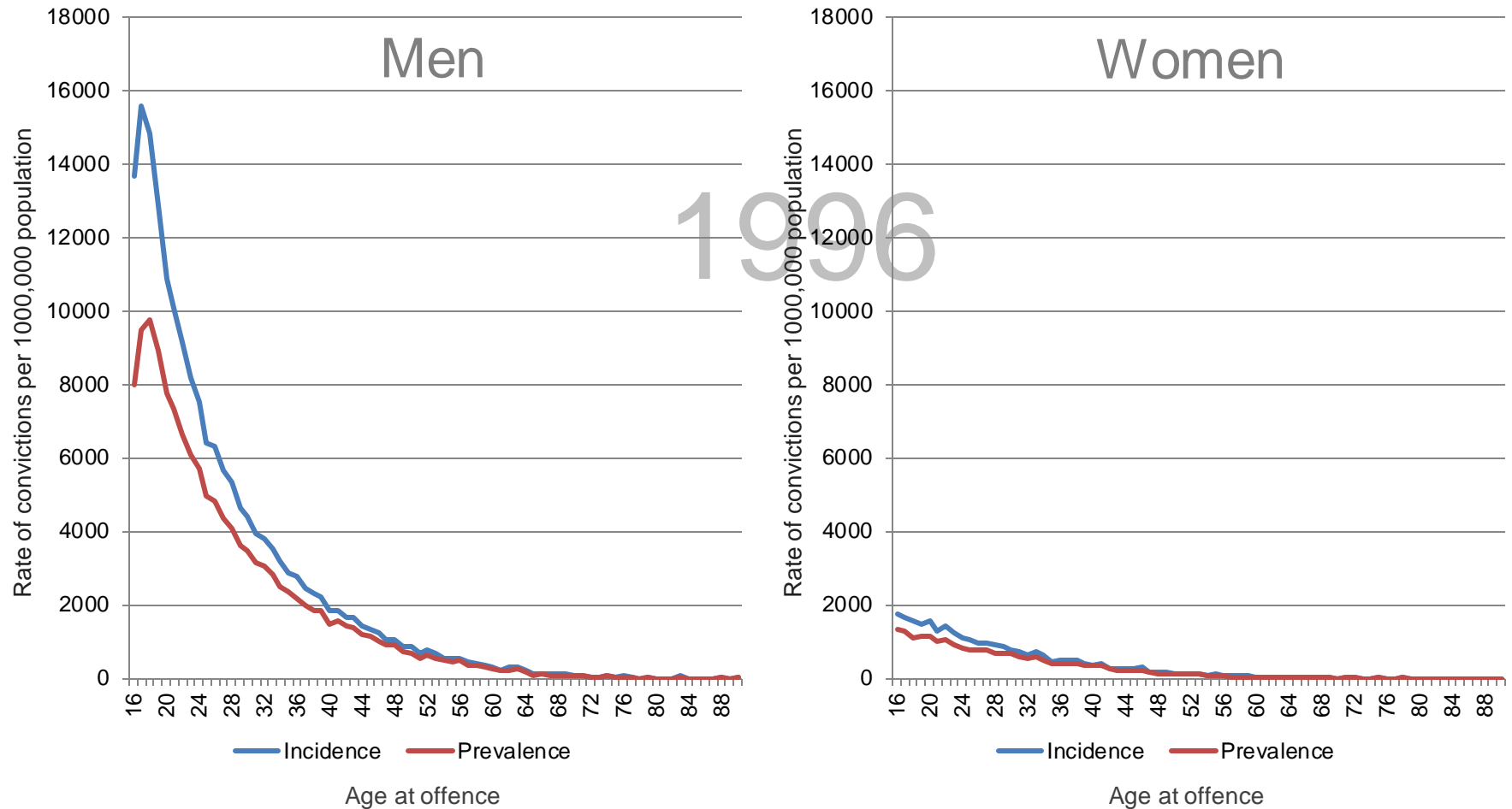
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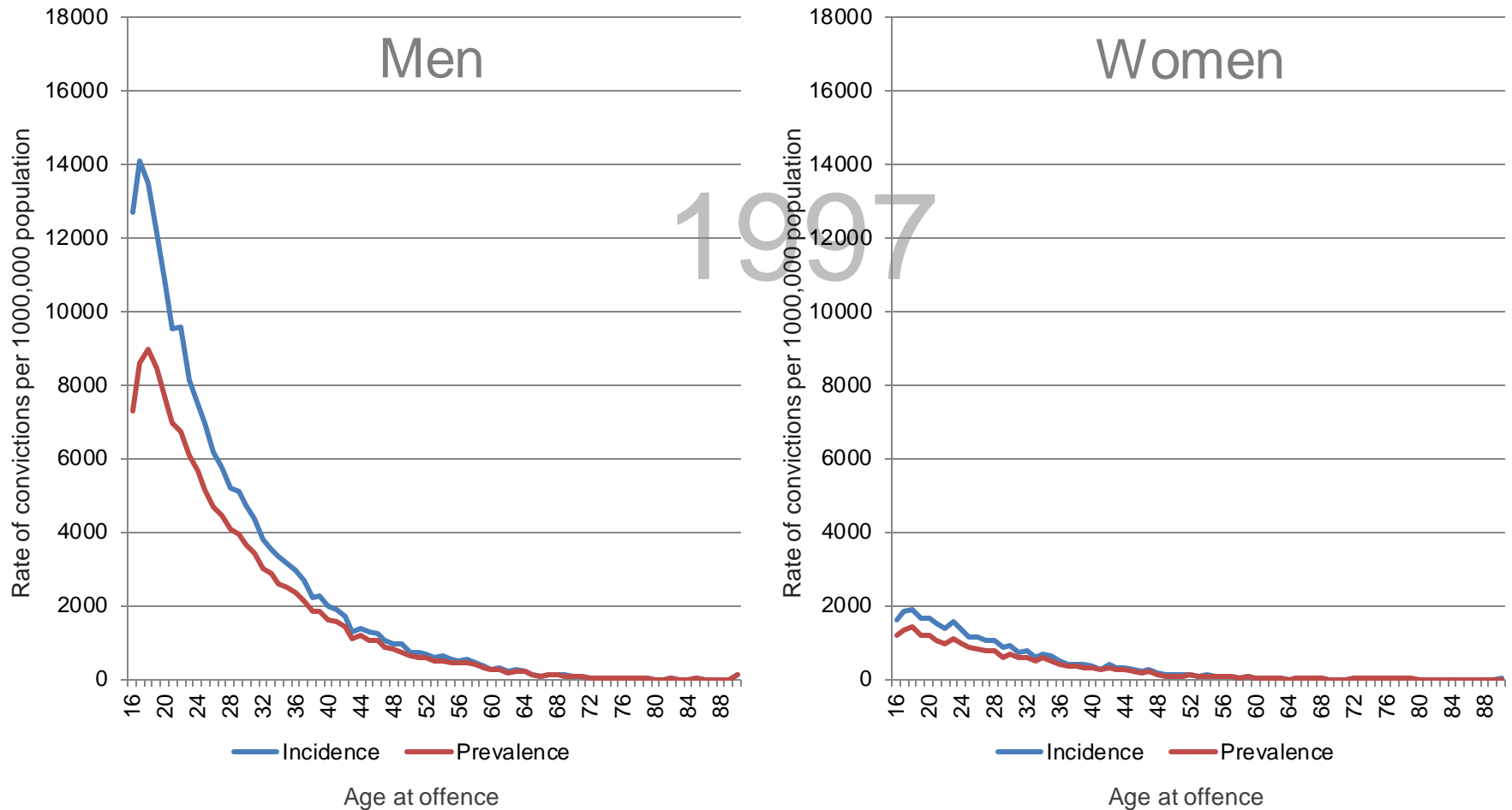
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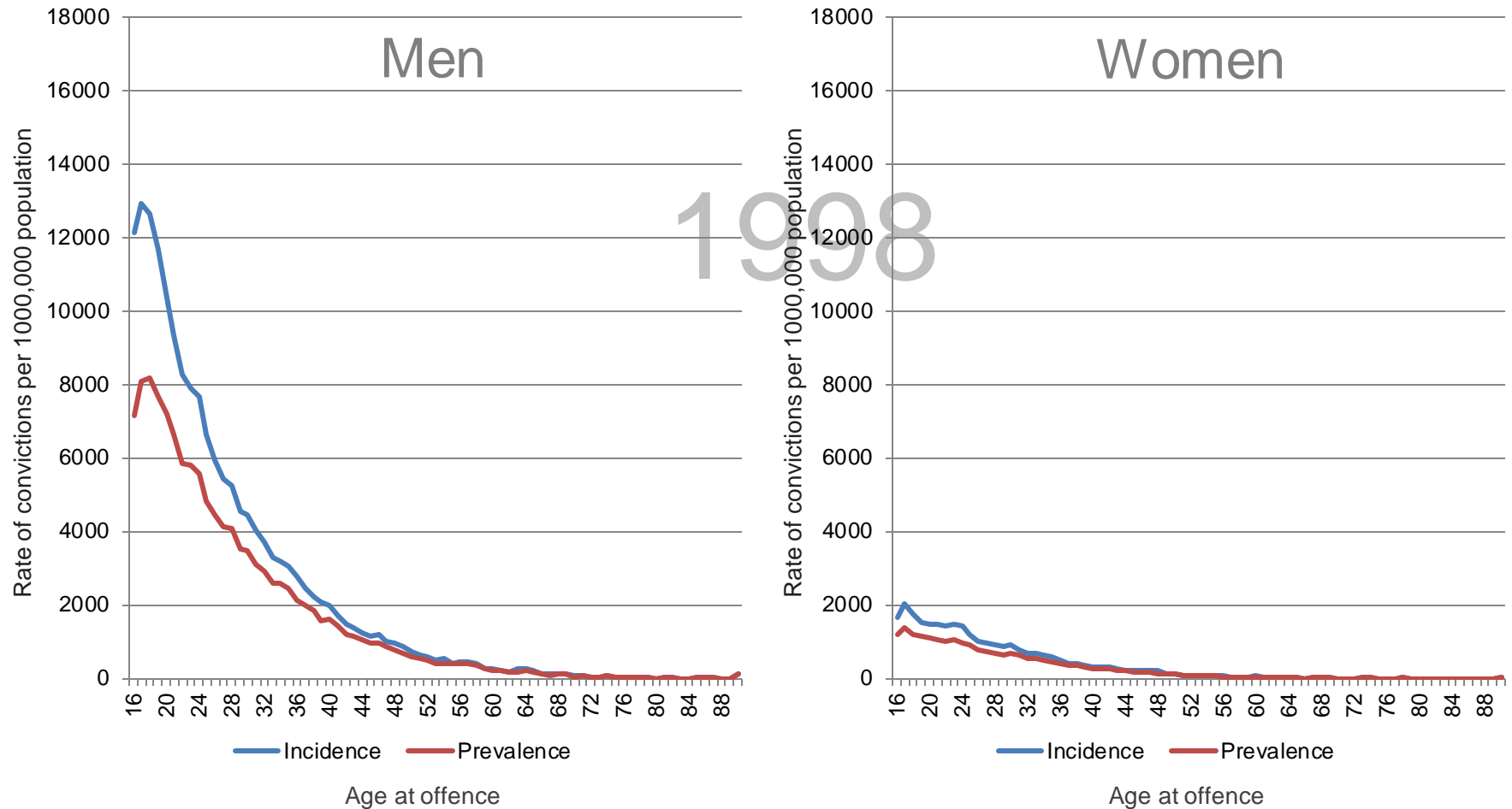
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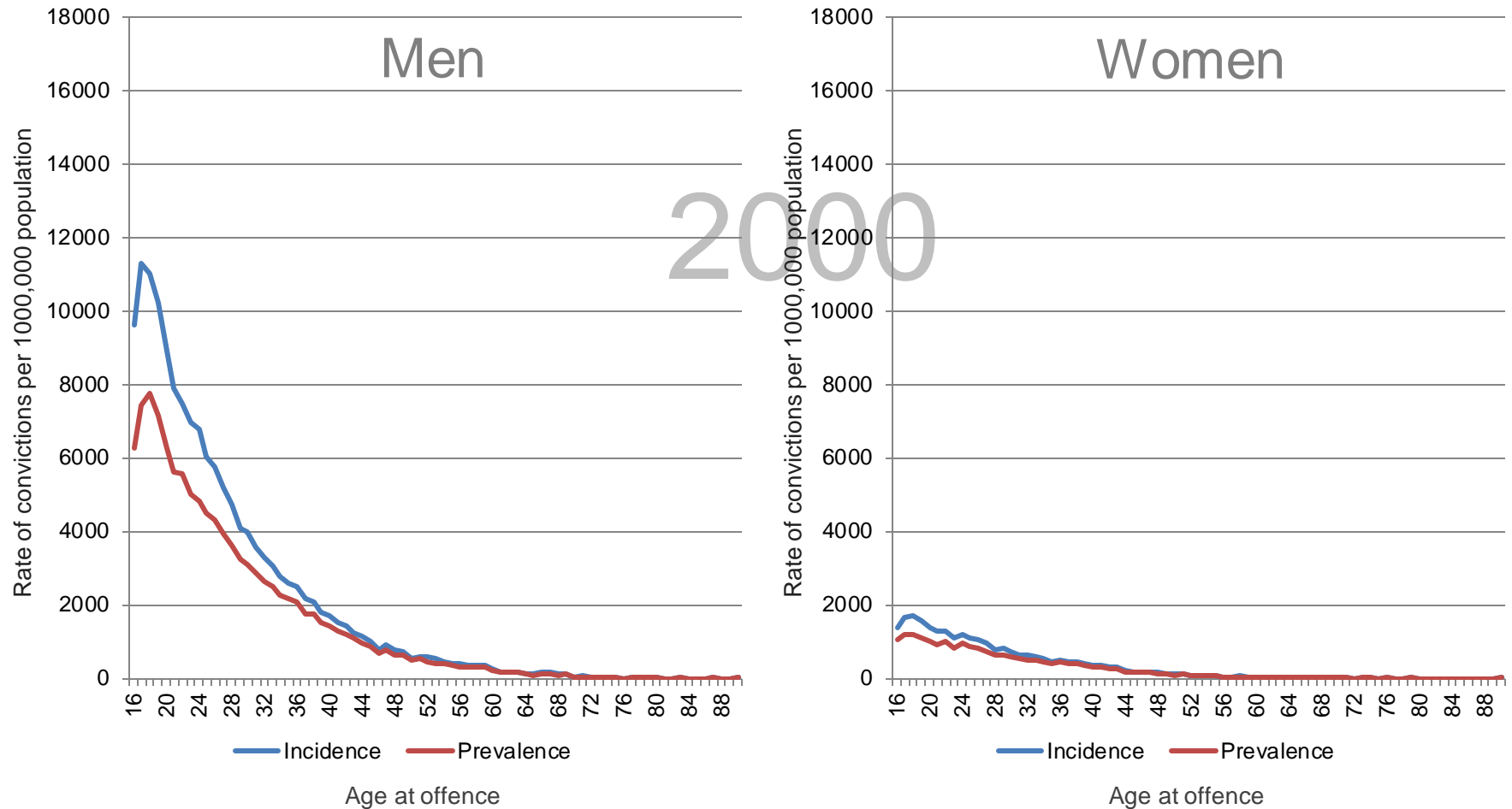
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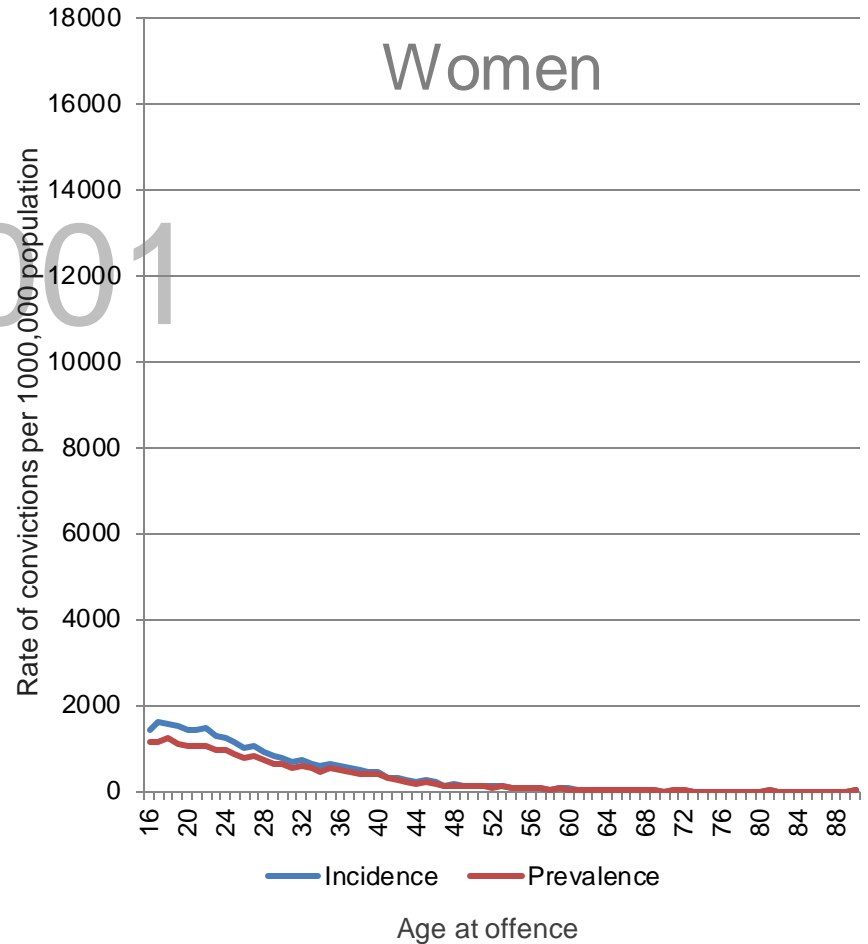
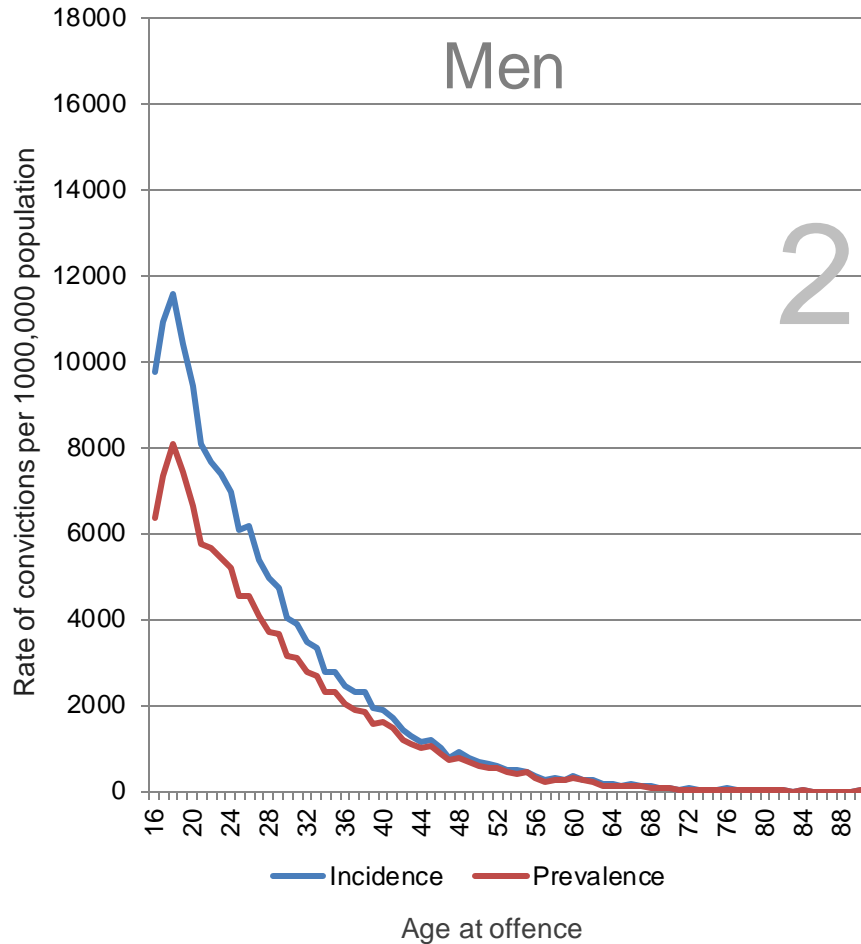
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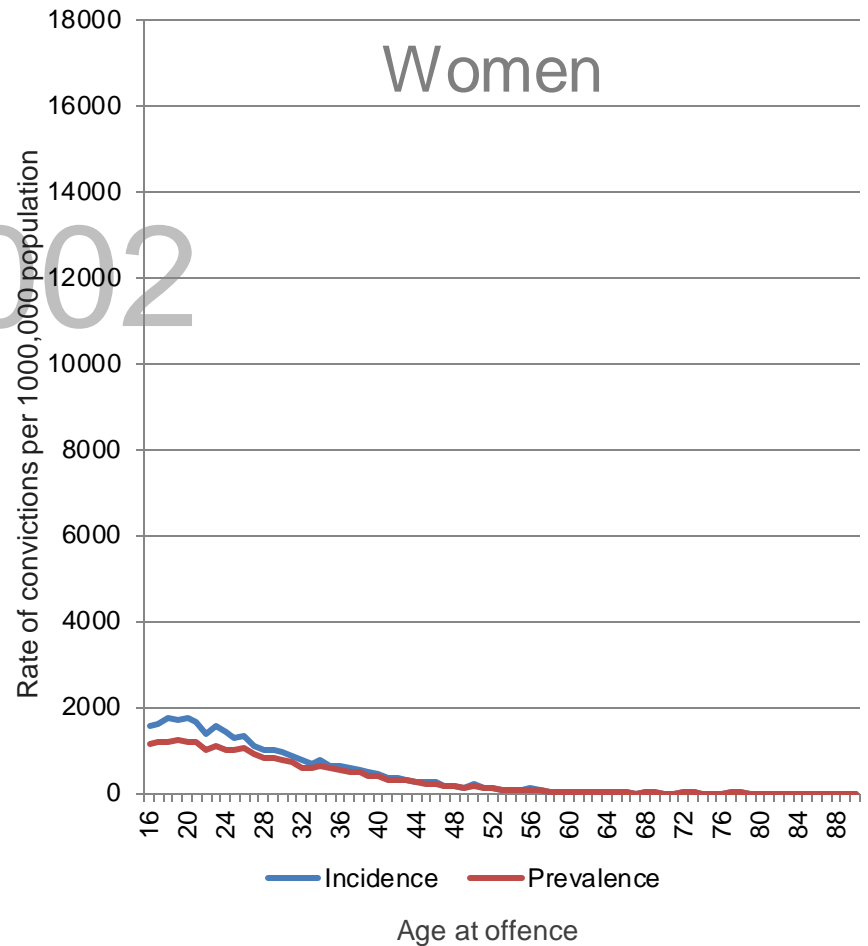
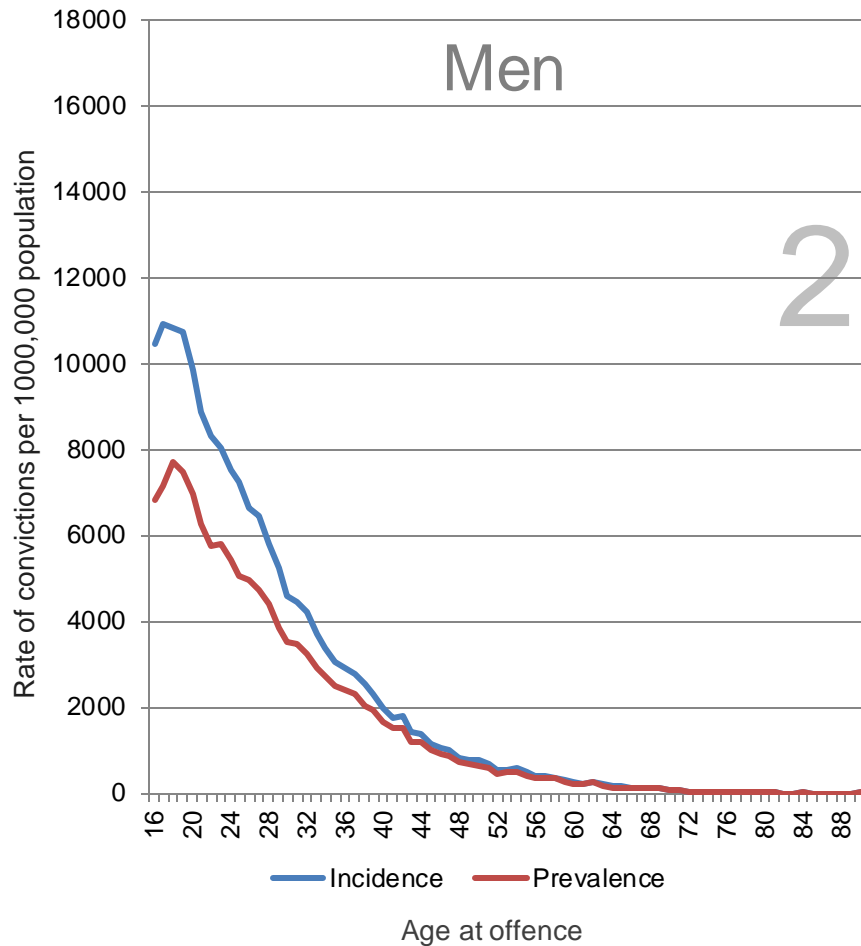
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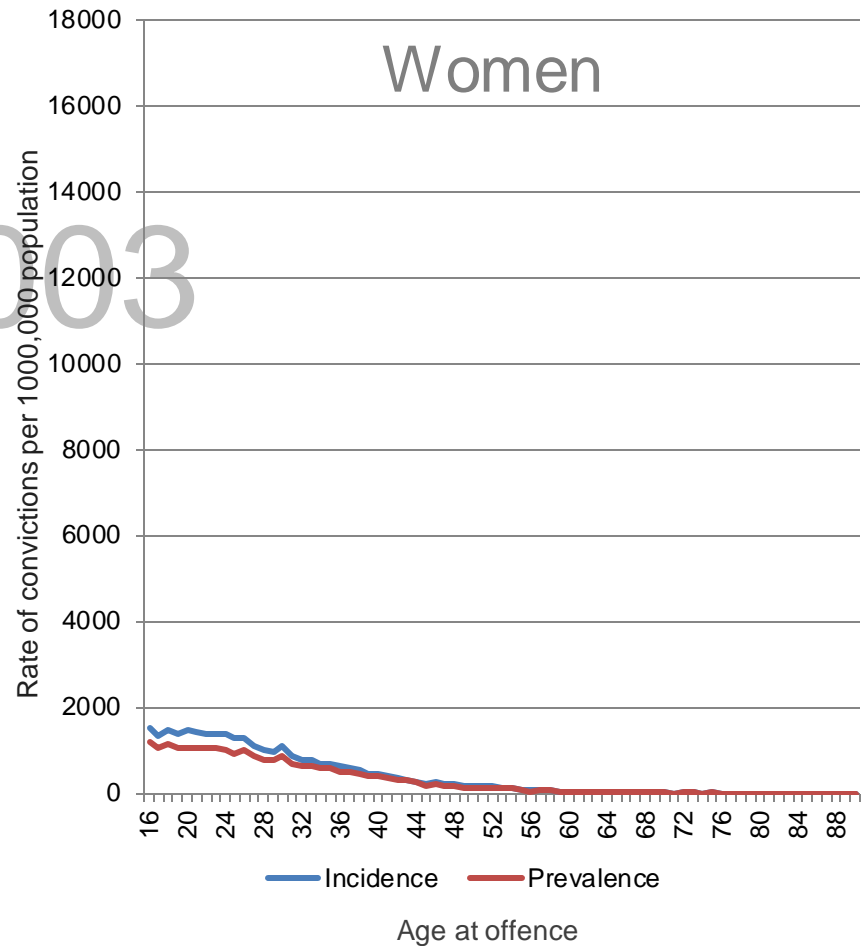
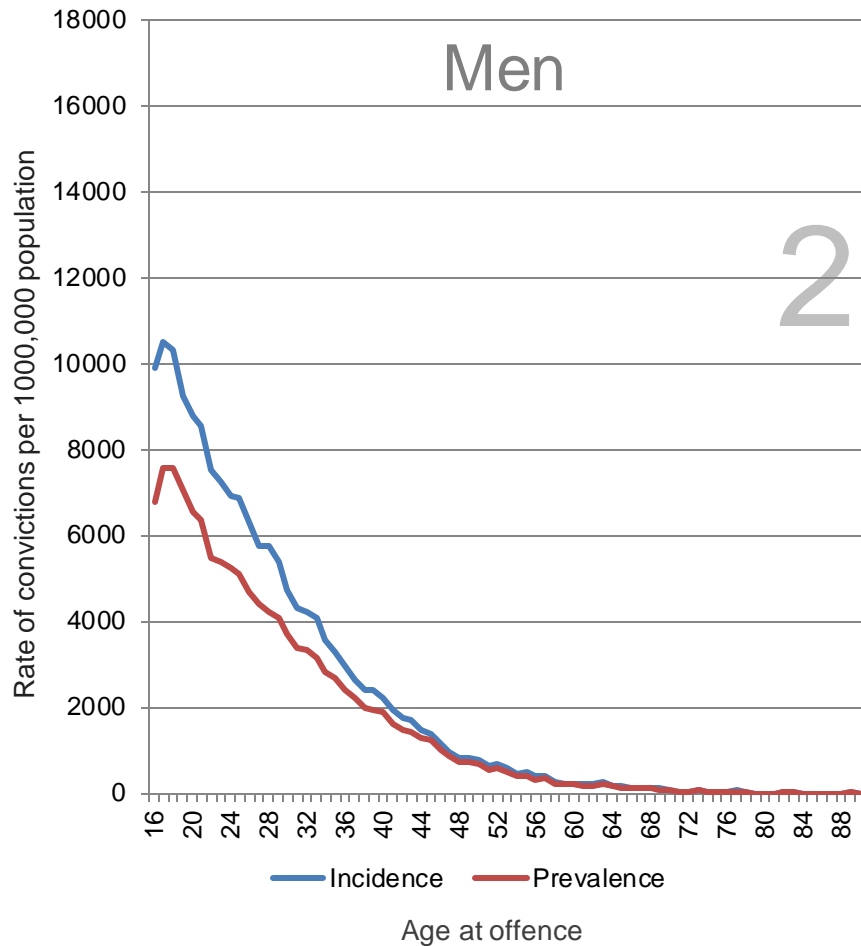
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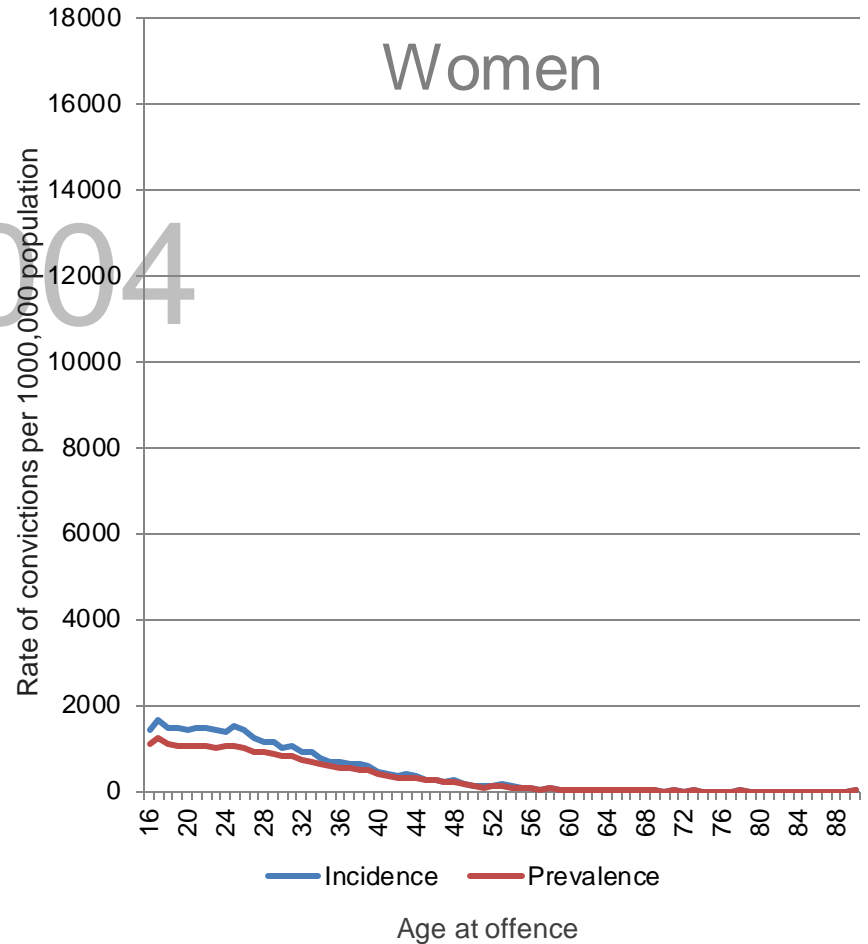
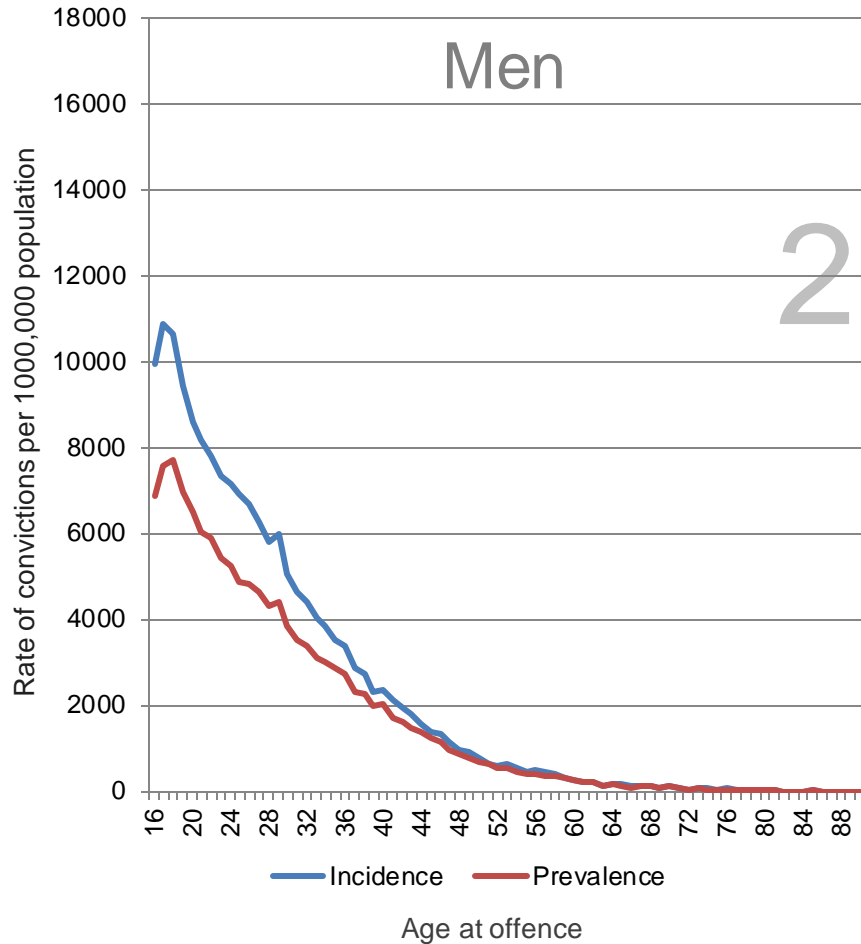
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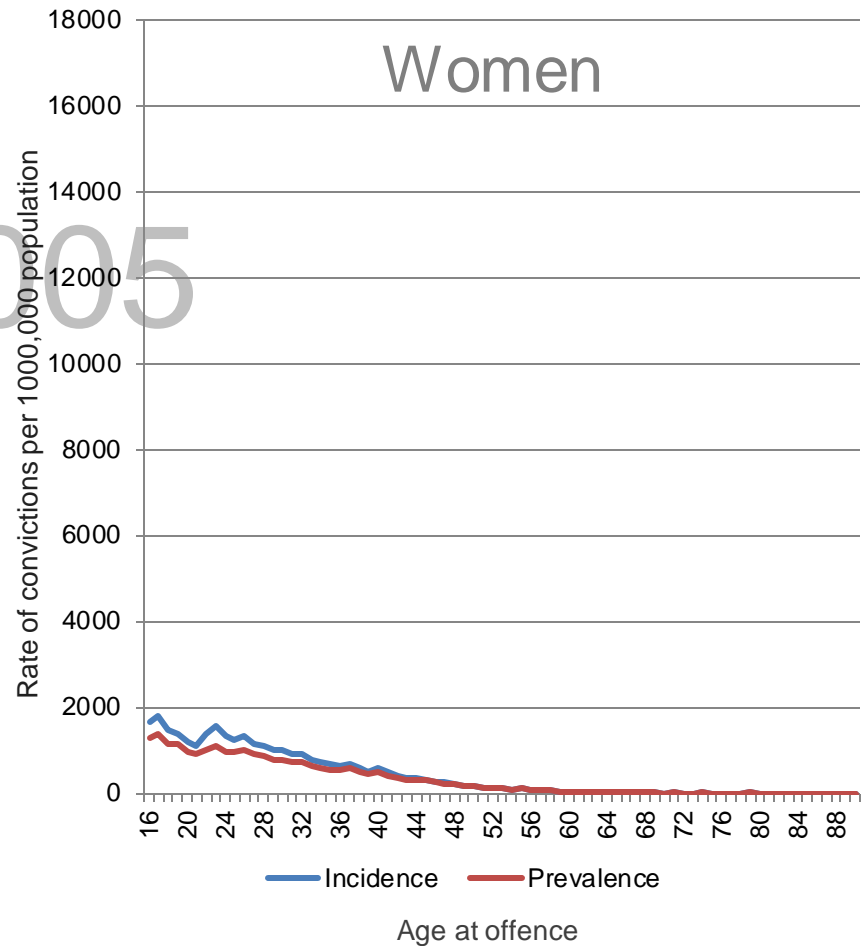
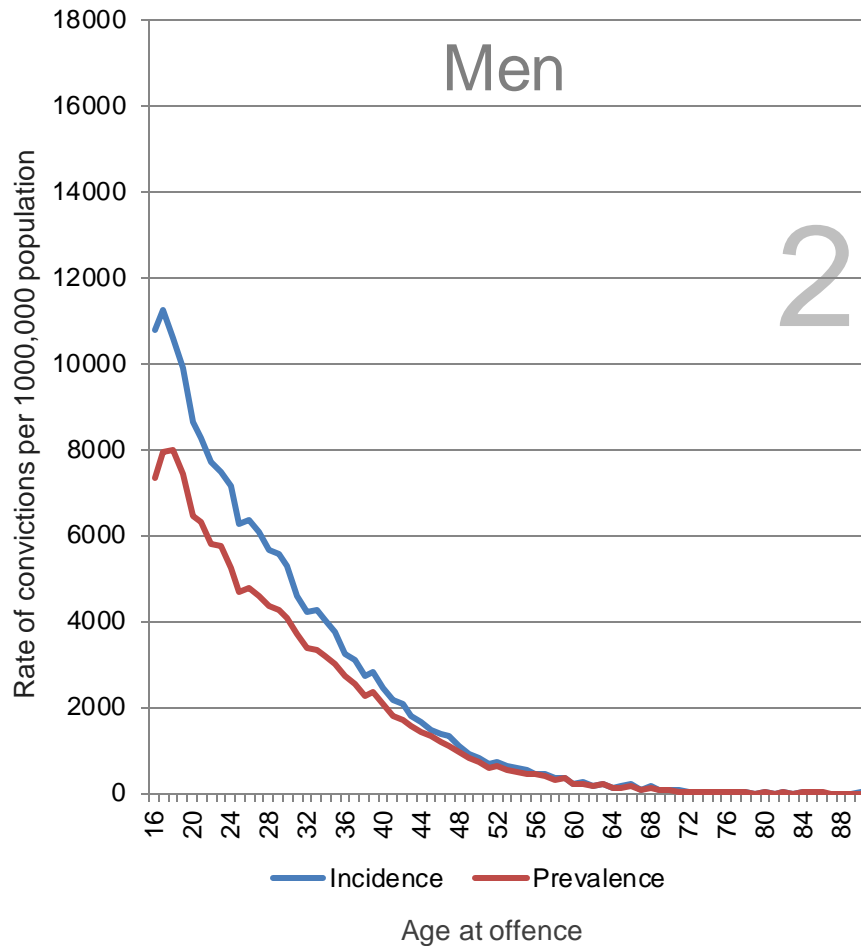
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2004

Results (2) – Different trends for men and women

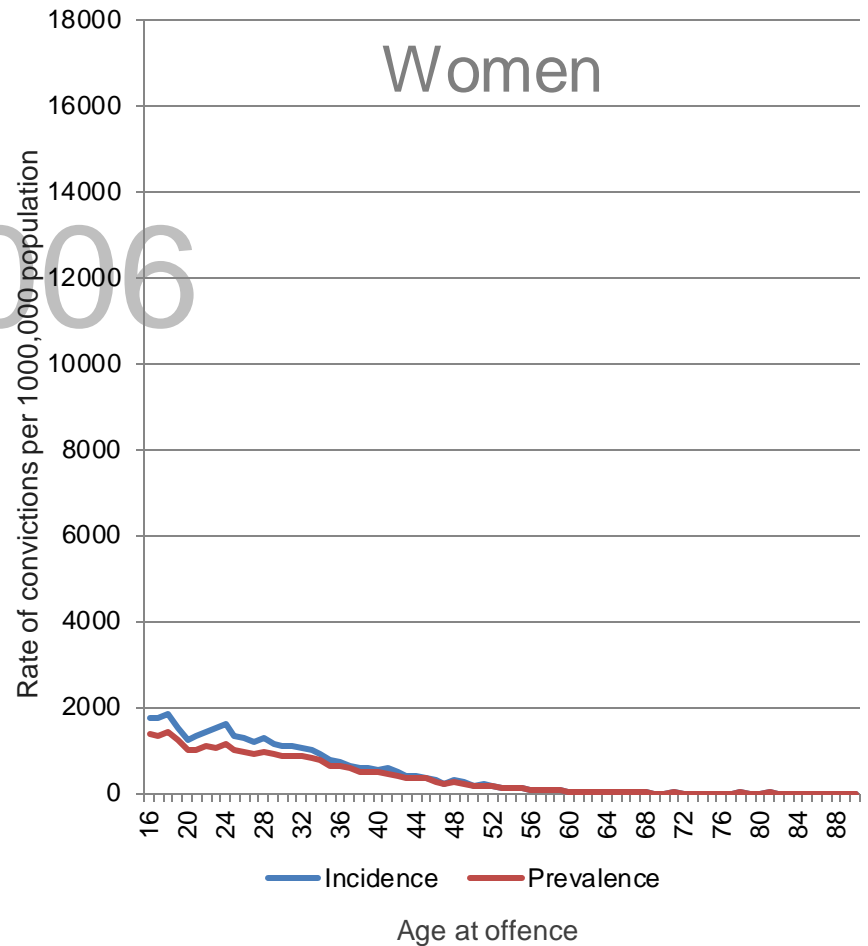
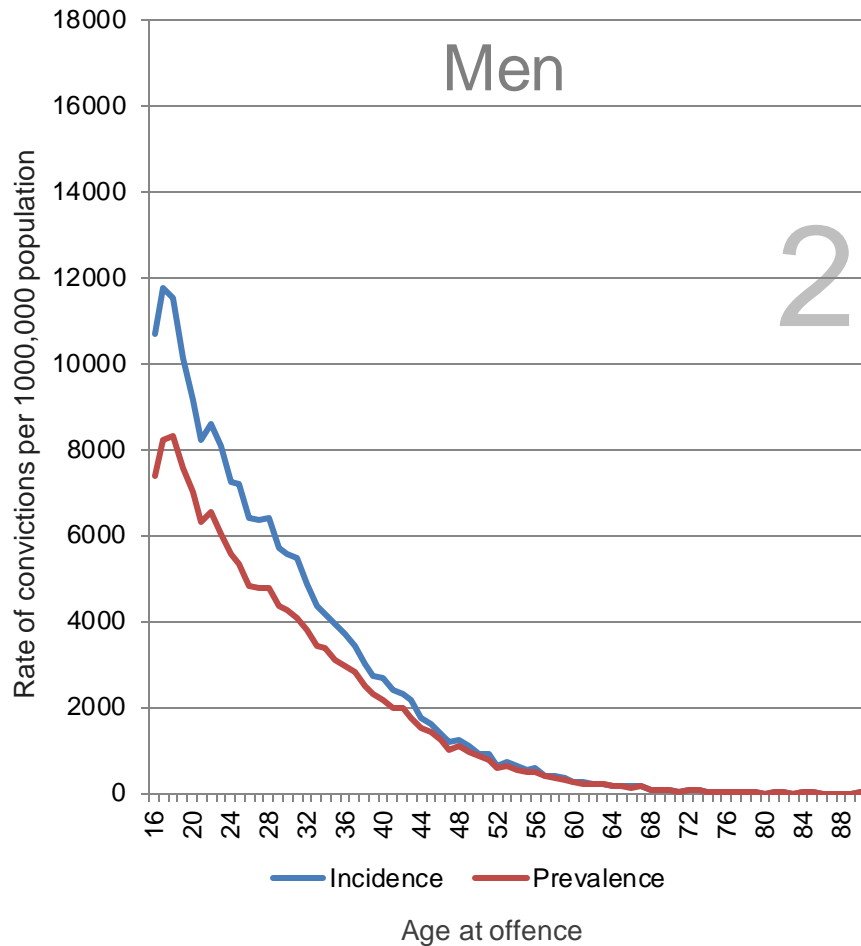
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2005

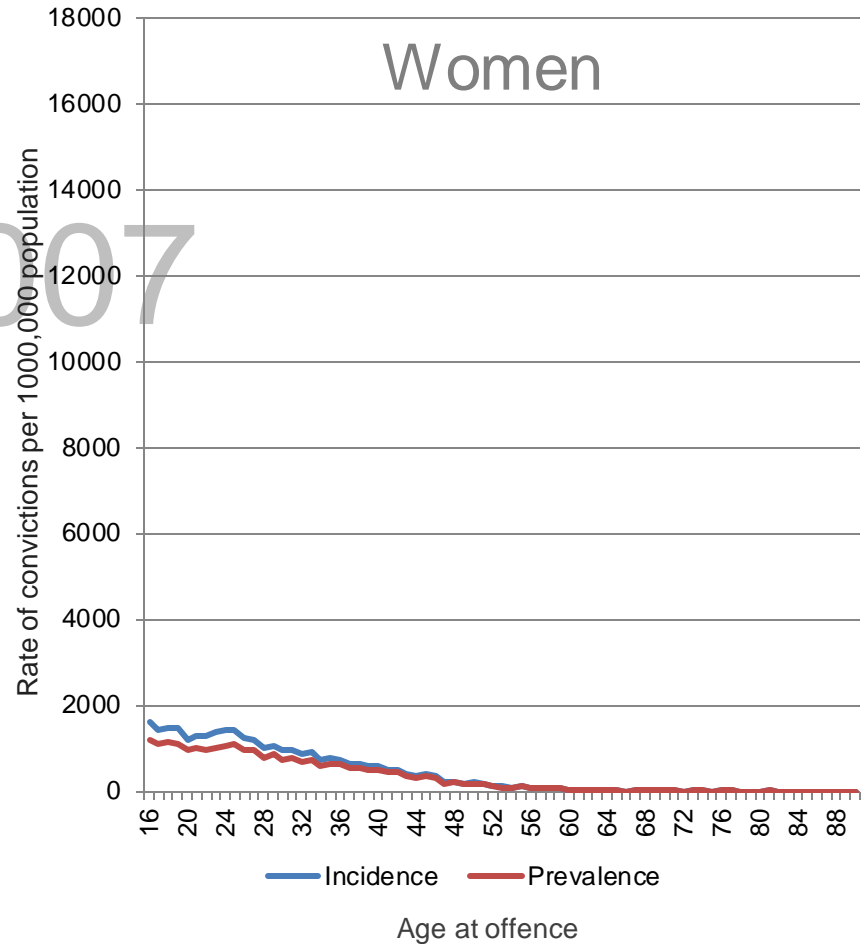
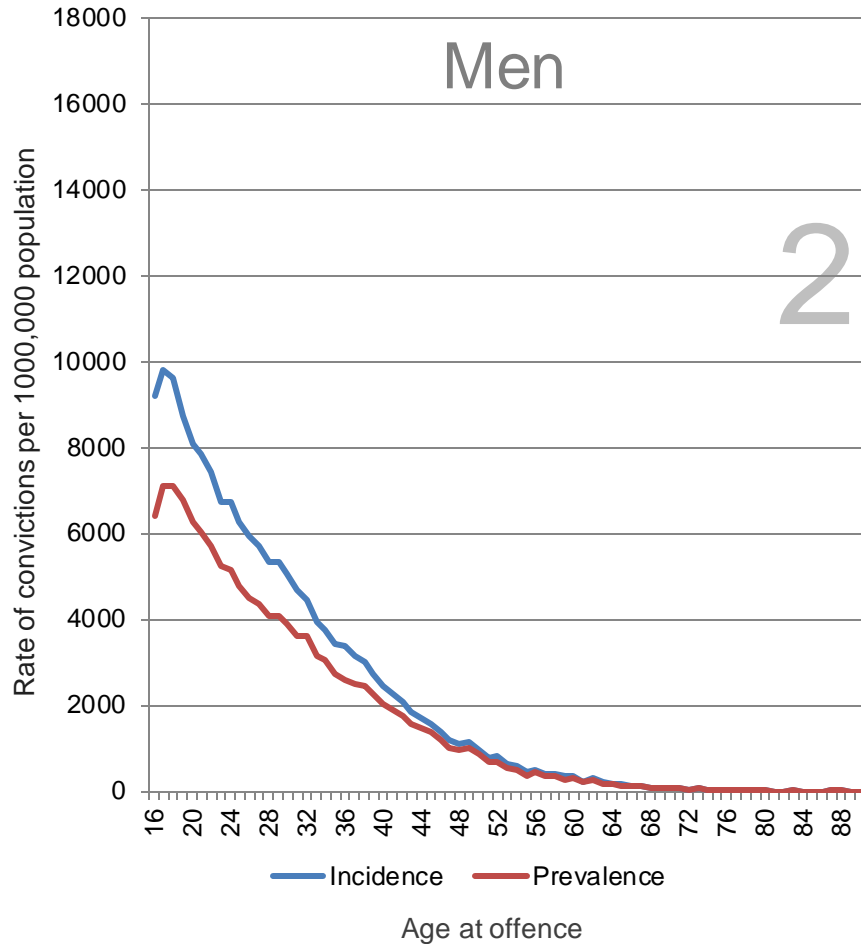
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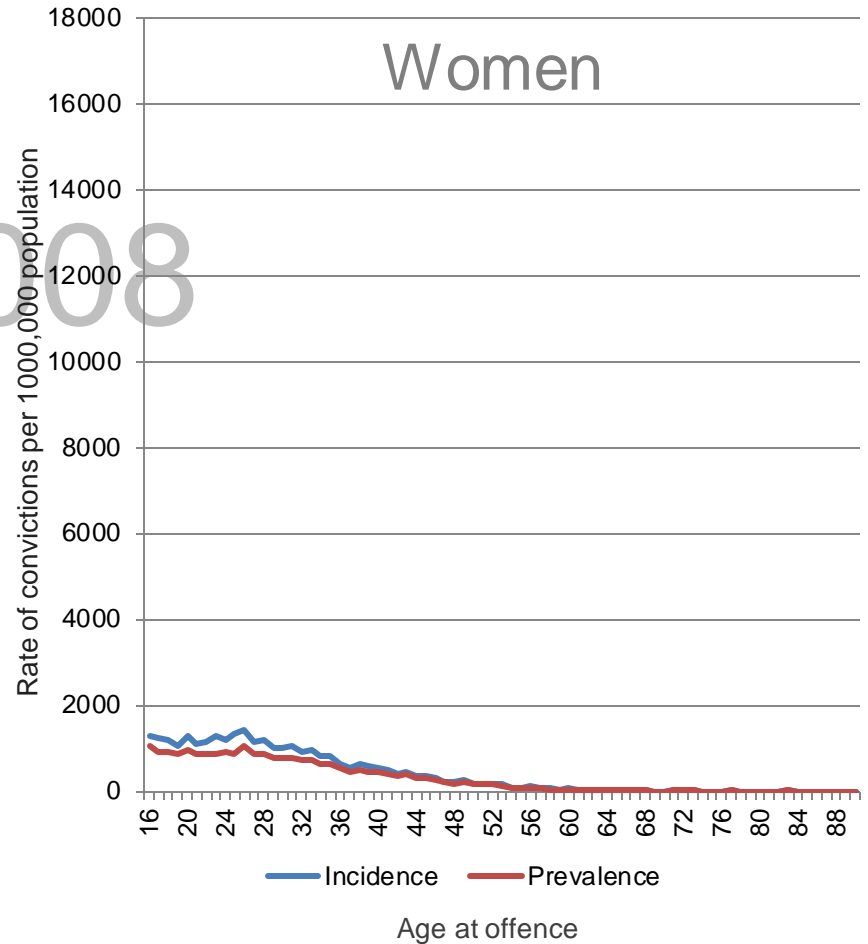
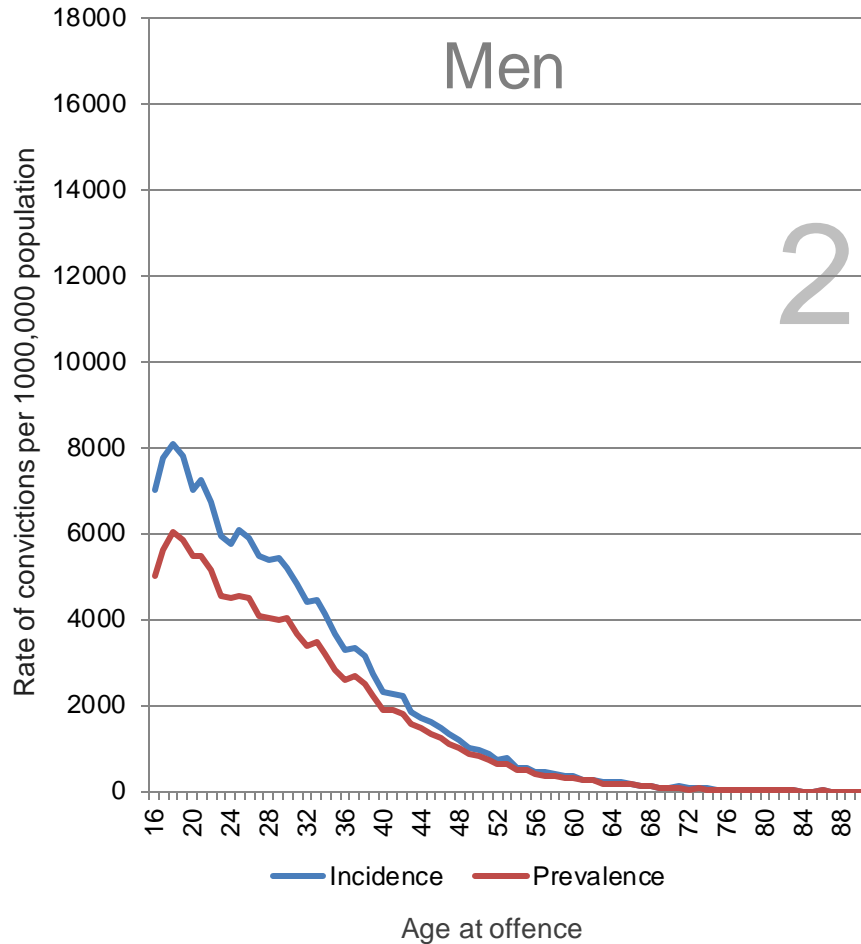
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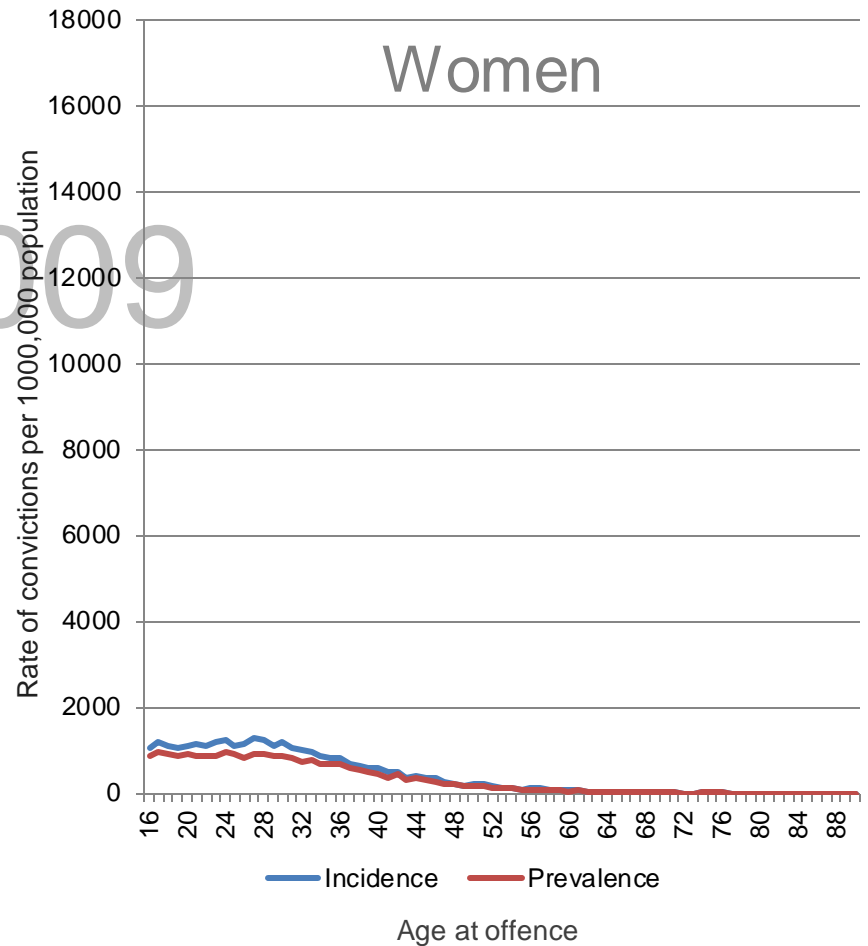
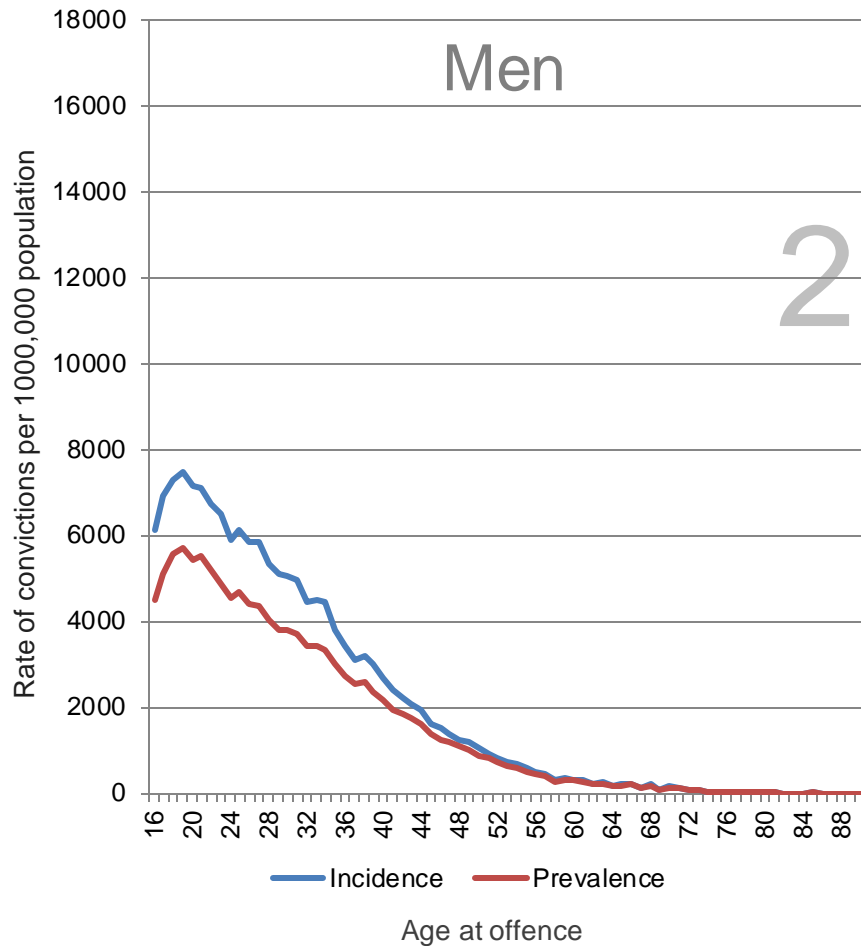
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2008

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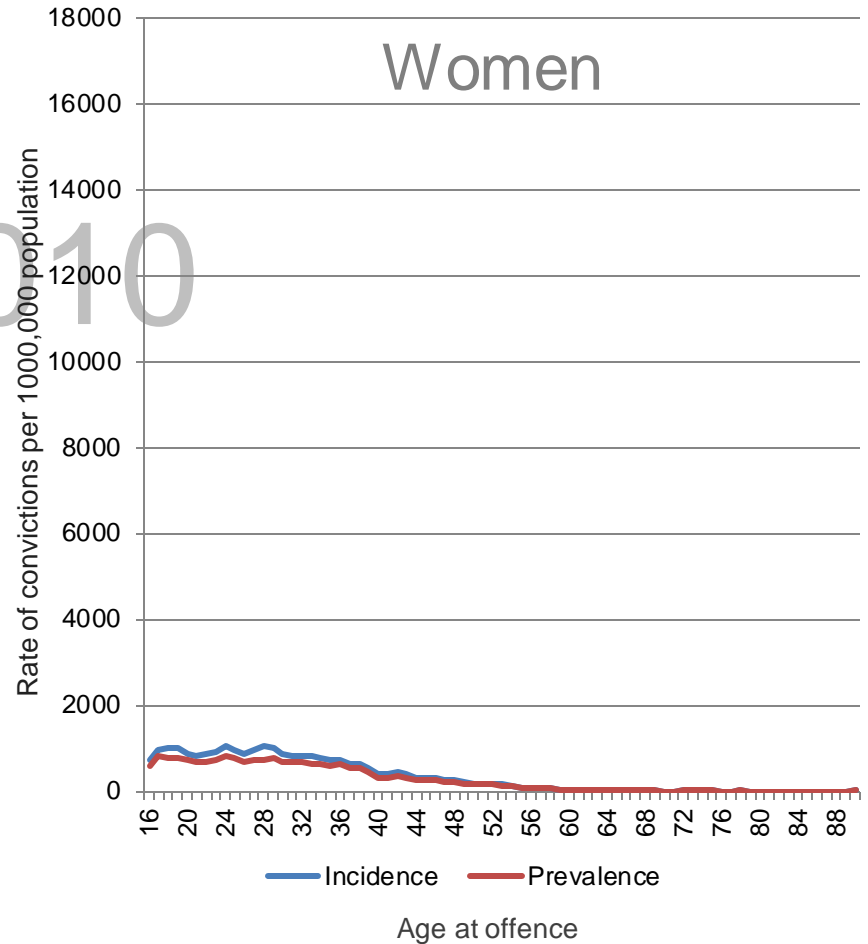
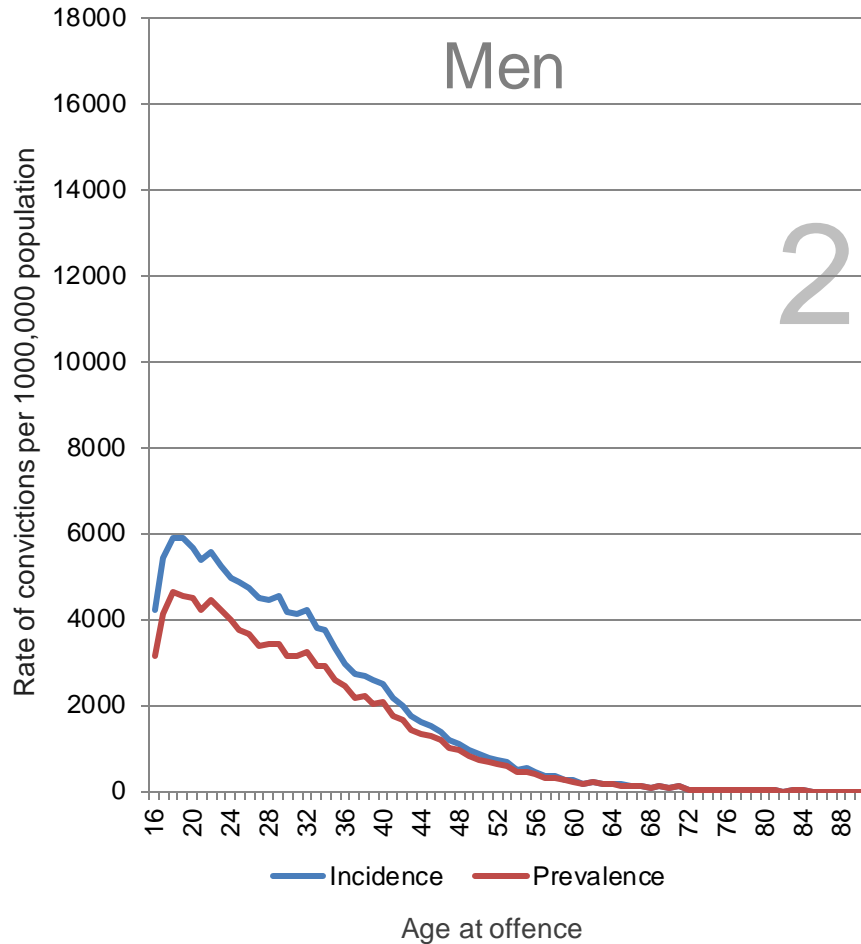
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2009

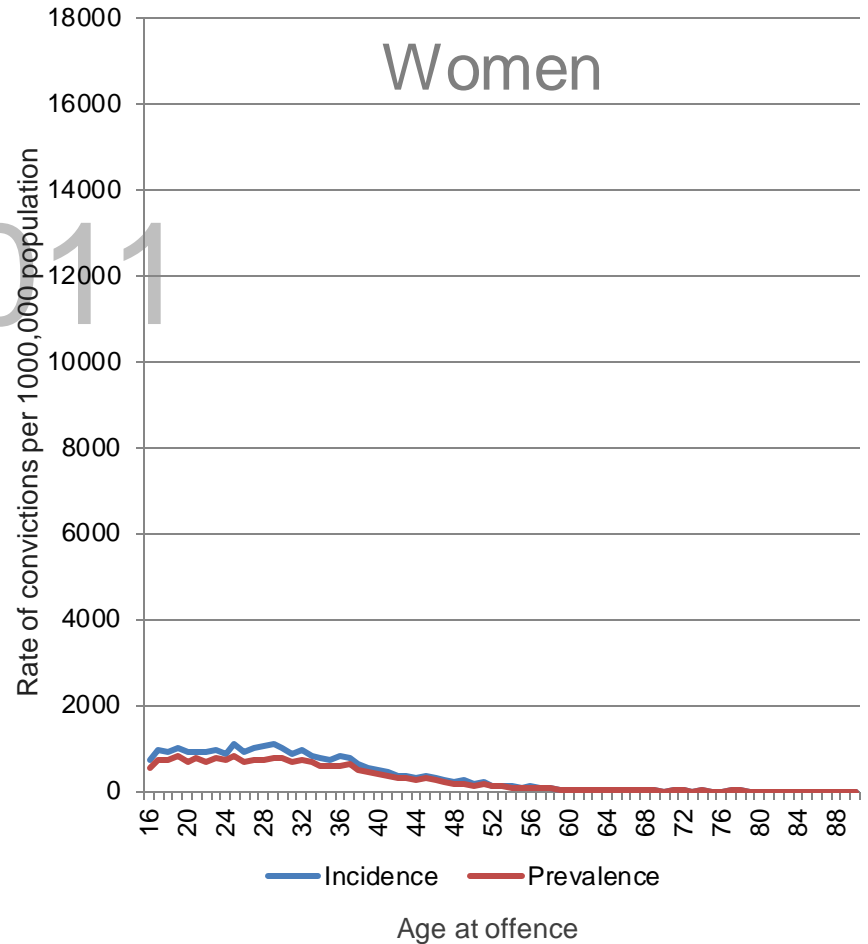
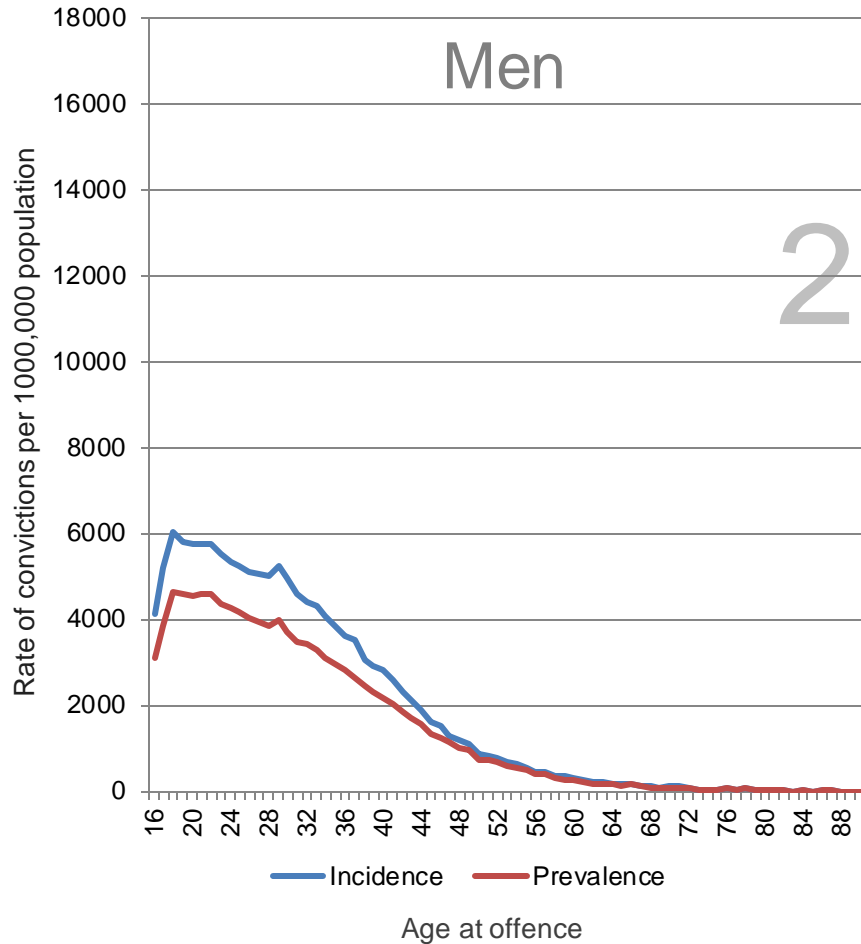
Results (2) – Different trends for men and women

Figure Nine: Change in the age-crime curve in the Scottish Offenders Index 1989-2012 split by sex



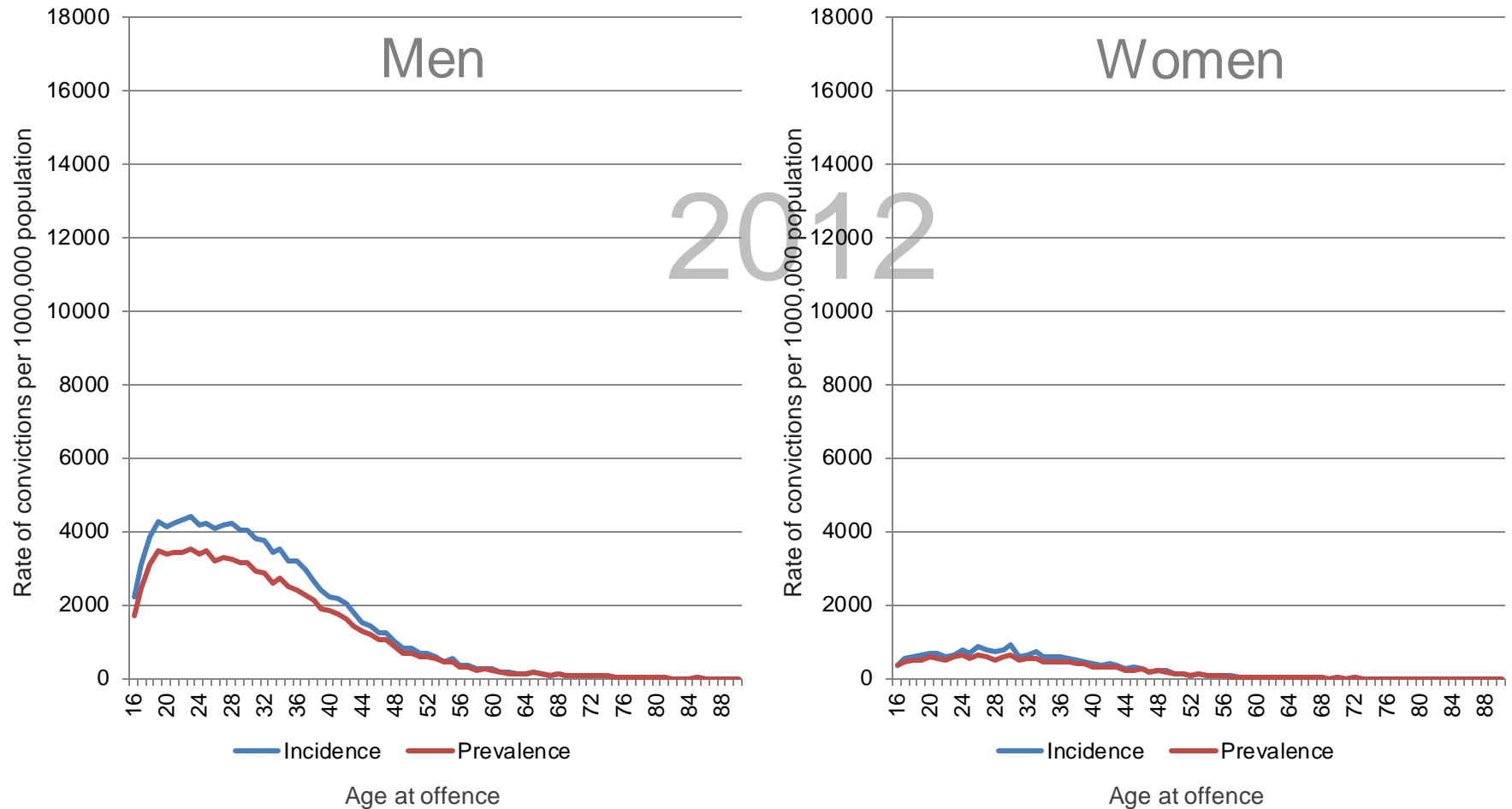
Results (2) – Different trends for men and women

Figure Nine: Change in the age-crime curve in the Scottish Offenders Index 1989-2012 split by sex



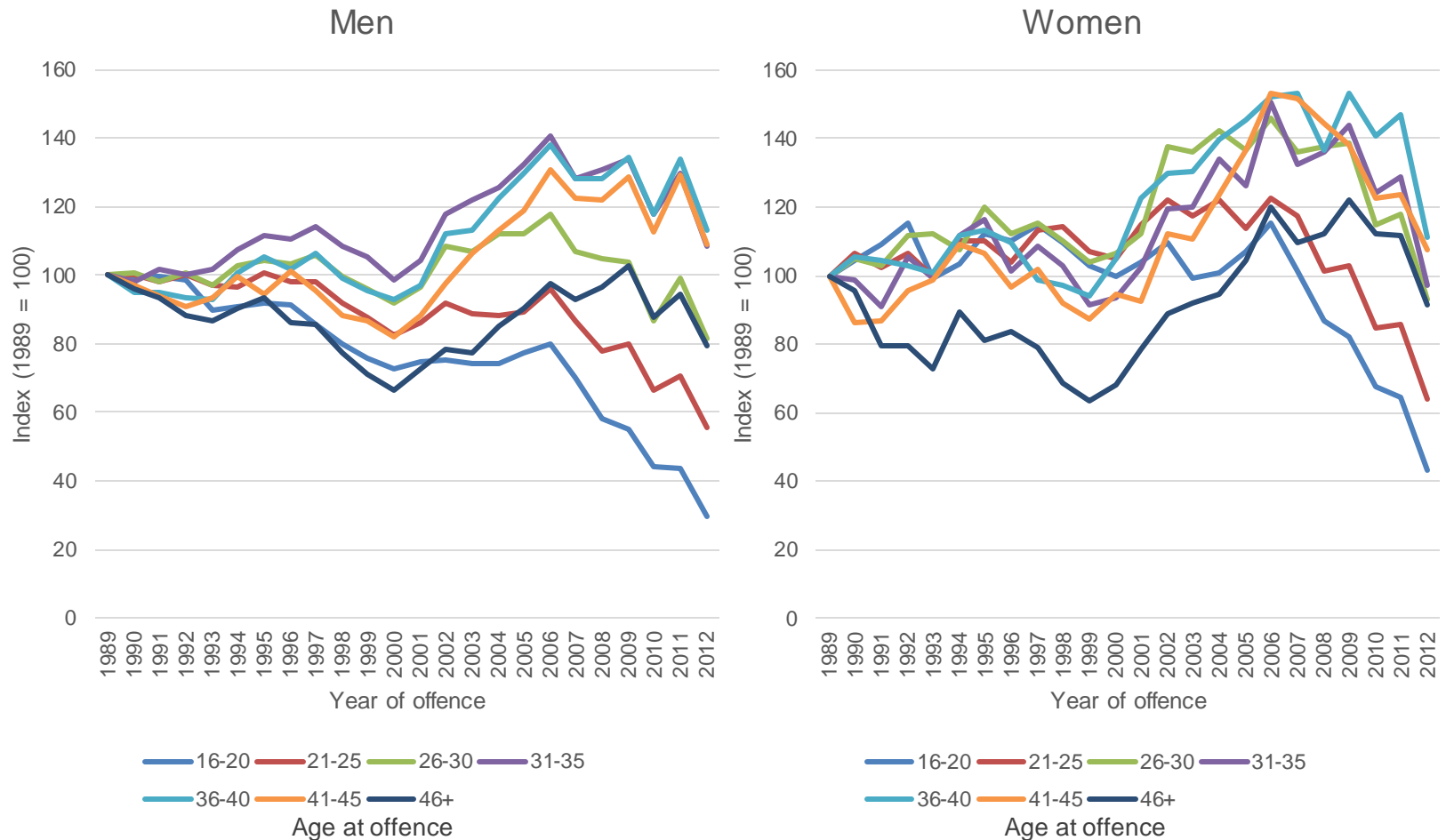
Results (2) – Different trends for men and women

Figure Nine: Change in the age-crime curve in the Scottish Offenders Index 1989-2012 split by sex



Results (2) – Different trends for men and women

Figure Ten: Trends in convictions rates for different age groups in the Scottish Offenders Index 1989-2012 split by sex



Results (2) – Different trends for men and women

Figure Ten: Trends in convictions rates for different age groups in the Scottish Offenders Index 1989-2012 split by sex



Summing up



- There have been **declines** in convictions to **young people** over course of the crime drop in Scotland
- The decline is **not evenly split between men and women**
- Convictions for **young men** decline between 1989-1999 and then again from 2007-2012, whilst convictions for **young women** only decline from 2007-2012
- Over the crime drop in Scotland there have been slight **increases** in convictions rates for those of **older ages**

... why?



- **Uncertainty** as to causes of the crime drop
- Possible explanations include **better security measures** such as car immobilizers, door and window locks (Farrell et al. 2011, Farrell, 2013)...
- ...and **changes** in the way the **justice system** deals with young offenders (see McAra and McVie, 2010)
- Explanations of the crime drop must be able to **account for divergent patterns** for different age groups
- **Where have all the young offenders gone?**

Thank you!

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Any questions?

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