

2016 NATIONAL SYMPOSIUM

ON SEX OFFENDER MANAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

JULY 26-27 | KANSAS CITY MARRIOTT DOWNTOWN, KANSAS CITY, MO

ADAM WALSH ACT

10th

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Meet the SOMAPI Authors: A Q & A Session and Open Discussion



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Tom Lerversee, L.C.S.W.

**Author: Juveniles Who Sexually Offend
Etiology and Typologies**



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Etiology

Sexual Victimization

- Sexually abusive behavior as reenactment of sexual victimization
- Ages 3 to 7 may be sensitive period when sexual abuse places youth at higher risk for sexually abusive behavior
- Being sexually abused by a cohabitant perpetrator
- Specific factors predictive of subsequent sexual offending

Etiology

Multiple Types of Maltreatment

- Sexual aggression a learned behavior, modeled after what they observed at home
- Social learning and parent-child attachment
- Importance of assessing and treating co-occurring issues, which can often be influential in sexual offending

Sexually Offending Juveniles Compared to Non-sexual Delinquents

- Sexual offending youth more likely: sexual abuse history; exposure to sexual violence; other abuse or neglect; social isolation; early exposure to sex or pornography; atypical sexual interests; anxiety; and low self-esteem
- Sexually victimized sexual abusers experienced significantly greater levels of all five types of abuse
- Extra-familial sexual abuse and intra-familial found in higher frequency in sexually offending juveniles
- Sexual offending juveniles experienced significantly greater parent or caregiver instability
- Results support association between unmet attachment and social-emotional needs and juvenile sexual offending

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

Etiology of Juvenile Sexual Offending

Conclusions and Policy Implications

- 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
- “Identifying the developmental antecedents of not only informs treatment planning but will be basis for identifying at-risk groups for primary and secondary interventions
- Future research should consider the complex relationships between risk and protective factors in the development of sexually abusive behavior

Typology Research

Juveniles Who Sexually Offend

Subtypes Based on Victim Age

- Adolescents who sexually offended against females their age or older:
 - More generally delinquent/greater antisocial tendencies
 - Display higher levels of aggression and violence in commission of the offense
 - Less likely to be related to the victim
 - Less likely to be socially isolated than those who offended against children
 - Come from a disturbed family background

Typology Research Juveniles Who Sexually Offend

Subtypes Based on Victim Age

- Adolescents who sexually offended against children:
 - More likely to have pessimistic styles and deficits in self-sufficiency
 - More likely to manifest psychosocial deficits/social isolation/attachment anxiety
 - Higher levels of co-occurring anxiety and depression
 - Sexual offending as compensatory behavior
 - Used less aggression in their offenses
 - More likely to victimize relatives
 - Small subset of adolescents who target children manifest pedophilic interests

Typology Research

Juveniles Who Sexually Offend

Subtypes Based on Delinquent History

“Sex-only” offenders

- Greater deficits in romantic relationships
- More likely to have a child victim
- Significantly fewer childhood conduct problems
- Better current adjustment
- More prosocial attitudes
- Lower risk for future delinquency

“Sex-plus” offenders

- Sexual offending may be part of a broader pattern of antisocial behavior
- May be influenced by general criminogenic risk and need factors
- More likely to have used drugs
- Caused more physical injury to victim

Typology Research Juveniles Who Sexually Offend

Subtypes Based on Personality Characteristics

- Research utilizing the California Psychological Inventory differentiated four subgroups:
 - Antisocial/Impulsive, Overcontrolled/Reserved, Unusual/Isolated, and Confident/Aggressive
- Research utilizing the Millon Adolescent Clinical Inventory differentiated five subgroups:
 - Normal, Antisocial, Submissive, Dysthymic/Inhibited, and Dysthymic/Negativistic

Typology Research Juveniles Who Sexually Offend

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

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Author: Adult Sex Offender Typologies



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Adult Sex Offender Typologies

Fixated vs. Regressed Child Sexual Abusers

- Degree to which the sexual behavior is entrenched
- Fixated
 - Identifies with children socially and sexually
 - Develops and maintains relationships to satisfy sexual needs
 - More likely sexually abuse male children
- Regressed
 - Prefers social and sexual interactions with adults
 - Sexual involvement with children is situational due to life stresses
 - Typically incest or female adolescent victims

Adult Sex Offender Typologies

Types of Rapists

- Based on relationship to victim, degree of aggression, motivation, degree of control, sexual or power
- 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, offends 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 recidivism

Adult Sex Offender Typologies

Female Typologies

- 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-
 - Domestic violence, motivated by power/jealousy/anger, criminal history
 - Exploitation, financial gain, arrests for nonsexual crimes

Internet Typology of Contact Offenders

Continuum of level of crime expertise (high-low):

- **The Experts (32%)**- sophisticated offenders who use explicit planning and manipulation. Pornography use and production. *Predatory* offender
- **Cynical offenders (35%)**- may know their victim or meet, progresses to physical, the goal is a sex crime. *Novice* offender
- **Attention-focused (21%)**- goal is to develop genuine relationship, become emotionally involved, victim's mutually interested, may or may not know victim's age
- **Sex-focused (12%)**- originates on sex-oriented internet sites use true identity, not seeking minors, looking for immediate sexual gratification, typically minor posing as an adult. *Deals and Exchanges* offender

Crossover Behaviors: Prevalence

- Adult and child victims (age crossover): range from 29 to 73%
- Rapists who sexually assault children: range from 50 to 60%
- Males and females (gender crossover): range from 20 to 43%
- Relationship (intrafamilial/extrafamilial): range from 64 to 66%

Adult Sex Offender Typology Research Methodological Issues

- Sampling issues
 - Limiting sample to only mixed offenders (crossover, polymorphic)
 - Including adolescents as a distinct category
 - Adults (18+)
 - Adolescents (13-17)
 - Child (under 13)
- Controlling for number of victims in recidivism studies
 - Age and relationship crossover associated with sexual recidivism in studies
 - Relationship no longer significant if number of victims is controlled

Crossover Offending: Female and Internet Offenders

- Female sexual offenders also report crossover offending
 - 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)

Self Regulation Model: Four Distinct Pathways

- Based on whether or not intent is to commit as sexual offense and self-management strategy
- Avoidant
 - Under-regulation (Avoidant Passive)- lack skills or awareness, negative affect
 - Mis-regulation (Avoidant Active)- Counterproductive or ineffective prevention, negative affect
- Approach
 - Under-regulation (Approach Automatic)- Impulsive, opportunistic, poor self-regulation, cognitive distortions positive affect
 - Intact regulation (Approach Explicit)- extensive planning, manipulation, positive affect

Specialist vs Generalist Research: Offense Trajectories

Four Trajectories to Sexual Offending based onset, frequency, and persistence over life course

- Overall findings:
 - Late onset associated with child sexual abuse and early onset related to rape
 - Sexual offending begins later than non-sex offending and typically decrease in frequency with age
- Low-rate persistent (56%)- onset during late teens, offend less than one per year, highest point in 30's, rape and/or child sexual abuse
- High-rate limited (24%) earlier age of onset, offend frequently (2x per year) during 20's, decline in 50's, generalist pattern, rape
- High-rate accelerators (12%) began in 20's and increased until mid-40's, mostly child sexual abuse
- Late-onset accelerators (8%) began in late 20's and increased until mid-50's (peak), incest offending

Adult Sex Offender Typology Research: Conclusion

Advances in knowledge may assist with risk and need evaluation but additional research is needed to develop more extensive models to explain sexual violence

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Risk Assessment**



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Juvenile Risk Assessment

- Assessment of juvenile sexual recidivism risk serves several purposes, and can be administered at different points:
 - During intake screening to guide authorities as to the appropriate course of action prior to or during adjudication
 - Upon post-adjudication to provide the authorities with information to be used in sentencing hearings and decision-making
 - In the treatment context to set a baseline assignment of risk, and periodically re-evaluate risk during the course of treatment

Juvenile Risk Assessment

- In treatment, the risk assessment process can be used to determine the type and intensity of necessary treatment and define treatment and case management targets
- Regardless of purpose, risk assessment is inherently difficult
- It's further complicated by low base rate of juvenile sexual recidivism
- Juvenile risk assessment is even further complicated by adolescent development and maturation
- Risk assessment models and tools need to account for these developmental factors in order to accurately estimate risk

Juvenile Risk Assessment

- Nevertheless, the field of juvenile risk assessment has largely developed in its own right over the past decade
- Contemporary juvenile risk assessment includes a focus on static and dynamic risk factors
- Dynamic risk factors are particularly important when treatment is provided as these become the targets for treatment

Protective Factors in Juvenile Risk Assessment

- Risk factors are the foundation of virtually all risk assessment instruments
- More recent attention given to protective factors and their role in mitigating the effects of risk factors
- Protective factors have been described in the child and adolescent development literature, and their role in delinquency prevention has long been recognized
- However, the appearance of protective factors in the forensic literature is new
- It is not clear which protective factors are most significant or how to evaluate their function and role in the process of evaluating and treating juvenile sexual risk

Juvenile Risk Assessment: Conclusion: What Have We Learned?

- Research about risk factors and risk assessment instruments still in its infancy
- However, studies have provided important insights
- First, the range of risk factors for juvenile sexual offending behavior and recidivism is relatively well defined. The *types and classes* of factors that place youth at risk have been identified.
- Second, current risk assessment instruments are far from empirically validated, making it difficult to conclude with any degree of confidence that the instruments are scientifically valid
 - The evidence concerning the predictive accuracy of various instruments is mixed, inconsistent, and contradictory.

Juvenile Risk Assessment: Conclusion: What Have We Learned?

- Third, there is a clear need for juvenile risk assessment instruments and processes to focus on estimates of short-term rather than long-term risk
 - However, the adoption of a short-term assessment model will likely mean that the manner in which juvenile risk instruments are used and researched will have to significantly change
- Fourth, regardless of instrument strength, sound risk assessment requires well-trained risk evaluators who do not simply rely on risk scores when making decisions and especially those with potentially lifelong consequences
 - Evaluators must understand strengths and limitations of current instruments, including lack of empirical evidence

Juvenile Risk Assessment: Conclusion: What Have We Learned?

- Fifth, risk instruments must be integrated into a comprehensive assessment process. They play an important role in the process, but more so for case management and treatment than their accuracy in predicting risk
 - The role risk instruments play in identifying dynamic risk is especially important, as these are targets for treatment
 - Equally important is their role in identifying protective factors, that may also be the targets of a strength-based treatment

Juvenile Risk Assessment: Conclusion: What Have We Learned?

- Sixth. Broad and life transforming decisions about juveniles with sexually abusive behavior should be made only in the context of comprehensive psychosocial assessments, and not based on the use of a risk assessment instrument alone
 - Social and legal policies should not hinge on the result of any juvenile risk assessment instrument at this time

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Adult Risk Assessment

- Knowledge about risk factors generated through research on the recidivism rate for offenders with a particular characteristic as compared to the rate for offenders without that characteristic, or for offenders possessing other characteristics
- Hanson and colleagues published series of meta-analyses that identify static risk factors
- To date, no single risk factor has been found to be a robust predictor of recidivism in isolation

Adult Risk Assessment

- Static risk factors have been established in numerous studies
- Number of dynamic risk instruments have been developed recently
- Instruments incorporating both static and dynamic risk factors becoming more prevalent

Adult Risk Assessment

- Dynamic risk factors important but adjusting actuarial instruments not most effective way
- No single “best” assessment instrument
 - Consider using more than one instrument during the assessment process

Adult Risk Assessment

- Support for administering multiple measures:
 - Classical test theory (increase number of items increases reliability and coverage)
 - Multiple factors in sexual recidivism
- Multiple dimensions or pathways underlie sexual offending. Some identify 2:
 - Sexual criminality
 - General criminality

Adult Risk Assessment

- Communication of results important:
 - Nominal descriptors of risk (low, moderate, and high) most common
 - Limitation: very different interpretations of categories
- Alternative: provide numerical indicators of risk
 - Recidivism rate probability
 - Percentile rank
 - Risk ratio

Thank You

Questions and Open Discussion

