


Using Implicit Measures to Explore Cognitions Associated With Sexual Offending Against Children

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Why do Some People Sexually Offend Against Children?

- Low self-esteem?
- Sexual offender self-concept?
- Positive attitudes towards sexual offending?
- Sexual attraction to children?



Self-Esteem IAT

me

me
my
mine
myself

not me

it
they
them
their

pleasant

vacation
rainbow
smile
sunshine
paradise
freedom

unpleasant

rotten
poison
sickness
vomit
cancer
evil

Nunes, Firestone, & Baldwin (2007)

Response latency

me

pleasant

not me

unpleasant

versus

Response latency

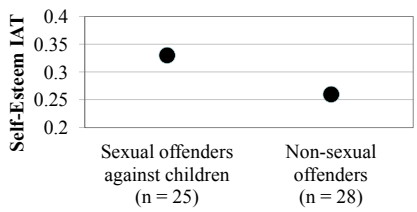
not me

pleasant


me

unpleasant

Self-Esteem IAT #1

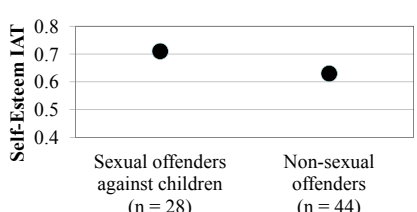


Cohen's $d = -0.42$, 95% CI [-0.97, 0.12]




Nunes, Firestone, & Baldwin (2007)

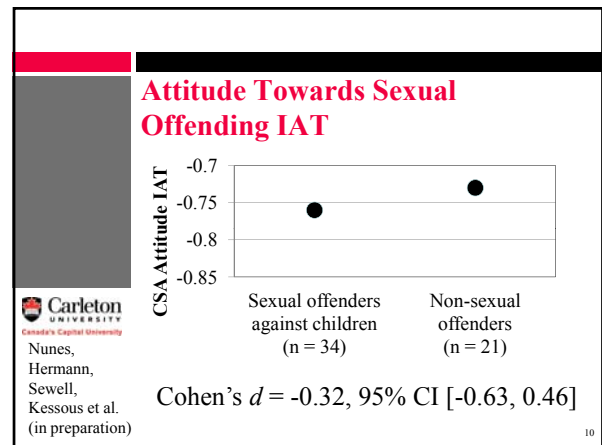
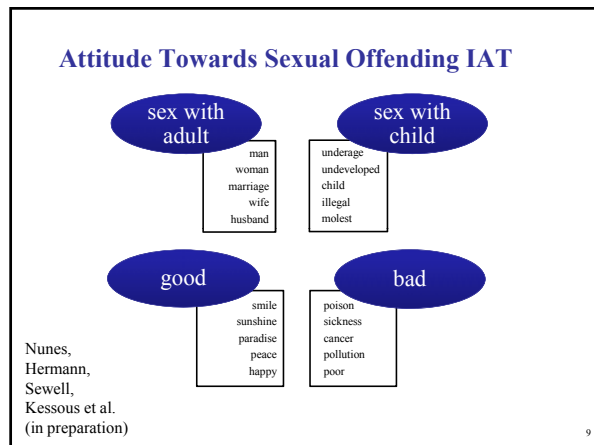
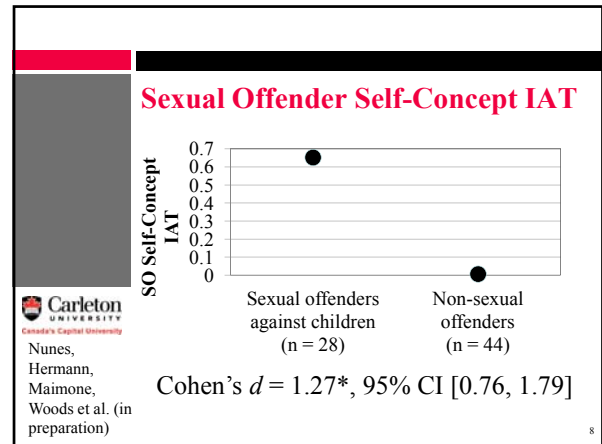
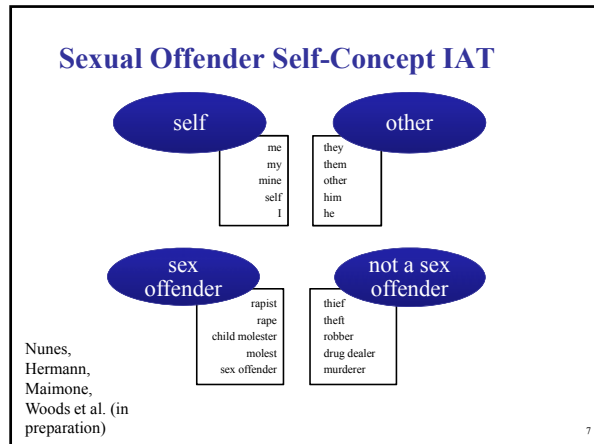
Self-Esteem IAT #2



Cohen's $d = -0.19$, 95% CI [-0.67, 0.28]



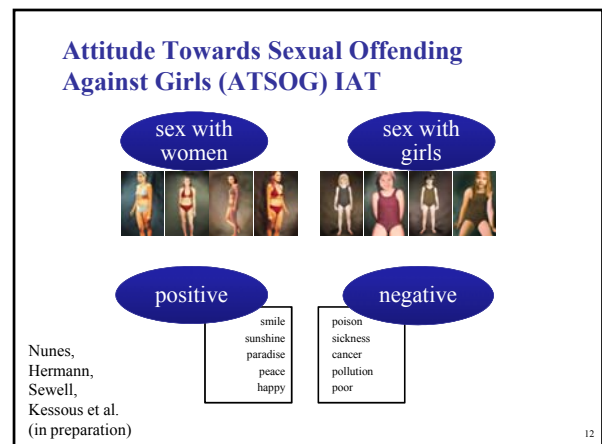
Pettersen, Nunes, Kostiuk, Jung, & Atlas (in preparation)



Effect of Sexual Arousal on Implicit Attitudes to Sexual Offending

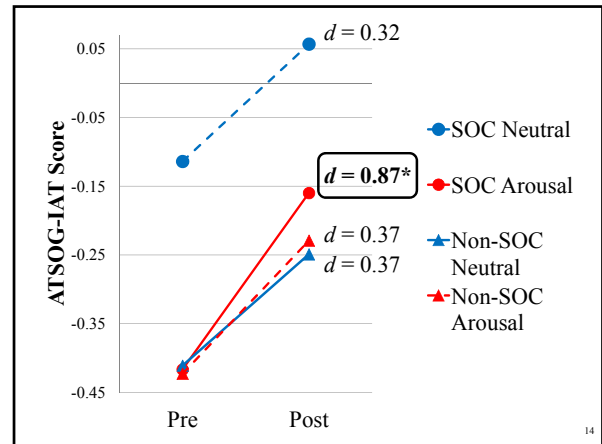
- Does sexual arousal make implicit attitudes towards sexual offending against children more positive?
- If so, is this the case only for sexual offenders against children?

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- ATSOG-IAT → arousing or neutral story → ATSOG-IAT
- Neutral story
 - 11 sexual offenders against children
 - 9 non-sexual offenders
- Arousing story
 - 13 sexual offenders against children
 - 8 non-sexual offenders

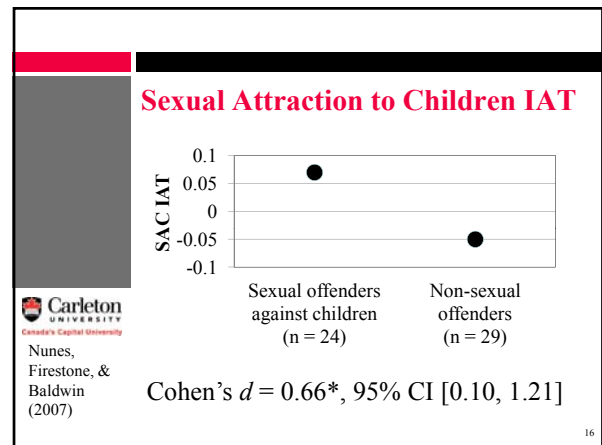
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Nunes, Hermann, Sewell, Kessous et al. (in preparation)



Sexual Attraction to Children IAT

adult	mature big man woman grownup adult	child	young small boy girl kid child
sexy	fuck naked masturbate sex beautiful love	not sexy	yuck stink old ugly impotent disgusting

Nunes, Firestone, & Baldwin (2007)



Meta-Analysis: IAT Measures of Sexual Attraction to Children

- Sexual offenders against children have more deviant scores on IAT measures of sexual attraction to children than do comparison groups
- Average Cohen's $d = 0.63^*$
 - 95% CI [0.42, 0.83]
 - $N = 707, k = 12$

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Babchishin, Nunes, & Hermann (2013)


Hypotheses About Causes of Sexual Offending vs. Our Findings

- ~~✗~~ Low self-esteem
- ✓ Sexual offender self-concept?
- ✓ Positive attitudes towards sexual offending?
- ✓ Sexual attraction to children?

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Next Steps


- More rigorous research
- Construct validity of IAT measure scores
- Increasing measurement precision and clarity → better understanding of causes → better assessment and intervention → less offending


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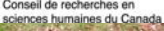
19


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20

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21