

Adult Sex Offender Typologies

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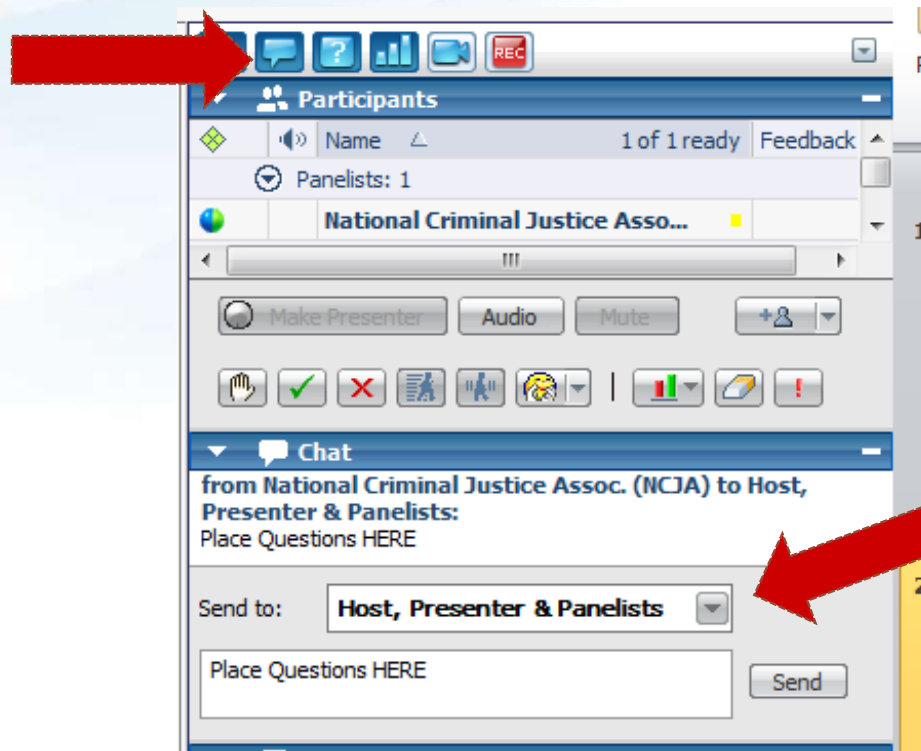
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Presenters

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Combating Sexual Offending and Victimization



- Practitioners and policymakers have a common goal: to protect the public from sex offenders and prevent sexual violence
- A variety of policies and programs exist
- Little known about “what works”
- Programs are more likely to be effective when based on scientific evidence

U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs (OJP) Role in Combatting Sexual Offending and Victimization



- Established in 2006 by AWA
- First federal office devoted solely to sex offender management-related activities
- Responsible for assisting with implementation of SORNA, and for informing about a broader scope of sex offender management activities needed to ensure public safety
- SOMAPI: identify evidence based practices, current gaps/needs of the field, and provide guidance to states and locals

SMART Office Sex Offender Management Assessment and Planning Initiative



- Goal is to identify research-supported programs for replication across the U.S.
 - Inform OJP funding decisions concerning sex offender programming and research
- Assess the state of research and practice of sex offender management
 - Work conducted by subject-matter experts through NCJA
 - Review of the literature on sexual offending and sex offender management
- 2012 Discussion Forum involving national experts

SMART Office Sex Offender Management Assessment and Planning Initiative



Literature reviews on 8 adult and 5 juvenile topics

Important to distinguish between adults and juveniles

Adult Topics

Incidence and prevalence
Etiology
Typologies
Risk assessment
Recidivism
Internet offending
Treatment effectiveness
Management strategies

Juvenile Topics

Etiology/typologies
Risk assessment
Recidivism
Treatment effectiveness
Registration and notification

SMART Office Sex Offender Management Assessment and Planning Initiative



- Key products:
 - Summaries of the research available online at:
<http://www.smart.gov/SOMAPI/index.html>
 - Findings, policy implications, future research needs
 - Research briefs
 - Targeted conference presentations
 - Webinars
 - National Symposium

Literature Review Methods

- Source materials identified using abstract databases, internet searches, outreach to relevant organizations and subject matter experts
- Primarily studies conducted within the past 15 years
- Emphasis on individual studies that employed scientifically rigorous methods, as well as on synthesis studies – such as systematic reviews and meta-analyses

Sex Offender Typologies

Why Typologies Matter

- Sexual violence has devastating consequences for society.
- Scarcity of resources impedes progress.
- Comprehensive understanding of accurate offense patterns and risk are necessary.
- Offense typologies inform decisions regarding management and treatment.

Traditional Typologies

- Basic assumption that sexual offenders specialize¹
- Child Sexual abusers – sexual interest, victim gender/relationship
- Rapists – motivation, anger, power, sexual sadism
- Female offenders – co-offender, age/gender of victim
- Internet offenders – sexual interest, exploitation

Challenges to Traditional Typologies

- Crossover offending
- Developmental risk factors
- Offense patterns

Sex Offender Typologies

Summary of the Research Findings

Traditional Typologies: Problems

- Sexual offenders exhibit heterogeneous characteristics.
- Have inadequate definitions
- Research findings are inconsistent.
- Fail to address treatment issues²
- Have not been shown to predict recidivism³

Child Sexual Abusers and Rapists



- Child sexual abusers
 - Offenses-uncontrollable, stable, and internal⁴
 - Deficits in information-processing skills and maintain cognitive distortions to deny impact of offenses⁵
 - Offend to relieve anxiety or depression; believe it is a mutual relationship⁶

- Rapists
 - Offenses-external, unstable, and controllable causes⁴
 - Distorted perceptions of women and sex roles⁷
 - Blame victim for offenses and offend as a result of hostility⁷

Typologies: Child Sexual Abusers

- Pedophilic vs. non pedophilic distinction
- Pedophilia is a strong predictor of recidivism⁸
- Pedophilia does not necessarily result in a sexual offense²
- Individuals who sexually assault a child are not necessarily pedophiles

Fixated vs. Regressed Child Sexual Abusers

- Fixated
 - Identifies with children socially and sexually⁹
 - Develops and maintains relationships to satisfy sexual needs¹⁰
 - More likely sexually abuse male children¹¹
- Regressed
 - Prefers social and sexual interactions with adults⁹
 - Sexual involvement with children is situational due to life stresses¹²
 - Typically incest or female adolescent victims¹²

Role of Victim's Gender

- Accounts for variability in child sexual abuse, addresses treatment issues, and related to recidivism²
- Male victims- strong predictor of recidivism⁸
- Female victims- twice as many victims¹³
- Both males and females – highest number of victims and offenses¹⁴

Relationship to Child Victim

- Intrafamilial¹⁵
 - Less psychopathic, fewer victims, more likely to report female victims
 - Less likely to be pedophilic, cause less injury, and have lower recidivism
- Extrafamilial¹⁶
 - More likely pedophilic and no/few adult relationships
 - More child victims

Characteristics of Rapists

- More likely to be younger¹⁷
- Socially competent
- Engage in an intimate relationship
- Lower socio-economic status
- Substance abuse
- Antisocial personality disorder¹⁸
- Intimacy deficits, negative peer influences, deficits in self-regulation, and offense supportive beliefs¹⁹

Are Rapists different than Violent Offenders?



- Rapists are similar to violent offenders.
- 19% sexually recidivate and 22% violently recidivate over a 5 year follow-up period.⁸
- Rapists engage in many types of crime over time.²⁰
- Rape reflects only one manifestation of and underlying antisocial condition.²¹

Types of Rapists²²

- Most rapists know their victims²³
- Power reassurance- feelings of inadequacy, poor social skills, less likely to inflict injury, and instrumental aggression
- Power assertive (antisocial)- impulsive, aggressive methods, substance abuse, and unlikely to use a weapon
- Anger retaliation – motivated by power, offenses for retaliatory reasons, uses degrading tactics
- Sadistic rapist – reenacts sexual fantasies of torture, desire to inflict pain, more likely to murder, and predictor of sexual recidivism²⁴

Female Offenders

- More likely to assault males and strangers²⁵
- Less likely to reoffend (1% over 5 yr. period)²⁶
- More likely to assault in a group or with a co-offender²⁷
- Can take an active or passive (indirect) role in the sexual abuse²⁸

Female Typologies²⁹

- Accompanied abusers – emotionally dependent socially isolated, and display low self-esteem
- Teacher/lover/heterosexual nurturer- abuse adolescent boys, acquaintance/position of trust relationship, dependency needs, substance abuse, attachment deficits
- Predisposed offenders- younger children, sexual interest, PTSD, psychopathologies, sexual abuse history
- Offend against female adults/adolescents- extensive criminal history, exploitation, domestic violence, and financial gain³⁰

*Internet Offenders*³¹

- Report more psychological difficulties in adulthood and fewer sexual convictions
- More likely to succeed in the community and less likely to engage in sexually risky behaviors
- More likely to be of white, European descent
- Substance abuse and criminal history predicted contact offenses
- Sexual interest in children, criminal history, and substance abuse predicted violent offending among child pornography offenders³²

Internet Typologies³³

- Access child pornography impulsively and/or out of curiosity
- Access /trade pornography to fuel sexual interest in children
- Sexual contact offenders used to acquire victims/disseminate produced images
- Download child pornography for financial gain

Crossover Offending

- Presents significant challenges to traditional typologies
- Crossover offending has been reported in studies using guaranteed confidentiality, anonymous survey, or treatment with polygraphy³⁴⁻³⁶
- Offenders admit more victims and offenses than arrested/convicted³⁴

Crossover Behaviors: Prevalence across Studies

- Adult and child victims (age crossover): range from 29 to 73%³⁷⁻³⁸
- Rapists who sexually assault children: range from 50 to 60%³⁴⁻³⁵
- Males and females (gender crossover): range from 20 to 43%^{34,39}
- Relationship (intrafamilial/extrafamilial): range from 64 to 66%^{34,39}

Crossover Offending: Female and Internet Offenders



- Female sexual offenders also report crossover offending⁴⁰
 - Age and relationship crossover – female offenders (11% to 30%)
- Internet offenders also report engaging in physical, sexual contact
 - Reported physical sexual contact (12.5% to 85%) depending upon study/methodology (polygraph obtains greater prevalence)⁴¹⁻⁴²

Explanation of Crossover: Sexual Offense Patterns



- Rehabilitation theories examine clusters of behaviors and psychological processes that account for the heterogeneity of offending⁴³
- Developmental factors- predictive of high risk sexual behaviors, treatment failure, and static/dynamic risk for reoffense⁴⁴⁻⁴⁶
- Specialization – child sexual abusers who sexually prefer children⁴⁷
- Generalization – rape and criminal versatility⁴⁷

Developmental Histories of Sexual Offenders



- Advanced statistical methods have been able to evaluate the unique and combined contributions of risk factors, offense patterns, and developmental histories
- Different types of maltreatment during childhood associated with different types of sexual offending^{48,49}
 - Child sexual abusers – heightened sexuality⁵⁰
 - Rapists – Violence and criminal diversity⁵⁰
- Poor parental bonding enhances the effects of child maltreatment⁵¹

Self-Regulation Model⁵²

- Nine-stage model of the sex offense process- accounts for heterogeneity of offending
- Examines situational precipitants, cognitive distortions, degree of control, self-evaluation after the offense, attitude toward offending
- Individuals are goal-oriented and offend to achieve a desired state

Four Distinct Pathways to Offending

- Avoidant
 - Mis-regulation (Avoidant Active)
 - Under-regulation (Avoidant Passive)
- Approach
 - Under-regulation (Approach Automatic)
 - Intact regulation (Approach Explicit)

Generalist vs Specialist Model⁵³

- Takes into account the risk and needs of offenders
- Does not classify by victim type
- Specialists – commit sexual crimes persistently
- Generalist – do not restrict themselves to one type of crime (majority of sexual offenders)

Specialist vs Generalist

- Specialist – sexually abuse children exclusively, more likely to have a sexual interest in children, history of childhood sexual abuse, sexual preoccupation, and emotional congruence with children⁵⁴
- Generalist – resemble violent nonsexual offenders, low self-control, impulsivity, substance abuse, and criminal lifestyle⁵⁵

Sex Offender Typologies

Research Limitations and Future Needs

Limitations

- Traditional typologies based upon official record or self-report
- Only 1-3% of sexual offenses are available in official record⁵⁶
- Traditional typologies have not demonstrated clinical utility or predictive validity for re-offense
- Polygraph testing remains controversial

Future Research Needs

- Generalist vs specialist demonstrates potential as a treatment conceptualization. Further research needed to identify factors that differentiate the types
- Self-regulation model has been validated extensively. Research is needed to determine whether the interventions based on pathway impacts recidivism.
- Additional research needed to develop extensive models of offending

Sex Offender Typologies

Conclusions and Policy Implications

Conclusions and Policy Implications

- If crossover is disclosed, assigned risk level increases—should be taken into consideration for treatment and management⁵⁷
- To address heterogeneity and crossover offending, it is best to regard typologies as a continuum than discrete categories⁵⁸
- Important to classify offenders based on characteristics not victim type⁵⁸

Conclusions and Policy Implications

- Prevention of sexual abuse requires a balance of community safety and effective resource allocation
- Developmental experiences predict dynamic risk and combined with static markers increase likelihood of re-offense- should be used as secondary prevention strategies
- Comprehensive understanding of treatment needs and effective intervention is necessary to prevent re-offense

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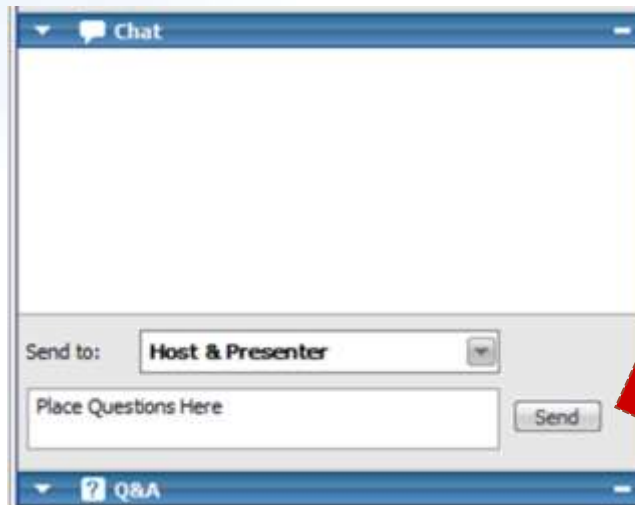
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