

2016 NATIONAL SYMPOSIUM

ON SEX OFFENDER MANAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

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ADAM WALSH ACT

10th

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The Sex Offender Management, Assessment and Planning Initiative (SOMAPI)

Literature Review Findings
Juveniles who Commit Sexual Offenses



SMART

Sex Offender Management Assessment and Planning Initiative

- 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”
- SOMAPI: identify evidence based practices, current gaps/needs of the field, and provide guidance to states and locals

Literature Review

- Cornerstone of SOMAPI
- Inform the SMART Office, OJP, and policy makers and practitioners in the field
- SOMAPI Report released in October 2014 via website and hardcopy
 - <http://smart.gov/SOMAPI/index.html>
 - Describes the research and presents findings, policy implications, research limitations, and future research needs

Literature Review

- Other products
 - Executive summary-type briefs
 - Webinar series
 - Audio/visual available at www.ncja.org
 - Updates to be published later in 2016
 - Key things to know briefs to be published in 2016

Literature Review

- Process
 - Subcontract with the National Criminal Justice Association (NCJA)
 - Topics identified by SMART Office and multi-disciplinary panel of subject matter experts
 - Researchers/writers identified by NCJA, lead consultants, and SMART Office
 - Extensive peer review

Literature Review Chapters

5 Juvenile Topics

Etiology/typologies
Risk assessment
Recidivism
Treatment effectiveness
Registration and notification

8 Adult Topics

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

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 (up to 2012)
 - Forthcoming update through 2016
- Emphasis on individual studies that employed scientifically rigorous methods, as well as on synthesis studies – such as systematic reviews and meta-analyses

Etiology of Juvenile Sexual Offending

- Sexual victimization plays a disproportionate role but co-varies with other developmental risk factors
- Multiple-factor theories in which early childhood maltreatment increases likelihood of sexually abusive behavior in relationship with personality variables

Relationship between multiple types of child maltreatment and personality variables

- Developmental and early childhood maltreatment experiences and specific, mediating personality traits contribute to predicting different patterns of juvenile sexual offending
 - Victim age, level of coercion or force
- Personality traits include:
 - Sexual Preoccupation
 - Hyper-masculinity
 - Misogynistic
 - Callous-unemotional traits

Typologies Research for Juveniles who Sexually Offend

- Typology research dealing with juveniles who commit sexual offenses has focused primarily on the **subtyping of juvenile offenders** based on:
 - Victim age
 - Delinquent history
 - Personality characteristics
- Although the research has produced mixed findings, it has yielded substantial insights in identifying differential **etiological paths, typological characteristics, and associated treatment targets**

Individualized treatment and supervision strategies

- Evolving knowledge on etiological pathways and typologies increasingly informing interventions that **address specific needs of subgroups** of juveniles who commit sexual offenses
- Evidence concerning prevalence of child maltreatment in early development offers support for continuing treatment aimed at **victimization and trauma resolution**
- **Developmental models**, which have included early childhood experiences and family functioning, should be broadened to include **larger social variables** such as exposure to sexually violent media and characteristics of social ecologies

Typology Research: Victim age/delinquent history

Psychosocial Adjustment

- Psychosocial deficits, social isolation, attachment anxiety
- Experience sense of failure in relationship with peers
- More schizoid, avoidant, and dependent
- Co-occurring anxiety and depression
- Sexual offending as compensatory behavior
- Victims more likely to be children

Delinquent History & Orientation

- Sexual offending part of broader pattern of general delinquency
- Not substantially different from other delinquent youth
- Less likely to be socially isolated
- More likely interpersonally exploitative, dismissive attachment
- Higher levels of aggression in offenses
- Victims more likely peer age/older

Typology Research: Subtype Specific Intervention

Psychosocial Adjustment

- Self-esteem, self-efficacy, and social competency
- Social skills and dealing with feelings
- Social anxiety
- Healthy sexuality and masculinity
- Engage family and other microsystems

Delinquent History & Orientation

- Target general delinquency factors
- Delinquent values, attitudes, & beliefs
- Association with delinquent peers
- Multi-systemic interventions
- Address sexual and non-sexual delinquency in an integrated fashion

Research Limitations and Future Needs

- Given the large number of potential influences and interactions of sexual offending characteristics, sexual offending juveniles may be better described by dimensional measures rather than assigning them to specific types
- These dimensions include:
 - Trauma and chaotic family environments
 - Attachment
 - Psychosocial adjustment
 - Delinquent history and orientation
 - Co-occurring mental health problems
 - Sexual drive and preoccupation
 - Atypical sexual interests

Research Limitations and Future Needs

- In addition to focusing solely on risk factors, it is likely that juveniles who have committed sexual offenses lack **protective factors**—such as emotional support and social competence—to buffer against risk in early experience
- Future research should consider the **complex relationships** between these risk and protective factors in the development of sexually abusive behavior

Risk Factors for Juvenile Sexual Offending

- An extensive literature on risk factors for juvenile sexual offending.
- As many as 101 different risk factors for juvenile sexually abusive behavior have been described in the literature, and this list continues to grow.
- However, similar risk factors appear in the most frequently used juvenile risk assessment instruments.

Common Categories of Risk Factors for Juvenile Sexual Re-Offense

1. Sexual beliefs, attitudes, and drive
2. History of sexual offending behavior
3. History of personal victimization
4. History of general antisocial behavior
5. Social relationships and connection
6. Personal characteristics
7. General psychosocial functioning
8. Family relationships and functioning
9. General environmental conditions
10. Response to prior/current treatment

Risk Factors for Juvenile Sexual Offending

- However, findings regarding risk factors vary considerably and are inconsistent across different studies.
- Further, most the literature on risk factors is theoretical and descriptive, rather than empirical.
- Characterized by methodological problems and other limitations.
 - Short follow-up periods of less than 3 years.
 - Samples that are small in size.
 - Risk factors studied vary widely from one study to the next, selected by researchers based on their own clinical experience or the literature on adult sexual recidivism

Risk Factors for Sexual Recidivism: Summary and Conclusions

- Research on risk factors for sexual recidivism is inconsistent and sometimes contradictory.
- It is disconnected and varied, with little to unify it.
- It is also likely that risk factors operate differently in different people, and at different points in child and adolescent development.
- For instance, van der Put et al. found the effect of both static and dynamic risk factors on recidivism varied by the age of the adolescent.
- Although evolving, our knowledge is speculative and provisional at this point in time.

Risk Factors for Sexual Recidivism: Summary and Conclusions

- Empirical evidence remains weak and inconsistent.
- It is likely that complex interactions among different risk factors are at play at different times in the development of children and adolescents.
- Similarities found between risk factors that place juveniles at risk for sexual offending and those that place juveniles at risk for many other problem behaviors, including general delinquency, complicate matters even further.
- **More research is needed to identify, understand, and construct both static and dynamic risk variables linked specifically to juvenile sexual recidivism.**

Juvenile Sexual Risk Assessment Instruments

- Risk assessment instruments provide a structured and anchored means for assigning risk.
- They define the risk assessment process and also the risk factors upon which the assessment is based and how these risk factors are to be assessed.
- There is some mild empirical support for the capacity of risk assessment instruments to identify statistically valid risk factors, as well as their predictive validity.
- However, it is not currently possible to definitively assert that any such instrument is empirically validated in terms of its capacity to accurately predict juvenile sexual recidivism.

Juvenile Risk Assessment Instruments: Predictive Validity

- Relatively few validation studies of juvenile risk assessment instruments have been undertaken to date.
- Research examining predictive validity of juvenile instruments has produced inconsistent and contradictory findings.
- Some research has reviewed and compared multiple instruments, some of which are not intended nor designed to measure risk for juvenile sexual recidivism.
- Other research has reviewed and evaluated only a single instrument.

Juvenile Risk Assessment Instruments: Predictive Validity

- Sometimes, research also reviews the capacity of juvenile sexual risk instruments to accurately predict nonsexual recidivism, although none of the juvenile risk assessment instruments currently available for use in the field are designed for that purpose.
- Little consistency across validation studies in terms of:
 - the recidivism definition employed
 - the time period studied
 - the selection of the sample/cohort
 - the study design itself
 - the ways in which statistics are applied and/or interpreted

Empirical State of Juvenile Risk Assessment Instruments

- There are no currently well-validated risk assessment instruments for the prediction of sexual recidivism among juveniles who commit sexual offenses.
- Juvenile risk assessment instruments do not perform in a manner that provides confidence regarding their ability to predict juvenile sexual recidivism.
- Independent research has produced inconsistent and poor results for the J-SOAP-II, ERASOR, and JSORRAT-II in predicting either sexual or general (sexual and non-sexual) recidivism, and especially for the prediction of sexual recidivism.

Recidivism of Juveniles who Commit Sexual Offenses

- Historical Studies of Adult Sex Offenders: Sex History Interviews
 - Retrospective studies report unidentified history of juvenile sexual offending
 - Viewed juveniles as budding adult sex offenders; similar to them
 - Didn't have prospective recidivism data on juveniles' likelihood to continue offending as adults

Prospective National Youth Sample

- Longitudinal study began in 1976
- N = 1,725 youth who were then 11-17
- 1992 survey wave
 - 6% committed a sexual assault (3% arrested)
 - 2% committed a serious sexual assault (2 or more sexual assaults) (10% arrested)
- Sexual assaulters - 58% sexual recidivism including 10% as adults
- Serious sexual assaulters – 78% sexual recidivism including 17% as adults
- 99% general recidivism rate for sex assaulters

Juvenile Sexual Recidivism: Conclusions

- Observed sexual recidivism rates range from 7-13% over 5 years
- Recidivism rates are generally lower for juveniles than adults
- Small % of juveniles will sexually reoffend as adults (research shows significant differences in populations)
- Higher general than sexual recidivism

Juvenile Sexual Recidivism: Conclusions

- Don't label juveniles sex offenders for life
- Evaluate policy impact on recidivism and iatrogenic effect
- Interventions should be individualized based on risk and need
- Focus on general and sexual recidivism
- Don't automatically use adult policies on juveniles – need evidence to implement

Juvenile Sexual Recidivism: Research Limitations

- Small # of studies
- Small sample sizes
- Under-reporting of sex crimes
- Short timeframes
- Measurement variations across studies
- Missing information about the characteristics of the sample studied and the intervention study subjects received

Juvenile Sexual Recidivism: Research Needs

- Studies producing more comparable findings
- Longer follow-up periods including as adults
- Comparison of different types of juveniles
- Research on juvenile females
- Policy-relevant research

Juveniles Who Sexually Offend

Treatment Effectiveness

Treatment Effectiveness Research: Key Considerations

- Effectiveness has been assessed in both single studies and synthesis studies
- 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

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-up

Findings From Single Studies

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 studies employing an RCT design have examined the effectiveness of Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST) with juveniles who sexually offend
- 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

- 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 & relapse-prevention techniques; average follow-up period of nearly 5 years
 - Average sexual recidivism rate of 7.4 percent for treated juveniles compared to 18.9 percent for comparison group members
- Drake, Aos, and Miller (2009) meta-analysis/cost-benefit analysis found that sex offender treatment programs for juveniles not only worked (avg. recidivism reduction of 9.7 percent); they also produced a return on investment of more than \$23,000 per program participant, or about \$1.70 in benefits per participant for every \$1 spent

Findings From Synthesis Research

- Meta-analysis conducted by Winokur and colleagues (2006)
 - 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

Conclusions

- Evidence from both individual studies and synthesis research indicates that therapeutic interventions for juveniles who sexually offend can and do work
- 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
- Future research should 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

Juvenile Sex Offender Registration and Notification (SORN)

- Wetterling Act allowed but did not mandate juvenile SORN
- 41 states register juveniles
- 30 states notify on juveniles
- Adam Walsh Act – 1st Federal juvenile SORN law

Juvenile SORN Research

- UCR Data from 47 states (1994-2009)
- Sex crime rates pre- and post-SORN
- No statistically significant decrease in juvenile sex crime arrests post-SORN

Juvenile SORN Research

- N = 1275 juveniles between 1990-2004 in South Carolina
- SORN implemented in 1995
- 9 year follow-up
- No different in sexual recidivism pre- and post-SORN
- Non-sexual, non-assault recidivism rate higher for SORN juveniles

Juvenile SORN Research

- N = 319 juveniles in Washington from 1995-2002
- 5 year follow-up period
- Level I or II – 9% sexual recidivism
- Level III (SORN) – 12% sexual recidivism

Sexual Recidivism for Juveniles who Commit Sex vs. Non-Sex Offenses

- N = 2,029 juveniles released from secure custody
- 5 year follow-up
- Sexual recidivism = 6.8% for juveniles who commit sexual offenses
- Sexual recidivism = 5.7% for juveniles who commit non-sex offenses

Juvenile SORN Research Needs

- More, more, more
- Research using rigorous scientific methods be encouraged & supported
- Larger sample sizes to overcome low base rate issue
- Impacts of SORN on juveniles and families

Thank You

Questions or Comments?

