

Effectiveness of Treatment for Juveniles Who Commit Sexual Offenses

June 1, 2015
2:00-3:30 pm ET

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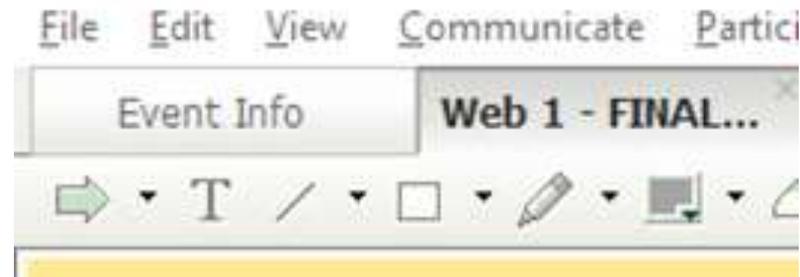
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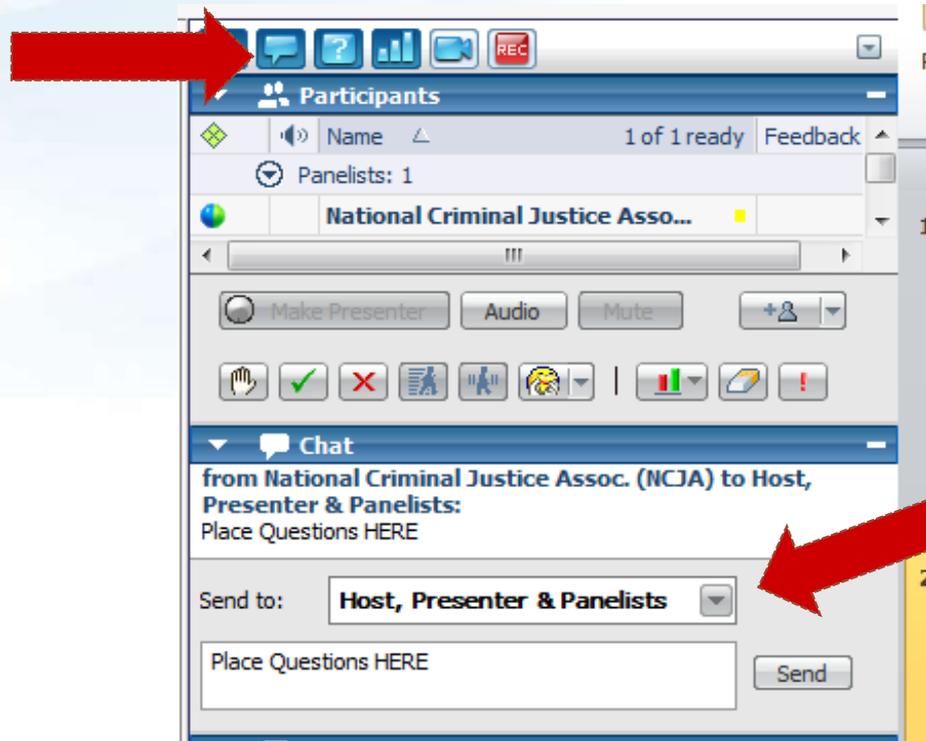
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Presenters

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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, SMART Office 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

Treatment Effectiveness Research: Key Considerations



- Important to consider both the quality and consistency of the evidence
- Among single studies, well designed and executed randomized controlled trials (RCTs) provide the most trustworthy evidence
 - Single studies are rarely definitive
 - Results from a single study must be replicated before meaningful conclusions can be made
- Effectiveness of an intervention can best be understood by examining findings from many different studies

Findings From Single Studies

- Worling and Curwen (2000) examined the effectiveness of a community-based treatment program for adolescents and children with sexual behavior problems and their families
 - Individualized treatment using cognitive-behavioral and relapse prevention techniques
- Significant reduction in recidivism based on a 10-year follow-up period
- Second study found that positive treatment effects persisted after 20-years of follow-up¹

Treatment and comparison group 10-year and 20-year recidivism rates for a new sexual charge, nonsexual violent charge, and any charge

Recidivism Measure	10-Year Recidivism Rate		20-Year Recidivism Rate	
	Treatment Group (n=58)	Comparison Group (n=90)	Treatment Group (n=58)	Comparison Group (n=90)
Sexual Charge	5%*	18%	9%*	21%
Nonsexual Violent Charge	19%*	32%	22%*	39%
Any Charge	35%**	54%	38%*	57%

* p < .05.

** p < .01.

Sources: Worling & Curwen, 2000; Worling, Litteljohn, & Bookalam, 2010.

Findings From Single Studies

- Several other single studies have found positive treatment effects for programs delivered in the community as well as in correctional facilities²
- Several studies employing an RCT design have examined the efficacy of Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST) with juveniles who sexually offend³
 - MST works within multiple systems (i.e., individual, family, school) to address the various causes of a child's delinquency, and it has been adapted to the special needs of juveniles who sexually offend

Findings From Single Studies

Effectiveness of MST



- Based on a follow-up period of 8.9 years, Borduin, Schaeffer, and Heiblum (2009) found significant reductions in recidivism for MST-treated youth
 - 8 percent sexual recidivism rate for MST-treated subjects compared to 46 percent for comparison group subjects
 - 29 percent nonsexual recidivism rate for MST-treated adolescents compared to 58 percent for comparison group subjects

Findings From Synthesis Research

- Several systematic reviews employing meta-analysis have examined the effectiveness of treatment for juveniles who commit sexual offenses
- These studies have consistently found that sex offender treatment works, particularly MST and cognitive-behavioral treatment approaches
- Cost-benefit analysis also demonstrates that sex offender treatment programs for youth provide a positive return on taxpayer investment

Findings From Synthesis Research

- Largest study of treatment effectiveness for juveniles who sexually offend was undertaken by Reitzel and Carbonell (2006)
 - Meta-analysis of 9 studies with a combined sample of 2,986 juvenile subjects
 - Treatment approaches most often based on cognitive-behavioral and relapse-prevention techniques
 - Treatment produced a significant reduction in recidivism
 - Based on an average follow-up period of nearly 5 years, the researchers found an average sexual recidivism rate of 7.4 percent for treated juveniles compared to 18.9 percent for comparison group members
 - Two of the four strongest treatment effects found in the meta-analysis were from studies of MST treatment

Findings From Synthesis Research

- Meta-analysis conducted by Winokur and colleagues (2006) incorporated methodological quality considerations
 - Seven studies included in the analysis; one RCT and six studies that matched treatment and comparison subjects
 - Three studies in the analysis examined treatment delivered in a community-based outpatient setting, three examined treatment in a residential setting, and one examined treatment in a correctional setting
 - In all seven studies, treatment involved some type of cognitive-behavioral approach
 - Average follow-up time of 6 years
 - Positive treatment effects were found for sexual recidivism, nonsexual violent recidivism, nonsexual nonviolent recidivism, and any recidivism

Findings From Synthesis Research

- Other meta-analyses have also found positive treatment effects⁴
 - Drake, Aos, and Miller (2009) found that sex offender treatment programs for juveniles reduced recidivism, on average, by 9.7 percent
- Treatment programs in the Drake et al. (2009) study produced a net return on investment of more than \$23,000 per program participant, or about \$1.70 in benefits per participant for every \$1 spent

Future Research Needs

- There is an acute need for more high-quality studies on treatment effectiveness
 - Both RCTs and highly rigorous quasi-experiments that employ equivalent treatment and comparison groups are needed
 - Systematic reviews and meta-analyses that are based on prudent exclusionary criteria and that employ the most rigorous analytical methods available are also needed

Future Research Needs

- Future research should also attempt to build a stronger evidence base on the types of treatments that work
- Empirical evidence specifying which types of treatment work or do not work, for who, and in which situations, is important for both policy and practice

Conclusions and Policy Implications

- While the knowledge base is far from complete, evidence from both individual studies and synthesis research suggests that therapeutic interventions for juveniles who sexually offend can and do work
- Rigorous studies have demonstrated the efficacy of MST in reducing the recidivism of juveniles who commit sexual offenses

Conclusions and Policy Implications (continued)



- Interventions that address multiple spheres of juveniles' life and that incorporate cognitive-behavioral techniques along with group therapy and family therapy appear to be effective
- Treatment interventions delivered in the community as well as in correctional settings can be effective

Conclusions and Policy Implications (continued)



- Juveniles who sexually offend are diverse in terms of their offending behaviors and future public safety risk
 - Therapeutic interventions that are developmentally appropriate; that take motivational and behavioral diversity into account; and that focus on family, peer, and other contextual correlates of sexually abusive behavior in youth are likely to be most effective

Notes

- 1) Worling, J.R., Litteljohn, A., & Bookalam, D. (2010). 20-year prospective follow-up study of specialized treatment for adolescents who offended sexually. *Behavioral Sciences and the Law*, 28, 46-57.
- 2) Seabloom, W., Seabloom, M.E., Seabloom, E., Barron, R., & Hendrickson, S. (2003). A 14- to 24-year longitudinal study of a comprehensive sexual health model treatment program for adolescent sex offenders: Predictors of successful completion and subsequent criminal recidivism. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 47, 468-481.
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- 3) Borduin, C.M., Henggeler, S.W., Blaske, D.M., & Stein, R. (1990). Multisystemic treatment of adolescent sexual offenders. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 34, 105-113.
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- 4) St. Amand, A., Bard, D.E., & Silovsky, J.F. (2008). Meta-analysis of treatment for child sexual behavior problems: Practice elements and outcomes. *Child Maltreatment*, 13, 145-166.
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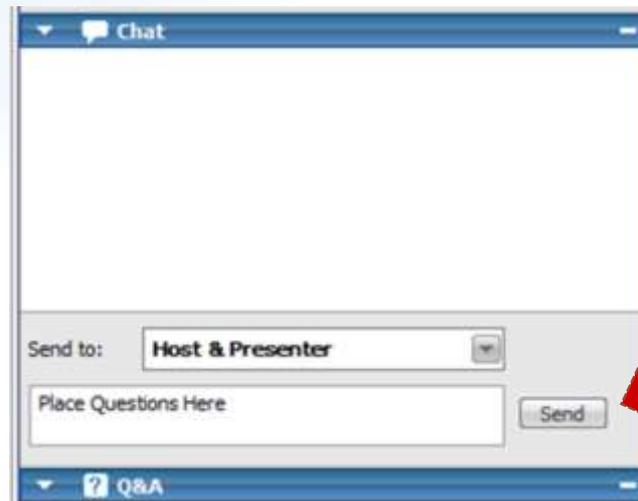


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Q & A

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Q & A



Moderator:

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