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2018 ATSA Conference | Friday October 19 | 10:30 AM – 12:00 PM

F-09

Prevalence, Risk, and Management of Sexual Offenders in Australia

Symposium Chair: Danielle Arlanda Harris, PhD
Griffith University

This symposium explores a range of individual-level factors associated with sexual offending, set in a Queensland context. The first part evaluates a field-based, systems-focused, culturally-informed treatment programme that targets high risk/high need adolescents adjudicated for sexual offenses. This study concludes that the intervention designed to reduce sexual recidivism in fact also reduced future victimisation. The second study evaluates how we assess the risk of child sexual offenders within the agencies who predominantly manage them. This is presented as a comparative analysis between contact and non-contact (online) sexual offenders and how their characteristics differ. This lays the foundation for further research into the way we assess the risk of known (charged/convicted) sexual offenders and whether these are the most effective ways of detecting and managing the risk of children being sexually abused in our communities. The final study describes and evaluates the management of sexual offenders who have returned to the community under intensive supervision. This work compares the implementation in two different state jurisdictions (in Australia and the United States) of a range of recent legislative measures aimed specifically at individuals who commit sexual offenses. Lessons learned and lingering questions from each country will be presented.

The Impact on Victimization of a Programme Designed to Reduce Sexual Reoffending

Sarah Brown, PhD, Forensic Psychologist, CPsychol, AFBPsS, ATSAF, FHEA
Coventry University

Although research indicates that there is considerable overlap between child and adolescent populations who are victimized and who victimize others, victimisation and offending are rarely studied together. This study was concerned with whether a systems-focused treatment programme delivered throughout Queensland, Australia, designed to address individual and systemic risk factors associated with the perpetration of sexual and violent crimes might also be successful in reducing future victimization by others. Boys (average age 15 at time of referral offence) adjudicated for sexual offences in Queensland who received 'treatment as usual' (TAU; $n = 335$) were compared with similarly

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adjudicated boys ($n = 200$) who completed the treatment programme on an individualised basis in their communities on their histories of contact with the police either as offenders or victims. Despite their higher rates of pre-intervention victimization, the treatment group were victimized less frequently post-intervention than the TAU group. Continued offending was the strongest predictor of victimization post-intervention. These findings suggest that offending and victimization share common risk and protective factors that may be addressed simultaneously to increase resilience following sexually harmful behaviour and to design interventions that prevent child sexual and other forms of abuse.

Learning Goals:

- To identify common risk factors for sexual offending and victimisation
- To understand the impact of a programme designed to reduce recidivism on victimisation
- To assess the limitation of the evaluation method employed in the study

The Lived Experience of Men Subject to Intensive Community Supervision in Australia

Danielle Arlanda Harris, PhD
Griffith University

In Queensland, Australia, approximately 100 men have been released from prison under the *Dangerous Prisoners (Sexual Offenders) Act 2003*. This legislation provides for intensive community supervision and rather punitive offender management measures including electronic monitoring, residence restrictions, and curfews. Although not bound by the same level of intensity or scope of the memorial legislation that is more commonplace in the United States, many of the technical requirements of supervised release are the same in Australia. The main distinction, however, is that the Australian registry of individuals convicted of sexual offenses is maintained and accessed only by law enforcement. Without a publicly available online registry or community notification, the lived experience of men convicted of sexual offenses and returning to the community is quite distinct. This presentation addresses the similarities and differences in the legislation across multiple jurisdictions in two otherwise fairly similar Western countries and discusses the lessons we might learn from each other.

Learning Goals:

- To provide a snapshot of the development, provisions, and consequences of the Dangerous Prisoners (Sexual Offenders) Act in Queensland;

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- To compare the conditions and lived experiences of men under intensive community supervision (post release) in Australia and the United States
- To suggest some lessons that could be learned through the knowledge exchange across jurisdictions.

Detection and Management of Contact and Non-Contact Sexual Offences in Queensland, Australia

Samuel James Nicol, BCCJ (Hons)
Griffith University

The emergence of the internet and proliferation of handheld technological devices has greatly increased the accessibility of Child Exploitation Material (CEM). This content has transformed from being used by a niche group of individuals to now being accessed very easily by a substantial number of people. The exponential growth of “sex offender risk assessment” relies almost entirely upon tools designed for and validated from samples of people with convictions for contact sexual offences. Since many of those tools were designed prior to the advent of the internet, there is a gap in our understanding and a disconnect in the ability of law enforcement agencies to assess and manage those people alleged, accused, or convicted of exclusively non-contact CEM offences. This Australian comparative study identifies the similarities and differences between men who were charged exclusively for contact sexual offenses against children, compared to men with noncontact convictions, exclusively. The unique characteristics of the state of Queensland, such as its considerable Indigenous population and large remote geographical areas provide an interesting backdrop to investigate this phenomenon. Results indicate that contact offenders were younger, reported more criminogenic factors, and more indicators of anti-social behaviour. Critical questions are raised around the way contact and noncontact offenders are detected, risk assessed, and managed in the community.

Learning Goals:

- To identify similarities and differences between contact and non-contact sexual offenders.
- To identify characteristics of contact and non-contact child sexual offenders in a QLD context.
- Create a foundation for further study into the effectiveness of risk assessment for child sexual offenders and particularly those convicted of non-contact CEM offences.

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Danielle Arlanda Harris is the Deputy Director-Research of the Griffith Youth Forensic Service and a Lecturer in the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Griffith University. She holds a doctorate in Criminology from Griffith University (2008), a Masters in Criminology and Criminal Justice from the University of Maryland (2004) and a Bachelor of Arts (hons) in Justice Studies from the Queensland University of Technology and the University of Westminster (2001). She has published more than 25 articles and book chapters and has given over 50 presentations at international conferences. Her research examines sexual aggression through a life course perspective, examining onset, specialization/versatility, desistance, and related public policy. Her study of civilly committed sex offenders in Massachusetts was funded by the Guggenheim Foundation and she recently received a grant from the California Sex Offender Management Board for a state-wide survey of community supervision practices. Her first book—which draws on the narratives of 74 men convicted of sexual offenses and released from custody—was released in December.

Professor Brown has been conducting research related to sexual aggression for over 20 years. She is a Forensic Psychologist, Chartered Psychologist and Associate Fellow of the British Psychological Society (BPS). Professor Brown is the Chair-Elect of the National Organisation for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers (NOTA) and a Fellow of the Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers (ATSA). She is a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy (HEA) and an Advisory Board Member of the Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse. She is an Associate Editor of *Child Abuse and Neglect* and a member of the Editorial Board of *Sexual Abuse* and the *Journal of Sexual Aggression* having been the Editor of the latter journal from 2008 to 2014.

Samuel Nicol graduated with a Criminology (honours) degree from the University of Northampton in the UK in 2007 and has been employed by the Metropolitan police and later the Queensland Police Service (QPS) over the past ten years, predominantly in criminal intelligence analysis roles. Over the past seven years, he has been producing intelligence products for the Child Abuse and Sexual Crime Group of QPS including conducting hundreds of actuarial risk assessments on QLD child sexual offenders subject to sex offender registration. His recent work has a strategic focus, particularly in relation to the most effective ways to identify and manage risk of child sexual offenders in QLD. Samuel is currently completing his honours in Criminal Justice and Criminology at Griffith University, with the aim of moving onto a doctorate in Criminology with a specific interest in exploring the reliance and limitations of the risk assessment of sexual offenders.