“A Picture Is Worth A Thousand Words”

What Do We Know About Child Pornography Offenders?

Michael Seto
Royal Ottawa Health Care Group

ATSA Conference
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Overview

I. Characteristics of CP offenders

II. Possible motivations of CP offenders

III. Risk and recidivism

IV. Implications for policy and practice
Defining Child Pornography (CP)

- Visual depiction of a minor engaged in sexually explicit conduct:

Wortley & Smallbone (2006)
Defining Child Pornography (CP)

- Visual depiction of a minor engaged in sexually explicit conduct:
  - Minor is someone under the age of 18
  - Can include suggestive content (United States v. Knox, 1993)
  - Possession includes accessing online; does not require downloading images

Wortley & Smallbone (2006)
A New Frontier: Increasing Number of CP Cases

- More U.S. arrests: Approximately doubling from 2001 to 2006 (CaCRC)
- More U.S. federal prosecutions (Motivans & Kyckelhan, 2007)
- Increased arrests in Canada, UK, and elsewhere
- More clinical cases
More U. S. Federal Prosecutions for Child Sexual Exploitation

Motivans & Kyckelhahn (2007)
More Clinical Cases:
Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (Canada)

Approx. 250-300 clients a year
Internet has Increased CP Activity

- Long history of CP before Internet
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- Internet: Anonymity, Affordability, Accessibility
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- Increase in CP cases parallels increases in Internet access and digital cameras over past 10 years
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- Long history of CP before Internet
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- Increase in CP cases parallels increases in Internet access and digital cameras over past 10 years
- Peer-to-peer, newsgroups, private FTP sites, etc.
Online CP Activity

- Typical image is of prepubescent girl (COPINE, NCMEC)
- Trend of younger children & more explicit (NJ OV1 & 2)
- Some commercialization, but predominantly amateur content; made by adult or self-produced
- Part of online pedophile & hebephile subculture
1. Characteristics of CP Offenders
I. Characteristics of CP Offenders

- Very likely to be male (99%)

- Disproportionately Caucasian (Babchishin et al., under review)

- Likely to be pedophilic (Seto et al., 2006)

- Average intelligence (Blanchard et al., 2007)

- Better educated than other offenders (Blanchard et al.)

- Contact > CP > controls in sexual and physical abuse histories (Babchishin et al.)
II. Possible Motivations of CP Offenders
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- Pedophilia or sexual interest in CP
- Indiscriminate sexual interests
- “Sexual addiction”, “pornography addiction”
- Incidental (e.g., blackmail, for-profit)
- Curiosity
- Misinformed (e.g., “sexting”)
- Accidental access (e.g., redirected, viruses)
### Explanations Given By Child Pornography Offenders

(Seto, Reeves, & Jung, 2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Police $n = 50$</th>
<th>Clinical $n = 34$</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sexual interest in children/CP</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>38%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indiscriminate sexual interests</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Pornography addiction&quot;</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>29%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Curiosity</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>27%</td>
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<td>Accidental access</td>
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Possibility of Other Paraphilic Interests
(Seto & Eke, 2008)

Any images
Possible interest

N = 301

Possibility of Other Paraphilic Interests
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Types of Child Pornography Offenders?

- Several typologies have been suggested
- Need validation research on proposed types
- Need comprehensive sexological assessment
- Pornography parameters may be relevant:
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- Several typologies have been suggested
- Need validation research on proposed types
- Need comprehensive sexological assessment
- Pornography parameters may be relevant:
  - Age and gender of children
  - Ratios of content themes
  - Frequency and recency of viewing
III. Risk and Recidivism
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- Contact offense history
- Risk to commit contact offenses in the future
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- Contact offense history

- Meta-analysis of 21 samples, total $N = 3,684$ offenders (Seto, Hanson & Babchishin, under review)
III. Risk and Recidivism

- **Contact offense history**

- **Meta-analysis of 21 samples, total $N = 3,684$ offenders** (Seto, Hanson & Babchishin, under review)

- One in eight CP offenders have official record for contact sexual offending

- Approximately half self-report contact offending
Recidivism

- Risk to commit contact offenses in the future
Recidivism

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- Meta-analysis of 7 samples, total $N = 1,688$, offenders, $M = 3.4$ years, 1.5 to 6 yrs \((\text{Seto et al.})\)
Recidivism

- **Risk to commit contact offenses in the future**

- Meta-analysis of 7 samples, total $N = 1,688$ offenders, $M = 3.4$ years, 1.5 to 6 yrs (Seto et al.)

- 2.2% new contact sexual offense

- 3.6% new CP offense

- 4.2% new violent (including sexual) offense
Risk Factors: Criminal History
(Seto & Eke, 2005)
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(Seto & Eke, 2005)
New Follow-up
(Eke & Seto, 2008)

- Convicted adult male CP offenders
- Criminal history & recidivism from records
- Now 541 offenders, mean followup = 4 years
- Original sample of 201 followed for 5.9 years
Predictors of Contact Sexual Recidivism

- Offender age at first charge (negative)
- Prior contact sexual offenses
- Prior violent offenses
- Pre-index Cormier-Lang violence score
Predictors of Child Pornography Recidivism

- Offender at first charge (negative)
- Any prior offense
- # index nonviolent offenses
- Any conditional release failure
Outcome: Failure on Conditional Release

- One in four offenders had at least one conditional failure on bail, probation or parole.
- Half of known failures for being around children or accessing Internet.
- E.g., music teacher who gave lessons to young boys alone; individual found at cybercafe accessing child pornography.
Other Risk Factors: Police Case Study
(Seto & Eke, 2008)

- 301 adult male CPOs (79% overlap with OSOR sample)
- Police files reviewed by RAs
- Criminal history, substance use, CP content, access to children, self-reported sexual interests
- Recidivism information obtained after file review completed
## Predictors of Contact Sexual Recidivism

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Similar predictors for violent (incl. sexual) recidivism and child pornography recidivism; CP recidivism also predicted by boy:girl content.
### Potential Predictors of Violent or Contact Sexual Recidivism

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Risk Measures: Webb et al. (2007)

- 90 convicted CP offenders
- Stable 2000 scores predicted probation failures and “sexually risky behavior”
- Stable-2000 factors: Negative social influences, general self-regulation, offense-supportive attitudes, cooperation with supervision, sexual self-regulation, intimacy deficits
Risk Measures: Barnett et al. (submitted)

- Risk Matrix 2000 among 513 CP offenders

- **RM2000**: offender age, sexual and any sentencing history, male victim, stranger victim, ever live-in, any noncontact offenses

- Risk measure predicted contact recidivism, though lower recidivism rates than for other sex offenders
Risk Assessment

- Antisociality factors predict contact sexual & violent recidivism
- Antisociality and boy:girl content predict CP recidivism
- Consistent with models of sexual offending emphasizing antisociality & sexual deviance
- Pedophilia is not sufficient explanation for contact sexual offending
Risk Assessment, cont’d

- Established risk measures for CP offenders with contact offense history
- Generalize to any CP offenders?
- Risk measures can rank order CP offenders
- Probabilistic estimates may not be correct
Summary

- CP offenders are usually male and often Caucasian
- Different IQ & education than other offenders
- Types of pornography suggest sexual preferences; CP suggests pedophilia
- Approx. half of CP offenders have no known contact sexual offense history
- CP offender observed recidivism rates low
IV. Implications for Policy & Practice
Implications for Evaluators

- Parameters of CP content may matter (boy:girl)
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- **Note other atypical pornography content, even if not illegal**
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- Parameters of CP content may matter (boy:girl)
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- Use of Internet to contact children or to network with other CP users?
- Has information about children and contacts with children?
- Assess risk using established measures
Implications for Child Protection

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- Child protection vs. family integrity
- Need valid risk assessment to make decisions
Implications for Policy-Makers

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- Technological arms-race; # CP users exceed law enforcement resources
- Subgroup of low-risk CP-only offenders?
- “users” vs. “producers & traffickers”
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- CP investigations detecting previously invisible group of pedophiles and hebephiles

- Technological arms-race; # CP users exceed law enforcement resources

- Subgroup of low-risk CP-only offenders?

- “users” vs. “producers/traffickers”

- Underscores need for effective prevention and management strategies (Neutze et al., 2009)
Acknowledgements

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