



Working with Offenders Who Access Child Sexual Exploitation Materials: What do We Actually Know?

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Questions to be Addressed

- Are all CSEM offenders pedophiles?
- Do all pedophiles abuse children?
- Why do some people with sexual interest in children act on it and others don't?
- If not all CSEM offenders are pedophiles, why would they look at this material?
- Are they all the same? Do they look at the material for the same reasons?
- Have all CSEM offenders already committed a contact sex offense against a child?

Questions to be Addressed

- How many CSEM offenders reoffend?
- What type of offense do they reoffend with?
- Can we differentiate individuals based on their risk to reoffend?
- Can we eliminate risk? If not, what's a level of risk that we generally tolerate?
- Do they all need treatment?
- Do they need long-term supervision and restrictions preventing them from contact with children?

What are we talking about?

- Sexualized images or stories of people under the age of 18 years

Terminology....

- Child Pornography (CP)
- Child Sexual Abuse Image (CSAI)
- Child Sexual Exploitation Materials (CSEM)
- Whatever you call this group, there is a stigma associated with this offense that requires that we balance public demonization with evidence-based practices

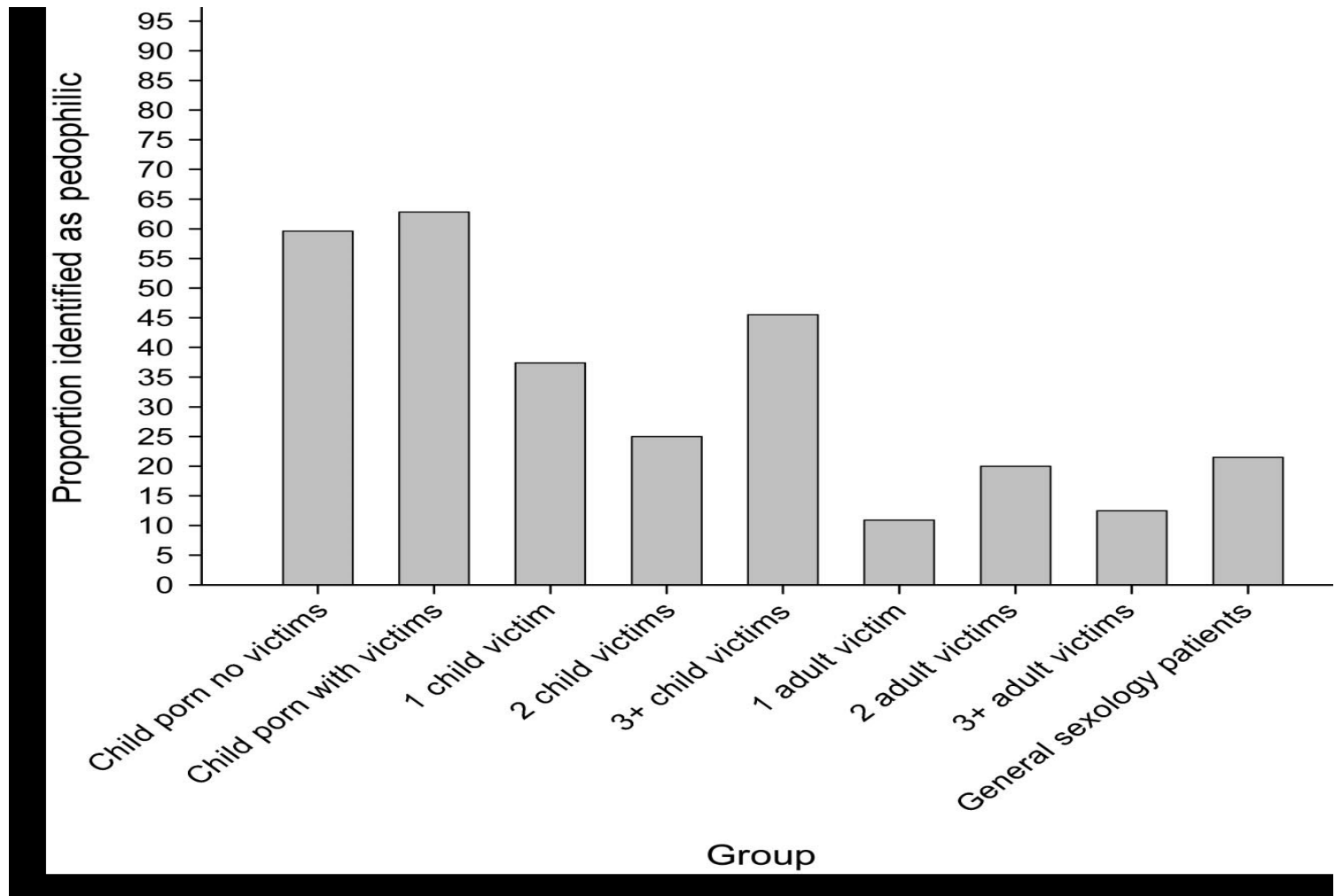
CSEM offenders vs mixed offenders

- CSEM only offenders ARE different than mixed offenders
- Mixed offenders can be assessed, treated, and managed as 'typical' sex offenders
- Our focus is CSEM only offenders

FACT v. MYTH

- Are all CSEM offenders pedophiles?

Pedo-hebephilic Interest (Seto, Cantor, Blanchard, 2006)



FACT v. MYTH

- Do all pedophiles abuse children?

Terminology

- Pedophilia \neq child molestation
- Interest and Behavior don't always align
 - Not everyone with an interest acts on it
 - Not everyone who tries something has an interest in it



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Concordance of Paraphilic Interests and Behaviors

Michael C. Seto, Susan Curry, Samantha J. Dawson, John M. W. Bradford & Meredith L. Chivers

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View supplementary material 

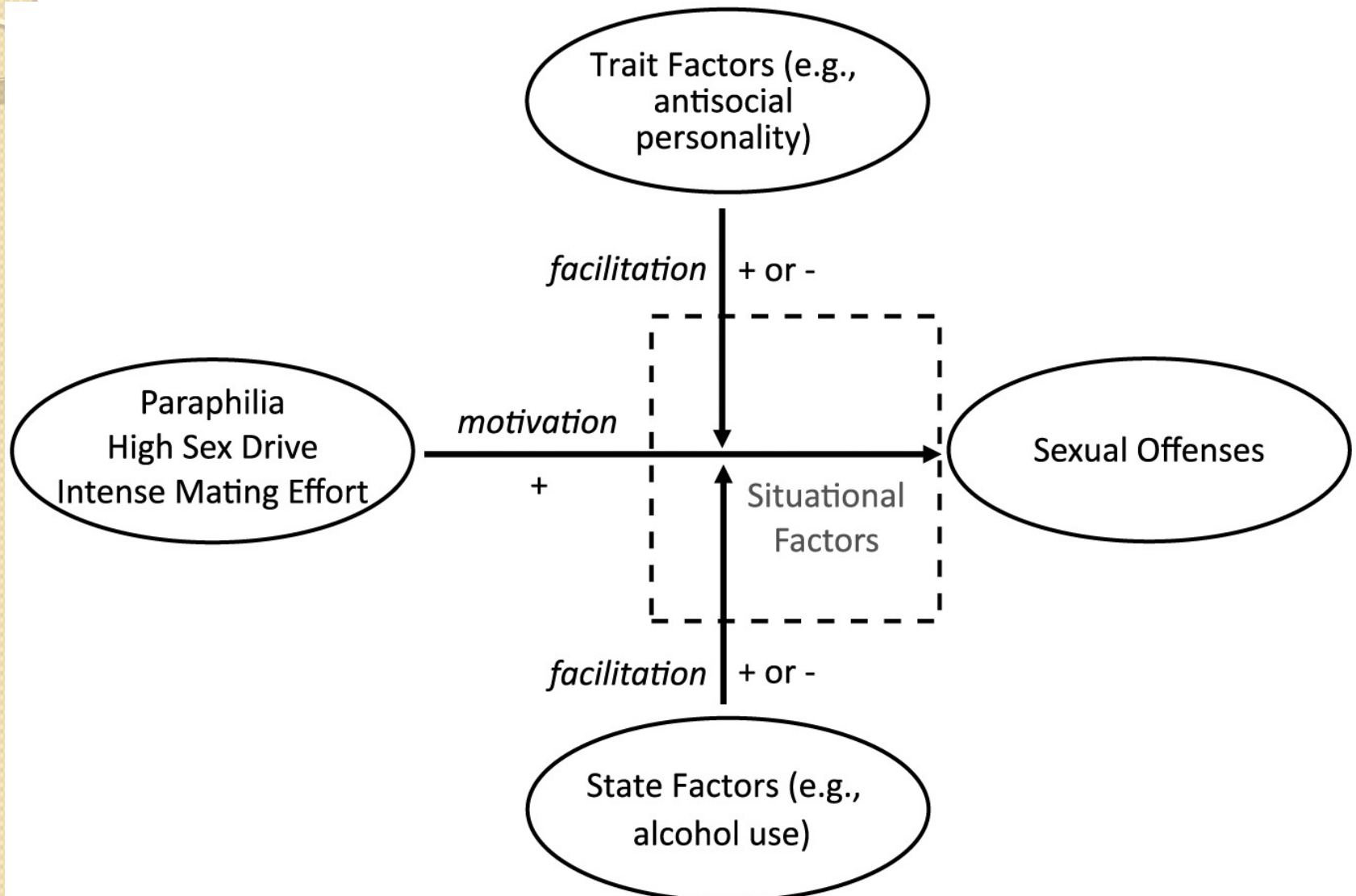
Seto et al. (2021)

- Anonymous survey
- Examined many sexual paraphilias (exhibitionism, fetishism, masochism, uroscopophilia, zoophilia)
- Relationship between interests and behaviour: Small to moderate
 - Smallest relationship: Pedohebephilia



**WHY DO SOME PEOPLE
WITH SEXUAL INTEREST
IN CHILDREN ACT ON IT,
AND OTHERS DON'T?**

Seto's Motivation & Facilitation Model

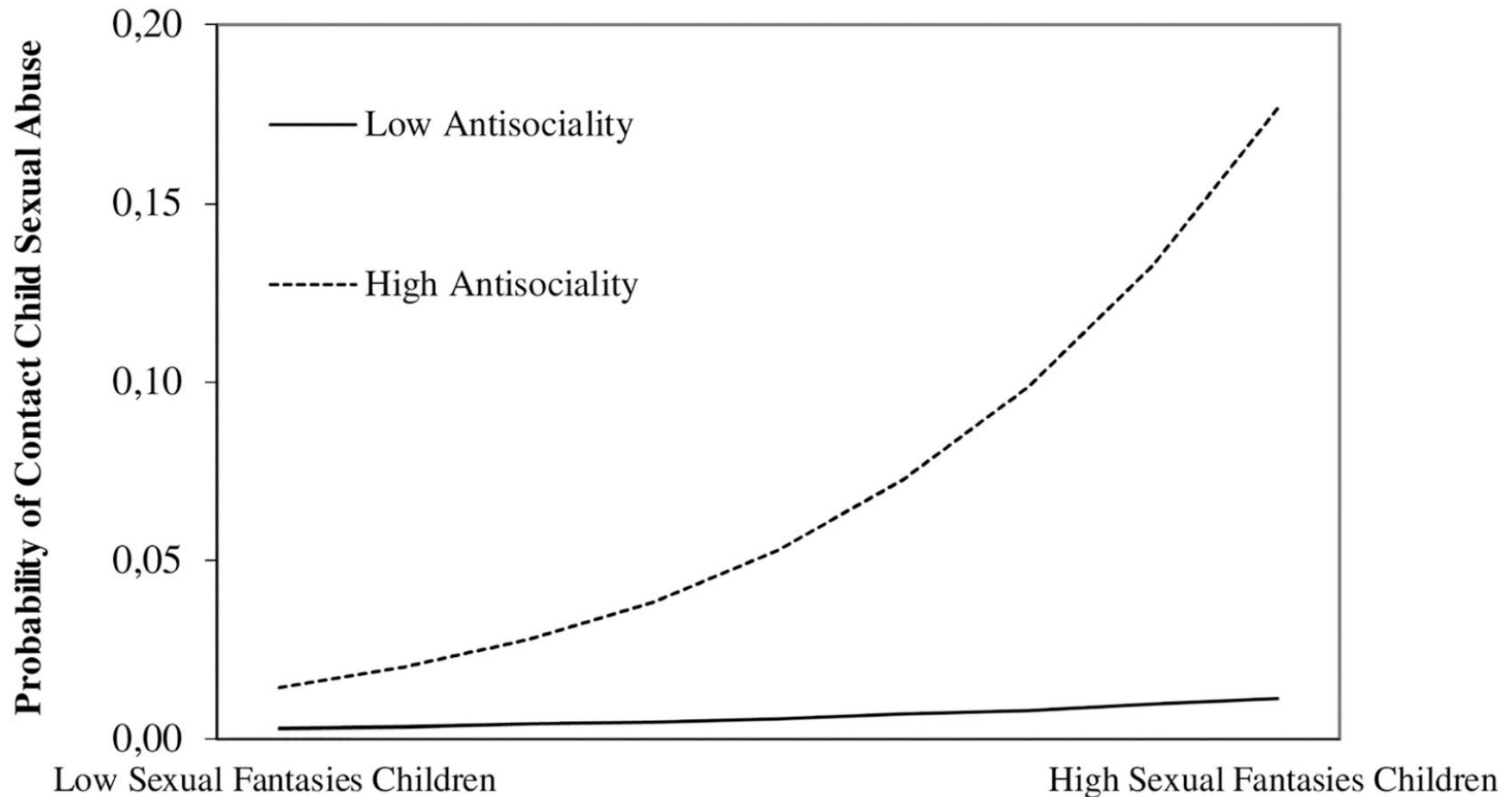


CSEM client characteristics (Henshaw, Ogloff & Clough, 2017; Babchishin et al, 2015; Blanchard et al, 2007; Webb et al, 2007; Wolak et al, 2011)

Compared to Contact and Mixed offenders, CSEM exclusive offenders:

- Higher motivational factors (e.g., sexual interest in children)
- Lower on facilitation factors (e.g., antisocial personality).
They have greater internal barriers to committing a contact offence against a live child

Klein et al. (2015) – Community men



FACT v. MYTH

- If not all CSEM offenders are pedophiles, why would they look at this material?
- Relatedly: Are they all the same? Do they look at the material for the same reasons?

Different motivations

- Curiosity/impulse driven consumption (no special interest in children)
- Consumption to satisfy sexual fantasies (no hands on offenses)
- Creation and distribution of CSEM for money
- Use of the Internet to facilitate hands on sexual offenses

See Babchishin, Hanson & Hermann (2011) for details

General typologies according to Lyne Piche!

- 1) Antisocial guys “I really don’t like following the rules”, “If you tell me not to do it... I will do it!”
- 2) Dysregulated guys who have difficulty managing emotions and relationships, “I’m lonely, angry, bored”
- 3) Pedophilic guys, “I really like kids”
- 4) Sexually preoccupied guys, “I really like sex”
- 5) “Un-dateable guys”, people who are unsuccessful in adult relationships
- 6) Special needs offenders
- 7) Men who are processing their own sexual abuse as children. Trauma related behaviors

Fantasy driven vs contact driven users of CSEM (Merdian et. al., 2016; 2018)

- Social Exclusion and Escapism
CSEMOs > CSOs
- Justification
CSEMOs < CSOs & Mixed/Dual Os
- Children as Sexual Agents
CSEMOs < CSOs & Mixed/Dual Os
- Power and Entitlement
CSEMOs < CSOs & Mixed/Dual Os

Fantasy driven vs contact driven users of CSEMs (Merdian et. al., 2016)

- Fantasy Driven Offenders
 - > intimacy deficits
 - > intensity of internet use
 - > arousal to deviant sexual material
 - > use of more extreme CSEM
 - > online contact with a minor
- Contact Driven
 - > endorsement of the sexual agency of children
 - > history of antisociality, non-violent offending, use of weapons

Typologies

- Take away: clearly heterogeneous population that requires careful assessment and different approaches to treatment, and risk management

FACT v. MYTH

- Have all CSEM offenders already committed a contact sex offense against a child?

The Butner Study (Bourke & Hernandez, 2009)

- N=155 – High intensity treatment (18 months – 15 hours per week) in an American federal prison for those with a conviction for CSEM
- N= 115 (74%) reported no prior contact sexual offenses
- During treatment repeatedly complete a “victims list” and 52% underwent polygraph
- Results: 131 (85%) admitted contact sexual offense
- Crossover by gender and age was high

The Butner Study (Bourke & Hernandez, 2009)

- Butner has been used – particularly by law enforcement - to argue that CSEM offenders are necessarily high risk to the community
- BUT.....
- The high rates of contact offenses is an outlier in the field
- More significantly, the finding does not speak to FUTURE risk
- Co-author Hernandez has raised concern about the misinterpretation of the study results

More Comprehensive Research Summary

- Seto et al. (2011)
 - From official criminal history: 12% have a contact sex offense against child at the time of index offence
 - From self-report: 55% admit to a contact sex offense
 - So, when dealing with a CSEM offender, roughly 50/50 chance they have already harmed a child

If half of them have already harmed a child, won't they continue?

- Cannot generalize past offending to recidivism
- Offending without being caught requires lower antisociality than offending after being caught
- Common for sex offenders to have multiple undetected victims when caught
- Offending frequency significantly declines after being caught (Kelley et al., 2022)

FACT v. MYTH

- How many CSEM offenders reoffend?
- What type of offense do they reoffend with?

Helmus (2023) Review – Estimated 5-year rates

k = number of studies

Group	Any Sexual Recidivism	Contact Sexual Recidivism	CSEM Recidivism
CSEM Overall	5.5% (k = 15)	2.8% (k = 15)	2.7% (k = 17)
CSEM-Only	3.9% (k = 7)	1.4% (k = 3)	4.8% (k = 7)
Mixed	10.0% (k = 5)	3.4% (k = 4)	1.1% (k = 6)

Comparison: 9% sexual recidivism after 5 years for primarily offline sex offenders (Hanson et al., 2018)

FACT v. MYTH

- Can we differentiate individuals based on their risk to reoffend?

Child Pornography Offender Risk Tool (CPORT)



- Measures
 - Any sexual recidivism among adult male offenders following a conviction for a child sexual exploitation material (CSEM) offense
 - ✓ Remember low base rates of recidivism
- Provides direction
 - Assessing risk in CSEM offenders, including those with no history of contact offenses

<https://www.researchgate.net/project/Child-Pornography-Offender-Risk-Tool-CPORT>

Not related to risk (CPORT study)...

- Number of images
- Age of children depicted
- Organization of content
- Other paraphilic themes in porn (e.g. BDSM)
- Morphing or anime
- Effort to hide use of CSEM

FACT v. MYTH

- Can we eliminate risk? If not, what's a level of risk that we generally tolerate?

Klein et al. (2015)

- Survey of 8,718 German men in community (not CJ-involved)
- 2.4% viewed CSEM
- 1.5% admitted to contact sex offence against a child

FACT v. MYTH

- Do they all need treatment?
- Do they need long-term supervision and restrictions preventing them from contact with children?

Is treatment needed?

Henshaw, Arnold, Darjee, Ogloff and Clough, (2020) suggest that there are 3 treatment groups for CSEM exclusive offending:

- 1) 75%- 95% of offenders require no treatment because unlikely to sexually reoffend
- 2) Offenders who are at further risk do require specialized treatment (CSEM only treatment)
- 3) Offenders who are at risk of contact offending required (Contact offender treatment)

You can overtreat offenders!

- CSEM offenders who participated in U.K. prison and probation service core sex offender treatment program (CORE SOTP) had higher rates of recidivism (4.4%) than the control group (2.6%)
(Babchishin, Merdian, Bartels & Perkins, 2018; Mews & al., 2017)
- 180 hours of treatment, maximum dosage was 360 hours!
- Mixed with contact offenders



Even High Risk Sex Offenders Are Not High Risk Forever

(Hanson et al., 2014, 2018)

- Every 5 years a sex offender is in the community after release from the sex offense conviction (with no new detected sex offense), their risk of reoffending CUTS IN HALF from where it started
- After 20 years, risk is essentially zero for all sex offenders (even highest risk!)



Harms of Over-treating and Over-Managing Risk

- Can make them worse
- Resources spent on lower risk offenders takes away from time that could be spent on higher risk offenders that would actually reduce public safety
- Litigation risks
- Wasting tax payers money

No Check We Won't Write: A Report on the High Cost of Sex Offender Incarceration

Sexual Abuse

2023, Vol. 35(1) 54–82

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Abstract

Child sexual abuse is a preventable public health problem that is addressed primarily via reactive criminal justice efforts. In this report, we focus on the cost of incarcerating adults convicted of sex crimes against children in the United States. Specifically, we summarize publicly available information on U.S. state and federal prison and sex offender civil commitment costs. Wherever possible, we used government data sources to inform cost estimates. Results indicate the annual cost to incarcerate adults convicted of sex crimes against children in the United States approaches \$5.4 billion. This estimate does not include any costs incurred prior to incarceration (e.g., related to detection and prosecution) or post-release (e.g., related to supervision or registration). Nor does this estimate capture administrative and judicial costs associated with appeals, or administrative costs that cannot be extricated from other budgets, as is the

So What Do We Do?

- Prevention – most effective
- If we cannot change sexual interest in children, we need to support people in living offense-free lives
- Ensure interventions/policy match the level of risk and follow the science
 - E.g. CSEM exclusive offenders risk typically well managed via community supervision, require limited treatment hours, do not undermine protective factors

Internet resources

- Pornography – Fight the new drug website
- Virtuous Pedophiles (VirPed.org)
- Don't Offend website
- Stop It Now!
- B4Uact.org
- Lucy Faithfull (UK)
- NoFap
- Talkingforchange.ca
- Internet blocking software and accountability programs

Conclusions

- Not all CSEM offenders are pedophiles
- Not all pedophiles harm children
- CSEM offenders are a diverse group
- Risk of committing a contact sex offense is low among CSEM-Only offenders
- Risk can be assessed
- Not all CSEM offenders need treatment
- Policies to manage risk need to be proportionate to risk and be adjusted over time to reflect reductions in risk
- Efforts should shift towards prevention of child sexual abuse



Questions?



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