

## Understanding Who is High and Who is Low in Emotional Congruence with Children

Chantal A. Hermann<sup>1</sup>, Ian V. McPhail<sup>2</sup>,  
Yolanda M. Fernandez<sup>3</sup>, and Emma Isai<sup>1</sup>

Carleton University<sup>1</sup>, Independent Research Criminologist<sup>2</sup>  
Correctional Service of Canada<sup>3</sup>

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2

## Why study ECWC?

- ECWC is a psychologically meaningful risk factor for sexual recidivism
  - ( $d = 0.42$ , 95% CI = 0.16, 0.69,  $k = 3$ ; Mann, Hanson, & Thornton, 2010)
- Effective intervention
- ECWC alone is not a sufficient cause of child sexual abuse

3

## Why Study ECWC?

- Typically examine ECWC as a criterion variable
- Need research examining the mechanisms that may lead to or are associated with ECWC
- Three mechanisms that could result in ECWC

4

## Mechanisms of ECWC

- **Blockage** (e.g., Finkelhor, 1984)
  - Blockage from adult intimate relationships produces emotional and social loneliness (Fisher & Howells, 1993; Marshall, 1989)
  - Fear adult women: perceived as domineering, cold, and dangerous authority figures
  - Lack of social skills or interpersonal competence
  - Children are perceived as welcoming, warm, and affectionate and are easier to emotionally relate to (Howells, 1979).

5

## Mechanisms of ECWC

- **Sexual Deviance** (Groth & Colleagues, 1979; 1978; 1982)
  - ECWC is a product of sexual attraction to children
    - Typically begins in adolescence
  - Maintain lengthy relationships with children because of sexual attraction
    - Offenders "fall in love" with children
  - Interpersonal type of SOC (MTC:CM3; Knight, Carter, & Prentky, 1989)
    - Lack of impulsivity
    - Offence supportive beliefs

6

## Mechanisms of ECWC

- **Psychological Immaturity (Finkelhor, 1984; Finkelhor & Araji, 1986)**
  - Offender has childish emotional needs
  - Failure to advance psychologically and experience themselves as children
  - Sexual interaction is a consequence of opportunity, rather than planning or intent to offend

7

## Summary & Purpose

- **Research Questions:** What psychological factors combine with or contribute to the development of ECWC to promote child sexual abuse?
  - Three potential mechanisms:
    - Blockage
    - Sexual Deviance
    - Psychological Immaturity
- Each mechanism has expected correlates...

8

Blockage	Sexual Deviance	Psychological Immaturity
Loneliness or Social Rejection	Low general sexual regulation (e.g., using sex for coping)	Being younger
Lack impulsivity	Lack impulsivity	Impulsivity
Hostility towards women	Deviant sexual interests	Low social competence
General lack of sexual deviance	Paraphilias	Poor cognitive problem-solving
Compliance with authority figures	More deviant victims (i.e., young or male victims)	More female victims
Lack of stable intimate relationships with adults	More prior victims and less stranger victims	Developmentally delayed
	Offence supportive beliefs	History of mental illness
	High rate of sexual	

9

## Overview

- **High and Low ECWC Groups:**
  - Emotional Identification with Children Item of the Stable-2000

	Score	Description
Low	0	•No obvious identification with children
High	1	•Immature relationships with adults •View children as having special qualities of understanding or communication that adults do not •Some interest in age-inappropriate (childlike) activities or past times
	2	•Obviously feels more comfortable with children than with adults •No adult friends - has children as friends • Strong child – oriented interests, past-times or activities

## Overview

- **Sex Offenders against Children:**
  - One victim under the age of 14
- **Examined differences on:**
  - Demographic variables (e.g., age)
  - Offence characteristics (e.g., number of victims)
  - Static risk factors (Static-99)
  - Psychological risk factors (Stable-2000)

11

## Analyses

- Area under the Receiver Operating Characteristic Curve (AUC) to examine group differences
- Can range from 0 to 1.00
- 95% CI do not contain .50 = significant
- AUCs < .50 = offenders low in ECWC evidence more of the factor (e.g., sexual deviance) relative to offenders high in ECWC
- AUCs > .50 = offenders high in ECWC evidence more of the factor (e.g., male victims) relative to offenders low in ECWC

12

## Participants

- n = 221 adult male sex offenders against children
  - Low ECWC n = 164
  - High ECWC n = 57
- Millhaven Assessment Unit (MAU): Ontario, Canada (2000 to 2007)
- Federally Incarcerated (2+ years)

13

	95% CI		
	AUC	LL	UL
<b>Demographic Variables</b>			
Age at time of offence	.42	.33	.52
<b>Offence Characteristics &amp; Static Risk Factors</b>			
Number of victims	.49	.40	.57
Prior sex offences	.46	.38	.55
Any unrelated victims	.51	.42	.60
Any stranger victims	.45	.37	.54
Any male victims	.54	.45	.61

## Psychological Risk Factors

	95% CI		
	AUC	LL	UL
Significant social influences	.53	.44	.61
Cooperation with supervision	.52	.44	.61
Lovers/intimate partners	.54	.45	.62
Hostility towards women	.51	.43	.60
Poor cognitive problem solving	.51	.42	.59
Social rejection/loneliness	.66*	.58	.73
Impulsive acts	.38*	.30	.46
Sex pre-occupation/sex drive	.60*	.51	.69
Sex as coping	.62*	.54	.71
Deviant sexual interest	.74*	.67	.82
Child molester attitudes	.73*	.65	.81

17

Blockage	Sexual Deviance	Psychological Immaturity
Loneliness or Social Rejection	√	Younger
Lack impulsivity	√	Impulsivity
Hostility towards women	X	Low social competence
General lack of sexual deviance	X	Poor cognitive problem-solving
Compliance with authority figures	X	More female victims
Lack of stable intimate relationships with adults	X	Developmentally delayed
	More deviant victims	History of mental illness
	High rate of sexual offending	X

16

## Discussion

- Most support for the sexual deviance mechanism
- Limitations:
  - Small sample size
  - Missing measures of some potential correlates (e.g., developmentally delayed)

17

## A second study... (Hermann, McPhail, Helmus, & Hanson, 2011)

### Dynamic Supervision Project (DSP) Sample (see DSP project for more details; Hanson et al., 2007)

- n = 359 adult male sex offenders against children released on community supervision (probation or parole)
  - Canada, Alaska, Iowa (2001 to 2005)
  - High ECWC n = 153
  - Low ECWC n = 206

18

DSP Sample (n = 359)				
Blockage	Sexual Deviance		Psychological Immaturity	
Loneliness or Social Rejection	√	Low general sexual regulation	√	Low social competence
Hostility towards women	√	Deviant sexual interests	√	Poor cognitive problem-solving
Lack of stable intimate relationships with adults	S	Offence supportive attitudes	√	Developmentally delayed
General lack of sexual deviance	X	More deviant victims	√	Being younger
Compliance with authority figures	X	More prior victims	√	Impulsivity
Lack impulsivity	X	High rate of sexual offending	√	More female victims
		Lack impulsivity	X	History of mental illness
		Less stranger victims	X	
		Juvenile sex offences	X	

## Discussion

- Important differences between offenders high in ECWC and low in ECWC on psychological risk factors
- ECWC most associated with sexual deviance correlates
  - For both federally incarcerated offenders and offenders released on community supervision
- Cannot determine if sexual deviance causes ECWC or if ECWC causes sexual deviance
  - Likely to co-occur, this is important for clinical intervention

## Discussion

- Limitations:
  - Small sample sizes
  - High ECWC group = 1 or 2 on the Stable-2000
  - Correlates defined by data set
- Future studies:
  - Different measures of ECWC (e.g., Children Identification Scale – Revised)

## Thank you

For more information please contact

Chantal A. Hermann

Carleton University

[chermann@connect.carleton.ca](mailto:chermann@connect.carleton.ca)