Meet the SOMAPI Authors: A Q & A Session and Open Discussion
Tom Leversee, L.C.S.W.

Author: Juveniles Who Sexually Offend Etiology and Typologies
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-
varyes 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
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
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
Author: Adult Sex Offender Typologies

Dominique A. Simons, M.A.
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 a 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.
Phil Rich, Ed.D. L.I.C.S.W.

Author: Juveniles Who Sexually Offend Risk Assessment
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
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
Kevin Baldwin, Ph.D.

Author: Adult Sex Offender Risk Assessment
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