

POSTER

Measuring Sexual Sadism with the MASA

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Despite the considerable attention in the clinical literature on sadism, empirical support for the construct has remained thin and controversial (Marshall & Kennedy, 2003). Attempts to operationalize the criteria for sadism have inevitably encountered difficulties in attaining adequate levels of interrater reliability (Knight, 1989; Marshall, Kennedy, & Yates, 2002; Marshall & Hucker, 2006). Inferring sexual arousal to injury or distress even from detailed descriptions of offense behavior is a formidable task (Prentky & Knight, 1991). It was the absence of such introspective information that motivated the initial version of the MASA (Knight & Cerce, 1999), which asked questions about sadistic fantasies, about the synergy between sex and aggression, about violence during sex, and about dominance and bondage. Using items from the MASA, various scales measuring important behaviors and fantasies generally associated with sadism were created. Subscales were factor analyzed and a single factor solution (KMO=0,91) was extracted. One parameter item response theory (Bond & Fox, 2001) was used to assess reliability, and correlations with associated behaviors were found to be high. Implications regarding the creation of a standardized measure of sadism are discussed.

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