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Implicit Identification With Sexual Offenders and Sexual Offending Against Children

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32nd Annual Research and
Treatment Conference of the
Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers

**Aggressive Cognitions and Behaviour
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Main Questions

- Implicit and explicit identification (ID) of self as a sexual offender relevant for sexual offending?
- Cognitive consistency between implicit ID, attitude to sex offenders, and self-esteem?
- Cognitive consistency relevant for sexual offending?

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Participants

- 28 adult male sexual offenders against children (SOC)
- 44 adult male non-sexual offenders (NSO)
- Federal and provincial prisons, probation offices, and forensic psychiatric hospital in western Canada

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Sex Offender Identity IAT (SOID-IAT)

- Categories and stimuli
 - SELF: ME, MY, MINE, SELF, I
 - OTHER: THEY, THEM, OTHER, HIM, HE
 - Sex offender: rapist, rape, child molester, molest, sex offender
 - Not a sex offender: thief, theft, robber, drug dealer, murderer
- Higher positive scores = more sex offender ID

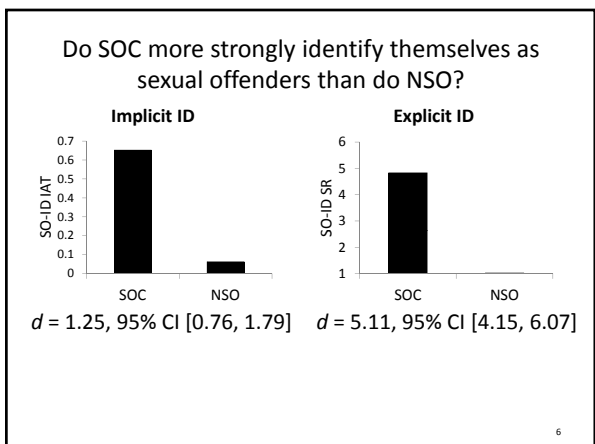
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Sex Offender Identity Self Report (SOID-SR)

I am

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not a sex offender				Neutral			A sex offender
Not a rapist				Neutral			A rapist
Not a child molester				Neutral			A child molester

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Consistency between ID, Attitude, and Self-Esteem

Consistent			Inconsistent		
Self	Attitude	ID	Self	Attitude	ID
+	+	SO	+	+	NSO
+	-	NSO	+	-	SO
-	+	NSO	-	+	SO
-	-	SO	-	-	NSO

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Cognitive Consistency Among SOC? Correlations

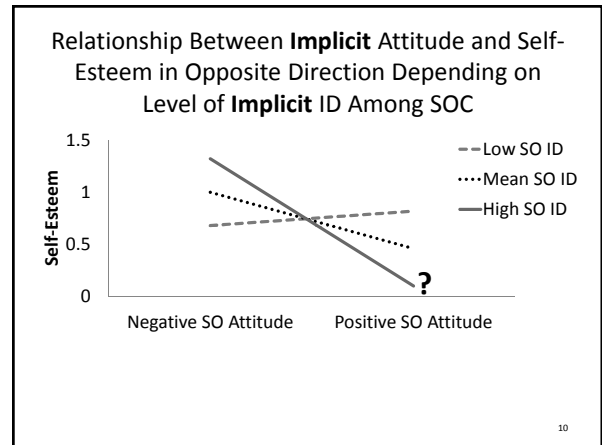
- Large and significant positive correlation between implicit ID and implicit attitude

	Attitude IAT	Self-esteem IAT
ID IAT	.72*	.13
Attitude IAT	--	.10

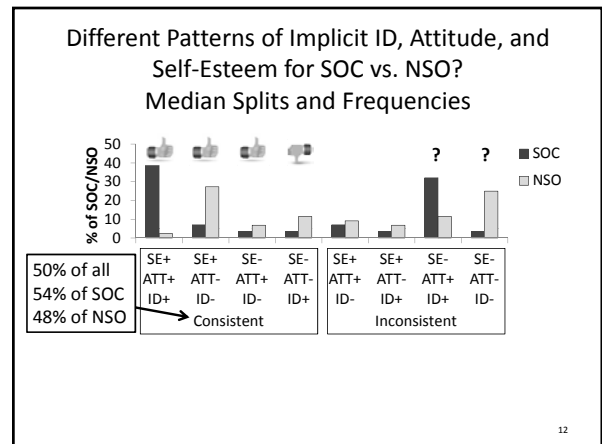
* $p < .05$

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- ### Cognitive Consistency Between **Implicit** Measures Among SOC? Multiple Regression Analyses
- Consistency would be indicated by **significant** and **positive** multiple R for interactions
 - Self-esteem X Attitude → ID
 - **Non-significant** and **negative** R
 - Self-esteem X ID → Attitude
 - **Non-significant** and **negative** R
 - ID X Attitude → Self-esteem
 - **Significant** but **negative** R
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- ### Different Patterns of Implicit ID, Attitude, and Self-Esteem for SOC vs. NSO? Moderated Logistic Regression Analyses
- None of the possible interactions between IAT measures significantly differentiated SOC from NSO
 - ID x attitude, ID x self-esteem, attitude x self-esteem, and ID x attitude x self-esteem **all non-significant**
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Discussion

- Little evidence of cognitive consistency between implicit ID, attitude, and self-esteem
- Little evidence that cognitive consistency is relevant for sexual offending
- But, evidence consistent with the hypothesis that implicit ID is relevant for sexual offending

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Limitations

- Small sample
 - Power, generalizability
- Unknown construct validity
- Maybe our ID measures are assessing “admitting” more so than self-concept?
- Cross-sectional correlational design leaves us guessing about causality

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Future Directions

- Larger N and anonymous studies in community to more conclusively examine if ID and cognitive consistency play a role in sexual offending
- Refine measures
- Examine with other types of sexual offenders and other implicit measures

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Acknowledgements

- Alberta Solicitor General
- Correctional Services of Canada
- MacEwan University Faculty of Arts & Science
- Northern Alberta Forensic Psychiatry Program



Social Sciences and Humanities
Research Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches en
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