Discriminant Factors for Adolescent Sexual Offending and the Importance of Considering Sibling Incest

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Background. Sex offending by adolescents is associated with different factor combinations and developmental pathways. These pathways are associated with different observable and clinically useful characteristics such as antisocial vs. asocial traits and children vs. peer victims. Although the victim age distinction proved to be useful, a growing number of studies suggest that the intra- vs. extra-familial distinction might be even more important to describe clinically and theoretically relevant subgroups of juvenile sex offenders (JSO).

Objective. The first goal of this study was to address potentially confounding factors across studies of victim age categorizations of JSO. Limiting the number of study variables, choosing them on theoretical grounds, controlling for multiple comparisons, calculating effect sizes should help clarifying the discriminant value of the victim age categorization among JSO. A second goal of this study was to distinguish the victim age categorization from the more specific intra- vs. extra-familial distinction. Finally, a finer description of the sibling incest distinction among JSO was aimed, based on multivariate analyses.

Method. Information related to more than 320 JSO, including collateral inputs from parents, legal guardians, and clinicians was gathered from an existing database (Carpentier, Leclerc, and Proulx, 2011). Distinction between JSO of children, JSO of peers, and mix JSO, as well as intra- vs. extra-familial relationship with the victim was made. Theoretically and clinically relevant factors were compared between the groups, including victimization history, social abilities, sexual experience, atypical sexual interest, low intellectual functioning, delinquency indicators, and aggressive behaviors.

Results. As reported by others (Leroux, Pullman, Motayne, & Seto, 2014), although the victim age distinction is relatively helpful to discriminate subgroups, it fails to detect differences on important variables. Considering sibling incest JSO (siJSO), however, improved the discriminant power. Multinomial regressions revealed that siJSO are significantly more likely to have been sexually and physically victimized and significantly less likely to have younger friends, to be socially rejected or isolated, and to have a boy victim than JSO of extra-familial children. siJSO were also significantly more likely to have been physically victimized and significantly less likely to have had a consensual sexual relationship than JSO of extra-familial peers or adults.

Conclusion. These results suggest that the victim age distinction is not sufficient to fully discriminate between subgroups of JSO on key factors, and that sibling incest should be considered.
Goals of the Poster Presentation:

1. Realizing that simple, observable variables such as victim age and relationship with the victim possess good predictive value for more specific pathway identification among JSO.

2. Questioning the value of victim age only to efficiently discriminate between subgroups of JSO.

3. Realizing that sibling incest might be important to consider in addition to victim age to better understand the dynamics and pathway of a given acting out.
