

What Do We Know About Sexual Offending and Sex Offender Management and Treatment? Incidence and Prevalence and Adult Etiology

March 30, 2015
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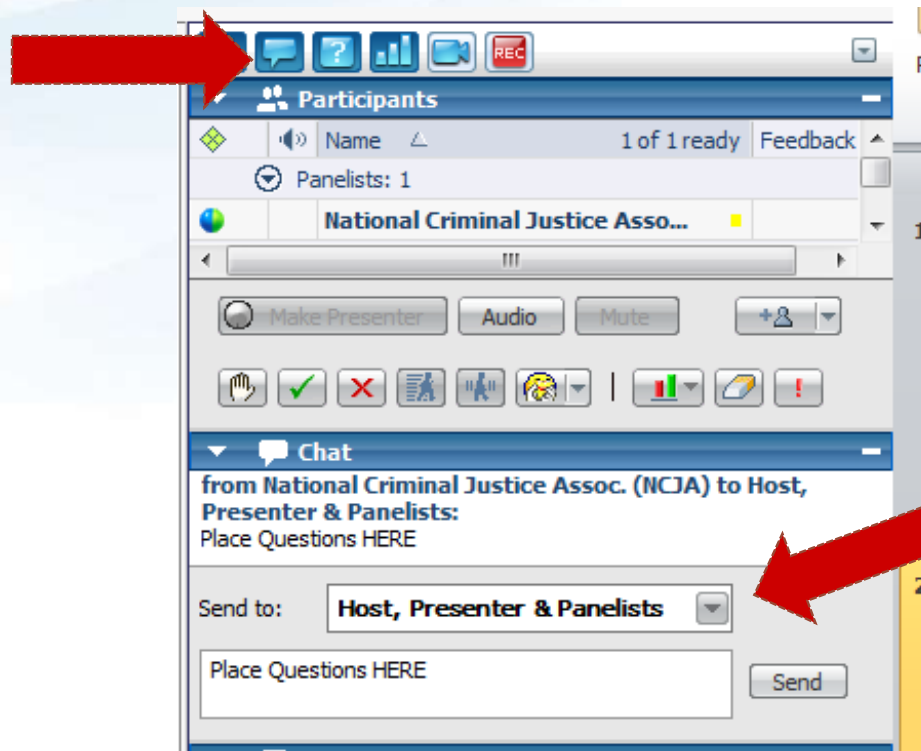
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Combatting Sexual Offending and Victimization

- Sexual offenders and the crimes they commit have received considerable attention from policymakers, practitioners and the public in recent years.
- Widespread recognition that crime control strategies, including those targeting sexual offenders, 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



- Since 1996, OJP has sponsored more than 100 research projects, publications, and training curricula related to sexual assault and sex offender management.
- Grant programs have provided funds to approx. 200 state, local, and tribal jurisdictions to enhance sex offender management.
- Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering, and Tracking (SMART) Office:
 - Established in 2006.
 - Provides assistance to criminal justice professionals around the entire spectrum of sex offender management activities.

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.
- National inventory of sex offender management professionals.
- 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

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.

Part One

INCIDENCE AND PREVALENCE OF SEXUAL OFFENDING

Original literature review conducted by Jane Wiseman , M.P.P.,
Consultant

How Many Sex Offenses are Committed Each Year?

- Difficult to estimate.
- Low levels of reporting.
- Not typically observed by others.

Despite These Limitations...

- Statistics on incidence and prevalence of sex crimes.
- Trend data.
- Important information for policymakers and practitioners.

Incidence and Prevalence of Sexual Offending

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

Challenges to Research

- No single definition of sexual offending.
- Even national data subject to differences in law enforcement criteria to classify a crime.
- Comparison difficult due to:
 - Different reference periods; and
 - Different length of study (Lifetime vs. annual).

Uniform Crime Report (UCR)

- FBI compiles data submitted by law enforcement nationwide.
- 88,097 forcible rapes in 2009 (28.7 crimes per 100,000 persons in U.S.)¹
- *Strength*: consistently collected nationally.
- *Weakness*: only records reported sex crimes.

National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS)

- Nationally representative sample of 42,000 households every 3 years.
- Only those over age 12.
- All crime types including rape and sex assault
- 243,800 rape/sex assault victimizations in 2011 in the U.S. (0.9 victimizations per 1,000 persons age 12 and older).²

National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS)

- Strengths:
 - Measures unreported victimization in addition to those reported to police.
 - Collected and reported annually.
- Weakness:
 - May not report crime they don't view as a crime.

National Violence Against Women Survey (NVAWS)

- Sponsored by National Institute of Justice (NIJ) and Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
- Nationally representative sample of 8,000 men and 8,000 women ages 18+.
- Surveyed between November 1995-May 1996.

National Violence Against Women Survey (NVAWS)

- 17.6% of women and 0.3% of men had been the victim of rape in their lifetime.
- Estimate 18 million women and almost 3 million men in the U.S. have been raped.³
- *Strengths:*
 - Nationally representative sample of men & women.
 - Asked series of questions rather than YES/NO.
- *Weakness:*
 - Nearly 20 years old.

National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS)

- Annual counts of incidents of child sex abuse from Child Protective Services since 1992.
- 2009: 66,000 child victims of sex assault⁴
- *Strength:* all states participating.
- *Weakness:* may not include sex abuse by a non-family member or non-caretaker.

National Incidence Studies of Missing, Abducted, Runaway, and Thrownaway Children-2 (NISMAART-2)

- Survey of households, juvenile residential facilities and law enforcement.
- Phone surveys in 1999.
- 285,400 children were victims of sex assault (4.1 per 1,000 children).⁵
- *Strength:* large probability sample using same questions as NCVS.
- *Weakness:* not conducted annually -- 1988 and 1999 only.

Trend Data

- Sex assault rates, like other crime types, have substantially declined over the past 10-20 years.
- UCR rates of forcible rape down 14%.
 - 2009 – 88,097
 - 1990 – 102,555
- Rate of rape reports to police also down 30% (41.1 to 28.7 per 100,000 residents).⁶
- NCSV rates of rape/sex assault down more than 30% over 9 years:
 - 2011 – 243,800
 - 2002 – 349,810.⁷

Summary of the Data

- Various methods to obtain data on incidence and prevalence of sex assault.
- Data limited by lack of reporting.
- Lack of precision in methods.
- Importance of information to policymakers and practitioners.

Under-Reporting

- NCVS data: 1 in 4 rapes/sexual assaults reported to police over past 15 years.⁸
- NVAWS: 19% of female and 13% of male rape victims reported to police.⁹
- Likelihood of reporting decreases with the victim's age.¹⁰
- NWS: 84% of victims did not report to police:
 - 12% of victims reported within 24 hours;
 - 4% after 24 hours.¹¹

Incidence and Prevalence of Sexual Offending

***RESEARCH LIMITATIONS AND
FUTURE NEEDS***

Research Limitations

- Need to develop standard definition of sex crimes.
- Need to facilitate disclosure victims may otherwise choose not to discuss.
- Problem of under-reporting.
- Victim perception of the crime.
- Wording of the questions.
- Prevention of sexual abuse needs study.
- Vulnerable populations.

Incidence and Prevalence of Sexual Offending

***CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY
IMPLICATIONS***

Conclusions

- Incidence of sexual offending may be declining
- Policymakers should monitor key indicators and work with researchers to better understand data
- Need improved and expanded data with enhanced comparability
- Learn more about under-reporting and provide supportive environment for victim reporting
- Policies must acknowledge existence of unidentified sex offenders, and limitations of sex offender management strategies

Notes

¹ Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) (2009a)

² Truman & Planty (2012)

³ Tjaden & Thoennes (2006)

⁴ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children's Bureau (2010)

⁵ Finkelhor, Hammer, & Sedlak (2008)

⁶ Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) (2009a)

⁷ Rennison (2000); Truman & Planty (2012)

⁸ Bachman (1998); Truman & Planty (2012)

⁹ Tjaden & Thoennes (2006)

¹⁰ Kilpatrick, Saunders, & Smith (2003)

¹¹ National Victim Center and Crime Victims Research and Treatment Center (NVC & CVRATC) (1992)

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Part Two

ETIOLOGY OF ADULT SEX OFFENDING

Original literature review conducted by Susan Faupel, M.S.W.,
Training Director for the Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault (ICASA)

Etiology of Sexual Offending



- Origins or causes of sexually abusive behavior:
 - Pathways associated with the development, onset, and maintenance of sexual offending.
- Why etiological knowledge matters:
 - The development of effective prevention and treatment strategies is contingent on knowledge about the causes of sexual offending and victimization;
 - Knowledge about causes can help sex offender management professionals manage risk; and
 - Etiological information can inform policy making.
- Single factor and multifactor theories

Single Factor Theories

Cognitive Theories

- Focus on how thoughts affect sexually abusive behavior:
 - Thinking errors such as denial, minimization of harm, entitlement, and victim blaming on the part of sex offenders have been documented in research. ¹
 - Problems recognizing and interpreting social cues and the emotional state of others also have been documented. ²
 - There is empirical evidence that distorted thinking patterns can drive deviant sexual behavior, and cognitive theories serve as a core component of many sex offender treatment programs.
 - Cognitive theories do not explain where cognitive distortions originate, nor do they explain why some individuals commit sexually offensive acts specifically. ³

Single Factor Theories

Behavioral Theories

- Argue that sexual offending is a learned behavior, and that sexually deviant arousal plays a pivotal role in the commission of sex crimes.
 - People who have sexual feelings toward inappropriate stimuli are more likely to commit sex crimes than those with appropriate sexual desires.
 - Sexual gratification and the perceived lack of negative consequences for sexual offending, coupled with a lack of support for not engaging in sexual offending behavior, increases the likelihood for sex offenses to continue.
- Research supports the notion that sexual abuse is a learned behavior, but behavioral theories do not offer a complete explanation of sexual offending because many male sex offenders lack deviant sexual arousal patterns. ⁴

Single Factor Theories

Social Learning Theories

- The primary social learning hypothesis suggested as an explanation for sexual offending is that children who are sexually abused grow into sexually abusive adults.
- Negative or adverse conditions in early development have been empirically linked to sexual offending later in life.
 - Sex offenders have higher rates of sexual abuse in their histories than would be expected in the general population; however, a large percentage of sex offenders do not report being sexually abused as children.⁵

Single Factor Theories

Social Learning Theories

- Although sexual victimization as a child cannot be the sole explanation for sexual offending as an adult, several factors may lead more easily to the development of sexually abusive behaviors in victims: ⁶
 - Victim's age;
 - Intensity and duration of abuse;
 - Internalizing the victimization experience as normal or pleasurable; and
 - The manner in which others respond to disclosure.⁷

Multifactor Theories

Marshall and Barbaree's Integrated Theory



- Suggests the prominent causal factors for sexual offending are developmental experiences, biological processes, cultural norms, and the psychological vulnerability that can result from a combination of these factors.
 - Early negative experiences in childhood cause children to view their caregivers as emotionally absent and themselves as unworthy of love, resulting in low self-esteem and poor interpersonal skills.
 - A key developmental task for adolescent boys is to learn to distinguish between sexual impulses and aggression.
 - Adolescent boys may find it difficult to know when they are angry, sexually aroused, or both, and learning how to inhibit aggression in sexual situations may also be difficult.

Multifactor Theories

Marshall and Barbaree's Integrated Theory

- Several of Marshall and Barbaree's hypotheses, such as the presence of poor impulse control and a lack of sufficient social skills in sexual offenders, have been supported through research. ⁸
- Research has shown that insecure childhood attachment can be linked to coercive sexual behavior. ⁹
- Evidence indicates that while some sex offenders have trouble with sexual impulse control, this is not the case for all sexual offenders. ¹⁰
- The assumption that basic human drives and capacities share neurological structures has been cast into doubt. ¹¹

Multifactor Theories

Hall and Hirschman's Quadripartite Model

- The theory groups sex offender personality traits and characteristics derived from other studies into four factors believed to be most significant in the etiology of sex offending:
 - Sexual arousal; thought processes; emotional control; and personality problems.
 - All four are important, but one is generally prominent.
- The theory is based on sound research about sex offender traits, and the notion that individual offenders display contrasting problems has empirical support.
- The theory does not adequately explain relationships and interactions among etiological factors, nor does it identify causal mechanisms behind each factor. ¹²

Multifactor Theories

Ward and Siegart's Pathways Model

- Identifies 5 causal pathways for the development of sexual offending based on different symptom clusters:
 1. intimacy deficits;
 2. deviant thought processes;
 3. emotional deregulation;
 4. antisocial cognition; and
 5. multiple dysfunctional mechanisms involving all symptom clusters associated with the previous pathways.
- Situational stressors serve as triggers for sexual offending.
 - Triggers vary according to the particular profile of causes underlying each individual's pathway.

Multifactor Theories

Ward and Siegart's Pathways Model

- While there are data supporting the basic tenets of the Pathways Model from other areas of psychology, there is little direct support for the theory from sex offender research.
- There is evidence suggesting that individuals in all five pathways share many of the same traits. ¹³
- The Pathways Model has a number of strengths, including its in-depth description of the factors involved in sexual offending and its ability to unify promising aspects of other theories.

Multifactor Theories

Stinson, Sales, and Becker's Multimodal Self-Regulation Theory



- Integrates various psychological perspectives and implicates self-regulatory deficits in the development of sexually inappropriate interests and behaviors:
 - Self-regulatory deficits resulting from negative childhood experiences combine for the development of deviant sexual interest and arousal.
 - When certain biological and temperamental vulnerabilities are also present, the individual is unable to manage behavior and sexual offending can result.
- Limited research to date; but there is empirical support for some tenets of the theory, including the roles that negative developmental experiences, cognitive distortions, and a lack of emotional control play in sexual offending ¹⁴

Conclusions

- No one cause for sexual offending has been found
- Research suggests a combination of factors likely contribute to sexual offending behavior:
 - Adverse conditions in an individual's early development can lead to poor attachment to others, and these conditions can contribute to the development of sexual offending.
 - Like other behaviors, sexual abuse appears to be learned and influenced by reinforcement and punishment.
 - Self-regulation and impulse control problems both appear to be related to sexual offending.

Limitation of Etiological Research

- Etiological research currently suffers from two major shortcomings: sampling problems and a lack of intersection among different theoretical perspectives
 - Many studies are based on samples of sex offenders who are in treatment, in prison, or both; and these studies represent only a subset of sex offenders overall
 - Many studies rely on self-report data which is of questionable validity because many sex offenders engage in cognitive distortions
 - Relatively few studies explore how social structures or cultural phenomena contribute to sexual offending behavior.

Future Research Needs

- Samples that are more representative of the range of individuals who commit sex crimes.
- Prospective, longitudinal research that explores antecedents to sex offending and changes in sexually aggressive behavior over time.
- Maltreatment in early childhood development.
- How thinking errors originate, and why some individuals act on these thoughts and others do not.
- How specific punishments and rewards affect sexual offending behavior.
- The impact of sexually violent and exploitive images in the culture, not only in pornography.
- Further study regarding the integration of theories and the ways that different factors involved in sexual offending relate to one another.

Notes



¹ Marshall, Anderson, & Fernandez (1999); Ward & Keenan (1999).

² Keenan & Ward (2000); Ward (2000).

³ Stinson, Sales, & Becker (2008).

⁴ Looman & Marshall (2005).

⁵ Berliner & Elliot (2002); Putnam (2003).

⁶ Burton (2000); Burton, Miller, & Schill (2002); Eisenman (2000); Freeman-Longo (1986); and Hummel et al. (2000).

⁷ Burton, Miller, & Schill (2002).

⁸ Smallbone & Dadds (2000).

⁹ Smallbone & Dadds (2000).

¹⁰ Proulx, Perreault, & Ouimet (1999).

¹¹ Kolb & Wishaw (1995); Symons (1979); Tooby & Cosmides (1992).

¹² Ward (2000); Ward, Polachek, & Beech (2006); Stinson, Sales, & Becker (2008).

¹³ Simon (1997a, 1997b, and 2002).

¹⁴ Stinson, Sales, & Becker (2008).

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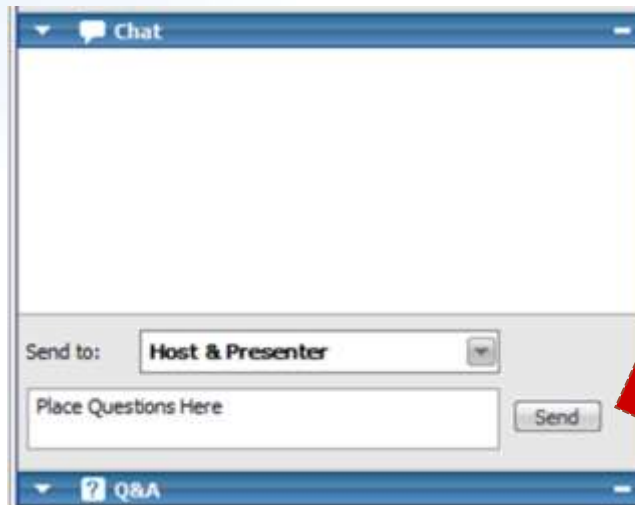
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Q & A

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Q & A

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Thank You for Joining Us!

Please join us for the next webinar in this series on April 20, 2015
The topic will be Internet Facilitated Sexual Offending

Today's slides and a recording of this webinar will be available at:
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