

# Sexually coercive adolescents: incidence, risk factors and outcome

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# Adolescent sexual offenders

- Aged 12-17
- Females and males
  - In Sweden - 15 years age of criminal responsibility

# National incidence of reports to social services year 2000

Kjellgren, Wassberg, Carlberg, Långström & Svedin, 2006

- New reports to social services during year 2000
- Aged 12-17
- 197 males, 2 females
- Incidence rate - among males 0.06%
  - number of reported cases year 2000 divided by the male population ages 12-17
- Equally frequent reports from big cities and rural areas

# Empirically Guided Checklists

A systematic review of risk factors that have been identified in the professional literature as being associated with sexual and criminal offending.

Practical value of a decision-support system for risk assessment, in comparison to unstructured clinical procedures.

- To improve the reliability and predictive validity of these assessments.

# Risk prediction challenges for adolescent sex offenders

- low base rates of recidivism
- limited number of well-designed studies on recidivism on youth

Currently two instruments that have data to support the use for assessment of adolescent risk of sexual recidivism  
Faniff & Becker, 2006

■ J-SOAP-II

– (Juveniles Sex Offender Assessment Protocol-II, Prentky & Righthand, 2003)

■ ERASOR

– (Estimate of Risk of Adolescent Sexual Offense Recidivism, Worling & Curwen, 2001)

- research on use of risk assessment is promising

# ERASOR

(Estimate of Risk of Adolescent Sexual Offence Recidivism)

- 25 risk factors that fall into 5 categories,
  - Sexual interests, attitudes and behaviours
  - Historical sexual assaults
  - Psychosocial functioning
  - Family / environmental functioning
  - Treatment

# Risk level

- occurrence of factors of the adolescent, guide professionals to estimate the level of risk of sexual recidivism
  - Low
  - Medium
  - High

Review of factors associated with criminal recidivism in adolescents who have offended sexually. Supported, promising, possible, and unlikely risk factors

Worling & Långström, 2003

✓ *Supported* risk factors

- Deviant sexual interests (prepubescent children or sexual violence)
- Prior criminal sanctions for sexual assaults
- Past sexual offences against two or more victims
- Selection of a stranger victim in sexual offence
- Lack of intimate peer relationships / social isolation
- Incomplete sexual offence-specific treatment

# Follow-up study

- Originally a clinical sample of 90 adolescent females and males assessed 1998-2004
- 4 girls and 86 boys
- Mean age 15 years by assessment (11-19 years)

# Follow-up study

## ≥ 4 years after assessment

- 40 males participate in follow up (mean age at follow up 22,7 years)
  - Mean 6 years post assessment
- Majority of victims < 12 years
- Half of the victims
  - siblings
  - or children living in the same foster family as the offending adolescent
- Majority of abuse, penetration or attempt to penetrate

# Risk estimate for the study group

- Low risk            22%
  - Medium risk      35%
  - High risk           43%
- 
- What happened.....?

# Follow-up study

## ≥ 4 years after assessment

- Did the risk assessments predict adolescents with increased risk to commit further sex offences/non-sex offences?
- Identify individual risk factors associated with reoffending?
- Social adjustment and life style today?
- Sexual health or sexual deviances today?
- How did they experience disclosure, assessment and intervention?

# Follow-up study

## ≥ 4 years after assessment

- interview and psychometric measures
  - Job / studies
  - social network
  - life quality
  - antisocial behaviour
  - use of drugs and alcohol
  - psychiatric health
  - sexuality
  - their experience of the social services intervention

# In progress.....

- Extensive interventions more likely for adolescents assessed of high risk
  - though some high risk adolescents did not get any abuse specific intervention
- High risk adolescents more likely to reoffend
  - in particular child offenders
- Some peer offenders referred to general interventions for anti-social behaviour
  - did not get any abuse specific interventions
  - reported worrying deviant sexual fantasies / interests

# PROGNOSIS

## ■ offence specific treatment

– 5 % reoffend sexually within 4 years

- Worling & Curven, 2000, Adolescent sexual offender recidivism: success of specialized treatment and implications for risk prediction, *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 24:7

## ■ no specialised treatment

– 20-30% reoffend sexually

- Worling & Långström, 2003, Assessment of Criminal recidivism risk with adolescents who have offended sexually, *Trauma, Violence and Abuse*, 4:4