

**Insights from the Field:
What Recent Research Tells Us about Juvenile Sexual
Offenders and Intervention**

Michael H. Miner, Ph.D., Symposium Chair

This symposium will consist of three presentations by the researchers conducting three major research projects on adolescents who commit sexual crimes. John Hunter will present the results of his work on studying possible subgroups of adolescent male sexual offenders. Dr. Hunter will explain how he's used cluster analysis to identify 5 subgroups and will discuss the characteristics of these subgroups. Michael Miner will present the results of his work identifying unique risk factors for child sexual abuse perpetration amongst adolescent males. Dr. Miner will explore the implication of Marshall and Barbaree's Integrated Theory for understanding the etiology of child sexual abuse in this population, including such factors as insecure attachment, perceptions of social isolation, and perceived adequacy in relating to peers, opposite gender peers, and masculinity. Finally, Elizabeth Letourneau will present the results of a randomized effectiveness trial of Multisystemic Therapy with juvenile sexual offenders. Dr. Letourneau's presentation will focus on multiple indicators of treatment outcome, including problem sexual behavior, delinquency, substance use, mental health functioning, and out-of-home placements and will include mediation analyses designed to explore the bases of MST success with this population.

The symposium will conclude with a discussion by Dr. Mark Chaffin of the implications of the findings presented. Dr. Chaffin will explore the common themes across the three studies, what these studies tell us about the nature of adolescent sexual offending, and the implications for treatment, prevention, and public policy.

Exploring Prototypic Subtypes of Adolescent Male Sexual Offenders

John A. Hunter, Ph.D.

Cluster analysis was applied to data from a national sample of 256 adolescent male sexual offenders receiving sex offender treatment in an institutional or community-based setting. Results (Hunter, Conaway, Figueredo, Malamuth, and Becker (2007), suggest the presence of *five* subgroups of these youth: "Life Course Persistent—Antisocial", "Adolescent-Onset—Experimenters", "Socially Impaired—Anxious and Depressed", "Pedophilic Interests/Antisocial", and "Pedophilic Interests/Non-Antisocial". In brief, both the "Life Course Persistent—Antisocial" and "Pedophilic Interests/Non-Antisocial" subgroups evidence lengthy childhood histories of exposure to violence and an early

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developmental onset to the viewing of pornography and drug/alcohol use. The primary difference being that the former group appears more inclined to sexually offend against peer and adult females than the latter.

Of the five prototypic subtypes, the “Life Course Persistent—Antisocial” subgroup has the highest rate of arrests for non-sexual crimes and appears has the highest reported rate of childhood exposure to violence. “Adolescent-Onset—Experimenters” appear less psychosocially and psychosexually disturbed than other subgroups, and report less childhood exposure to violence and less preadolescent pornography/substance use than either the “Life Course Persistent—Antisocial” subgroup or the “Pedophilic Interests/Antisocial” subgroup. They also appear to have the lowest average number of victims of the five subgroups; however, in their victim choice and adolescent-manifest pattern of alcohol and drug use, they more closely resemble “Life Course Persistent—Antisocial” youth than either “Socially Impaired—Anxious and Depressed” youth, or those in the “Pedophilic Interests/Non-Antisocial” subgroup. The latter two subgroups appear to predominantly sexually offend against children. The author’s current research involves the longitudinal tracking of these subgroups through treatment in an effort to further test hypotheses about subgroup differences in treatment amenability and response. These results will be published as new data are gathered and analyzed.

Can the Integrated Model Explain Sexual Crimes Against Children? Results of a Study of Adolescents

Michael H. Miner, Ph.D.
Dianne Berg, Ph.D.
Beatrice Robinson, Ph.D.
Rebecca Swinburne Romine, M.A.
Jason Netland, M.A.

Marshall and Barbaree’s Integrated Theory proposes that individuals who turn to children for sexual gratification do so because of a need for interpersonal closeness, coupled with an expectation of rejection by peers. It has been suggested by Smallbone and others that attachment theory can help in exploring this hypothesis. In this presentation, we present the results of a 5-year study that used multiple methods (semi-structured interview, computer administered self-report, and chart review) to compare three groups of adolescents, sexual offenders with child victims (n=107), sexual offenders with peer/adult victims (n=49), and non-sexual delinquents (n=122). Participants were recruited from residential treatment facilities, juvenile detention facilities, outpatient treatment programs, and juvenile probations. The results of hierarchical logistic regression indicate that some support for the integrated theory and provides evidence for involvement of an attachment style indicative of attachment anxiety and a poor internal

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working model of self. This attachment style appears to lead to isolation from peers and to inadequacy in many heterosocial and other intimate situations. These factors appear to lead to sexual crimes against children, rather than against adults or peers or general delinquency. There are few differences between the sexual offenders with peer/adult victims and other delinquent youth. This is consistent with findings from longitudinal studies, which indicate that rape is an endpoint crime, generally preceded by other delinquent and violent behavior. The implications of these results will be discussed within the context of the heterogeneity of juvenile sexual offenders, the need for social control, and the important aspects of preventive and treatment interventions.

Multisystemic Therapy for Juvenile Sexual Offenders: 1-Year Results from a Randomized Effectiveness Trial

Elizabeth J. Letourneau, Ph.D.
Scott W. Henggeler, Ph.D.
Charles M. Borduin, Ph.D.
Paul A. Schewe, Ph.D.
Michael R. McCart
Jason E. Chapman, Ph.D.
Lisa Saldana, Ph.D.

In spite of the serious and costly problems presented by juvenile sexual offenders, rigorous tests of promising interventions rarely have been conducted. This study presents a community-based randomized *effectiveness* trial comparing multisystemic therapy (MST) adapted for juvenile sexual offenders with services that are typical of those provided to juvenile sexual offenders in the U.S. Youth were randomized to MST ($n = 67$) or treatment as usual for juvenile sexual offenders (TAU-JSO; $n = 60$). Outcomes through 12 months post recruitment were assessed for problem sexual behavior, delinquency, substance use, mental health functioning, and out-of-home placements. Relative to youth who received TAU-JSO, youth in the MST condition evidenced significant reductions in sexual behavior problems, delinquency, substance use, externalizing symptoms, and out-of-home placements. The findings suggest that family- and community-based interventions, especially those with an already established evidence-base in treating adolescent antisocial behavior, hold considerable promise in meeting the clinical needs of juvenile sexual offenders.