Childhood Sexual Victimization (CSV)

- Abused-abuser hypothesis has received some preliminary support.
- Higher prevalence of CSV reported by sexual offenders against children relative to non-sexual offenders against children (e.g., Cale, Leclerc, & Smallbone, 2014; Jespersen, Lalumiere, & Seto, 2009).
- Causal?

Main Research Question

Is childhood sexual victimization related to cognitions thought to be relevant to sexual offending?

Study 1 Research Questions

Is childhood sexual victimization related to beliefs regarding sexual offending against children?

Is childhood sexual victimization related to evaluation of sexual offending against children?

**Study 1 Methods**

- **Participants**
  - 17 adult male sexual offenders against children ($M = 42.68$ years, $SD = 9.05$)
  - 10 self-reported CSV; 7 self-reported No CSV
  - Offenders recruited from forensic and correctional institutions

**Beliefs regarding Sex with Children**

- **Sex With Children scale (SWCH; Mann, Webster, Wakeling, & Marshall, 2007)**
  - Factor 1 (Harmless Sex with Children)
    - 11 items; strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)
    - “Many children benefit from having sex with an adult.”
  - Factor 2 (Provocative Sex with Children)
    - 7 items; strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)
    - “Children enjoy sexual attention from adults.”

**Evaluation of Sexual Offending**

- **Evaluation of Sex with Boys Under 12 Semantic Differential (SD; e.g., Sewell, Hermann, Nunes, & McPhail, 2010)**
  - 7 items; more negative (1) to more positive (7)
  - “Having sex with boys under 12 is...”

- **Evaluation of Sex with Girls Under 12 Semantic Differential (SD; e.g., Sewell et al., 2010)**
  - 7 items; more negative (1) to more positive (7)
  - “Having sex with girls under 12 is...”

**Study 2 Research Questions**

Is childhood sexual victimization related to self-esteem?

Is childhood sexual victimization related to evaluation of sex offenders?

Is childhood sexual victimization related to identification as a child molester?
Study 2 Methods

- **Participants**
  - 28 adult male sexual offenders against children (M = 41.30 years; SD = 11.44)
  - 13 with CSV; 15 with No CSV
  - According to file information
  - Offenders recruited from provincial and federal prisons, and outpatient services

Self-Esteem

- **Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES; Rosenberg, 1965)**
  - 10 items; very strongly disagree (1) to very strongly agree (9)
  - "I feel that I have a number of good qualities."

- **Short Self-Esteem Scale (SSES; Thornton, 1989)**
  - 8 items; Yes/ No
  - "Do you like the sort of person you are?"

Evaluation of Sex Offenders

- **Evaluation of Sex Offenders Semantic Differential (SD; e.g., Hermann, Maimone, Atlas, Kostiuk, Jung, & Nunes, 2013)**
  - 5 items; more negative (1) to more positive (7)
  - "Sex offenders are..."

**Study 3 Research Questions**

Is childhood sexual victimization related to emotional congruence with children?

Is childhood sexual victimization related to identification with children?

**Study 3 Methods**

► Participants
  > 19 adult male sexual offenders against children (*M* = 43.26 years; *SD* = 10.34)
  > 10 self-reported CSV; 9 self-reported No CSV
  > Offenders recruited from forensic and correctional institutions.

► Emotional Congruence with Children (ECWC)
  > Child Identification Scale—Revised (CIS-R; Wilson, 1999)
    > 40 items; True or False
    > “I feel closer to children than to adults.”
  > Emotional Congruence with Children scale of the Children and Sex Questionnaire (CSQ; Beckett, 1987)
    > 15 items; very untrue (1) to very true (5)
    > “I am better than most people at understanding children.”

**Identification with Children**

► Identification with Children Semantic Differential (SD; e.g., McPhail, 2010)
  > 3 items; less ID with children (1) to more ID with children (7)
  > “I am...”

- 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- Mature
- Adult-like
- Manly
- Immature
- Child-like
- Boyish

**Identifications with Children SD**

- CSV
- No CSV

**Emotional Congruence with Children**

- CIS-R Total Score: *d* = 2.16*
- CSQ Total Score: *d* = 1.39*
- Identification with Children SD: *d* = 0.69

* *p < .05*
CSV was moderately to strongly associated with Unpublished manuscript. (Available from David Thornton, P.O. 
Unable to make causal inferences about the Small sample sizes 
Cross-sectional design 
Unable to make causal inferences about the relationship

References (Continued)


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In conclusion...

These results suggest that CSV is associated with many cognitions thought to be relevant to sexual offending against children.

If there is a causal link between CSV and sexual offending, perhaps these cognitions may at least partly explain how CSV leads to sexual offending