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2018 ATSA Conference | Friday October 19 | POSTER

### **Factors Related to Treatment Selection and Recidivism in a Sample of Female Sex Offenders**

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According to the risk-need-responsivity (RNR) model, treatment is most successful when it is provided to offenders who are at the highest risk of recidivism (Andrews, Bonta, & Hoge, 1990). Furthermore, accurate risk assessment informs the level of treatment that would be most appropriate for offenders (Andrews et al., 1990). Assessing risk is integral to effective treatment, so for populations of offenders who have been widely neglected in risk research, such as female sexual offenders, the ability of decision makers to adequately apply the RNR framework may be precluded. While limited, research on female sexual offenders has provided some insight into factors that are demonstrative of risk, such as victim characteristics (Pflugradt & Allen, 2010), criminal history (Freeman & Sandler, 2008; Sandler & Freeman, 2009), and offender characteristics (Miller & Marshall, 2018; Muskens, Bogaerts, Casteren, & Labrijn, 2011).

Despite the research that does exist, decision-makers in the criminal justice system do not have a validated risk assessment tool for determining risk level and selection for treatment for female sexual offenders. For some jurisdictions, the lack of a validated assessment has resulted in the use of risk assessments that are not intended for use with female sexual offenders, such as the Static-99R (Helmus, Hanson, & Thornton, 2009). Given the differences that are known to exist between female and male sexual offenders (Cortoni, Hanson, & Coache, 2010; Sandler & Freeman, 2009), this could result in the overestimation or misspecification of risk in these offenders. In light of this gap in the research, the current study will seek to reveal what factors are related to treatment selection for incarcerated female sexual offenders, and furthermore, determine which of those factors are actually related to recidivism. Results this study will provide insight into how female sexual offenders are selected for treatment, as well as suggestions for improving selection criteria moving forward.

A sample of 506 female sexual offenders were used to conduct the analyses for the current study. In particular, the sample consisted of female sexual offenders who were arrested, convicted, and served a sentence for a sexual offense within the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ). Within this larger sample, a sample of 226 female sexual offenders who participated in the Sex Offender Treatment Program (SOTP) during their sentence with TDCJ between the years 2000 and 2013 were identified by matching them on date of birth, race, criminal history, and index crime variables. Variables of interest included in the study are age, criminal history, victim characteristics, offender characteristics, offense characteristics, treatment selection, and recidivism. In this study, recidivism was defined as any kind of re-arrest that occurred after the offender was released for the index offense, and was divided into non-sexual and sexual recidivism. The

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analyses consisted of bivariate analyses between the treatment and non-treatment groups on the variables of interest, and logistic regression models examining which factors significantly predict the odds of recidivism, as well as the odds of recidivism.

Results of the study revealed that offender age, offense characteristics, and victim characteristics were significantly related to the odds of recidivism. While age was related to non-sexual recidivism, contrary to the results for treatment selection, criminal history and offender characteristics were significantly related to sexual recidivism. These results indicate that the selection criteria, for the most part, does not converge with the factors that are demonstrative of risk for these offenders. Implications for treatment selection and risk assessment for female sexual offenders moving forward will be discussed.

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