Adult Attachment Classification in Men Convicted of Sexual Crimes

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1. Attachment related offender theory

2. Empirical evidence for an attachment developmental pathway

3. Context of the present study

4. Results
Abusive Family Experience

Disruptions in early attachment experiences
Parents present but emotionally unavailable
Children attracting parental attention with disruptive demanding behaviour
Children fail to learn appropriate interpersonal and intimacy skills within context of a bonded relationship.
Aggressive, coercive, & manipulative strategies for interpersonal relationship management are modelled & reinforced.
Child adopts these coercive, aggressive, & manipulative strategies if they prove to provide some success for coping with family environment.

Child Adopts a Maladaptive, Coercive, Aggressive, & Manipulative Strategy for Interpersonal Interactions.
Failure of “Coercive” Strategy When Applied to Relationships Outside Home.

Outcome of the Failure of the Coercive Strategy

Child fails to form or maintain stable and satisfying relationships with peers and other adults outside of the immediate family system.

The child's social and intimacy skills are not given a developmental pathway which allows their potential to unfold.

Failure to establish successful relationships outside the family leads to a negative self-image and a reduction in self-confidence, further blocking the potential for inter-personal development.
Intermediate Outcome of the Abusive Family Experience - A Syndrome of Social Disability.

1. Inability to establish & maintain intimate relationships.

2. Low self-esteem.

3. Diverse antisocial attitudes & behaviour, including:

4. Lack of empathy.

5. Cognitive distortions that support and justify criminal behaviour.

Additional Factors in the Aetiology of Deviant Sexual Behaviour.

- Sexual, physical or emotional abuse.
- Inherited temperamental factors predisposing impulsivity.
Puberty and the failure to establish relationships that appropriately meet the emerging need for the development of an intimate and sexual quality to some relationships.
Personal Outcome.

Feeling of exclusion from experience of intimate relationships.
Feel powerless in establishing healthy relationships through appropriate interaction
Concept of self as masculine is negatively effected.
Feelings of anger & resentment.
Feelings of anger & resentment directed towards girls & women.

Employment of “Coercive” Strategy and Emergence of Sexually Deviant Behaviour.

Desired sexual contact achieved through employment of “coercive” strategy that was learnt within the abusive family.
Sexual contact achieved by force, or with younger, more vulnerable partner.
Memories of sexual contact become elaborated incorporating fantasies.
Memories and fantasies are reinforced.
Reinforced memories and fantasies promote urge to act out sexually.
Progressive desensitisation to & distortions concerning fear of being caught and impact of sexual assaults on victims.
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4. Results
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>similar</strong></th>
<th><strong>different</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **1. Anti-Social Tendencies**  
• Age of onset  
• Conduct problems  
• Anti-social personality traits  
• Anti-social sexual attitudes  
**2. Exposure to Abuse**  
• Exposure to family and non-family physical violence  
**3. Family Problems**  
• Family relationship problems  
• Separation from a parent  
• Family substance abuse  
• Family criminality  
**4. Interpersonal, 5. Sexual, 6. Psychopathology, & 7 Cognitive**  
• Similar social skills deficits  
• Sexual experience  
• Depression  
• Neuroticism  
• Psychotic symptoms  
• Suicidal tendencies  
• IQ  
• Academic problems  
• Neurological anomalies  
| **1. Anti-Social Tendencies**  
• Less previous criminal history  
• Less general anti-social attitudes  
• Less anti-social association  
• Less substance abuse  
**2. Exposure to Abuse**  
• Sexual abuse 5 times more likely  
• Physical abuse 1.6 times more likely  
• Greater exposure to family sexual violence  
• More emotional abuse or neglect  
**3. Family Problems**  
• Poorer social relations, more isolation and withdrawal  
• Greater exposure to sex or pornography  
• More atypical sexual interests  
• Higher anxiety  
• Higher social anxiety  
• Lower self-esteem  
• Specific learning disability  
|


### AAI & Sexual Offending (Stirpe et al., 2006)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offence type</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Secure</th>
<th>Dismissing</th>
<th>Preoccupied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extra-familial child offenders</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
<td>63.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incest offenders</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
<td>68.4%</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rapists</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violent non-sex offenders</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
<td>78.9%</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-violent non sex offenders</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>47.6%</td>
<td>23.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population norms</td>
<td>2000+</td>
<td>45-55%</td>
<td>20-30%</td>
<td>10-15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Attachment related offender theory

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Evidence Strand 1: Psychological Change

Group 1
Intervention group

Pre-intervention assessment of psychological characteristics associated with sexual offending

Intervention Programme

Post-intervention assessment of psychological characteristics associated with sexual offending

No Intervention Programme

Evidence Strand 2: Impact on Offence Recidivism

Group 1
Intervention group

Group 2
No intervention group

1. Number who reoffend in each group
2. Time to recidivism in each group

Passage of Time
Pre-intervention assessment of psychological characteristics associated with sexual offending

Group 1
Intervention group

Group 2
No intervention group

Intervention Programme

No Intervention Programme

Post-intervention assessment of psychological characteristics associated with sexual offending

Very Positive Findings…

- Relapse prevention awareness: 1.48 (Large effect size >.8)
- Adversarial sex beliefs: 1.02
- Assertiveness: 0.82
- Victim empathy: 0.74 (Medium effect size >.5)
- Self-esteem: 0.70
- Emotional loneliness: 0.61
- Cognitive dis. children & Sex: 0.61
- Anger management: 0.28 (Small effect size >.2)
- Locus of control: 0.14

Irish Prison Service Intervention Outcome Study 2

- Outcome is reoffending

- 248 Participants in total

- All 124 convicted men the IPS ever attempted intervention with from 1994-2009 compared to a very carefully control group of 124 men who received no intervention

- Average follow-up time post release into the community was 6 years

1. Number who recidivate in each group
2. Time to recidivism in each group

Recidivism measured by re-conviction, and/or sentenced re-imprisonment, and/or time spent on remand

Re-conviction data obtained from Domestic Violence Sexual Assault Unit (D.V.S.A) of National Criminal Bureau of Investigation (N.C.B.I) via PULSE system

Re-imprisonment and remand data obtained from PRIS (recent cases) (70% of the full group) and archived files held within the Irish Prison Service (historical cases) (30% of the full group).

Recidivism rates

Sexual Recidivism | Violent Recidivism | Non-Sexual Non-Violent Recidivism | All Recidivism
---|---|---|---
Treatment Group: 8.9 | 7.3 | 27.4 | 29.8
Untreated Group: 7.3 | 7.3 | 21.8 | 26.6
Presentation Overview

1. Attachment related offender theory
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4. Results
Study 3: Adult Attachment Functioning

Group 1
Intervention group

Group 3
Non-offending group

Pre-intervention assessment of psychological characteristics associated with sexual offending

Intervention Programme

Post-intervention assessment of psychological characteristics associated with sexual offending

19 men convicted of sexual crimes compared to 19 demographically similar men with no known criminal history

Control group mean age 40.81 (12.86)

Offender group mean age 38.81 (10.71)

Child only victim: 14
Girls: 9
Boys: 3
Boy & girls: 1

Adult only victim: 4
Child & adult victim: 1

Familial: 7
Non-Familial: 11
Both 1
Study 3: Adult Attachment Functioning

G1: Offender Group
G3: Normal Group

- A1-2: G1: 6, G3: 4
- A3-4: G1: 0, G3: 6
- A5-6: G1: 1, G3: 9
- A7-8: G1: 12, G3: 0
- B: G1: 0, G3: 0
- C1-2: G1: 0, G3: 0
- C3-4: G1: 6, G3: 4
- C5-6: G1: 12, G3: 0
- C7-8: G1: 6, G3: 4
Study 3: Offence Type

AW: adult-woman
CG: child-girl
CB: child-boy
G&B: child girl & boy
C&A: child & adult

AW x 1
CG x 2
AW x 1
CG x 2
CG x 2
CG x 1
CG x 1

G1: 6
G3: 4
G1: 12
G3: 0

AW x 2
CG x 3 CB x 2
G&B x 2 C&A x 1

AW x 1
CB x 1

A1-2
A3-4
A5-6
A7-8
AC
C1-2
C3-4
C5-6
C7-8
B
Study 3: Familial or Non-familial

F = Familial: 7
NF = Non-familial: 11
Both: 1

F x 2: F x 1
NF x 2: F x 1
F x 2
F x 1
NF x 1
NF x 1
NF x 1
F x 3
NF x 6
Both x 1

10
Study 3: Number of victims

person/people refers to number of people victimised

1 person x 1

2 people x 2

2 people x 1

6 people x 1

1 person x 1

1 person x 1

1 person x 3: 2 people x 1
3 people x 1: 4 people x 3
5 people x 2

10
Study 3: Unresolved loss

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Group 1 Offender Group</th>
<th>Group 2 Non-offender Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi-square = 0.63 NS
### Study 3: Unresolved trauma

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Group 1 Offender Group</th>
<th>Group 2 Non-offender Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi-square = 15.55 P<0.001
Conclusions

1. Offender group more likely to have non-normative A & C classifications

2. C5-6 most frequent AAI classification (10/19)

3. C3-4, C5-6 were associate with child boy victims

4. C5-6, C7-8 associated with multiple victims

5. Unresolved loss not associated with offending

6. Unresolved trauma more likely in offender group
Bill Marshall attachment theory and sexual offending...

- Responsible for applying ideas on attachment to sexual offending behaviour
- Disruptions in childhood attachment...
- Leads to coercive manipulative relationship style
- Lead to peer relationship failure...
- Lead to a failure to establish intimate relationships in adolescent and adult life...
- Leads to chronic emotional loneliness which is associated with increased aggressiveness, and self-centredness
- Which increases risk of offending through application of maladaptive coercive insecure attachment driven relationship template
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• Extend Marshall’s ideas and introduce considerations on adult attachment rather than childhood attachment.

• Utilise a model of adult attachment developed by Bartholomew (1990) that has two dimensions:
  – Self regard (positive or negative)
  – Other regard (positive or negative)

• Different types of offending associated with different adult attachment styles
Bartholomew Adult Attachment Model

View of self

Positive

Negative

SECURE

PREOCCUPIED

View of others

Positive

Negative

DISMISSIVE

FEARFUL

VIOLENT OFFENCES

NOT LIKELY TO OFFEND

IMPRESSONAL & MUCH DISREGARD FOR VICTIM

CHILD GROOMING OFFENCES

NOT LIKELY TO OFFEND

IMPERSONAL & MUCH DISREGARD FOR VICTIM

CHILD GROOMING OFFENCES