



Psychiatry & Behavioral Science Section - 2016

I16 The Assessment, Treatment, and Community Management of Sex Offenders

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The goals of this presentation are to: (1) provide practical and effective strategies for the assessment of sexual offenders and people with problematic sexual interests; (2) provide an overview of the current treatment strategies used among sexual offenders and people with problematic sexual interests; and, (3) provide an understanding of the similarities and differences between Canadian and American approaches to the assessment, treatment, and community-based management of this population.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by providing information regarding the paraphilic interests and sexual offending behaviors from a forensic psychiatry perspective. The forensic science community will learn about the components of sexual offender assessment, the historical development of treatment models, evidence that treatment of paraphilias does work, and what measures are in place for community-based management of sexual offenders once they are released. Both Canadian and American approaches will be discussed.

This panel will provide an overview of Canadian and American perspectives on current methods used to assess, treat, and manage sexual offenders and people with problematic sexual interests. First, an overview will be provided of the assessment protocol for sexual offenders from the American perspective. The use of a tripartite approach with the components being clinical review, psychological instruments, and physiological assessments will serve as the framework. The physiological element includes visual reaction time measurement, Penile Plethysmography (PPG), and polygraphy. This will include a discussion of the development of an innovative phallometric stimuli set, as well as preliminary empirical data from an on-going study on this new set.

The Canadian perspective of the assessment protocol for sexual offenders will then be explored. Topics discussed include: referral sources, patient characteristics, and objective measures of sexual arousal as well as psychological measures that are currently being used in the Sexual Behaviours Clinic (SBC) of Royal Ottawa Mental Health Centre (The Royal) in Ottawa, Canada. New and innovative research projects will also be discussed, including objective assessment of female sexual arousal, which is in a pilot stage of study. Alternate and complimentary methods for the objective assessment of sexual arousal will be presented, such as **functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging** (fMRI) testing, eye-tracking, and new stimulus sets to be used during penile plethysmography.

Treatment strategies utilized between the 1960s and the present day will be highlighted. This will include the progression from solely behavioral techniques, such as aversion therapy, to more advanced and appropriate treatment interventions such as pharmacotherapy, cognitive-behavioral therapy, relapse prevention, and the Good Lives Model. Dynamic risk factors that are commonly targeted when treating this population and how these treatment targets have expanded and evolved throughout the years will be outlined. An overview of treatment strategies for special populations of sex offenders, such as juveniles, females, and individuals with intellectual disabilities, will be included in order to highlight the similarities and differences that are relevant when treating these various subgroups.

Next, evidence will be reviewed that challenges the hypothesis that paraphilic disorders are untreatable. Four perspectives that have been used to describe and treat the paraphilias will be explored. Evidence will be presented that supports the hypothesis that sexual interest can not only be controlled but changed. Explanations for why it may be time for a new paradigm regarding the effectiveness of treatment for men with paraphilias are covered.

This presentation will conclude with a review and discussion of the management of sex offenders in community settings, notably the use of Sex Offender Registries (SORs) and Public Notification (PN). The rationale for the use of this legislation and ethical concerns regarding the use of this type of community-based management will be explored. Academic research findings on the utility of these tools have largely been limited and inconsistent where available. Varying features of SORs across state and national lines has severely limited the ability for cross-sectional comparisons and broad legislative improvements. Legislation governing the international use of SORs and PN will be compared.

Sex Offender, Paraphilia, Treatment

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