

Moral Panics or Monstrous Offenders? Balancing Public Perceptions of Sexual Offenders with their Offence Patterns

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Abstract

This thesis aims to provide a broad overview of contemporary challenges in relation to sexual offending, with specific focus being placed on the need to balance the public's perceptions of those convicted of sexual offences with the reality of their offence patterns, to determine what risk society really faces from these individuals. In doing this, it incorporates diverse methods, including a systematic review, an empirical research study, an individual case study and a critique of a psychometric measure. Following a general introduction in Chapter 1, Chapter 2 presents a systematic evaluation of 13 studies investigating public perceptions of sexual offenders, with specific focus on comparing public demographic variables as predictors of these attitudes. It was found that overall; the public's perceptions were negative, with beliefs about high recidivism rates amongst other misperceptions. Demographic characteristics were shown to be inconsistent in predicting punitive judgments. Level of educational attainment was the only demographic variable investigated that was consistently associated, with higher levels of education resulting in more positive perceptions. In Chapter 3, the offence patterns of repeat sexual offenders are investigated, including an analysis of whether this population escalate, de-escalate or remain stable over time. The results indicate an overall pattern of stability, indicating that sexual

recidivists commit the same category of offence from one offence to the next. However, escalation was also common, a finding that warrants further exploration. Chapter 4 explores the factors that contribute to the onset and escalation of the offence behaviours of a repeat sexual offender, through the use of psychological formulation. Results indicated that a different set of risk factors contributed to the onset of the client's offending compared to those that contributed to escalation. Chapter 5 evaluates the Community Attitudes Toward Sex Offenders (CATSO) scale (Church, Wakeman, Miller, Clements, & Sun, 2008), an assessment measure used in Chapter 2. Finally, Chapter 6 provides a discussion and conclusion to the thesis, drawing together the implications of the research.

Statement of Authorship

The results of Chapter 3 were presented at the following professional conference (see Appendix A):

Wynn, C., & Duff, S. (2016, June). *The offence patterns of repeat sexual offenders: An examination of escalation, de-escalation and stability across sexual offence categories*. Paper presented at the British Psychological Society Division of Forensic Psychology Annual Conference, Brighton, UK.

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Glossary of Terms

ATP	Attitudes Toward Prisoners
ATS	Attitudes Toward Sex Offenders
ATTSO	Attitudes Toward the Treatment of Sex Offenders scale
AXIS	Appraisal Tool for Cross-sectional Studies
BPS	British Psychological Society
CASP	Critical Appraisal Skills Programme
CATSO	Community Attitudes Toward Sex Offenders scale
CATSO-C	Community Attitudes Toward Sex Offenders scale – Chinese version
CJS	Criminal Justice System
CRO	Community Rehabilitation Order
CSOM	Center for Sex Offender Management
DFP	Division of Forensic Psychology
GBH	Grievous Bodily Harm
GLM	Good Lives Model
HMPS	Her Majesty's Prison Service
HSP	Healthy Sex Programme
ISPP	Indeterminate Sentence for Public Protection
ITDSO	Integrated Theory of Desistance from Sexual Offending
ITSO	Integrated Theory of Sexual Offending
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
NOMS	National Offender Management Service
NWPS	North West Psychological Services
OVP	OASys Violence Predictor
PATSOR	Public Attitudes Toward Sex Offender Rehabilitation
PSO	Perceptions of Sex Offenders
RM-2000	Risk Matrix-2000
RNR	Risk, Needs and Responsivity
RPM	Relapse Prevention Model
RSVP	Risk of Sexual Violence Protocol
SARN	Structured Assessment of Risk and Need
SARN-TNA	Structured Assessment of Risk and Need – Treatment Needs Analysis
SOTP	Sex Offender Treatment Programme
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States
WAIS-IV	Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale – 4th Edition

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Chapter One:

General Introduction to Thesis

'Monstrous Offenders': The Implications

Sexual offending evokes strong emotions within society. The term 'sex offender' is commonly associated with a population of highly recidivistic individuals who lack the ability to control their behaviour and who are not amenable to treatment (King & Roberts, 2017). Compounding this, media sensationalism tends to focus on rare, high-profile violent sexual offences, contributing to misperceptions regarding the offence patterns and behaviours of this population. Coupled with subsequent public outcry, this has resulted in a number of management policies being created specifically for this population, including sex offender notification, registration and residence restrictions (e.g. Levenson, Brannon, Fortney, & Baker, 2007). Such policies were originally designed to control and monitor offenders convicted of violent sex crimes, and thus protect the public from the perceived level of risk posed (King & Roberts, 2017). To illustrate, in the United Kingdom (UK), the well-publicised 'Sarah's Law' is named after the victim of a high-profile violent offence where the perpetrator, Roy Whiting, was a convicted sex offender.

Whilst undoubtedly sexual offending should be viewed as a cause for concern given the extensive physical and psychological consequences that can be suffered by victims, this has unhelpfully led sexual offenders to be perceived as a homogenous population. In this respect, policy-makers have become over-inclusive, such

that a wider range of offences (for example, from public urination [as "indecent exposure"] to rape and child sexual abuse) are all categorised as 'sex offences' and are universally subject to these restrictions, albeit to varying extents (Harris, Lobanov-Rostovsky, & Levenson, 2010). This has resulted in the focus being diverted away from higher risk offenders and those statistically more likely to recidivate. Further, as fear and hostility against those convicted of a sexual offence increases, so does the public's demand that more needs to be done in order to manage the perceived risk associated with sex crimes. As a result, registered sex offenders face increasing harassment, difficulties in finding stable housing and employment, and potentially reduced chances of successful community reintegration (Levenson & Cotter, 2005).

Promoting Rehabilitation

The aforementioned consequences are inconsistent with the aims of community re-entry and rehabilitation (to reduce reoffending and protect the public; Göbbels, Ward, & Willis, 2012), and theories aimed at understanding the process of desistance from offending. In reality, community re-entry presents a significant source of stress for any offender. For those convicted of sexual offences, due to the high levels of fear evoked within the community about these persons, this process is arguably more challenging (Petersilia,

2003). Some reports from convicted sexual offenders even suggest a preference for remaining in custody rather than being released into the community (Willis & Johnston, 2010).

The Integrated Theory of Desistance from Sexual Offending (ITDSO; Göbbels et al., 2012) places emphasis on a community re-entry process that supports the process of rehabilitation. The environment can therefore be seen as either a facilitator, or inhibitor to successful rehabilitation, the latter having the potential unintended consequence of increasing the risk of recidivism. Within this, emphasis is also placed on the construction of a non-offending identity (Göbbels et al., 2012) and the potential for barriers to successful re-entry to act as inhibitors to this process. This occurs through the internalisation of the 'sex offender' identity and reducing motivation to change (Göbbels et al., 2012; Harper, Hogue, & Bartels, 2017). From a Labelling Theory standpoint (Becker, 1963), stigmatisation could increase risk through obstructing opportunities to maintain desistance (Mingus & Burchfield, 2012).

Similarly, the "Good Lives Model" (GLM; Ward & Maruna, 2007) is aimed at providing offenders with the internal and external resources necessary to achieve a 'good life', a life that is socially acceptable. In this respect, external factors such as negative public attitudes and restrictive management policies may act as a barrier

to the offender achieving primary goods, and so negatively impact on the reconstruction of the self and result in the offender seeking to meet their needs through further offending. It is therefore imperative to gain a comprehensive understanding of the nature of the public's attitudes towards those convicted of a sexual offence in order to determine where intervention efforts are required and more accurate information needs to be provided.

Theories of Punitiveness

A number of theoretical perspectives have been proposed to explain punitive views towards sexual offenders. Of greatest relevance are the Sex Offender Stereotypes Model (Pickett, Mancini, & Mears, 2013; Quinn, Forsyth, & Mullen-Quinn, 2004) and the Risk-Management Concerns Model (Lancaster, 2011; Pickett et al., 2013). The former posits three stereotypes that contribute to the perception of sexual offenders as 'monstrous' predators that fuel public hostility. These include a belief that sex offenders tend to victimise strangers; that they offend because of "*personal immorality, deviant sexual desires and selfishness*" (Pickett et al., 2013, p.734); and that they are unreformable. This serves to justify the use of harsh punishments and restrictions over more rehabilitative efforts. However, few studies have attempted to specifically examine the influence of stereotype endorsement on

support for sex offender management policies. Mancini and Mears (2010) found that those who believed that sexual offenders were highly likely to recidivate were more likely to support the execution of those committing the most serious sexual offences (defined by the authors as rape and sexually abusing a child). Further, Levenson, Shields, and Singleton (2012) found that participants who believed that most sex offenders would reoffend were more likely to support residence restrictions as an additional punishment.

The Risk-Management Concerns Model suggests that sex offender management policies are fuelled by public beliefs about increasing rates of sexual offending. Compounded by sensationalised media reports, there is a general consensus among the public that sex crimes are on the rise (e.g. Levenson et al., 2007). This therefore results in greater perceived difficulty in protecting oneself from victimisation, and increased support for sex offender management policies. To illustrate, Comartin, Kernsmith, and Kernsmith (2009) found that fear of sexual assault is positively associated with support for punitive sex offender management policies.

Sexual Recidivism and Offence Patterns

As identified above, justifications for sex offender management policies appear to be based on widespread public belief that sexual

offenders are compulsive recidivists who are incapable of controlling their behaviour, and without close monitoring their recidivism is almost inevitable (e.g. Harris, Smallbone, Dennison, & Knight, 2009; Sample & Bray, 2003; Zimring, 2004). However, these lay beliefs are inconsistent with the literature (e.g. Lussier, 2005). For example, meta-analyses have shown that on average, 5-14% of sexual offenders will be re-arrested for a subsequent sexual offence within 3 to 6 years (Hanson & Bussiére, 1998; Hanson & Morton-Bourgon, 2005). Langan, Schmitt, and Durose (2003) compared the recidivism risk of sexual and non-sexual offenders, and found that within a 3-year follow-up, sexual offenders were significantly less likely to be arrested for any type of offence (sexual or non-sexual), compared to non-sexual offenders (45% and 68% respectively). However, it should be noted that the majority of sexual offences are not brought to the attention of the criminal justice system; therefore utilising official statistics may underestimate the true level of sexual reoffending and introduce bias to our understanding.

Despite its apparent relative infrequency, given the widespread public concern it is important to understand the nature of sexual recidivism and the 'criminal careers' of those committing sexual offences in order to better inform public understanding, and for intervention efforts to be more directly targeted to riskier offenders. The criminal career of an offender is thought of as *"the longitudinal*

sequence of crimes committed by an individual offender" (Blumstein, Cohen, Roth, & Visher, 1986, p.12).

A number of studies have investigated the offence patterns of repeat sexual offenders, commonly focusing on specialisation and versatility. The term 'specialisation' refers to a particular pattern of offending whereby offenders persistently engage in a specific type of offence (Jennings, Piquero, Zimring, & Reingle, 2015), whereas versatile offenders commit a range of offences over the course of their criminal careers. Generally, sexual offenders are viewed as specialising in their particular genre of offences; however, literature reviews have shown that this population are no more likely to specialise in sex crimes than any other type of offender (Harris, Smallbone, Dennison, & Knight, 2009). For example, Sample and Bray (2003) found that sexual offenders had one of the lowest recidivism rates for the same type of offence, at 6.5% over a 5-year follow-up. Further, Langan et al's. (2003) study found that 87% of sexual offences from a sample of over 270,000 released offenders were perpetrated by those whose original convictions constituted a non-sexual offence, with only 13% being committed by a 'specialist' group of sexual offenders. Miethe, Olson, and Mitchell (2006) analysed a sample of 38,000 released offenders, and found that sexual offenders were less specialised than other categories of offender.

Part of this also involves the seriousness of an offence: criminal careers may be characterised by periods of increasing seriousness, or escalation, or alternatively by periods of decreasing seriousness, or de-escalation. However, to date, few studies have focussed on the potential for sexual offenders to escalate in the seriousness of their behaviour over time.

To summarise, distorted public perceptions have potential negative and far-reaching consequences regarding the rehabilitation of convicted sexual offenders. It is necessary to gain a comprehensive understanding of the nature of these attitudes in order to better direct intervention efforts to ensure that the public are more accurately informed. Similarly, given the popular belief that sexual offenders recidivate at a much more frequent rate than research data suggests, it is necessary to provide the public with a more accurate picture surrounding the potential 'danger' posed by those committing sexual offences.

Thesis Structure

This research thesis aims to provide a broad overview of the contemporary challenges in relation to sexual offending through an examination of the perceptions of the public towards those convicted of a sexual offence, and balancing this against sexual

offence patterns. The thesis comprises of four main chapters, including a systematic review of the literature examining public attitudes towards sexual offenders, with specific focus being placed on comparing demographic variables as predictors of these attitudes (Chapter 2); an empirical research study identifying the offence patterns of repeat sexual offenders, specifically whether they escalate, de-escalate or remain stable over time (Chapter 3); an individual case study outlining the factors that contribute to offence escalation in a sexual recidivist (Chapter 4); and a critical appraisal of the Community Attitudes Towards Sex Offenders (CATSO) scale (Chapter 5), a tool frequently used in studies included within Chapter 2. The chapters are presented in sequence; however, they are suitably diverse in terms of focus and method to stand as independent studies.

Chapter 2 reports on a systematic review of the attitudes of the public towards those convicted of a sexual offence. Studies in this area have typically focussed on providing a broad overview of the public's attitudes, which have been shown to be inherently negative, and highlight that the public frequently endorse myths surrounding those convicted of a sexual offence. This has included perceptions of high recidivism rates (e.g. Fortney, Levenson, Brannon, & Baker, 2007; Levenson et al., 2007; Sample & Bray, 2003), and beliefs that treatment is ineffective and that offenders

frequently abuse stranger victims (e.g. Levenson et al., 2007). Whilst this is informative, few studies have attempted to examine the complexity of public attitudes towards sexual offenders, and this neglects the fact that attitudes can vary as a result of a number of variables, such as characteristics of the public, characteristics of the offender, or characteristics of the victim (King & Roberts, 2017). Thus, the purpose of the review was to determine the extent to which specific demographic characteristics of the public influence punitive judgements towards those convicted of a sexual offence.

In Chapter 3 an empirical research project is described, which explored the offence patterns of repeat sexual offenders, specifically whether they escalate, de-escalate, or remain stable over time. Since public attitudes are shown to be inherently negative, including beliefs about high recidivism rates, it is crucial to examine the heterogeneity of sexual offenders with respect to their recidivism in order to offer some perspective on whether the public's attitudes, and the resulting legislative policies, are justified. If only a subgroup of sexual offenders are shown to have the level of recidivism risk that the public are concerned about, then perhaps the laws should be re-evaluated *"so that they more closely reflect the empirical realities of recidivism among sexual offenders"* (Sample & Bray, 2006, p.98). As already outlined, many studies have reviewed the recidivism rates of sexual offenders and their

offence patterns with respect to specialisation and versatility. However, few have considered the potential for sexual recidivists to escalate in the severity of their behaviour over time. In this respect, the few studies that exist have defined escalation in terms of the specific behaviours displayed or the level of force used against the victim (e.g. Hewitt & Beauregard, 2014). The present study therefore aimed to take a broader focus and investigate whether repeat sexual offenders escalate in the seriousness of their behaviour over time, and whether escalation is more likely to be observed in any one particular offence category.

Chapter 4 reports on a case study detailing the formulation of a repeat sexual offender detained within Her Majesty's Prison Service (HMPS), who had escalated in the seriousness of his offending behaviour over the course of his criminal career. The client had also previously completed the accredited Core and Extended group-based Sex Offender Treatment Programmes. In light of the findings reported in Chapter 3 whereby a pattern of escalation was observed, this case study aimed to identify the factors that contributed to the onset and escalation of the client's offending through the use of psychological formulation.

In light of conclusions drawn from Chapter 2 suggesting that a more consistent approach is required when measuring public attitudes,

Chapter 5 critically appraises the Community Attitudes Toward Sex Offenders (CATSO) scale (Church et al., 2008). Specifically, the scale is evaluated in terms of its validity, reliability, practical utility and its usefulness in accurately capturing the attitudes of the public towards those convicted of a sexual offence.

Finally, in Chapter 6 the main findings of the thesis are summarised and reflections are provided on the implications of these findings both for society, and those convicted of a sexual offence. Recommendations for further research are also discussed.

To summarise, the aims of this thesis were as follows:

- To systematically evaluate the public's perceptions of sexual offenders, with particular focus on the extent to which demographic characteristics influence punitive attitudes;
- To explore the offence patterns of repeat sexual offenders through considering whether they escalate, de-escalate or remain stable over time;
- To identify factors contributing to the onset of and escalation in the offence behaviours of a sexual recidivist through the use of psychological formulation; and
- To critically appraise the Community Attitudes Toward Sex Offenders (CATSO) scale as a measure of public attitudes towards sex offenders.



Chapter Two:

Public Perceptions of Sexual Offenders: A Systematic Review of the Literature

Abstract

Public attitudes towards sexual offenders are generally negative. Such attitudes are commonly derived from sensationalised media reports portraying extreme cases of sexual violence that serve to distort the public's overall view, leading to misperceptions that contradict empirically derived knowledge, and triggering seemingly "get tough" attitudes. Indeed, public attitudes are a strong driving force behind a number of restrictive legislative interventions intended to manage the perceived level of risk posed by sexual offenders and protect the public from further victimisation. This review synthesised the available literature to determine the current state of understanding relating to the complexity of public attitudes towards sexual offenders, with specific focus on the extent to which specific demographic characteristics of the public (including age, gender and educational attainment) influence punitive judgements. Four electronic reference lists and grey literature sources were searched and two experts were contacted in order to obtain relevant studies. Inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied to the references and the resulting studies were quality assessed prior to the data being extracted and synthesised. The electronic search yielded 14,774 hits. Of these, 11,570 duplicates and 2,584 obviously irrelevant references were removed. A further 496 references did not meet the inclusion and exclusion criteria and 110

did not meet the minimum threshold criteria for study quality. A total of 14 studies were retained. The quality of the studies varied, as did the way in which attitudes were defined and measured. It was found that the public overall held negative perceptions towards those convicted of a sexual offence. No consistent relationship was observed in relation to the influence of age on punitive judgments. Participant gender was also inconsistent; however, females were typically shown to be more punitive compared to males. Educational attainment was the only demographic characteristic that consistently influenced public perceptions, with those with higher levels of educational attainment holding more positive perceptions. The implications of these findings are discussed, along with recommendations for future research.

Introduction

'Attitudes' and Misperceptions

Attitudes have previously been defined as *"a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favour or disfavour"* (Eagly & Chaikin, 1993, p.1). Breckler (1984) further proposed that attitudes consist of: a cognitive component, which is related to the beliefs or stereotypes an individual holds; an affective component, or the emotional response an individual experiences; and a behavioural component, relating to the way people act (Harper, Hogue, & Bartels, 2017). Therefore, in order to develop a comprehensive understanding of the attitudes held regarding a particular topic or entity, it should be expected that all three dimensions will be explored.

Several studies have measured the attitudes and misconceptions held by the general public towards sexual offenders. Typical misconceptions include an overestimation of recidivism rates, beliefs that sexual offenders are incapable of controlling their sexual urges, and a belief that treatment is ineffective. For example, an early study by Brown (1999) focussed on attitudes towards the treatment of sexual offenders and found that such attitudes were generally positive, although only if this took place alongside some form of punishment (for example, a prison sentence). However, if

this were the case, a significant number of sexual offenders would not be able to receive treatment due to only a small proportion of sexual offences resulting in a custodial sanction.

Since this time, researchers have evaluated the truthfulness of public perceptions of sexual offenders. For example, Levenson, Brannon, Fortney, and Baker (2007) found that persons from Florida's perceptions of sex offenders reflected a homogenous group who frequently reoffend, the majority of participants believing that 80% of sex offenders would reoffend, a view that is inconsistent with the literature (Willis *et al*., 2010). Further, Levenson et al's. participants tended to favour lengthy prison sentences for sexual offenders and, although they endorsed treatment, they were also sceptical of its benefits.

In a more detailed analysis, Fortney, Levenson, Brannon, and Baker (2007) compared the perceptions of both sexual offenders and the public to published research data documenting recidivism rates, the frequency of stranger assaults, and treatment effectiveness, and found significant differences. Specifically, the public over-estimated the rate at which children are victimised by strangers, and over-estimated the proportion of offenders who were sexually victimised as children. Further, the public over-estimated recidivism rates (in terms of being re-convicted for another sexual offence) and the number of offences that come to the attention of

authorities. The effectiveness of treatment was also under-estimated. This led the authors to conclude that public misperceptions could compromise an offender's reintegration into society.

Another on-line study by Katz-Schiavone, Levenson, and Ackerman (2008) found that participants were well-informed about some facts surrounding sexual offending; however, they also endorsed several misconceptions such as high recidivism rates, that treatment is ineffective, and that the majority of offenders were the victims of sexual assault themselves during childhood. In the United Kingdom (UK), Brown, Deakin, and Spencer (2008) sampled 976 members of the public regarding their perceptions of sex offenders and their attitudes towards community re-entry. Their findings showed that participants overestimated reconviction rates, with 60% of males and 75% of females believing that at least 25% of sex offenders would be re-convicted of another sexual offence within a year. Further, when asked about the accuracy of the media's depictions of sexual offenders, over 50% of participants thought that the media was either accurate or under-reported the risk posed by these individuals (Willis *et al*., 2010).

More recently, Jahnke, Imhoff, and Hoyer (2015) surveyed both American and German participants comparing attitudes towards paedophiles, alcohol abusers, sexual sadists, and perpetrators of anti-social behaviour. In both samples, attitudes

towards sex offenders were more negative compared with the other offence categories.

Perhaps more positively, Craun and Theriot (2009) found that on average, 7 out of 10 participants reported being equally or more concerned about a child being sexually assaulted by someone known to them, rather than by a stranger. This is consistent with the literature regarding victim-offender relationships (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2000). Lastly, Olver and Barlow (2010) reported that most of their sample held negative attitudes towards a sexual offender living in their neighbourhood and favoured longer prison sentences. However, more than half of the sample believed that sex offenders could be safely managed in the community, and that they were capable of changing their behaviour. Nevertheless, overall, these findings suggest that many of the preconceived notions regarding those convicted of a sexual offence appear to be based on misperceptions rather than empirical evidence (Center for Sex Offender Management; CSOM, 2000; Levenson et al., 2007).

The Role of the Media

It has been suggested that in the absence of knowledge or contact with known sex offenders, the attitudes of the general public might be more heavily influenced by what is shown by the media

(Kjelsberg & Loos, 2008; Willis et al., 2010). For the public, the media are a primary source of information regarding sexual offences (CSOM, 2000). However, the way in which sex crimes are reported is problematic and can influence the formation of negative and misinformed attitudes and perpetuate unhelpful myths surrounding sexual offences. This is because media coverage of such events is typically selective, tending to sensationalise sex crimes through focussing on reports of exceptional cases of high-profile, repeat sexual offenders offending against unrelated victims, which in reality are very rare.

Existing research, however, has continually shown that sex offenders have lower rates of reoffending and are more likely to offend against known victims. For example, research has shown that nearly 75% of sexual offenders are known to their victims (Greenfield, 1997), and the vast majority of people committing sex crimes will not reoffend (e.g. Hanson & Bussière, 1998; Sample & Bray, 2003) or may not be caught. To demonstrate this link, Proctor, Badzinski, and Johnson (2002) found an association between media reports of sex crimes and an individual's awareness of sexual violence and support for community protection policies. The related impression, therefore, is that sex offenders inevitably progress to more serious and predatory offences. More recently, Harper and Hogue (2017) reported differences between individuals who read tabloid versus broadsheet newspapers, with tabloid

readership being associated with more negative attitudes towards sex offenders in terms of perceptions of risk and preferences for harsher punishments.

Impact and Implications of Negative Public Attitudes

As highlighted above, sex crimes evoke considerable fear and anxiety in society. The negative reactions of the public, reinforced by the stereotypes promoted by the media, has led government legislators to implement a number of restrictive policies aimed at protecting the public from sexual victimisation (e.g. Levenson & D'Amora, 2007), including community notifications, registration and residence restrictions. Though most contemporary sexual assault policies have been inspired by public outcry following highly publicised stranger abductions, researchers have established that individuals known to the victim commit the vast majority of sexual offences. For example, it was found that 34% of abusedchildren were sexually assaulted by relatives, with 59% being abused by acquaintances (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2000).

Consequently, although laws are most often designed to prevent sex crimes by strangers, victims are much more vulnerable to assaults by known perpetrators (Fortney et al., 2007). This may therefore result in an increased focus on strangers as perpetrators at the detriment of being concerned about those who are

statistically more likely to perpetrate sexual crimes (Craun & Theriot, 2008). Further, the endorsement of such misperceptions and stereotypes may result in an increased likelihood of offenders avoiding detection. For example, parents are more likely to warn their children away from strangers, despite the above-identified evidence to the contrary. Further, Craun and Theriot (2009) reported that an awareness of a local sex offender was positively linked to an increased likelihood of having a misperception (i.e., thinking that 'strangers' are more likely to commit sexual assault), suggesting that community notification may create unnecessary fear in communities.

Public support for sex offender management policies is high. Mears, Mancini, Gertz, and Bratton (2008) found that 76.3% of participants supported community notification for all sex offenders. Further, the Center for Sex Offender Management (CSOM; 2010) found that 79% of participants felt that registration and notification was an effective public safety investment. A further 82% expressed belief in the effectiveness of GPS monitoring and 63% felt that restricting where sex offenders could live served to protect the public (Harris & Socia, 2014). Perhaps most concerning are Levenson et al's. (2007) findings, where it was reported that 74% of participants endorsed the statement *"I would support these policies even if there is no scientific evidence showing that they reduced sexual assault"*

(p.14). Such levels of support are connected with a belief that such policies are effective. However, empirical data indicate that the initial aims of such legislation, namely to increase public safety, have largely not come to fruition (e.g. Nobles, Levenson, & Youstin, 2012). More importantly, research has consistently demonstrated that such legislation has detrimental effects on offender reintegration efforts, which may actually increase the risk of reoffending (e.g. Levenson & Tewksbury, 2009). Further, Levenson and Agoba (2015) have suggested that sex offender laws have not contributed to a reduction in recidivism rates for registered sex offenders, suggesting that they may be ineffective.

Restrictive management policies may also act as a barrier towards successful community reintegration, through placing limitations on where an offender can live and work, and through their details being made available for public viewing. Conversely, desistance from crime is reported to be enhanced when offenders are given opportunities such as community integration and employment (Kruttschnitt, Uggen, & Shelton, 2000). Willis, Levenson, and Ward (2010) further advocated that these restrictive laws should be only applied to those with stranger victims and a high risk of re-offending, rather than a blanket application to all individuals

convicted of a sexual offence, which would not take into account what the literature says.

What the Literature tells us About Sex Offenders

Whilst sexual offending is undoubtedly a cause for concern, a number of large-scale studies have shown that recidivism rates for sexual offences are lower than commonly believed by the public (Katz-Schiavone et al., 2008). Fortney et al. (2007) highlighted two meta-analyses of 82 recidivism studies involving over 29,000 sexual offenders from the United States (US), Canada and Europe, and recidivism rates were reported to be 14% over 4-6 years (Hanson & Bussière, 1998; Hanson & Morton-Bourgon, 2005). Sample and Bray (2003) showed that sexual offenders were the least likely offender group to be arrested for new crimes, leading them to conclude that *"sex offenders do not appear to be more dangerous than any other criminal categories"* (Sample & Bray, 2003, p.79). Despite these findings, it must also be acknowledged that the majority of sexual offences are not brought to the attention of the Criminal Justice System (CJS), which may therefore limit the conclusions that can be drawn from studies utilising official data. Some offenders will assault many more victims than those for which they are caught, and additionally some victims may choose not to

report sex crimes for fear of being embarrassed or humiliated (Katz-Schiavone et al., 2008).

In relation to this, Langan and Levin (2002) found that 46% of sexual offenders released in 1994 were rearrested within three years for a subsequent offence. However, this was not always in relation to sex-based crimes. Only 2.5% of over 3,100 released sex offenders were arrested for a subsequent sexual offence, with recidivism being higher for violent and acquisitive offences. This led the authors to conclude that sex offenders are 'non-specialists', meaning that they do not generally recidivate with sex-based crimes. This finding has been supported by Soothill, Francis, Sanderson, and Ackerly (2000), and Howard, Barnett, and Mann (2013).

With regards to the victim-perpetrator relationship, in contrast to the public's beliefs, research data suggests that an individual known to the victim perpetrates the majority of sexual assaults (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2000). For example, Vanzile-Tamsen, Testa, and Livingston (2005) found that 98% of women reporting sexual abuse stated that they knew the perpetrator.

The effectiveness of sex offender treatment, however, is more contentious, with mixed opinions being reported. For example, Marques, Wiederanders, Day, Nelson, and van Ommeren (2005) found no differences between treated and un-treated groups of both

rapists and child molesters. Alternatively, Hanson et al. (2005) found that sexual offenders who did not participate in treatment had a higher recidivism rate (17%) compared to those who received CBT (10%; Fortney et al., 2007). These findings have been reported within a later systematic evaluation of 80 comparison studies between treated and untreated groups of sexual offenders. Many studies confirmed a positive effect of treatment, with overall recidivism rates being reported as 11.1% for treated offenders and 17.5% for untreated offenders (Schmucker & Lösel, 2008). However, a more recent systematic review by Walton and Chou (2014) found that only 3 out of 10 included studies showed lower recidivism rates for treated child molesters.

Rationale

Despite the vast amount of attention that is paid towards sexual offenders and the consequences negative perceptions can have in regards to successful community reintegration, no research to date has attempted to systematically examine public attitudes towards those convicted of a sexual offence. Further, few studies have attempted to examine the complexity of public attitudes towards sexual offenders, and this neglects the fact that attitudes can vary as a result of a number of factors (for example, characteristics of the public, characteristics of the offender or characteristics of the

victim). Having such an understanding could help highlight the misperceptions held by the public to identify where further, more accurate information is required to better inform public judgments and ensure that the resulting policies are based on empirical evidence, and target those offenders who are most 'risky'. The present review therefore synthesises the available literature to assess current understanding in relation to public attitudes towards those convicted of a sexual offence, with specific focus being placed on determining the extent to which specific demographic characteristics of the public influence punitive judgments, including age, gender and educational attainment. Research has additionally focussed on ethnicity, victimisation experiences, parental status and newspaper readership; however, the former are more commonly evaluated.

The review could also contribute to research on the offence patterns of repeat sexual offenders, in particular the emerging research on offence escalation, as it could potentially highlight whether the public's judgements, and the resulting management policies, are justified. In this sense, it is important that public attitudes are researched and addressed in order to promote successful community re-integration in order to reduce the risk of recidivism, and encourage legislation that is supportive of this process, as opposed to legislation that is based on the distorted

picture of sexual offending presented by the media (Gakhal & Brown, 2011).

Method

Search Strategy

Relevant articles were identified using a variety of sources, including electronic searches, grey literature sources and expert contact. Specifically, the following search techniques were utilised: an electronic search of The Cochrane Collaboration library (completed on 20/06/2017); four electronic bibliographic databases, including PsycINFO, ASSIA, Web of Science and Medline (all completed on 20/06/2017); three thesis portals, including ProQuest Dissertations and Theses A&I, DART Europe E-Thesis and Nottingham E-Thesis (all completed on 21/06/2017). Two experts in the field were also contacted to request any unpublished literature and contemporary studies that matched the area of interest. There were no restrictions regarding publication date, language or country of origin, in order to obtain the maximum number of studies possible.

Search Terms

The following search terms are provided as a guide to the terms that were applied to all databases. Where appropriate, the terms were adapted to suit the specific requirements of each database.

Full details regarding the search syntax for each database are provided in Appendix B.

(public* or people* or societ* or communit* or citizen* or resident*)
AND
(demographic* or age* or gender* or sex* or educat*)
AND
(attitude* or opinion* or view* or thought* or belie* or perspective* or perception* or misconception* or preconception* or stereotyp* or prejudice* or judg* or stigma*)
AND
((sex* adj3 (offen* or abus* or assault* or violen* or predator? or perpetrator?)) or paraphil* or rape? or rapist? or (child adj (molest* or abus*)) or p?edophil* or voyeur* or (indecent adj (expos* or exhib*)))

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion criteria were developed to identify the specific elements a study must have to be included in the review. Specifically, all references had to meet the criteria outlined below:

a) Participants

Participants included adult members of the public, both male and female, aged over 18. For the purpose of the review, the term 'public' was defined as individuals who have not worked with sexual offenders in either a professional or a paraprofessional capacity. Therefore, studies involving juvenile members of the public, and individuals who have experience working with sex offenders were excluded from the review. Further, although it would be useful to capture the attitudes student samples, given that young females are statistically more likely to be victims of sexual offences (Office for National Statistics; ONS, 2017), the decision was made to exclude this sub-group. Student samples are typically younger and better educated when compared with the general public, which may have skewed the results towards more positive or more negative perceptions. Researchers have also advised against using student samples, particularly within studies involving attitudinal variables (Hanel & Vione, 2016).

b) Exposure/Comparator

The perceptions of the public were compared on a number of demographic variables including age, gender and level of educational attainment. These variables were selected due to being frequently highlighted through scoping searches as factors that may

influence public perceptions towards those who have sexually offended. Attitudes are defined in the outcome measure below.

c) Outcome Measure

Included studies were required to assess the public's attitude towards sexual offenders. For the purpose of this review, sexual offenders included any adult male receiving a conviction for a sexual offence, owing to this being the population most greatly affected by sex offender management policies. Therefore, studies evaluating public attitudes towards female and juvenile sexual offenders were excluded from the review. Further, scoping searches identified few studies that specifically examined public perceptions towards these groups, which would have made a systematic evaluation difficult to achieve. A copy of the inclusion and exclusion form is provided in Appendix C.

Study Selection

Following completion of the initial literature search, any duplicate references were removed, in addition to any titles that were obviously irrelevant to the area of interest. As such a large number of references were initially obtained, abstracts of the remaining studies were then reviewed to exclude any further irrelevant results, where the relevance of the study could not easily be

determined from the title. All remaining references were subsequently compared against the full inclusion and exclusion criteria, with all those not meeting the inclusion criteria being removed. In cases of ambiguity, the study authors were contacted for clarification; however, if no reply was received within one month, the study was excluded from the review. All studies that met the inclusion criteria were reviewed and quality assessed as outlined below.

Quality Assessment

The remaining studies were quality assessed to determine their reliability and to identify any areas of potential bias. Due to the large number of hits obtained, quality assessment was undertaken in two phases, consistent with previous published research (Tully, Chou, & Browne, 2013). Threshold criteria were first applied; detailed as follows:

- Was the population a genuine public sample?
- Did the authors clearly describe how attitudes were to be measured?
- Was a clear description provided regarding the way in which attitudes were measured?

Studies that did not meet these criteria were excluded from the initial quality assessment phase for not meeting the minimum quality threshold (Tully et al., 2013).

Quality assessment of the remaining studies was completed using pre-defined forms, adapted from the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP; 2004) and the AXIS Tool (Downes, Brennan, Williams, & Dean, 2017), a recently developed tool to assess the quality and risk of bias in cross-sectional studies. The AXIS Tool was suggested by the developers to be the first of its kind to assess cross-sectional studies. See Appendix D for a copy of the forms used. Specifically, the following categories of bias were assessed:

Assessment of sampling or selection bias considered how representative the individuals selected to participate in the study were likely to be of the general population, and whether the sample were recruited in an appropriate way. This was to determine how generalisable the study results were to the target population. Assessment of bias in the measurement of public attitudes towards sex offenders was also considered. This included the clarity of the definitions of these constructs, and the validity, reliability and objectivity of the measurement method. Assessment of bias within the analysis was also evaluated, which considered whether the analyses were appropriate to the research question.

Risk of bias for individual items was rated as 'high' (high risk of bias), 'possible' (mixed evidence for risk of bias), 'low' (no evidence for risk of bias), or 'unclear' (insufficient evidence to determine risk of bias). Risk of bias for each study was evaluated using clinical judgment. The author assessed the quality of all of the included studies, with a second reviewer independently assessing the quality of 21% of the studies (3 out of 14 studies). This individual was a student on the University of Nottingham's Doctoral Programme in Forensic Psychology, who had also received training in the methodology of conducting a systematic review. Disagreements were resolved through collaborative discussion.

Data Extraction

A data extraction form was used to extract the data from included studies (see Appendix E). Where specific data could not be obtained directly from the study, study authors were contacted in an attempt to obtain any missing information.

Results

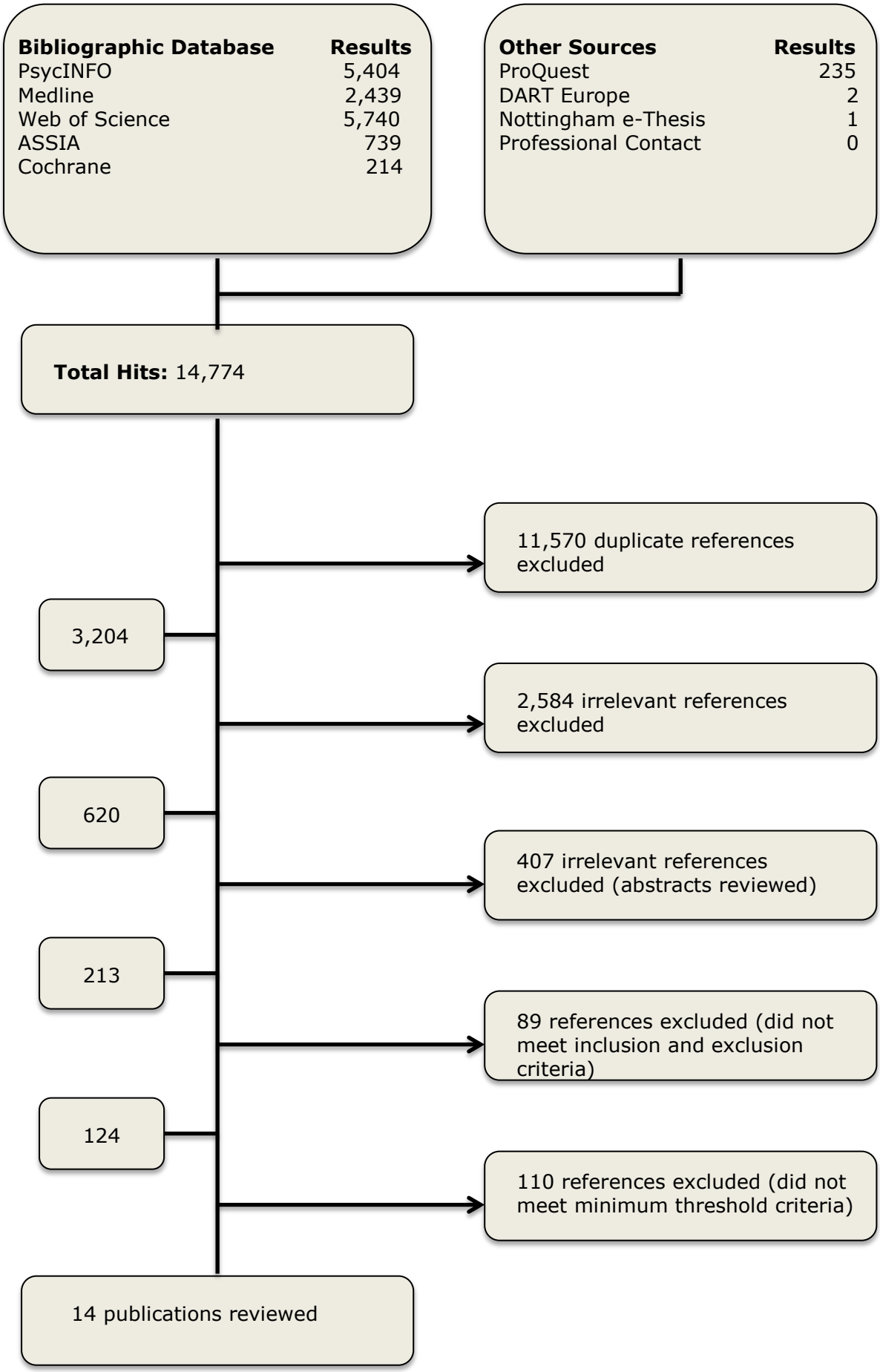
Description of Studies

The search yielded 14,774 publications. Of these, 11,570 duplicates were removed and a further 2,584 irrelevant publications were excluded based on the title bearing no obvious relevance to the focus of the review. Following a review of the abstracts, a further 407 studies were removed. Of the remaining 213 articles, 89 did not meet the full inclusion criteria. Reasons for exclusion included the use of a student sample, and studies not distinguishing between participant's demographic characteristics. A further 110 studies were excluded as they did not meet the minimum threshold criteria for overall study quality. The remaining 14 studies were included within the review. Figure 1 outlines the search results in greater detail.

Characteristics of Included Studies

Table 1 outlines the characteristics of the 14 included studies and provides a summary of the results. Thirteen of the 14 included studies adopted a cross-sectional design, with one utilising a case-control approach. Overall, the studies considered the perceptions of 6,633 participants. All included studies were treated as separate studies, although it is possible that some participants participated in

Figure 1: Search results and study selection.



more than one study included within the review. However, this possibility could not be examined.

Participant Recruitment

Participants were mainly recruited online, including via email, online advertising and social media (Harper & Hogue, 2015; Hoing, Petrina, Duke, Völlm, & Vogelvang, 2016; King, 2016; Shackley, Weiner, Day, & Willis, 2014; Weiner, Shackley, Willis, & Day, 2014; Willis et al., 2013;). Other studies utilised telephone surveys (Brown, 1999; Chui, Cheng, & Ong, 2015; Comartin, Kernsmith, & Kernsmith, 2009; Kernsmith, Craun, & Foster, 2009); face-to-face opportunity sampling (Levenson et al., 2007; Koon-Magnin, 2015; Wevodau, Cramer, Gemberling, & Clark, 2016); and postal surveys (Rogers, Hirst, & Davies, 2011; King, 2016). Some studies utilised more than one recruitment method.

The countries where the participants were sampled from included New Zealand (1 study), Hong Kong (1 study), the United States (6 studies), Australia (2 studies), and the United Kingdom (3 studies). One study analysed the perceptions of a European public sample, including participants from the United Kingdom, Ireland, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Spain, Latvia, Bulgaria and Hungary.

Consideration of 'Sexual Offenders'

The majority of studies did not explicitly differentiate between different sexual offences and therefore treated sex offenders as a homogenous group. However, one study (Kernsmith et al., 2009) examined differences in attitudes towards seven categories of sex offender, including an incest offender, a statutory rapist, a juvenile offender, a spousal rapist, a paedophile, a date rapist and a historical offender.

Test Instruments

Perceptions of sexual offenders were mostly assessed using psychometric measures designed specifically for the purpose of assessing public attitudes (8 studies), with the Community Attitudes Toward Sex Offenders scale (CATSO; Church et al., 2008) being the tool most frequently utilised. This is an 18-item self-report questionnaire that assesses attitudes in terms of perceived social isolation of sexual offenders, their capacity to change, the severity of their offences and their level of sexual deviancy. Responses are recorded on a 6-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 ('strongly disagree') to 6 ('strongly agree'). The internal consistency for this scale is reported to be adequate (Cronbach's alpha: 'Social Isolation' = .70; 'Capacity to Change' = .80; 'Severity and Dangerousness' = .70; 'Sexual Deviancy' = .43; total scale = .74; Church et al., 2008; Hoing et al., 2016). The CATSO was occasionally adapted to suit the

country in which the study was being conducted (e.g. CATSO-C; Chui, Cheng, & Ong, 2015).

Studies also utilised the Attitude Towards the Treatment of Sex Offenders Scale (ATTSO; Wnuk, Chapman, & Jeglic, 2006), a 15-item self-report questionnaire that assesses attitudes towards sex offender treatment programmes in terms of the incapacitation of offenders, the effectiveness of treatment and the use of mandatory treatment programmes. Responses are recorded on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 ('strongly disagree') to 5 ('strongly agree'). The reliability of this scale is reported to be good (Cronbach's alpha: 'Incapacitation of Offenders' = .88; 'Effectiveness of Treatment' = .81; 'Mandatory Treatment' = .78; total scale = .86; Wnuk et al., 2006).

Some studies used the Public Attitudes Towards Sex Offender Rehabilitation scale (PATSOR; Rogers et al., 2011), a 12-item self-report questionnaire that explores perceptions of sexual offenders' rehabilitation and reintegration into society. Responses are measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 ('strongly disagree') to 5 ('strongly agree'). The reliability for the sex offender rehabilitation subscale was reported to be good (Cronbach's alpha = .86) but low for the area of residence subscale (Cronbach's alpha = .60; Rogers et al., 2011).

Finally, one study (Harper & Hogue, 2015) used the Perceptions of Sex Offenders (PSO) scale, developed by the authors following an evaluation and re-imagination of the CATSO. This is a 20-item self-report tool measuring participants' perceptions of sex offender sentencing and management, stereotype endorsement and risk perception, with responses being measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale. The reliability of the scale overall and each of its subscales was reported by the authors to be very good (Cronbach's alpha: total scale = .92; 'Sentencing and Management' = .93; 'Stereotype Endorsement' = .85; 'Risk Perception' = .81). For studies that used existing attitude measures, four assessed attitudes using participants' overall scores, whereas three broke participants' attitudes down by sub-scale. In addition to using established tools to measure public attitudes, a number of studies also devised their own items for assessing the public's perceptions, including participants' feelings and anticipated behaviour towards sexual offenders (thus addressing the affective and behavioural components of attitudes, Willis et al., 2013); estimates of recidivism (e.g. Levenson et al., 2007; Willis et al., 2013); and sentencing and rehabilitation judgments (e.g. Chui et al., 2015; Weiner et al., 2014).

Other studies developed their own questionnaires in order to assess public attitudes, including sex offender management policies (community notification, residency and work restrictions,

monitoring), sentencing decisions, endorsement of misconceptions (including sex crime rates, victim-offender relationships, recidivism and treatment effectiveness) and feelings towards sex offenders. Whilst the validity of some scales was not reported (e.g. Koon-Magnin, 2015; Levenson et al., 2007), others reported validity to be good (Cronbach's alpha = .86, Comartin et al., 2009; .89, King, 2016).

Study Quality

There were some common themes amongst studies that were assessed as having a higher risk of bias, which may serve to compromise the representativeness of the overall results. In relation to sampling bias, there were issues in relation to the methods used to recruit participants, with the majority of studies (7 studies) using the Internet. This constituted a source of bias as participants with access to the Internet are generally thought to be younger (Katz-Schiavone, Levenson, & Ackerman, 2008). Additionally, although efforts were made within several studies to compare sample characteristics against the target population (for example, by using Census data) females and those with higher levels of educational attainment were generally over-represented within the included studies, which may have skewed the results to some extent. Many studies also lacked an objective and reliable measure of public

attitudes. Whilst 8 studies used tools that had been previously published and validated, 6 studies relied solely on self-developed scales by which to measure the public's attitudes. Although some studies made efforts to conduct a reliability analysis, others did not.

Descriptive Data Synthesis

General Perceptions

Some of the included studies reported on participant's overall perceptions of sexual offenders; however, the way in which this was defined and measured varied across studies, and the measures used to provide an overall picture of the public's attitude were different to those used to evaluate the role of demographic characteristics.

Chui et al. (2015) found that overall, 60.9% of participants agreed with the need for longer prison sentences in order to reduce sex crimes. Lengthy prison sentences were also advocated by participants in Levenson et al's. (2007) study, whereby participants felt that sexual offenders should serve an average of 38.8 years in prison (although the most frequent response was 99 years). Further, participants of this study endorsed misperceptions, believing that over half (67%) of offenders were sexually abused as children, and that 49% of sexual assaults against adults were committed by strangers. Participants also believed in high recidivism rates, with

74% of participants believing that sex offenders go on to commit another sexual offence. However, these variables were not considered in relation to demographic characteristics. When demographic characteristics were measured, only attitudes in terms of reported levels of fear and anger, and perceptions of community notification were considered. Hoing et al. (2015) reported similar results, finding that 21.8% of participants endorsed misperceptions surrounding the recidivism rates of child abusers and rapists, perceiving recidivism rates to be high. Further, 16.3% believed that sex offenders victimise strangers.

Overall, attitudes towards sex offenders, sex offender treatment and sex offender rehabilitation tended to be negative in all countries. In support of this, Rogers et al. (2011) found that overall, participants held moderately negative attitudes towards sex offenders, sex offender treatment and sex offender rehabilitation. Results reported by King (2016) suggest that participants were misinformed regarding sexual offences. Specifically, over 80% agreed that educating children surrounding 'stranger danger' was effective in preventing victimisation, and 63% agreed that almost all sex offenders will recidivate. In relation to sex offender management, 88% supported sex offender registration and 76% supported community notification. With regards to sentencing, 71% of participants agreed that prison sentences for sex offenders should

be longer; with a further 70% believing that repeat sex offenders should never be released. In terms of policy support, Comartin, Kernsmith, and Kernsmith (2009) found that participants overall were generally supportive of sex offender management policies, particularly in relation to where a convicted sex offender was allowed to live and work. Finally, Koon-Magnin (2015) found that overall participants believed that sex offenders reoffend at a higher rate compared to other offenders (48%), and that 46% of offenders would reoffend even if they received specialised treatment. In terms of policy support, 48% of participants suggested that they would support community notification procedures even in the absence of scientific evidence confirming their effectiveness.

Participant Age

The results reported in relation to the influence of participant age on public perceptions were varied, with the majority of studies reporting no significant association between age and attitudes. In Willis et al's. (2013) study, during preliminary analyses it was reported that there were no significant differences in public attitudes as a function of age; therefore it was excluded from the main analysis. This finding was supported by Shackley et al. (2014), who reported no significant differences in total CATSO scores in terms of participant age. Similarly, Wevodau et al. (2016) found that no age differences were observed in participant's scores on the 'Social

Isolation' and 'Capacity to Change' subscales of the CATSO. Comartin et al. (2009) found that participant age was not significant in terms of predicting policy support or support for severe punishment (life imprisonment or chemical castration).

In contrast, significant differences were reported by Weiner et al. (2014), who found that age was a significant covariate in predicting punitive attitudes. As a general trend, older participants judged sex offenders less negatively than younger participants in terms of total scores on their self-developed measure, and adherence to misperceptions about sexual offenders. Conversely, Brown (1999) found that participants under 50 years-of-age were significantly more likely to think that treatment was a good idea compared to those over 50 years-of-age. Similarly, those under 50 were significantly more likely to believe that treatment could 'sometimes' be effective, and that sex offenders could learn to control their behaviour. Those over 50 were more likely to believe that treatment could 'never' be effective and that sex offenders could not learn to control their behaviour. However, no significant age differences were found in terms of the action participants said they would take towards a treatment centre being located in their community or towards a convicted sex offender who had completed their sentence. Age was also significant in Chui et al's. (2015) study, with older participants advocating for longer prison sentences compared to

their younger counterparts. However, age was not reported to be significant when predicting beliefs in the rehabilitation of sex offenders.

Overall, these findings suggest that participant age is not predictive of negative perceptions towards sexual offenders. However, the majority of studies did not provide age ranges; therefore it cannot be determined whether similar cut-offs were used in differentiating between 'younger' and 'older' participants. Where age ranges were provided, the samples tended to be biased towards younger participants (e.g. Shackley et al., 2014; Weiner et al., 2014). Differences may also be attributed to the way in which participants were recruited (for example, on-line versus face-to-face), with on-line methods more likely to result in a younger overall sample.

Participant Gender

Although the results were varied, 6 of the 11 studies reporting on the influence of participant gender found females to be more negative in their perceptions. Willis et al. (2013) found that during preliminary analyses males showed less negative attitudes towards sexual offenders compared to females on all items (feelings towards released sex offenders, social distance and anticipatory behaviour, estimation of recidivism rate) except the CATSO, where no significant gender differences were found. Overall, males had

significantly more positive attitudes in terms of their feelings towards sexual offenders. Males also showed significantly less negative attitudes on the social distance and anticipatory behaviour subscale compared to females, with males indicating that they would be more willing to have a released sex offender as a neighbour, colleague, boss, acquaintance, close friend, partner in marriage/civil partnership or son-in law. Males also estimated the rate of sexual reoffending to be lower compared to females (57% versus 69% respectively). However, gender was excluded from the main analysis due to the small number of male participants in the sample.

Females were also found to be more punitive in results reported by Levenson et al. (2007), who found that gender differences were observed in terms of participants' feelings towards a released sex offender. Overall, females were more likely to experience a greater degree of fear if a sex offender lived in their area compared to males. However, there were no significant gender differences in terms of perceptions of notification fairness; feelings of anger if an offender lived nearby, with both groups experiencing high levels of anger; tolerance of a sex offender living in the community, with both groups being equally as intolerant; and beliefs that notification gives a false sense of security.

Similar findings were reported by Koon-Magnin (2015) who used the same measures of punitiveness. Specifically, it was reported that gender was significant when considering participants'

reported levels of fear if a sex offender moved into their neighbourhood. Overall, females reported higher levels of fear compared to males. However, no significant gender differences were observed in terms of participants' reported feelings of anger if a sex offender moved into their neighbourhood. There were also no gender differences in terms of participants' perceptions that community notification policies provide a false sense of security. None of the demographic variables considered were significantly related to support for community notification or support for policies without evidence of their effectiveness.

King (2016) found that when demographic characteristics were considered, the only predictive demographic variable (including gender, race, education, age, income, parental status, victimisation experiences and knowing a convicted sex offender) was participant gender, in that female participants held higher levels of punitiveness on their self-developed measure. However, gender was not a significant predictor of adherence to misperceptions surrounding sexual offenders.

Harper and Hogue (2015) observed gender differences in that females scored significantly higher (therefore expressing more negative views about sex offenders) on the PSO scale compared to males. The same pattern was also found for each of the subscales: 'sentencing and management', 'stereotype endorsement' and 'risk

perception'. However, although gender differences were observed in relation to stereotype endorsement, these were not significant.

Finally, Kernsmith et al. (2009) showed that females reported experiencing significantly higher levels of fear towards sex offenders compared to males. Females were also found to be significantly more fearful than males towards each of the individual types of offenders (including an incest offender, statutory rapist, juvenile offender, spousal rapist, paedophile, date rapist and a historical offender) included within the study. Overall, registration requirements were supported by the majority of participants; however females were generally more supportive of such sanctions compared to males. When examining the types of offences individually, only the juvenile offender, incest offender and historical offender were found to elicit any significant differences.

Chui et al. (2015) found that only gender had any significance in predicting punitive responses (assessed in terms of the length of prison sentence proposed for those convicted of a sexual offence). In contrast to the above findings, male participants were more likely to advocate longer prison sentences compared to females. In terms of stereotypical perceptions as measured by the 'Social Isolation' and 'Sexual Deviancy' subscales of the CATSO-C (Chui, Cheng, & Ong, 2014), the social isolation subscale was found to be significant in that longer prison sentences were recommended when

participants perceived sex offenders to be more socially isolated. However, females were more likely to believe that the sex offender register should be open to parents for inspection. Gender differences were not significant in predicting beliefs in the rehabilitation of sexual offenders.

Mixed findings were reported by Hoing et al, (2015). When gender differences were explicitly considered, no significant differences were observed in terms of the number of misperceptions endorsed about sexual offenders. However, in the total sample, females were found to hold more pessimistic attitudes towards sex offenders, sex offender treatment and sex offender rehabilitation. More specifically, females felt less convinced of offenders' capacity to change, and felt that sexual offenders were more dangerous compared to males. However, males felt that sexual offenders were more socially isolated and more sexually deviant compared to females. In relation to sex offender treatment, females were more likely to favour incapacitation, and were more pessimistic with regards to treatment effectiveness compared to males. However, males were more likely to favour mandatory treatment compared to females. With regards to rehabilitation, females were less likely to believe that offenders could be rehabilitated compared to males.

Rogers, Hirst, and Davis (2011) found no significant gender effects for any of the CATSO, ATTSO or PATSOR measures.

Similar results were reported by Wevodau et al., (2016), who found no gender differences in participant's scores on the 'Social Isolation' and 'Capacity to Change' subscales of the CATSO.

Overall, these results suggest that females hold more punitive attitudes towards those convicted of a sexual offence compared to males. However, females were largely overrepresented in the samples of included studies (e.g. Chui et al., 2015; Harper & Hogue, 2015; Kernsmith et al., 2009; Shackley et al., 2014; Weiner et al., 2014; Willis et al., 2013), which may have skewed the results to some extent towards increased punitiveness.

Educational Attainment

More consistency was observed when level of educational attainment was considered. Willis et al. (2013) reported a significant main effect of educational attainment when looking at total CATSO scores. Post-hoc analyses showed that lower educational attainment was associated with more negative attitudes. Specifically, those with some high school education showed significantly more negative attitudes compared with high-school graduates, who showed significantly more negative attitudes compared to college graduates. However, no significant differences were observed for the feeling scale, with all participants expressing equally negative feelings towards sexual offenders. A main effect of educational attainment

was also found for the social distance and anticipatory behaviour scale, with participants with lower educational attainment expressing more negative attitudes (i.e. wanting more social distance from sex offenders). Those with some high school education showed significantly more negative attitudes compared to college graduates and those with a post-college education. Education was also the only significant factor in participants' estimates of recidivism in the main analysis. Specifically, those with a lower level of educational attainment estimated recidivism rates as being higher, with those with some high school education estimating higher levels of recidivism compared those with a high school diploma, who estimated a higher rate than college graduates, who estimated a higher rate than those with a post-college education.

Similarly, Weiner et al. (2014) found that education was a significant covariate in terms of total CATSO scores. Specifically, participants who had completed some high school education were significantly more negative in their judgments compared to those who had completed high school, or held an undergraduate or postgraduate degree.

These findings were echoed by Shackley et al. (2014), with lower educational attainment being associated with more negative attitudes (i.e. higher total CATSO scores). Overall, participants who had completed some high school education were significantly more negative in their attitudes compared to both individuals who held an

undergraduate degree and those who held a postgraduate degree. Further, those who had completed high school held significantly more negative attitudes than those with a postgraduate degree. Also examined were predictors of adherence to misconceptions about sexual offences, and it was reported that education had the greatest impact, such that more advanced levels of education resulted in decreased adherence to misconceptions about sexual offences.

Finally, Comartin et al. (2009) reported that education was negatively correlated with policy support, such that participants with higher levels of educational attainment were less likely to support the implementation of sex offender management policies. Education was also found to predict support for severe punishment (for example, life imprisonment and chemical castration), whereby lower levels of educational attainment were associated with support for more severe punishments. However, the above results may be attributed to the fact that the participants in these studies generally held higher levels of educational attainment (e.g. Comartin et al., 2009; Shackley et al., 2014; Weiner et al., 2014; Willis et al., 2013), which may have biased the findings to some extent. Alternatively, the results may have been confounded by profession, rather than education *per se*, as greater educational attainment typically results in more professional roles.

In contrast, in King's (2016) study, education was not found to be significant in predicting punitiveness or misperceptions held towards sexual offenders. Finally, Wevodau et al. (2016) found that education was only significant for the 'Capacity to Change' subscale of the CATSO, with results suggesting that more negative views of sex offenders' capacity to change was significantly, yet modestly associated with lower levels of educational attainment.

Table 1: Summary of Results

Reference	Sample Size	Location	Attitude Measure and Description	Demographic Variables	Mean (SD)	Significance
Willis, Malinen, & Johnston (2013)	401	New Zealand	CATSO (cognitive component); Feelings towards released sex offenders (affective component), developed by the researchers for the study and measured on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 'very negative' to 'very positive'. Participants were asked how they generally felt about sex offenders; Social distance and anticipatory behaviour (behavioural component), developed by the researchers for the study and measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 'most definitely not' to 'most definitely'. Example question: "Would you have a sex offender released from prison as your neighbour?" "Would you employ a released sex offender?" (p.247); and Estimation of recidivism rate (0-100%).	Age (preliminary analyses) Gender (preliminary analyses) Education (main analysis)	<u>Age</u>: Not reported. <u>Gender</u>: *Feeling Scale* (scoring 1-7)*:* Males = 5.42 (1.25) Females = 5.81 (1.16) *Social Distance Scale* (scoring 1-5)*:* Males = 33.38 (8.79) Females = 36.44 (7.93) *Recidivism* (scoring 0-100%)*:* Males = 57.19 (24.50) Females = 69.46 (22.57) <u>Education</u>: *CATSO* (scoring 1-6)*:* Some high school = 61.53 High school graduate = 56.21 College graduates = 52.47 Post-college = 50.38	Not reported (n/s) $p < .01$ $p < .01$ $p < .001$ $p < .01$

					Social Distance Scale: Some high school = 40.68 High school graduate = 36.89 College graduates = 33.93 Post-college = 33.59	*p* <.01
					Feeling Scale: No significant differences.	Not reported (n/s)
					Recidivism: Some high school = 87.17 High school graduate = 71.26 College graduate = 61.39 Post-college = 52.15	*p* <.001
Chui, Cheng, & Ong (2015)	202	Hong Kong	CATSO-C – validated with a Chinese public sample (see Chui et al., 2014), measuring the endorsement of sex offender stereotypes including social isolation and deviancy. Responses are measured using a 6-point Likert-type scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'; Punitive attitudes, measured in terms of advocating longer prison sentences using a 3-point Likert-type scale ranging from 'disagree' to 'agree'; and Rehabilitative attitudes, measured in terms of whether participants	Age Gender Education	<u>Age</u>: *CATSO-C* (scoring 1-6)*:* Not reported *Punitive attitudes* (scoring 1-3)*:* Not reported *Rehabilitative attitudes* (scoring 1-3*:* Not reported <u>Gender</u>: *CATSO-C:* Not reported	*p* <.05 Not reported (n/s) Not reported (n/s) *p* <.05

			thoughts that rehabilitating sex offenders was a waste of time using a 3-point Likert-type scale ranging from 'disagree' to 'agree'.		*Punitive attitudes:* Not reported *Rehabilitative attitudes:* Not reported <u>Education</u>: *CATSO-C:* Not reported *Punitive attitudes:* Not reported *Rehabilitative attitudes:* Not reported	*p* <.05 Not reported (n/s) Not reported (n/s) Not reported (n/s) Not reported (n/s)
Levenson, Brannon, Fortney, & Baker (2007)	193	United States	Self-developed questionnaire measuring perceptions of sex offenders (e.g. fear felt if a sex offender lived in their area, re-offence rates) and perceptions of sex offender management policies (e.g. notification fairness, notification giving a false sense of security)	Gender	*Fear felt if an offender in your area* (scoring 1-10)*:* Males = 6.3 Females = 8.3 *Agreement with community notification laws* (scoring 1-5)*:* Males = 2.7 Females = 3.0 *Overall recidivism estimate* (scoring 0-100%): 74% (20.2) *Child molesters recidivism estimate* (scoring 0-100%)*:*	*p* <.001 *p* <.05 n/a n/a

					76% (20.6) *Rapist recidivism estimate* (scoring 0-100%)*:* 74% (21.7)	n/a
Hoing, Petrina, Duke, Völlm, & Vogelvang (2016)	1,874	United Kingdom, Ireland, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Spain, Latvia, Bulgaria and Hungary	CATSO - In this study, a neutral mid-point answer (4; 'undecided') was added so not to force attitude formation; ATTSO; PATSOR; and Support for Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA) – example question: "If a friend of mine would become a CoSA volunteer I would: agree/disapprove/don't know" (p.16).	Gender	<u>CATSO</u> (scoring 1-7): *Social isolation:* Males = 3.92 (1.04) Females = 3.7 (1.03) *Capacity to change:* Males = 4.16 (1.21) Females = 4.30 (1.13) *Severity and dangerousness:* Males = 2.98 (1.17) Females = 2.56 (1.07) *Sexual deviancy:* Males = 4.01 (1.17) Females = 3.85 (1.17) <u>ATTSO</u> (scoring 1-5): *Incapacitation:* Males = 2.74 (0.80) Females = 2.84 (0.78) *Effectiveness of treatment:* Males = 3.08 (0.74) Females = 2.94 (0.72)	*p* <.001 *p* <.01 *p* <.001 *p* <.001 *p* <.001 *p* <.001

					Mandatory treatment: Males = 3.94 (0.87) Females = 4.12 (0.83) <u>PATSOR</u> (scoring 1-5): *Rehabilitation:* Males = 3.24 (0.64) Females = 3.38 (0.64) <u>Support for CoSA</u> (scoring 0-5): Males = 1.99 (1.77) Females = 2.09 (1.74)	*p* <.001 *p* <.001 *p* =.20
Weiner, Shackley, Willis, & Day (2014)	552	Australia	CATSO; and Ten self-developed 'judgment items' towards a hypothetical sex offender (where crime seriousness and risk of re-offence were manipulated), his treatment and reintegration back into the community. Responses were measured on a 6-point Likert-type scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'.	Age Gender Education	Not reported Not reported *CATSO*: Some high school = 44.04 (8.10) High school = 35.61 (9.40) Undergraduate degree = 35.72 (8.55) Postgraduate degree = 35.32 (8.50)	*p* <.001 Not reported (n/s) *p* <.001
Rogers, Hirst, & Davies (2011)	235	United Kingdom	CATSO; ATTSO; and PATSOR	Gender	<u>CATSO</u> (scoring 1-6): *Social Isolation*: Males = 2.79 (0.76) Females = 2.68 (0.74) *Capacity to Change*:	Not reported (n/s)

					Males = 3.30 (1.06) Females = 3.30 (1.09) *Deviancy*: Males = 3.21 (0.79) Females = 3.08 (0.74) <u>ATTSO</u> (scoring 1-5): *Incapacitation*: Males = 2.79 (0.79) Females = 2.75 (0.79) *Effectiveness of Treatment*: Males = 3.85 (0.76) Females = 3.81 (0.82) *Mandatory Treatment*: Males = 3.66 (0.71) Females = 3.81 (0.76) <u>PATSOR</u> (scoring 1-5): *Rehabilitation*: Males = 2.95 (0.83) Females = 2.86 (0.76)	Not reported (n/s) Not reported (n/s)
Shackley, Weiner, Day, & Willis (2014)	552	Australia	CATSO	Age Education	<u>Age</u>: *CATSO:* 18-27 = 53.14 (9.94) 28-46 = 52.20 (9.91) 47-72 = 54.26 (10.25) <u>Education</u>: *CATSO*:	*p* = .62 (n/s) *p* = .001

					Some high school = 58.69 (12.04) High school = 54.10 (10.11) Undergraduate degree = 52.73 (9.14) Postgraduate degree = 50.43 (11.14)	
King (2016)	500	United States	Self-developed Perceptions About Sex Offences scale (PASO), a 12-item scale measuring misconceptions (e.g. sex crime rates, victim-offender relationship, recidivism and treatment) and punitiveness (opinions about harsh prison sentences, registration, community notification, electronic monitoring and residence restrictions). Responses were measured using a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'. Higher scores indicate more misinformed, punitive perceptions.	Age Gender Education	<u>Age</u>: *Punitiveness:* Not reported *Misconceptions:* Not reported <u>Gender</u>: *Punitiveness:* Not reported *Misconceptions:* Not reported <u>Education</u>: *Punitiveness:* Not reported *Misconceptions:* Not reported Recidivism: 63% (total sample)	Not reported (n/s) Not reported (n/s) *p* <.01 Not reported (n/s) Not reported (n/s) *p* <.01 n/a

Comartin, Kernsmith, & Kernsmith (2009)	703	United States	Self-developed items assessing support for sex offender sanctions (community notification, work and residency restrictions, monitoring or restricting an offender's movements, and severe sanctions [castration and life imprisonment]). Responses are measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'.	Age Education	<u>Age</u>: *Policy support:* Not reported *Support for severe policies:* Not reported <u>Education</u>: *Policy support:* Not reported *Support for severe policies:* Not reported	Not reported (n/s) Not reported (n/s) *p* <.001 *p* <.001
Koon-Magnin (2015)	188	United States	Self-developed survey measuring beliefs and perceptions about sex offenders and sex crimes, similar to Levenson et al. (2007). Participants were asked questions related to risk (in terms of the level of anger and fear felt if a sex offender moved into their neighbourhood, and beliefs that sex offender notification provides a false sense of security), measured on a 10-point Likert-type scale ranging from 'not at all' to 'extremely'; support for community notification ('yes' or 'no' responses); and support for community notification policies in the absence of scientific evidence, using a Likert-type scale ranging from 1-5.	Gender	*Fear felt if an offender in your area* (scoring 1-10)*:* Males = 6.25 (3.1) Females = 8.11 (2.61) *Anger felt if an offender in your area* (scoring 1-10): Males = 7.64 (2.52) Females = 8.21 (2.38) *Community notification providing a false sense of security*: Males = 6.34 (2.46) Females = 6.61 (2.60) *Support for community notification:*	*p* <.05 Not reported (n/s) Not reported (n/s)

					Males = 0.96 (0.20) Females = 0.91 (0.29) *Support in the absence of effectiveness*: Males = 3.85 (1.31) Females = 3.75 (1.30)	Not reported (n/s) Not reported (n/s)
Harper & Hogue (2015)	400	United Kingdom	Perceptions of Sex Offenders (PSO) scale measuring sentencing and management, stereotype endorsement, and risk perception. Responses are measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale.	Gender	PSO (scoring 1-5): *Overall scores*: Males = 33.04 Females = 38.69 *Sentencing and Management:* Not reported. *Stereotype Endorsement*: Not reported. *Risk Perception*: Not reported.	*p* <.01 *p* <.05 *p* = .73 (n/s) *p* <.001
Kernsmith, Craun, & Foster (2009)	322	United States	Two self-developed scales measuring attitudes towards sex offenders. The first was a fear scale and included 7 questions asking participants to rate how afraid they would be if a person committing a certain sexual offence were living in their neighbourhood. Responses for this scale were measured on a 4-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 ('very afraid') to	Gender	*Fear (overall)*: Not reported. *Fear (offence-specific)*: Not reported. *Registration Requirements (overall)*: Not reported.	*p* <.001 *p* <.001 (for each offence type). *p* <.001

			4 ('not at all afraid'). Seven additional questions asked participants to rate how strongly they agreed that each of the 7 offender types should be subject to registration requirements. Responses were measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 ('strongly disagree') to 5 ('strongly agree').		*Registration Requirements (offence-specific)*: *Incest* = not reported *Juvenile Offender* = not reported *Historical Offence* = not reported *Fear x Registration Support:* Not Reported	p <.001 p <.001 p <.001 p = .876 (n/s)
Brown (1999)	312	United Kingdom	Self-developed questionnaire measuring stereotypes towards sex offenders and attitudes towards their punishment, in addition to attitudes towards their treatment and anticipatory behaviour.	Age	*Treatment Support*: Not reported. *Treatment Effectiveness*: Not reported. *Behaviour Control*: Not reported. *Anticipatory Behaviour*: Not reported.	p < .01 p < .01 p < .05 Not reported (n/s)
Wevodau, Cramer, Gemberling, & Clark (2016)	199	United States	'Social Isolation' and 'Capacity to Change' subscales of the CATSO	Age Gender Education	Age: *Social Isolation:* Not reported. *Capacity to Change*: Not reported.	Not reported (n/s) Not reported (n/s)

		Gender: *Social Isolation:* Not reported. *Capacity to Change*: Not reported. Education: *Social Isolation:* Not reported. *Capacity to Change*: Not reported.	Not reported (n/s) Not reported (n/s) Not reported (n/s) *p* <.05

Discussion

The main aim of this systematic review was to examine the complexity of public attitudes towards those convicted of a sexual offence, through specifically comparing the demographic variables of age, gender and educational attainment as predictors of these attitudes. A total of 14 studies were systematically reviewed. The quality of the studies varied, as did the way in which attitudes were defined and measured, and the findings in relation to the influence of demographic variables as predictors of attitudes towards sex offenders.

Summary of Findings

Overall, the perceptions of participants towards sex offenders were inherently negative. Participants of the included studies regularly endorsed misperceptions, including beliefs about high recidivism rates, and supported restrictive management policies and long prison sentences. Participants also generally held negative attitudes towards sex offender treatment and its effectiveness. The tendency for sex offenders to be considered collectively as dangerous predators could explain these findings, something that is unhelpfully perpetuated by sensationalised media reports of

infrequent, high-profile cases, and political responses to resulting public outcry. As a result, sex offenders are homogenously labelled as dangerous recidivists who have no control over their behaviour.

Where demographic characteristics were concerned, the majority of studies assessing attitude differences in terms of participant age found no significant differences, suggesting that participant age is not predictive of attitudes towards sexual offenders. Where significant differences were identified, however, the results were mixed. One study found that older participants were more likely to advocate longer prison sentences compared to younger participants, whereas another reported that younger participants were more likely to support sex offender treatment and believe in its effectiveness. However, this difference could be attributable to the fact that 'attitudes' were measured in different ways in these studies. Further, the majority of the included studies only provided the mean age of participants and did not provide any descriptive information regarding the age categories used or how 'younger' participants were differentiated from 'older' participants; therefore it is unclear whether age was measured consistently across studies.

In terms of participant gender, the results were again mixed; however, studies overall seemed to find that females held more punitive attitudes towards sex offenders compared to males. Specifically, significant gender differences were observed in terms

of participant's overall perceptions of sexual offenders, beliefs surrounding their capacity to change and perceived levels of dangerousness, their beliefs in the effectiveness of sex offender treatment, their feelings (for example, reported levels of fear), anticipatory behaviour, and increased punitiveness in terms of sentencing and policy support. Nevertheless, one study found males to be more punitive in terms of recommended prison sentences, and another found that males were more likely to recommend mandatory treatment compared to females. Other studies reported no significant gender differences in terms of overall perceptions of sex offenders, beliefs about sex offender rehabilitation, perceptions of notification fairness and the endorsement of misperceptions. The inconsistency of these findings means that it is difficult to draw firm conclusions regarding the influence of participant gender on attitudes towards sex offenders. However, this could be due to differences in the way in which attitudes were measured, or due to sampling issues in the fact that females were generally over-represented. More consistent results may have been observed if attitudes were measured in the same way across studies and a more balanced sample of participants had been obtained.

The only consistent demographic characteristic across studies was the effect of level of educational attainment, where regardless of the way in which attitudes were measured, higher

levels of educational attainment were associated with more positive attitudes and less support for sex offender management polices. Only one study reported no significant differences in terms of educational attainment. In explaining these findings, it could be that individuals with higher levels of educational attainment generally endorse fewer stereotypes, or take their information from more credible sources than those with lower levels of educational attainment (Willis et al., 2013). Alternatively, the findings could be explained by the fact that participants generally held higher levels of educational attainment, which may have biased the results in this domain towards more optimistic attitudes.

Differences were also observed according to the dimension of public attitudes being considered (for example, cognitive, behavioural or affective). For example, Willis et al. (2013) found that females held more punitive attitudes on the feeling (affective) and social distance (behaviour) scales, but not the CATSO scale, which looks at cognitions and stereotypical beliefs. Similarly, studies that evaluated the affective and behavioural dimensions of attitudes, such as fear at an offender living nearby, and agreement with community protection policies found that females tended to endorse more negative attitudes (e.g. Kernsmith et al., 2009; Levenson et al., 2007). These findings highlight the complexity of evaluating attitudes towards sex offenders, and support the need

for researchers to consider all attitudinal dimensions in order to gain a fuller and more comprehensive understanding.

The interactions between combinations of demographic factors on attitudes towards sexual offenders were not considered within any of the included studies; however, it is possible that such effects do exist. For example, it is possible that gender and educational attainment may interact, such that females with lower levels of educational attainment have more negative attitudes compared to either variable studied alone. It would also be interesting to consider whether higher levels of educational attainment mediate negative attitudes held by females or those who are younger in age.

Implications

The negative perceptions of the public could have important implications for the successful rehabilitation of those convicted of a sexual offence. In line with arguments proposed by existing studies (e.g. Harper, Hogue, & Bartels, 2017), negative attitudes, and the political responses they influence, could contribute to a range of disadvantages for sexual offenders in terms of compromising successful community re-entry and rehabilitation. This is inconsistent with the tenets of the Integrated Theory of Desistance

from Sexual Offending (ITDSO; Göbbels, Ward, & Willis, 2012), which places emphasis on the process of community re-entry and the external environment as moderating this through creating a rehabilitation-reinforcing environment (Harper et al., 2017). Further, Willis et al. (2010) emphasised the need for attitudes to be addressed in terms of community re-entry. Research has shown that if convicted sex offenders are able to access stable housing and have opportunities for employment, the likelihood of sexual recidivism is reduced (e.g. Hanson & Morton-Bourgon, 2005; Willis et al., 2010). However, restrictive management policies driven by the negative views of the public are not conductive to this, and act as a barrier towards successful re-entry.

The findings from this review also have implications for intervention efforts aimed at improving the negative attitudes of the public in order to promote the rehabilitation and successful community re-entry of those convicted of a sexual offence. Specifically, understanding the complexity of public attitudes and which demographic groups are more disposed to negative attitudes could help inform the development of training programmes in terms of where training efforts need to be targeted. The mixed findings of this review suggest that a broad approach should be adopted when planning (e.g. Willis et al., 2013), though making sure to include females and those with lower levels of educational

attainment. For the public, having a realistic awareness of who commits sexual offences could help better achieve the goal of public protection (Fortney et al., 2007) through re-directing management policies and intervention efforts towards offenders who are more 'risky', rather than adopting a 'one-size-fits-all' approach to sex offender management.

Limitations of the Reviewed Studies

There are several methodological limitations to note, which compromised the quality of studies, and hence the overall quality of this review. The inconsistency in the way in which attitudes were defined and measured across studies presents an issue in relation to the robustness of the findings and the conclusions that can be drawn in terms of demographic predictors of punitive attitudes. Whilst some studies attempted to analyse attitudes in terms of participant's cognitive, affective and behavioural responses, others focussed solely on one domain (Breckler, 1984). The majority of studies included within this review mainly considered the cognitive component, or a participant's stereotypical views of offenders, which may provide a biased view of attitudes and neglects other, important attitudinal components that may also be appropriate targets for intervention. Harper and colleagues (Harper & Hogue, 2015; Harper et al., 2017) argued that in light of most studies

focussing on stereotypical views, what they actually consider are the participant's perceptions of sexual offenders, rather than attitudes *per se*. There is therefore a need for future studies to consider attitudes along all three dimensions to promote consistency and enable a more comprehensive understanding to be obtained.

Further, studies generally provided an overall picture of attitudes, for example, through reporting total CATSO scores, without indicating whether there were any differences within the sub-scales to allow a more accurate understanding of public attitudes to be obtained and intervention efforts to be more directly targeted. Whilst this is still informative, studies are at risk of providing a descriptive picture of attitudes, rather than highlighting areas in which attitudes are more negative than others. Similarly, a number of studies developed their own measures for assessing perceptions of sexual offenders, rather than relying on previously established tools. For example, some studies (e.g. Koon-Magnin, 2015; Levenson et al., 2007) measured perceptions of sex offender management policies and support for these policies as indicators of negative attitudes. Whilst this is interesting, they do not constitute empirically validated measures of the public's attitudes towards sex offenders, despite frequently being labelled as such (Harper et al., 2017).

The majority of studies treated sex offenders as a homogenous group, without taking into consideration that different categories of sexual offence may be perceived more or less negatively than another. For example, within Kernsmith et al's. (2009) study, participants reported that they would be most afraid of paedophiles, with incest (a family member offending against a child) being reported as the second most feared offence and rape being reported as the least feared offence. Having a broader understanding of whether certain sex offender types elicit more negative attitudes could potentially help highlight further misperceptions and better guide intervention and management efforts. For example, Challinor and Duff (2017) have recently reported that rapists were perceived as the 'most dangerous' offenders, whilst voyeurs were perceived as the 'least dangerous' in a sample of members of the public and professionals working with this population. These results suggest that it may be worthwhile further investigating attitudes towards specific categories of sexual offender, in order to obtain a greater understanding of the complexity of these attitudes.

Although in several cases efforts were made to obtain a representative sample, females were generally over-represented within the included studies, as were those with higher levels of educational attainment. This could have biased the results to some

degree, given that females typically were shown to hold more negative attitudes (although those with higher levels of educational attainment generally endorsed more positive attitudes). It is therefore unclear whether similar results would have been obtained in a more representative sample. Further, the majority of included studies were of cross-sectional design and as such only considered attitudes at one point in time. This could have introduced bias within the findings, particularly since one study (Levenson et al., 2007) reported that six months prior to data collection, two highly publicised cases of child abduction and murder local to the area were reported and frequently discussed within the media, which could have influenced attitudes to some degree. More accurate and reliable conclusions could have been drawn if attitudes were assessed at several time points. Finally, the majority of included studies were conducted in Western societies, with the exception of Chui et al., (2015); therefore it is unclear whether similar demographic differences in terms of age, gender and educational attainment would be found in non-western public samples.

Limitations of the Review

The present review has a number of limitations. Incorporating a broad definition of 'attitudes' and measures by which to identify such was beneficial in terms of highlighting the complexity of public

attitudes and the need for consistency within future research in considering all dimensions of attitudes. Including a narrower definition may have compromised this and led to a biased and distorted picture of attitudes towards sex offenders being obtained. However, the inclusion of such a broad definition also presented some difficulties in that it was difficult for comparisons to be made between demographic characteristics. It was also difficult to establish relationships between demographic characteristics and punitive attitudes, given that studies measured attitudes in inconsistent ways.

Further, the review only considered demographic characteristics in relation to age, gender and educational attainment. Other areas of investigation have included ethnicity, victimisation experiences, parental status and newspaper readership, thus the review provides a limited perspective of demographic differences and therefore only somewhat informs intervention targets. In order for this to be more robust, a wider range of demographic characteristics needs to be considered. The decision to focus solely on attitudes towards adult male sexual offenders meant that attitudes towards juvenile and female offenders were not captured; however, the research literature is generally limited with regards to studies that focus specifically on this population.

The search syntax ensured that the international literature was not unintentionally omitted on the basis of differences in terminology. However, the majority of included studies were from Western countries, including research from Australia, New Zealand, the United States and the United Kingdom. It is unclear whether the lack of studies from other, non-Western countries reflected a general lack of relevant literature on this topic from other parts of the world, or whether limitations in the electronic databases included within this review meant that other studies were overlooked.

Conclusion

The results here highlight the complexity of public attitudes towards those convicted of sexual offences, and it seems that negative attitudes towards sex offenders permeate across demographic groups. Specific interventions to educate the public are therefore advocated, in order to dispel some of the myths surrounding those convicted of sexual offences and provide the public with more accurate information. Such interventions could help promote rehabilitation and desistance from sexual offending through facilitating societal reintegration. However, due to the inconsistency of the findings and the methods utilised to assess public attitudes, no clear conclusions can be drawn regarding the

influence of demographics on responses to those convicted of sex crimes. Also highlighted are the limitations of current efforts to understand the nature of public attitudes towards sex offenders and the need for further, high quality research in this area, in particular relating to the way in which attitudes are measured and obtaining a representative public sample. Despite the limitations, it is believed that this review adds to the current understanding of public attitudes towards those convicted of a sexual offence, and constitutes an important step towards understanding the complexity of these attitudes.



Chapter Three:

The Offence Patterns of Repeat Sexual Offenders: An Examination of Escalation, De-Escalation and Stability Across Sexual Offence Categories

Abstract

In this exploratory piece of research, the offence patterns of 140 repeat sexual offenders were examined to determine whether such individuals escalate, de-escalate or remain stable over time. Data were collected for five offence categories: Voyeurism; Indecent Exposure; Non-penetrative Sexual Assault; Penetrative Sexual Assault and Rape, and were analysed using Transition Matrices. An overall pattern of stability was observed, that is, offenders tended to commit the same offence from one crime to the next. This was particularly apparent for the offence of Rape. However, when looking at individuals who changed their behaviour, the majority of offenders escalated, with their behaviours becoming more serious over time. This finding was consistent across all offence categories. Subsequent analyses were conducted in order to determine whether individuals committing any particular offence category were more likely to escalate. Chi-square analyses did not reveal any significant findings. Despite this, the initial findings could have implications for best practice in the risk assessment and treatment of repeat sexual offenders within the Prison Service. Directions for future research are also discussed.

Introduction

Sexual offending is a serious social problem, with victims suffering both physical and psychological effects. Official statistics on the prevalence of such crimes suggest that between 2009 and 2012 in England and Wales, 2.5% of females (*n* = 404,000) stated that they had been victims of a sexual offence (including attempts) in the previous 12 months (Ministry of Justice; MoJ, 2013). The nature and breadth of the sexual offences reported ranged from the least serious offences of Indecent Exposure and unwanted sexual touching, through to Rape and Penetrative Sexual Assault. Within this, it was estimated that approximately 0.5% of females were the victims of the most serious sexual offences, with a further 0.5% falling victim to these serious offences in the previous 12 months (MoJ, 2013). Between 2011 and 2012, Rape and Sexual Assault offences accounted for 71% of all sexual offences recorded by the police, with the majority of other crimes comprising Voyeurism, Indecent Exposure, and sexual activity with minors (MoJ, 2013a). However, official statistics are limited in that victims of sexual offences may not always report these crimes, and not all cases will reach the stage of a conviction or even be recorded by the police; therefore statistics may significantly underestimate the nature and prevalence of sexual offences in England and Wales.

Compared to other categories of offender, recidivism studies (e.g. Craig, Thornton, Beech, & Browne, 2007; Hanson & Bussière, 1998) generally report low levels of recidivism among those committing sexual offences. Nevertheless, a primary concern of the public is the perceived 'dangerousness' of sexual offenders and the likelihood of recidivism, which has influenced restrictive policies that negatively impact upon the successful rehabilitation of these individuals. It would therefore be important to establish the offence patterns of the small proportion of those who do recidivate to determine whether the public's beliefs are justified. However, due to the aforementioned limitations, the potentially unknown prevalence of sexual offending highlights a significant gap in our knowledge and understanding of these individuals.

The Stability Versus Versatility of Sexual Offending

A portion of the research on sexual offending has considered the offence patterns of sexual recidivists, seeing whether these individuals change aspects of their behaviour during subsequent offences. Research within this area has typically focused on the stability versus versatility of these patterns. The first component of this debate relates to the range of criminal activities committed by sexual offenders, and whether or not these individuals tend to

specialise in sex crimes, or commit a variety of different offences. This idea raises the question of whether or not it is misleading to label individuals who have committed a sexual offence as a 'sex offender' when in fact their criminal repertoire consists of a variety of other offence types (Lussier, Deslauriers-Varin, Mathesius, & Prolux, 2015), particularly considering the stigma and consequences associated with sexual offences. For example, research utilising DNA databases has shown that many sexual offenders commit a range of criminal activities before committing their first sexual offence, with burglary being highlighted as a specific 'gateway' offence (Stevens, 2001). However, such studies are commonly retrospective in nature, examining the offence histories of current sexual offenders. This does not conclusively imply a pattern of escalation from burglary to sex crimes, but rather could reflect more opportunistic change; therefore more prospective studies are warranted in order for more reliable conclusions to be drawn.

The second component is associated with the nature of the sex crimes committed. Research focuses on whether or not persistent sexual offenders tend to repeat the same sex crimes across offences, and this has been examined using a variety of indicators. In this respect, versatility has also been termed 'crossover offending', or 'Sexual Polymorphism', which refers to *"crime-switching patterns along several dimensions such as victim's age,*

gender, relationship to the offender, and nature of the acts committed by the offender" (Lussier, Leclerc, Healey, & Prolux, 2008, p.98).

It has been suggested that when looking closely at certain aspects of a sexual offence, sexual offenders may or may not evidence stability in one, or all dimensions (Hewitt & Beauregard, 2014). For example, Guay, Prolux, Cusson, and Ouimet (2001) found that sexual offenders' victim choice remained relatively stable across offences in terms of the victim's age, gender and the victim-offender relationship. This was especially true when looking at males who target stranger-child and stranger-female victims. However, these findings are limited due to the small number of offenders included in the study, which decreased further as more offences were considered in the analysis. This sampling issue may fail to capture the true picture of sexual offence patterns, and as such the results may be unreliable. Further, the authors highlighted the importance of situational context and how this makes it difficult to compare victim selection patterns. For example, when considering child abuse, if a victim is available within the family, this allows the offender to continue his behaviour for a long period of time, thereby reducing his need to find another victim (Guay et al., 2001).

Soothill, Francis, Sanderson, and Ackerley (2000) reported similar findings, observing a high degree of stability in victim choice

for those who committed an indecent assault on a male. When versatility has been considered specifically in relation to victim characteristics, this has been termed 'victim-choice polymorphia'; however, these results suggest that victim choice remains relatively stable across sexual offences. Nevertheless, such research highlights the importance of profiling victim characteristics, in addition to those of the offender.

In an expansion from previous studies, Lussier et al. (2008) investigated patterns of versatility and specialisation in sexual offenders by examining the level of physical force used and the sexual acts committed, as well as the offender's victim choice. Results showed evidence of stability with regards to victim gender and the level of physical force used by the offender, especially for those who committed hands-on offences.

Evidence of polymorphism was also observed in this sample, as offenders tended to switch between offences with regards to the victim's age and the sexual acts committed. Specifically, offenders who targeted children and those who targeted adults both switched and targeted adolescents, suggesting that this victim group may be viewed as a surrogate choice for both types of offenders, or that victims in this case contain examples of both preferred victim types and have specific developmental vulnerabilities. With regards to sexual acts, offenders who began by touching or masturbating their

victim were likely to perform penetration with subsequent victims, thus also indicating a level of escalation.

Consistent with Soothill et al's. (2000) hypothesis, these results indicate clear specialisation for some aspects of sexual offending. At the opposite end of the continuum, the victim's age and the level of sexual intrusiveness appeared to vary across crime transitions. However, these results were based on a small sample of Canadian prisoners, which may not be representative of sexual offenders as a whole. Further, the cross-sectional design of the study only captures a snapshot of the criminal activity of sexual offenders. Since some offenders will eventually re-offend, a more longitudinal, prospective design may have provided more reliable findings.

Combining both aspects of the specialisation-versatility debate, Howard, Barnett, and Mann (2013) examined the reoffending and sexual histories of a large, national dataset of sexual offenders in England and Wales. Specialisation was apparent within sexual offending, whereby non-contact offenders were frequently specialists; however, contact offenders only had a moderate tendency to specialise. In particular, 85% of individuals accessing indecent images were defined as sexual specialists using the threshold that 50% or more of their offences were sexual in nature (e.g. Miethe, Olsen, & Mitchell, 2006), and 69% had only sexual

offences within their criminal histories. Evidence of versatility was found in those who had committed offences against adults, whereby a history of non-sexual violent offending was more common than being a specialist sexual offender, compared to those who had offended against children. However, this study is limited in that rates of reoffending were only followed-up for a period of less than 5 years, as it can take time for sexual offences to come to the attention of authorities and for them to be tried in Court. Further, official criminal records were used as the sole source of information, which may have led to an over-estimation of the levels of specialisation in sexual offending (Howard et al., 2013). In summary, these studies provide little reason to believe that sexual offenders are a highly specialist group.

More recently, Lussier et al., (2015) examined the offending pathways of 89 polymorphic sex offenders in terms of their pre-crime patterns and *modus operandi*. Results revealed that most sex crimes fell into two categories; coercive (17.9%), characterised by expressive violence, humiliation of the victim, coercive behavioural strategies and sexually intrusive sexual acts (e.g. rape, sexual assault); and non-coercive (82.1%), where only a few crime events were characterised by the use of such behaviours. Offenders whose crime events fell into either the coercive or non-coercive pathway were labelled specialists, whereas those whose crimes fell into both

categories were classified as versatile. Overall, 84.3% were classed as specialists only, whereas only 15.7% were classed as versatile. A small group of versatile offenders (*n*=12), escalated in that their non-coercive crimes were followed by coercive crimes. In contrast, only two participants in this sample de-escalated and followed a coercive offence with a non-coercive offence. Most versatile offenders therefore escalated in terms of their use of violence.

The question of whether individuals specialise in offending is of particular importance for sexual offenders, as restrictive risk-management procedures are frequently applied with this group. This is in part due to the common public assumption that sexual offenders are fixated, persistent and dangerous individuals whose offending escalates in terms of harmfulness over time (Zimring, 2004). However, this has frequently been proven to be incorrect when compared to recidivism data (e.g. Hanson & Morton-Bourgon, 2005; Sample & Bray 2003, 2006). Policies based on inaccurate information may serve to increase the risk of sexual reoffending by preventing successful community reintegration. Further, consideration should also be given to whether treatment programmes should be offence specific. If the goals of treatment programs offered to versatile offenders are too specific, then they may have a limited impact on these individuals' criminal careers over time. Conversely, if treatment goals for specialised offenders

are too general, such programs will have a limited impact on preventing specific forms of offending (Lussier et al., 2015).

Offence Escalation

One way of studying criminal careers is to measure offence escalation, which refers to the tendency for an offender to commit offences of increased seriousness as their criminal career progresses (Kyvsgaard, 2003). There is an assumption among the public that offenders tend to escalate in seriousness over the course of their criminal careers, and this underpins many criminal justice policies. However, although much interest has been directed towards criminal career patterns, research on offence escalation is underdeveloped.

In one of the first reviews of criminal escalation, Blumstein, Cohen, Roth, and Visher (1986) found evidence of escalation amongst juvenile offenders, whereas offences committed by adults were more commonly characterised by de-escalation (the tendency to move to less serious offences). More recent research generally echoes these findings. Piquero, Farrington, and Blumstein (2003) found evidence of escalation during adolescence, before offence patterns became stable in early adulthood, followed by a period of de-escalation. Further, Liu, Francis, and Soothill (2011) found that de-escalation was associated with the aging process, whereby crime seriousness reduced as offenders grew older. They also found that

escalation was associated with greater conviction occasions, such that offences increased in seriousness in line with the number of court appearances. These researchers therefore proposed two types of escalation processes: escalation associated with experience of the Criminal Justice System (CJS); and escalation associated with age and maturation (Liu et al., 2011). Francis and Liu (2010) found that the majority (92%) of individuals in their sample of general offenders committed offences with a relatively low and stable level of crime seriousness. However, a small number (4%) of highly diverse offenders displayed high levels of crime seriousness, characterised by early offending that escalated rapidly at a young age. The remaining 4% were classified as 'de-escalators'.

Escalation in Sexual Offending: Current Research

The question of whether sexual offenders will escalate in the severity of their behaviours remains an under-researched area. One of the few studies to investigate escalation in repeat sexual offenders was conducted by Hewitt and Beauregard (2014). The authors researched escalation, which they defined as an increase in the severity of the crime over time, or de-escalation from one victim to the next within a group of 72 repeat stranger-victim sexual offenders. This was studied in relation to the sexually intrusive acts committed, (including: exhibitionism and other non-coital

behaviours; caressing/rubbing or sexual touching of breasts or other sexual body parts; masturbation of the victim; oral sex; or vaginal intercourse with fingers/penis/objects and sodomy with fingers/penis/objects), and the level of physical force used.

Results were examined using transition matrices, and showed that with regards to sexually intrusive behaviours, there was much evidence of versatility. For example, 55% of those who sexually contacted their first victim repeated this behaviour with their subsequent victim. Of those who changed their behaviour, 5% escalated to oral sex and 35% escalated to penetration. In contrast, 5% de-escalated to perform non-contact offences. A similar trend was observed for the second crime transition. Evidence of stability was, however, observed for acts considered to be more sexually intrusive such as masturbation of the victim, oral sex and penetration, with findings mostly being consistent across crime transitions. With regards to the level of physical force, findings were consistent with Lussier et al. (2008), in that a level of stability was observed. For example, 86% of offenders who used no force against their first victim did not use force with their second victim. This remained consistent across crime transitions. Versatility was more apparent for those using minimum force, whereby 21% in the first transition escalated to using more force than necessary, whereas 14% de-escalated to using no force.

When looking at overall categorisations, 76% of offenders were classified as stable in the first crime transition in that the same amount of force was displayed against their second victim as their first victim. Again, this remained consistent for the remaining crime transitions. However, this study is again limited by a small sample size. Further, only 47 offenders within the sample had committed more than three sexual offences, which therefore limits the generalisability of the findings and the conclusions that can be drawn. However, recidivism rates for sexual offences are generally reported to be low; therefore it can be expected that participant numbers decrease as more crimes are considered. As data for the study were collected from individuals convicted of a sexual offence between the years of 1995 and 2004, it is possible that some of these offenders have since been released and re-convicted of another sexual crime. It is unknown whether or not these offenders continued to remain consistent, or whether they changed their offending behaviour (Hewitt & Beauregard, 2014). Finally, this study used participants from a correctional facility in Canada; therefore it is unknown whether the same effects would be observed in a sample of sexual offenders in the United Kingdom (UK).

Leclerc, Lussier, and Deslauriers-Varin (2015) built upon Lussier et al's. (2008) study, incorporating a wider range of strategies used by the offender and the sexual behaviours performed during the

commission of their offences. Offenders were classified as escalators, de-escalators, or specialists based on this information. Results of transition matrices showed that seduction or the use of physical violence were generally the norm, indicating a degree of specialisation in *modus operandi*. When looking at other strategies, versatility was more noticeable, with patterns of escalation and de-escalation being observed for offenders who utilised deception, who made threats and who utilised a direct action approach against initial victims.

With regards to the sexual behaviours performed during the offence, specialisation in a particular sexual act was more unusual. Thirty-eight per-cent of offenders who sexually touched their first victim also did so against their second victim. Of those who changed their behaviour, 16% escalated to performing oral sex and 38% escalated to having sexual intercourse with the victim. Further, 54% of offenders who performed oral sex on the victim repeated these behaviours with their second victim. Of those who switched, 20% de-escalated to sexual touching and 20% escalated to having intercourse with the victim. Finally, for offenders who penetrated their first victim, many de-escalated. Specifically, 16% performed oral sex on their subsequent victim, whereas 16% performed sexual touching and 6% performed masturbation.

In examining co-variates used to explain crime-switching patterns, it was found that offender characteristics, including low

self-control and high sexualisation were important (Hewitt & Beauregard, 2014). Like previous studies, the authors acknowledged that a larger sample size would provide a more focussed investigation of offence patterns. Further, Leclerc et al's. sample was comprised primarily of child molesters; therefore it may not be possible to generalise these findings to explain the offence patterns of those who have offended against other victim types, for example, adult females.

Explanations of Offence Escalation

Currently, although many theoretical models exist to explain the development and onset of adult sexual offending, few seek to specifically explain sexual offence escalation. Nevertheless, the following models and individual factors are proposed in an attempt to explain escalation in some sexual offenders.

Moffit's (1993) dual taxonomy theory distinguishes two types of offenders: the adolescence limited (AL) and the life-course persistent (LCP). In regards to the former, AL offending develops with the onset of puberty and is the result of a disconnection between biological and social maturity. AL offenders are suggested to engage in a range of impulsive and aggressive behaviours throughout adolescence, but desist once their social and biological

development reaches a point of equilibrium (Boutwell, Barnes, & Beaver, 2013). Conversely, within LCP offending, antisocial behaviour emerges very early in childhood and is thought to continue throughout the life course, meaning these individuals may have a diverse criminal repertoire. As these offenders age, their behaviours are suggested to escalate in severity (Boutwell et al., 2013).

There is currently a paucity of evidence surrounding the propensity for LCP offenders to commit sexual assault. However, LCP offenders are thought to account for a disparate number of serious crimes. Since most sexual offences are classed as a serious crime, this would suggest that such offenders follow a LCP trajectory. DeLisi (2001) found that rapists were among the most severely antisocial offenders in the sample, engaging in a variety of criminal behaviours, suggesting that such offenders fall within the LCP trajectory. More recently, Boutwell et al. (2013) examined the tendency for LCP offenders to engage in acts of forced sexual behaviour, and found that these individuals were disproportionately involved in acts of rape and sexual coercion. It could therefore be hypothesised that, given the persistence of LCP offending over the life course, specialist sexual offenders may escalate in the severity of their offending over time.

Behavioural theories may provide an alternative explanation, particularly through the process of operant conditioning (OC) and the idea of coercive sexual behaviours being learned and reinforced. This is based on the view that deviant sexual arousal plays a central role in the commission of sexual offending (Faupel, 2014). According to behavioural theory, the likelihood of sexual reoffending depends on reinforcement; sexual offending may be positively (for example, through sexual gratification, feelings of power and control), or negatively (for example, the reduction of a negative mood state) reinforced. Conversely, if the perceived consequences of sexual offending are sufficiently strong, it is less likely to occur (Laws & Marshall, 1990).

With regards to escalation, the tolerance effect may lead to an increase in the severity of sexual behaviour (Stinson, 2006). Sexual offending may progress when current patterns of sexual behaviour are no longer sufficient to elicit prior levels of sexual or emotional satisfaction (e.g. Carnes, 1990). It could therefore be hypothesised that the more frequently sexual offending behaviours are repeated, the less fulfilling and rewarding they become, meaning the offender may need to commit a more serious offence to achieve the same outcome.

However, single factor theories are ineffective in providing a comprehensive overview of the development of sexual offending

behaviour and its complexity. Ward and Beech's (2006) Integrated Theory of Sexual Offending seeks to explain both the onset and maintenance of general sexual offending through combining a number of variables. Specifically, this model proposes three groups of variables that interact continuously to result in sexual offending: biological factors (genetic predisposition and neurological development); ecological niche factors (sociocultural environment and personal situation); and neuropsychological factors (motivation, emotion and memory). Biological and ecological niche factors are suggested to lead to changes in neuropsychological functioning, leading to the emergence of clinical symptoms (state factors), including problems with emotional and behavioural regulation, a desire for intimacy or control, offence-supportive beliefs and deviant sexual arousal. It is these factors that lead to the commission of a sexual offence.

With regards to the maintenance of offending and the potential for escalation, Ward and Beech (2006) emphasise a positive feedback loop, whereby the consequences of sexual offending serve to maintain or even strengthen the offending behaviours. Escalation is also thought to be dependent on the interaction of ecological niche factors with the personality characteristics of the offender, creating situations that either support or discourage further deviant sexual behaviours (Ward & Beech, 2006).

In their extension of the ITSO, Thakker and Ward (2012) focussed on sexual reoffending with emphasis on the positive feedback loop, incorporating a number of key factors highlighted within the literature as being related to sexual recidivism. Such factors included general antisociality, deviant sexual arousal, offence-related attitudes and beliefs, intimacy deficits and poor self-regulation. They suggest that, following the commission of a sexual offending, the likelihood of further offending is increased if one or more of the above variables are present. This is suggested to occur through the process of conditioning, with sexual gratification acting as a powerful reinforcer, such that the offence itself can strengthen deviant sexual arousal and increase the likelihood of further offending.

Sexual arousal and deviant sexual fantasy are, in themselves, hypothesised as critical factors in the development and maintenance of sexual offending. Aside from antisocial behaviour, deviant sexual fantasy is suggested to be the strongest predictor of sexual reoffending (Hanson & Morton-Bourgon, 2005). Sexual deviancy has also been included within many theories of sexual offending (e.g. Hall & Hirschman, 1991; Marshall & Barbaree, 1990; Ward & Beech, 2006). Generally, deviant sexual fantasy is thought to lead to sexual offending through increasing sexual arousal and reducing behavioural inhibitions. However, reoffending may bring an

escalation in sexual fantasy, whereby they become more intense and detailed. As a repeat sexual offender progresses along their offence pathway, they may not achieve the same level of sexual satisfaction, and earlier sexual thoughts may become less fulfilling and gratifying, meaning they may need to escalate their behaviours in order to achieve the same outcome. However, this is a multifaceted phenomenon that is likely to interact with a number of other factors, such as affect.

Aims and Objectives

This exploratory study aims to expand current knowledge relating to the offence patterns of repeat sexual offenders in the UK. Overall, there is limited insight regarding specific offence patterns, as the majority of existing research focuses on the versatility and stability of sexual offence patterns, without any specific indication of the nature of the change between offences (i.e. whether they escalate, de-escalate, or remain stable in the severity of their crimes). In relation to escalation in the severity of an individual's offending over time, there is currently limited research in this area. Only a handful of studies have investigated escalation in repeat sexual offenders, and these have focussed on specific aspects of the offence such as offence behaviours and the level of physical force used, and these studies have been conducted on offender populations outside of the

UK. No study to date has examined these in relation to specific sexual offence categories, which is the focus of investigation for the current study.

To investigate this, the present study aims to examine the offence patterns of repeat sexual offenders in the UK who have committed two or more sexual offences against adult female victims by looking across specific sexual offence categories. As such, the following research questions will be addressed:

1) Do the offence patterns of repeat sexual offenders escalate, de-escalate, or remain stable from one offence category to the next?
2) Are offenders committing a specific category of sexual offence more likely to escalate than an offender committing another category of sexual offence?

Method

Participants

In order to calculate the minimum number of participants required for the study, a power analysis was conducted (http://www.gpower.hhu.de/en.html) for 0.3 effect size and 0.8 power. This required a minimum of 108 participants. In order to maximise the reliability of the conclusions that could be drawn from the research, 140 participants were recruited for the purpose of this study from two prison establishments, which represented all of the participants within the research locations who met the study's eligibility criteria. The sample consisted of males aged over the age of 21, who had been convicted of a minimum of two sexual offences. Convicted sexual offenders were selected for this study as this created a lack of ambiguity regarding their sexual offence histories.

Participants were identified through pre-anonymised Sex Offender Treatment Programme (SOTP) databases that were held by the Psychology Department and SOTP facilitators within these establishments. These databases are a record of all sexual offenders currently in custody, and also hold the details of individuals who have previous convictions for sexual offences, or who have been convicted of other offences with a sexual element (e.g. Murder, Arson, Burglary). Contained within these databases are details of

individuals' index offence(s) and victim(s), and details of any previous sexual and non-sexual convictions. This was therefore determined to be the most appropriate method for identifying participants, as the likelihood of any potential participants being accidentally excluded from the analysis was significantly reduced, and the researcher did not have to unnecessarily access the case records of prisoners. Verbal consent to access these databases was granted from the SOTP Lead Psychologist prior to screening and data collection. Both SOTP databases were initially screened to identify individuals who had committed at least two sexual offences against an adult female victim(s).

The focus was placed on adult female victims as females constituted the majority of participants included within Chapter 2, where more negative attitudes were identified; therefore this study aimed to determine the potential risk presented to this victim group. Further, due to the variety and breadth of convictions for offenders against child victims, escalation would have been difficult to operationalise for this victim group. The anonymised details of these individuals were then transferred to a separate database created by the researcher. The full eligibility criteria for the study are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2: List of Eligibility Criteria

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
1. Participants must be aged 21 or over	1. Participants who have committed other, non-sexual offences
2. Participants must currently be serving a custodial sentence for a sexual offence committed against an adult female victim (defined as aged 16 or over according to the legal age of consent)	2. Participants committing sexual offences against child victims (defined as under the age of 16)
3. Participants must have committed at least one other sexual offence against an adult female victim	3. Participants whose only other previous sexual convictions were against child victims

Design

The present study adopted a cross-sectional design, whereby the offence patterns of repeat sexual offenders were analysed for five common sexual offences, in order to determine whether these individuals increased (escalated), decreased (de-escalated), or remained stable in terms of the severity of their offending over time.

Procedure

Initially, an 'escalation checklist' was developed by the researcher containing a list of five sexual offence categories, defined by the Sexual Offences Act (2003), that reflected the most common sexual

offences reported by adult female victims. The offences selected for the present study were, in order of seriousness: Voyeurism; Indecent Exposure; Non-penetrative Sexual Assault; Penetrative Sexual Assault; and Rape. For the purpose of the current research, 'seriousness' was defined in terms of what would legally warrant a more serious sentence or punishment, and the level of harm (physical and psychological) that could potentially be caused to the victim (Sentencing Guidelines Council, 2007, 2014). A copy of the escalation checklist is provided in Appendix F.

For participants meeting the full eligibility criteria, data were gathered using the offence information provided within each of the two pre-anonymised SOTP databases. This meant that other file information was not accessed unnecessarily, and only information relevant to the research was reviewed. Using information from the databases was selected as the preferred method of data collection over direct interviews with participants, as this ensured that the prison regime was not disrupted by taking time out of the prisoner's day to interview them, or for them to complete a questionnaire. The risk of distress to participants as a result of recalling the details of their offences was also limited. This additionally meant that the likelihood of study results suffering recall bias was reduced, from participants trying to recall events that in some cases may have occurred several years previously. Finally, if participants were

interviewed or completed a self-report questionnaire, the likelihood of the results being influenced by cognitive distortions or denial could also be increased. Offence patterns for each participant were marked on the 'escalation checklist', whereby each sexual offence was recorded in terms of its position in the offence sequence.

In order to protect against possible 'researcher effects' and 'researcher bias', a sample of the 'Escalation Checklists' (10%, *n* = 14) were checked by an independent rater for verification of all entries made, to ensure that the information was properly coded. This individual was a member of the Psychology Department within the research setting who would already have access to the SOTP databases as part of their day-to-day role.

Ethical Considerations

Formal ethical approval was deemed to be unnecessary due to the data being collected solely from pre-anonymised sources (see Appendix G); therefore the researcher could not identify participants. However, this study has been reviewed and given a favourable opinion by the North West Psychological Services (NWPS) Lead Psychologist (see Appendix H).

Results

Descriptive Statistics

The offence patterns of 140 repeat sexual offenders were examined for the purpose of this study. The age of participants ranged between 21 and 70, with the average age being 47.2 years. Participants had committed between two and five offences, with the average number of offences being 3.3.

Analytical Strategy

The analytical strategy adopted in the present study is in line with previous published research (e.g. Hewitt & Beauregard, 2014; Leclerc, Lussier, & Deslauriers-Varin, 2015). As such, the data were first analysed using transition matrices in order to determine patterns of offending (Research Question 1). Transition matrices allow for the examination of crime-switching patterns, and in the present case, whether repeat sexual offenders escalated, de-escalated or remained stable from one crime transition to the next. Specifically, a transition matrix can be described as "*a grid where the offender's behaviour against victim$_x$ is cross-tabulated with the offender's behaviour against victim$_{x+1}$*" (Leclerc et al., 2015, p.180). In constructing the matrix, the data were first coded from one to five to reflect a level of seriousness, whereby 1 represented an

offence of Voyeurism and 5 represented an offence of Rape. Probabilities were then calculated for each of the crime transitions and displayed in Table 3. The methods of calculating probabilities to determine whether offenders escalated, de-escalated or remained stable across crime transitions are provided in Appendix I. Crime transitions were analysed for the first five offences only, due to the reducing number of offenders in the sample with more than five convictions. Four crime transitions were therefore considered (T_1, crime 1 to crime 2, n=140; T_2, crime 2 to crime 3, n=98; T_3, crime 3 to crime 4, n=51; and T_4, crime 4 to crime 5, n=30). Following this, Chi-Square analyses were conducted in order to determine whether an individual committing one offence category was more likely to escalate than an individual committing another offence category (Research Question 2).

Transition Matrices

Table 3 presents the probabilities that offenders in the current sample will escalate, de-escalate or remain stable from one sexual offence to the next. Those whose offences fall on the diagonal of the matrix repeated the same behaviour from one crime to the next and were therefore classed as 'stable' in their offending patterns. Those who fell below the diagonal, indicating that their offences decreased

Table 3: Crime transitions of the most serious category of sexual offence performed on the victim by the offender during the crime event.

Crime T	Crime T+1				
	Voyeurism	**Indecent Exposure**	**Non-penetrative Sexual Assault**	**Penetrative Sexual Assault**	**Rape**
Voyeurism	T_1 = 0.50 (1) T_2 = 0.00 (0) T_3 = 0.00 (0) T_4 = 0.00 (0)	T_1 = 0.50 (1) T_2 = 0.00 (0) T_3 = 0.00 (0) T_4 = 0.00 (0)	T_1 = 0.00 (0) T_2 = 1.00 (1) T_3 = 0.00 (0) T_4 = 0.00 (0)	T_1 = 0.00 (0) T_2 = 0.00 (0) T_3 = 0.00 (0) T_4 = 0.00 (0)	T_1 = 0.00 (0) T_2 = 0.00 (0) T_3 = 0.00 (0) T_4 = 0.00 (0)
Indecent Exposure	T_1 = 0.00 (0) T_2 = 0.00 (0) T_3 = 0.00 (0) T_4 = 0.00 (0)	T_1 = 0.40 (6) T_2 = 0.25 (3) T_3 = 0.25 (1) T_4 = 0.00 (0)	T_1 = 0.40 (6) T_2 = 0.42 (5) T_3 = 0.00 (0) T_4 = 0.50 (1)	T_1 = 0.00 (0) T_2 = 0.00 (0) T_3 = 0.00 (0) T_4 = 0.00 (0)	T_1 = 0.20 (3) T_2 = 0.33 (4) T_3 = 0.25 (1) T_4 = 0.00 (0)
Non-penetrative Sexual Assault	T_1 = 0.00 (0) T_2 = 0.00 (0) T_3 = 0.00 (0) T_4 = 0.00 (0)	T_1 = 0.08 (4) T_2 = 0.03 (1) T_3 = 0.00 (0) T_4 = 0.00 (0)	T_1 = 0.42 (20) T_2 = 0.36 (12) T_3 = 0.24 (5) T_4 = 0.20 (1)	T_1 = 0.23 (11) T_2 = 0.36 (12) T_3 = 0.29 (6) T_4 = 0.20 (1)	T_1 = 0.27 (13) T_2 = 0.09 (3) T_3 = 0.19 (4) T_4 = 0.60 (3)
Penetrative Sexual Assault	T_1 = 0.00 (0) T_2 = 0.00 (0) T_3 = 0.00 (0) T_4 = 0.00 (0)	T_1 = 0.03 (1) T_2 = 0.00 (0) T_3 = 0.00 (0) T_4 = 0.10 (1)	T_1 = 0.07 (2) T_2 = 0.00 (0) T_3 = 0.00 (0) T_4 = 0.00 (0)	T_1 = 0.18 (5) T_2 = 0.23 (5) T_3 = 0.22 (4) T_4 = 0.30 (3)	T_1 = 0.72 (21) T_2 = 0.55 (12) T_3 = 0.56 (10) T_4 = 0.30 (3)
Rape	T_1 = 0.00 (0) T_2 = 0.00 (0) T_3 = 0.00 (0) T_4 = 0.00 (0)	T_1 = 0.00 (0) T_2 = 0.00 (0) T_3 = 0.02 (1) T_4 = 0.00 (0)	T_1 = 0.11 (5) T_2 = 0.04 (3) T_3 = 0.00 (0) T_4 = 0.03 (1)	T_1 = 0.13 (6) T_2 = 0.01 (1) T_3 = 0.00 (0) T_4 = 0.06 (2)	T_1 = 0.76 (35) T_2 = 0.50 (36) T_3 = 0.35 (19) T_4 = 0.41 (14)

Note: Percentages are displayed with the sample size included in brackets.
T1 = Transition from victim #1 to victim #2 (*n*= 140); T2 = Transition from victim #2 to victim #3 (*n*= 98); T3 = Transition from victim #3 to victim #4 (*n*= 51); T4 = Transition from victim #4 to victim #5 (*n*= 30). The pink area represents stability in offence patterns, whereas the area below represents patterns of de-escalation and the area above represents patterns of escalation

in seriousness, were labelled as 'de-escalators', whereas those who fell above the diagonal were labelled as 'escalators' as their offences increased in seriousness with time. When interpreting the matrix it is helpful to first look at areas of stability and then move horizontally, which is further broken down in subsequent sections. Due to the small number of offenders in the sample receiving convictions for Voyeurism, the results for this offence will not be interpreted.

Indecent Exposure

Table 4: Offence patterns of offenders in the sample committing Indecent Exposure

Crime T	**Crime T+1**				
	Voyeurism	**Indecent Exposure**	**N/P Sexual Assault**	**Penetrative Sexual Assault**	**Rape**
Indecent Exposure	T_1 = 0.00 (0)	T_1 = 0.40 (6)	T_1 = 0.40 (6)	T_1 = 0.00(0)	T_1 = 0.20(3)
	T_2 = 0.00 (0)	T_2 = 0.25 (3)	T_2 = 0.42 (5)	T_2 = 0.00(0)	T_2 = 0.33(4)
	T_3 = 0.00 (0)	T_3 = 0.25 (1)	T_3 = 0.00 (0)	T_3 = 0.00(0)	T_3 = 0.25(1)
	T_4 = 0.00 (0)	T_4 = 0.00 (0)	T_4 = 0.50 (1)	T_4 = 0.00(0)	T_4 = 0.00(0)

Note: Percentages are displayed with the sample size included in brackets. The pink area represents stability in offence patterns, whereas the area to the left represents patterns of de-escalation and the area to the right represents patterns of escalation.

For offences of Indecent Exposure, the proportion of offenders who repeated this offence across victims varied from .00 to .40. For instance, 40% of offenders who committed such an act against their first victim also did so against their second victim (T_1). Of those who changed their behaviour, 40% escalated to Non-Penetrative Sexual Assault and 20% escalated to Rape. For the second crime transition (T_2), 25% of offenders remained stable. Of those who changed their

behaviour, 42% escalated to Non-penetrative Sexual Assault and 33% escalated to Rape. For the third crime transition (T_3), 25% of offenders remained stable and 25% escalated to Rape. The remaining 50% received no further convictions after this point. In the final crime transition (T_4), no offenders who committed an offence of Indecent Exposure against their fourth victim did so with their final victim. Of those who changed their behaviour, 50% escalated to Non-penetrative sexual assault. The remaining 50% of offenders received no further convictions after this point. There was no evidence of de-escalation for any of the crime transitions considered for offences of Indecent Exposure. Interestingly, no offenders committing Indecent Exposure in this sample escalated to Penetrative Sexual Assault at any point in their crime sequence.

Non-Penetrative Sexual Assault

Table 5: Offence patterns of offenders in the sample committing Non-Penetrative Sexual Assault

Crime T	**Crime T+1**				
	Voyeurism	**Indecent Exposure**	**N/P Sexual Assault**	**Penetrative Sexual Assault**	**Rape**
N/P Sexual Assault	T_1 = 0.00 (0)	T_1 = 0.08 (4)	T_1 = 0.42 (20)	T_1 = 0.23 (11)	T_1 = 0.27(13)
	T_2 = 0.00 (0)	T_2 = 0.03 (1)	T_2 = 0.36 (12)	T_2 = 0.36 (12)	T_2 = 0.09 (3)
	T_3 = 0.00 (0)	T_3 = 0.00 (0)	T_3 = 0.24 (5)	T_3 = 0.29 (6)	T_3 = 0.19 (4)
	T_4 = 0.00 (0)	T_4 = 0.00 (0)	T_4 = 0.20 (1)	T_4 = 0.20 (1)	T_4 = 0.60 (3)

Note: Percentages are displayed with the sample size included in brackets. The pink area represents stability in offence patterns, whereas the area to the left represents patterns of de-escalation and the area to the right represents patterns of escalation.

The proportion of offenders who committed Non-penetrative Sexual Assault on their subsequent victims ranged from .20 to .42. A total

of 42% of offenders who engaged in this behaviour with their first victim also did so with their second victim (T_1). Of those who changed their behaviour, 23% escalated to Penetrative Sexual Assault, 27% escalated to Rape, and 8% de-escalated to Indecent Exposure. For the second crime transition (T_2), 36% who engaged in Non-penetrative Sexual Assault with their second victim remained stable. Of those who changed their behaviour, 36% escalated to Penetrative Sexual Assault and 9% escalated to an offence of Rape, whereas 3% de-escalated to Indecent Exposure. The remaining 22% did not receive any further convictions after this point. For the third crime transition (T_3), 24% repeated the same behaviour with their fourth victim. Of those who changed their behaviour, 29% escalated to Penetrative Sexual Assault and 19% escalated to Rape. The remaining 28% of offenders did not receive any further convictions after this point. For the final crime transition (T_4), 20% of offenders who committed Non-penetrative Sexual Assault against their fourth victim also did so against their fifth victim. Of those who changed their behaviour, 20% escalated to Penetrative Sexual Assault and 60% escalated to Rape. There was no evidence of de-escalation for the final crime transition.

Penetrative Sexual Assault

Table 6: Offence patterns of offenders in the sample committing Penetrative Sexual Assault

Crime T	Crime T+1				
	Voyeurism	**Indecent Exposure**	**N/P Sexual Assault**	**Penetrative Sexual Assault**	**Rape**
Penetrative Sexual Assault	T_1 = 0.00 (0)	T_1 = 0.03 (1)	T_1 = 0.07 (2)	T_1 = 0.18 (5)	T_1 = 0.72 (21)
	T_2 = 0.00 (0)	T_2 = 0.00 (0)	T_2 = 0.00 (0)	T_2 = 0.23 (5)	T_2 = 0.55 (12)
	T_3 = 0.00 (0)	T_3 = 0.00 (0)	T_3 = 0.00 (0)	T_3 = 0.22 (4)	T_3 = 0.56 (10)
	T_4 = 0.00 (0)	T_4 = 0.10 (1)	T_4 = 0.00 (0)	T_4 = 0.30 (3)	T_4 = 0.30 (3)

Note: Percentages are displayed with the sample size included in brackets. The pink area represents stability in offence patterns, whereas the area to the left represents patterns of de-escalation and the area to the right represents patterns of escalation.

For offences of Penetrative Sexual Assault, the proportion of offenders who repeated this behaviour with subsequent victims ranged from .18 to .30. For instance, 18% of those who committed this offence against their first victim repeated this behaviour with their second victim (T_1). Of those who changed their behaviour, 72% escalated to Rape. There was also some evidence of de-escalation, whereby 7% of offenders de-escalated to Non-penetrative Sexual Assault and 3% de-escalated to Indecent Exposure. For the second crime transition (T_2), 23% who engaged in Penetrative Sexual Assault with their second victim also repeated this behaviour with their third victim. Of those who changed their behaviour, 55% escalated to Rape. The remaining 22% of offenders in this sample did not receive any further convictions after this point. For the third crime transition (T_3), 22% of offenders repeated this offence with their fourth victim, and 56% escalated to Rape. The remaining 22% did not receive any further convictions after this

point. For the final crime transition (T_4), 30% of offenders in this sample repeated offences of Penetrative Sexual Assault with their final victim. Of those who changed their behaviour, 30% escalated to Rape and 10% de-escalated to Indecent Exposure. The remaining 30% did not receive any further convictions after this point.

Rape

Table 7: Offence patterns of offenders in the sample committing Rape

Crime T	**Crime T+1**				
	Voyeurism	**Indecent Exposure**	**N/P Sexual Assault**	**Penetrative Sexual Assault**	**Rape**
Rape	T_1 = 0.00 (0)	T_1 = 0.00 (0)	T_1 = 0.11 (5)	T_1 = 0.13 (6)	T_1 = 0.76 (35)
	T_2 = 0.00 (0)	T_2 = 0.00 (0)	T_2 = 0.04 (3)	T_2 = 0.01 (1)	T_2 = 0.50 (36)
	T_3 = 0.00 (0)	T_3 = 0.02 (1)	T_3 = 0.00 (0)	T_3 = 0.00 (0)	T_3 = 0.35 (19)
	T_4 = 0.00 (0)	T_4 = 0.00 (0)	T_4 = 0.03 (1)	T_4 = 0.06 (2)	T_4 = 0.41 (14)

Note: Percentages are displayed with the sample size included in brackets. The pink area represents stability in offence patterns, whereas the area to the left represents patterns of de-escalation.

Evidence of stability was observed for those committing offences of Rape. The proportion of offenders who repeated this offence with subsequent victims ranged from .35 to .76. For example, 76% of offenders in this sample who raped their first victim also committed this offence against their second victim (T_1). Of those who changed their behaviour, 13% de-escalated to Penetrative Sexual Assault and 11% de-escalated to Non-penetrative Sexual Assault. For the second crime transition (T_2), 50% of offenders evidenced stability between their second and third victims. Of those who changed their behaviour, 1% de-escalated to Penetrative Sexual Assault and 4%

de-escalated to Non-penetrative Sexual Assault. The remaining 45% of offenders did not receive any further convictions after this point. For the third crime transition (T_3), 35% of offenders who raped their third victim also repeated this behaviour against their fourth victim. Of those who changed their behaviour, 2% de-escalated to Indecent Exposure. The remaining 63% of participants did not receive any further convictions after this point. For the final crime transition (T_4), 41% of offenders who raped their fourth victim also raped their fifth victim. Of those who changed their behaviour, 6% de-escalated to Penetrative Sexual Assault and 3% de-escalated to Non-penetrative Sexual Assault. The remaining 50% of offenders in this sample did not receive any further convictions after this point.

Classification of Sexual Offenders

As can be seen in Table 8, the majority of offenders across all four crime transitions remained stable. For example, 48% of offenders in the first crime transition were classified as stable, in that they offended in the same way against their first victim as they did their second victim. Similar effects were observed for the remaining transitions (56%, 57% and 60% respectively). Escalation was also common. Thirty-nine per cent of offenders escalated within their first crime transition, meaning they committed a more serious sexual offence. Similar effects were also observed for transitions two

and three (39% and 41% respectively), with slightly less offenders escalating between crimes 4 and 5 (27%) Interestingly, there was little evidence of de-escalation throughout any of the crime transitions.

Table 8*:* Descriptive statistics of the percentage of offenders in the sample classified as stable, escalators or de-escalators.

Offence Pattern	Sexual Offences
Stable	T_1 = 0.48(67)
	T_2 = 0.57(56)
	T_3 = 0.57(29)
	T_4 = 0.60(18)
Escalators	T_1 = 0.39(55)
	T_2 = 0.39(38)
	T_3 = 0.41(21)
	T_4 = 0.27(8)
De-escalators	T_1 = 0.13(18)
	T_2 = 0.05(5)
	T_3 = 0.02(1)
	T_4 = 0.13(4)

Note: Percentages are displayed with the sample size included in brackets.

Chi-Square Analyses

Chi-Square analyses were conducted in order to determine whether escalation was more likely to be observed within any one particular offence category. Separate analyses were completed for each crime transition in order to determine whether there was an association between type of offence and offence pattern (escalation versus no escalation) and whether there was a significant difference between

participants who were stable versus those versus those who de-escalated or were not convicted of any further sexual offences. Rape was not included within this section of the analysis due to this being the highest category of offence for which offenders could have been convicted; therefore they could not escalate further from this point. In each case, the data were weighted by crime transition in order to inform the software package that the data were made up of individual responses. An alpha level of .125 was used throughout in order to correct for multiple testing. Overall, none of the tests were statistically significant for any of the transitions: T_1: $\chi^2(2, N = 92) = 5.03$, $p = .090$; T_2: $\chi^2(2, N = 67) = 3.10$, $p = .203$; T_3: $\chi^2(2, N = 43) = 1.25$, $p = .676$; T_4: $\chi^2(2, N = 17) = 3.35$, $p = .257$. Similar findings were observed when examining patterns of stability, with none of the results reaching statistical significance: T_1: $\chi^2(3, N = 84) = 3.36$, $p = .351$; T_2: $\chi^2(3, N= 103) = 4.25$, $p = .348$; T_3: $\chi^2(3, N=77) = 1.06$, $p = 829$; T_4: $\chi^2(3, N=49) = .72$, $p = 1.000$.

Discussion

Summary and Interpretation of Findings

The present study was exploratory in nature and explored a relatively under-researched, yet important area of sexual offending. The aims of the study were twofold: the first was to offer an indication of the offence patterns of repeat sexual offenders by looking at whether they escalate, de-escalate or remain stable over time. The second was to identify whether escalation was more likely to be observed in any particular category of sexual offence.

With regards to the former aim, the overall data suggest that repeat sexual offenders are stable in their offence patterns. This finding contributes to the on-going specialisation versus versatility debate and supports conclusions drawn from previous research that sexual offenders are stable in their offending; that is, they commit the same type of offence from one crime to the next (e.g. Howard et al., 2013; Soothill et al., 2000).

In attempting to explain this, it is possible that an offender may have intended to escalate and commit a more serious offence, but may have been prevented from doing so by factors in the environment, or by the behaviour of the victim. For example, they may have been disturbed early in the offending process or the victim may have resisted and prevented the offence from escalating. These

findings could suggest that the current risk-management procedures in place for people convicted of sexual offences, which are in part driven by the widespread public belief that sexual offenders are dangerous recidivists who will ultimately escalate in their behaviour, may be too restrictive. This hypothesis could also serve to explain changes in offence patterns; therefore offender intention may need to be examined in order to develop further insight into the offence process. Due to the mixed evidence of specialisation and versatility, the 'one size fits all' approach to sex offender management may be inappropriate.

However, the level of stability observed could be attributed to the fact that a significant proportion of offenders in the sample were convicted of Rape, with the majority of these individuals remaining stable in their offence patterns, which could have skewed the findings. When looking at other sexual offence categories, the majority of individuals who changed their behaviour (versatility), escalated in seriousness, a finding that remained consistent across offence type and crime transitions. This adds to the small body of existing research on offence escalation, and supplements findings by Leclerc, Lussier, and Deslauriers-Varin (2015), with broader findings on patterns of stability, escalation and de-escalation across different sexual offence categories.

De-escalation, on the other hand, was relatively uncommon. There are a number of hypotheses that could be generated to explain these findings. First, offenders in the sample may have de-escalated and committed offences that are less serious but were either not caught or not prosecuted, meaning they were not captured within the present research.

Conversely, participants may have escalated because it fulfils some form of sexual need. For example, research has suggested that hyper-sexuality, or sexual preoccupation, could contribute to offence escalation (Kafka, 2003 a, b). In this context, as offending behaviour continues, the strength of the individual's sexual fantasies and motivation may increase, meaning that in order for these to be fulfilled, a more serious sexual act needs to be committed. Similarly, Beauregard (2010) hypothesised that versatile sexual offenders may be characterised as highly sexualised, which may result in difficulties controlling their sexual urges and the exploitation of different opportunities to seek sexual gratification.

The situation in which the offence was committed may also have contributed to the findings. For example, a more serious offence may have been easier to perform if the victim was in some way incapacitated, or if there were no potential witnesses present. As no two offending situations are exactly the same, one must expect some degree of variability in offending. Unfortunately, there was no scope within the present study to assess the factors that

may have influenced changes in offence patterns, and this is something that could be addressed within future research.

The exception to this was the offence of Rape, whereby the majority of participants convicted of this offence remained stable. This was to be expected, given that by the definition of 'escalation' adopted by the study, individuals convicted of Rape could not escalate any further. This raises an interesting question, however: given that escalation is a common feature of other sexual offence categories, and the majority of people committing Rape continued to do so with subsequent victims, is it possible that offenders escalated within the category of Rape? That is, do their specific offence behaviours become more severe with time?

Despite these findings, it is difficult to draw firm conclusions regarding the 'lower order' sexual offences of Voyeurism and Indecent Exposure due to the small number of participants in the sample receiving convictions for such offences. Research indicates that such crimes are typically considered 'nuisance offences' and are handled as such by the Criminal Justice System (e.g. Douglas, Burgess, Burgess, & Ressler, 1992; Longo & McFadin, 1981), and are commonly prosecuted as misdemeanours (Krueger & Kaplan, 2016). All but the most serious offences of Indecent Exposure and Voyeurism (e.g. cases of raised harm and culpability) are prosecuted by means of a fine or the imposition of a community order (MoJ,

2013). These findings corroborate data from the MoJ (2013) indicating that victims are more likely to report the more serious sexual offences. Indeed, just 13% of all sexual offences *recorded by* the Police in 2011/2012 consisted of Voyeurism and Indecent Exposure offences, compared to 71% being comprised of Rape and Sexual Assault. This is despite the fact that the majority of victims reported being victims of a wider range of sexual offences when asked directly about their experiences. As such offences are typically non-contact offences, victims may not be aware that they have been a victim of such crimes and consequently would not have had the opportunity to report it. It is therefore not surprising that the sample of incarcerated males contained so few convictions for such offences.

With regards to the latter aim (to identify whether escalation was more likely to be observed in any particular category of sexual offence), it was not possible to identify whether escalation was more likely for any one particular category of offence, as none of the analyses reached statistical significance. This suggests that people committing one category of sexual offence are no more likely to escalate than those committing another category of offence, and that there is no evidence of an association between offence type and offence patterns. However, such findings could also be attributed to the small number of participants convicted of Voyeurism and

Indecent Exposure, coupled with the fact that the number of participants decreased as more crime transitions were considered in the analysis.

Implications

The results of the present study have clinical implications for the assessment and treatment of sexual offenders within the Prison Service. Specifically, the findings could help inform best practice regarding the risk assessment and treatment of sexual offenders and provide guidelines as to where prevention efforts should be targeted, through identifying the potential level of risk posed by these individuals and the possibility of a more serious sexual offence being committed in the future. As a general pattern of escalation was identified for most offence categories, this information could be utilised to prevent the circumstances under which a more serious sexually harmful event may occur, through the earlier identification of individuals potentially at risk of escalation and the provision of an appropriate assessment and treatment (Hewitt & Beauregard, 2014). This would have further implications for the reduction of reoffending and public protection, which is arguably the main objective of those working within the Prison Service.

In addition, the results could constitute a starting point towards providing government legislators (and the public) with more

accurate information regarding the offence patterns of repeat sexual offenders. This will enable the resulting management policies to be based on more factual data, and allow them to be more directly targeted, avoiding a 'one-size-fits-all' approach that could impede offender rehabilitation.

Limitations

The present research was subject to a number of limitations. First, the cross-sectional design of the study meant that offence patterns were only captured at one point in time. This ignores the potential for offenders included within the sample to subsequently be released from custody and commit further sexual offences; and to test for longitudinal effects. A more longitudinal design would obtain a more robust understanding of the nature sexual offence patterns, and for more accurate conclusions to be drawn.

Second, the data were gathered using official data sources. This method provides a representation of offences for which the offender has been convicted, and therefore does not consider that offenders in the sample may have committed further offences for which they had not been caught or had not resulted in a conviction. This may be attributed to the fact that a large proportion of sexual offences are not reported to the Police and therefore cannot be recorded or pursued. Such occurrences are common. For example,

the MoJ (2013) report that only around 15% of Rape cases were reported to the Police in 2011/2012, with actual conviction rates reported to be approximately 5.7% (Kelly, Lovett, & Regan, 2005). The current data may therefore be an underrepresentation of the total number of offences for which an individual has committed, meaning only a partial indication of sexual offence patterns can be provided. Methodological quality may have been enhanced through the use of complementary sources of information, for example, interviewing offenders directly or asking them to complete a questionnaire in relation to their offence history. However, whilst this may increase the ability to detect static and dynamic patterns in sexual offending over time, self-report data is subject to memory biases and a tendency to under-report crimes of this nature (Heil, Almeyer, & Simons, 2003), with cognitive distortions coming into play that could potentially undermine the seriousness of their behaviour.

Finally, the study is limited by the increasingly smaller sample size as more transitions were included within the analysis. This places limitations on the conclusions that can be drawn, with a larger sample size being required. Nevertheless, the number of participants included within the analysis (n = 140) represented the total number of offenders within the research sites who met the study's eligibility criteria, and therefore represented the maximum number of offenders who could have been included within the study.

Directions for Future Research

In order to address some of the limitations outlined above and for more concrete conclusions to be drawn in relation to the nature of sexual offence patterns, a larger, national sample of sexual offenders is required in order to determine whether the findings of the present study are replicated with a larger sample. Further, a longitudinal design should be implemented in order to address whether the offence patterns identified in the present study are maintained over time. Second, as stability was the most common offence pattern identified for the offence of Rape, it would be of interest to examine the concept of within-offence escalation. That is, whether an individual escalates through a particular offence category and 'graduates' to committing a more serious sexual offence. Third, to supplement existing knowledge and for assessment and treatment efforts to be better directed, it may be useful for future research to identify the factors that might contribute to changes in offence patterns (i.e. escalation or de-escalation). If contributory factors are identified, particularly for offence escalation, it may be possible to prioritise individuals with such factors for treatment and incorporate this into the assessment process. Finally, the present study did not account for factors that may have influenced changes in offence patterns, for example, the completion of an accredited Sex Offender Treatment Programme

(SOTP); therefore future research could address this to provide a more robust understanding.

Conclusion

This research aimed to further current understanding regarding sexual offence patterns. Whilst a degree of stability was observed overall, the findings served to highlight the dynamic nature of sexual offending and the potential for sexual offenders to escalate in the seriousness of their behaviour over time. This potential should be considered within future research in order to enhance the accuracy and quality of policies designed to manage risk in this area, and better inform the public regarding the potential 'danger' posed by sexual offenders; and better aid assessment and treatment procedures within the Prison Service.



Chapter Four:

An Assessment of the Contributing Factors to Offending and Offence Escalation in a Repeat Sexual Offender

Abstract

This case study outlines the psychological formulation of a 34-year-old repeat sexual offender, 'Sam', who was initially convicted for the offence of Indecent Exposure before later committing a series of Sexual Assaults against adult female victims. Prior to the study, Sam had already successfully completed both the Core and Extended Sex Offender Treatment Programmes (SOTPs) within custody. Having displayed evidence of offence escalation and escalating in the seriousness of his behaviour throughout his index offences, the present case study aimed to hypothesise the factors that may have contributed to both the onset and escalation in his behaviour over time. Following a review of previous assessments and a detailed clinical interview, a psychological formulation was developed using the 5 P's model. It was found that a different set of risk factors contributed to the onset of Sam's offending compared to those that contributed to the escalation in his behaviour. Specifically, the escalation in Sam's behaviour was best explained through deviant sexual arousal, sexual preoccupation and deviant sexual fantasy; whereas the onset of his offending appeared to relate more to emotional dysregulation, poor self-esteem and more distal factors arising from his childhood experiences. The implications of these findings are discussed, in addition to directions for future research.

Client Introduction

Client Description

For the purpose of this Case Study and to protect the client's anonymity, the client will be referred to throughout as 'Sam'.

Sam is a 34-year-old Caucasian male who is currently serving an Indeterminate Sentence for Public Protection (ISPP), with a minimum tariff of 2 years 209 days for the offences of GBH, Threats to Kill, Indecent Exposure and five counts of Sexual Assault against adult female victims. This tariff expired in July 2012.

Sam was initially referred to the Psychology Department for treatment to reduce his risk of sexual reoffending, and over the course of his sentence has completed the Core and Extended Sex Offender Treatment Programmes (SOTPs). His post-programme progress reports using the Structured Assessment of Risk and Need (SARN; Webster et al., 2006) highlight how Sam had made significant progress with regards to each of his identified treatment needs (outlined below), such that a progressive move to open conditions was recommended. However, during his most recent Parole Board hearing, Sam disclosed that he had offended whilst in custody by exposing his penis to two female Prison Officers, and

was subsequently referred for further work with Psychology related to monitoring on-going risk.

Relevant Background Information

Family Experiences

Sam was raised by his mother and father. His parents were in the Army and as such he lived a somewhat transient life, frequently moving home and school. A period of stability was achieved when the family stayed in one place for 12 years, meaning he was able to make friends, have stable employment and find a girlfriend who was of a similar age. Sam described this as the happiest time of his life. However, when his father passed away suddenly in 2002, the family moved away as his mother found it difficult to cope living in the area. Sam assumed a level of responsibility for his father's death following a fight shortly prior in which Sam punched him, although there was no evidence to suggest this was so.

Whilst Sam reported a positive relationship with his mother, he described a very difficult relationship with his father. Whilst he loved and missed him when he was away in the Army, he hated him for the violence he perpetrated towards himself [Sam] and his mother, whom he felt unable to protect as a young child. Sam

recalled witnessing extensive domestic abuse against his mother, as well as being subjected to physical abuse himself. He also reported that his father put a lot of pressure on him to be able to cope with his problems, teaching him that it was a weakness to show emotion. Consequently, he learned to cope in a strong and determined way throughout his life, and identified that as a result he put a lot of pressure on himself to be able to solve all of his problems. When he was unable to do this, Sam reported experiencing negative self-evaluations, feelings of worthlessness and low self-esteem.

Aged 8, Sam was the victim of repeated sexual abuse perpetrated by his fourteen-year-old babysitter. During such times, she would get into bed with him and touch his penis whilst he touched her breasts. When Sam told his parents about the abuse, he was not believed and consequently the babysitter received no consequences for her actions.

Education, Training and Employment

Sam left school without any formal qualifications. He described how during his school years he frequently felt like an outsider and was also subjected to verbal bullying from his peers.

At the time of his index offences, Sam was employed as a Kitchen Porter in an elderly care home. Whilst Sam described an initial level of fulfilment in this job, he became increasingly dissatisfied due to perceptions that his manager was bullying him. During this time, Sam attributed his use of Cannabis and Cocaine as a method of coping and would regularly fail to attend work, instead choosing to frequent the local parks. It was during this time that the index offences were committed.

Relationship and Psychosexual History

Sam started to masturbate at the age of 12 to pornographic magazines. This continued into his teenage years, although he did not have sexual intercourse until he was 18. Sam reported having 30 consensual sexual partners, approximately 20 of which had been one-night-stands. Throughout his life, Sam reported that he constantly sought sex and relationships, and when he looked at women this brought sexual fantasies to his mind.

Sam has had two previous intimate relationships. However, both ended due to Sam's insecurities, lack of trust and overly 'clingy' behaviour, resulting in him experiencing feelings of abandonment. He also expressed a level of mistrust towards women which made it difficult for him to engage in and maintain intimate relationships. He also recognised that his unstable lifestyle had a profound impact on

his ability to form relationships in general and resulted in him having a desire for intimacy.

Substance Use History

Sam described the use of his free time as being focussed on the illicit use of Cocaine and Cannabis. He started using Cannabis at the age of 18, which expanded to Ecstasy and Cocaine through his formative adult years. The index offences were committed whilst under the influence of Cannabis and Cocaine, something that Sam initially attributed as the main reason for his offending.

Mental and Physical Health

Sam has never been formally diagnosed with any mental health problems, nor has he experienced any suicidal ideation or intent. At the time of assessment, no physical health issues were identified.

Forensic History

Sam has one previous conviction for three separate offences of Indecent Exposure in 2004, for which he received a three-year Community Rehabilitation Order (CRO). These offences involved Sam exposing his penis to lone women who were walking their dogs in woodland. Sam denied having any offence-related fantasies at this time, and stated that he did not masturbate prior to or after their commission. He also stated that it was not his intention to

escalate his behaviour at this stage, describing in interview how he *"never thought* [he'd] *get to this point"* (receiving a conviction for a serious sexual offence and serving a custodial sentence).

Current Offences

Sam was convicted in June 2009 of five counts of Sexual Assault, and one count of GBH, Threats to Kill and Indecent Exposure. Full case summaries of each of Sam's index offences will be discussed in chronological order in Appendix J. Brief offence details are summarised in Table 9.

The lead-up to each of the offences is similar in that Sam would leave his mother's property under the pretence of going to work. In fact, Sam had not been attending work for some time and instead would spend his days frequenting local parks, smoking Cannabis and taking Cocaine. Sam commented how at this time he felt relaxed at the prospect of not being in work due to his on-going dislike of his manager, and simultaneous feelings of stress regarding his ability to effectively contribute towards household bills due to his absences from work. At the time of the offences, he had taken on the role of financial provider within the household following his father's death, and reported to have struggled with this role.

During the index offences, Sam would masturbate during and after their commission and would ejaculate on most occasions. Sam also identified sexual fantasies of having someone masturbate him whilst he touched their breasts, mirroring his own victimisation experiences. He acknowledged that these were offence-related as he wanted to achieve this through exposing himself, and the interactions were non-consensual. This desire became stronger over the course of his offending.

The fact that Sam has committed previous offences of a similar nature could suggest that he exploits opportunities to offend against women when they are vulnerable. Further, despite being made subject to community supervision in the past, Sam has continued to offend in a similar manner, which is indicative of a failure to respond to previous intervention. It is also of concern that having previously been convicted of offences that occurred in public parks whilst being under the influence of Cannabis and Cocaine, Sam failed to identify his index behaviour as being linked to the risk of harm that he presented.

Table 9: Summary of Sam's Index Offences

	Conviction	Offence Behaviours (in chronological order)
1.	**Sexual Assault**	Called out to the victim, put his hands up the victim's top and touched her breasts.
2.	**Sexual Assault & GBH**	Exposed penis, pushed victim down into the bushes, touched victim's breasts over her bra, forced the victim to touch his penis, hit the victim over the head and fled the scene.
3.	**Sexual Assault**	Approached the victim whilst masturbating, followed the victim and grabbed her by the neck when she made attempts to get away, put his hands up her top and touched her breasts.
4.	**Sexual Assault**	Approached victim with his penis exposed, pushed victim to the floor, rubbed his penis on the victim's neck, jaw and cheek, grabbed her breasts under her bra, ran away and returned a minute later, pushing the victim to the floor, rubbed his hips against victim's body.
5.	**Sexual Assault & Threats to Kill**	Knocked the victim to the ground, put his hand over the victim's mouth and over her throat, touched the victim's breast under her bra, threatened to kill the victim, rubbed his testicles over his clothing, forced his hands below the victim's underwear and touched her vagina.
6.	**Indecent Exposure**	Shortly after the above offence, Sam emerged from the bushes in which he was hiding, exposed his erect penis and began masturbating. Semen was observed from the end of his penis.

Literature Review

Exhibitionism, or Indecent Exposure, has broadly been defined as *"the exposing of the genitals to an unsuspecting stranger"* (McNally & Fremouw, 2014, p.474). Although it is thought to be one of the most common sexual offences (Morin & Levenson, 2008), exhibitionism is regarded by many as a 'harmless' or 'nuisance' offence (e.g. Rabinowitz-Greenberg, Firestone, Bradford, & Greenberg, 2002). In contrast, victims report feeling distressed by such offences and perceive offenders of this type to be dangerous, as they believed that exhibitionism was the first step towards the perpetration of more serious offences (Riordan, 1999).

Despite this, the potential for escalation to a more serious offence has been largely overlooked. This is of concern, considering research on professionals working with sexual offenders has found that approximately 87% viewed non-contact sexual offenders as having the potential to escalate in the severity of their crimes (Lea, Auburn, & Kibblewhite, 1999). However, this may not be reflective of a genuine risk issue; rather, professionals may simply be being cautious. This study is also limited by a small sample size; therefore the findings cannot be extrapolated to all such professionals. Further, nearly half of the sample consisted of police officers, who have been shown to possess more negative attitudes compared to other professional groups (e.g. Hogue, 1993). These methodological

limitations may have biased the results to some extent, meaning the conclusions that can be drawn are limited.

With regards to reconviction rates, a review of 12 peer-reviewed studies on the link between exhibitionism and contact sexual offences identified that a history of exhibitionistic behaviour was present in a small number of contact sexual offences. Approximately 5-10% of exhibitionists were found to escalate to more serious offences, whilst approximately 25% reoffended with another exhibitionistic offence (McNally & Fremouw, 2014). Earlier research reported recidivism rates between 0 and 71% for exhibitionists with regards to both contact and non-contact sexual offences (Furby, Weinrott, & Blackshaw, 1989). However, studies utilising reconviction data are limited in that a large number of sexual offences may go unreported, and as such sexual offenders are likely to have committed a greater number of offences than their convictions would suggest. Nevertheless, the above-identified research highlights the potential for those committing offences of Indecent Exposure to escalate in the severity of their behaviour.

Explanations of Sexual Aggression Towards Women

It is important to understand the factors that contribute towards the onset of sexual offending against women in order to effectively identify areas of risk and direct treatment pathways, although it is

also acknowledged that such behaviours are complex and are unlikely to be explained by a single risk factor. However, there is a scarcity of research that specifically explores exhibitionism; therefore the research considered below is thought to best relate to the issues presented within the present case.

Hall and Hirschman's (1991) Quadripartite Model suggests four 'motivational precursors' or causal factors to sexual offending. The first is an offence-related sexual arousal, whilst the second constitutes offence-related (e.g. pro-rape) cognitions. Within this, it is purported that when an individual becomes sexually aroused, the situation is evaluated in terms of its goal relevance, which in turn influences the likelihood an offence will occur. An individual may also draw upon particular attitudes and beliefs that are relevant to the situation, for example, perceptions about women. The third factor constitutes affective dyscontrol, in which the offender is unable to manage negative emotional states in a more pro-social manner. According to the model, sexual offending occurs when affective states become so compelling and powerful that they overcome inhibitions (Thakker & Ward, 2015). Finally, the model refers to antisocial, developmentally informed personality problems related to early life experiences (for example, abuse and neglect). Environmental factors, for example, substance abuse and victim

availability, are also thought to play a role in determining whether or not an offence is likely to occur.

This model is flexible in that it allows for variation in the extent to which each factor contributes to an individual's offending process; however, there is a lack of clarity regarding the contributions of personality. In keeping with this model, other research findings act in support of the role of stress and other negative affective states as a precursor to sexual offending. Across two studies, Cortoni and Marshall (2001) found that both rapists and child molesters consistently reported utilising both consensual and non-consensual sex as a way of managing stressful circumstances. Further, Prolux, McKibben, and Lusignan (1996) suggest that when sexual offenders experience conflict, humiliation, anger or loneliness, an increase in the frequency of deviant sexual fantasies and masturbation is observed, which in turn increases the likelihood of deviant sexual behaviour. In contrast, when negative mood states were absent, a lack of deviant fantasies was noted. This is consistent with the principles of the Relapse Prevention Model (RPM; Pithers, 1990), which suggests that if an offender is unable to cope appropriately with a high-risk situation (for example, conflict or negative mood states) a lapse (deviant sexual activity) is likely to follow (Cortoni & Marshall, 2001). In this respect, it could be hypothesised that sex provides a powerfully pleasurable

experience that can temporarily relieve negative emotional states in people who do not possess more appropriate coping mechanisms.

Marshall and Barbaree's (1990) Integrated Theory of Sexual Offending (ITSO) suggests that sexual abuse occurs as a result of a number of distal and proximal factors. Specifically, individuals experiencing adverse developmental events (e.g. physical and sexual abuse, poor parenting, inappropriate role models) are likely to develop distorted internal working models of relationships. The transfer between childhood and adolescence is thought to be crucial, as adverse early experiences could leave the offender deficit in the necessary social skills to develop and maintain pro-social intimate relationships. Further, vulnerability factors are purported to interact with more transitory, situational factors such as stress, negative affect, substance misuse and the presence of a potential victim which impede the offender's ability to control their behaviour, resulting in the commission of a sexual offence (Ward & Sorbello, 2003). According to this model, sexual offending is perpetuated through cognitive distortions and the reinforcing effects of deviant sexual activity, which may be positive or negative (Ward & Sorbello, 2003).

Although this model represents advancement in our understanding of sexual offending, there are issues with regards to its generality. Because of this, Ward and Sorbello (2003) suggest

that the model does not sufficiently address the issues associated with specific types of sex crimes, and the sub-groups of offenders within these. Second, the theory places considerable importance on impulsivity and the inability of the offender to inhibit deviant sexual desires. However, only a small number of offenders are thought to experience such difficulties (Hudson, Ward, & McCormack, 1999).

Risk Factors for Escalation in Exhibitionists

Whilst current research is limited, several factors have been proposed to explain escalation to contact sexual offences among perpetrators of exhibitionistic behaviour. One review in particular (Sugarman, Dumughn, Saad, Hinder, & Bluglass, 1994) showed that a history of Personality Disorder or Conduct Disorder, exposing at more than one site, excessive libido, touching or pursuing the victims whilst exposing and having an erection or masturbating whilst exposing were determined to be risk factors for future contact sexual offences. However, overall, the results of recidivism studies were mixed: where one study found support for a given risk factor as contributing to offence escalation, another did not.

Kafka (2003) suggested that hypersexuality, or sexual preoccupation, may explain the progression from non-contact to contact sexual offences. When examining co-morbid diagnoses in

exhibitionists, Kafka and Hennen (2003) found that hypersexuality was an important variable among 32 exhibitionists. However, due to the small sample size, the findings from this study are not likely to be representative of all individuals perpetrating exhibitionistic behaviour. Nevertheless, this argument was further supported by Lussier, Prolux, and LeBlanc (2005), who cited research suggesting that sexual deviance is associated with a higher sexual drive (Ellis, 1991; Knight, 1999). Långström and Seto (2006) also found that compared to controls, exhibitionists had more sexual partners, a higher frequency of masturbation, greater sexual excitability and greater use of pornography.

Assessment

Assessment Methods

In order to ensure completeness, the assessment of Sam was conducted using a variety of methods, described in greater detail below. Prior to the interview process, Sam was seen on one occasion in order to gain informed consent for his participation in the Case Study (see Appendices K and L respectively for a copy of the Information Sheet and Consent Form).

Previous Assessments

Sam was previously assessed using the standardised assessment framework adopted by the Prison Service to assess his suitability for SOTP by identifying static and dynamic treatment needs, in addition to specific responsivity issues. According to the principles of Risk, Need and Responsivity (RNR; Andrews & Bonta, 2010) the aim of the assessment process should be to identify offenders who demonstrate appropriate of levels of risk, to ensure the programme is appropriate; and need, to ensure the programme is relevant. The following assessments had already been completed by SOTP facilitators prior to Sam's participation in the case study.

Static Risk Assessment

Sam's risk of sexual reoffending was assessed using the RM-2000/s, which forms part of the RM-2000 (Thornton et al., 2003) and is a static prediction scale for sexual recidivism. Sam was assessed as having a High risk of reconviction for a sexual crime, suggesting he has many of the characteristics that are associated with raised risk of sexual reconviction in sexual offenders. Characteristics that increased Sam's recidivism risk on this scale included being below the age of 35 at the earliest possible date of release and the absence of a marital-type relationship lasting over two years. High-risk offenders should usually be prioritised for treatment and supervision over those in lower risk groups; however, any such decisions should take into consideration other risk factors such as risk of serious harm.

The RM-2000 is useful in aiding decision-making regarding how much treatment and supervision an individual is likely to need; however, it does not consider all of the factors that could potentially affect their offending behaviour. Further, actuarial assessments are criticised due to their methodology. Risk of recidivism is based on group averages and therefore cannot estimate the level of risk for a specific individual with a high degree of certainty (Coid, Ullrich, & Kallis, 2013). As the tool ignores levels of serious harm, it should

not be used as a stand-alone instrument and should be interpreted alongside detailed clinical interviewing.

Sam's risk of non-sexual violent reoffending was assessed using the OASys Violence Predictor (OVP). The OVP is an actuarial measure of violence risk. Sam was assessed as Medium risk of proven reoffending for non-sexual violent crime, meaning he has some of the characteristics that are associated with raised risk of proven violent reoffending. Medium risk offenders are those whose likelihood of proven violent reoffending within 2 years of the start of an 'at risk' period is between 30 and 59% (for example, at the commencement of a Community Order or discharge from custody; NOMS, 2015).

Research has shown that the OVP achieves *"significantly greater clinical validity"* (Howard & Dixon, 2012, p.2) than existing actuarial instruments, which is why the OVP was selected over RM-2000/v scores in this case. Specifically, results have shown that the static subscale of the OVP is a better predictor of non-sexual violence than the RM-2000/v (Howard & Dixon, 2012).

Dynamic Risk Assessment

An assessment of the dynamic (changeable, psychological) risk factors using the Structured Assessment of Risk and Need (SARN;

Webster et al., 2006) Treatment Needs Analysis (TNA) framework associated with Sam's sexual offending was completed in 2012. The SARN-TNA is an 'empirically guided' process for identifying risk factors known to affect the likelihood of further offending. Risk factors are divided into four domains, with Sam having 'strongly characteristic' risk factors in two of these domains, namely 'Sexual Interests' and 'Self-Management', putting him at a Medium level of dynamic risk. Individual risk factors identified as being relevant for Sam as a result of the TNA process included: 'preoccupied with sex'; 'other offence-related sexual interest' [Indecent Exposure]; 'impulsive, unstable lifestyle'; 'not knowing how to solve life's problems'; 'feeling inadequate'; 'not having an emotionally intimate relationship with an adult' and 'beliefs that women can't be trusted'. These are risk factors that have been identified through widely cited meta-analyses as contributing to an increased risk of sexual recidivism (e.g. Hanson & Morton-Bourgon, 2005). The risk factors comprising the SARN-TNA are provided in Appendix M.

Studies have shown that the inclusion of dynamic risk factors in the assessment of sexual offenders can significantly increase the accuracy of predicting risk of recidivism (e.g. Thornton, 2002). However, a more recent study (Tully, Browne, & Craig, 2014) concluded that the SARN-TNA is ineffective in predicting risk of recidivism in adult male sexual offenders, with the 'Sexual Interests'

domain being highlighted as the only predictive element (Tully et al., 2014). Nevertheless, the SARN was not used in this way in the present case. Instead, it was used to identify treatment needs and to evaluate treatment progress in relation to each of Sam's identified needs. The primary use of the SARN-TNA in the Prison Service is as a treatment-planning tool, forming part of a comprehensive assessment process, and as such it should not be used in isolation as a predictor of sexual re-offending.

To further assist in identifying areas of treatment need, a standardised battery of psychometric assessments were administered prior to treatment (see Appendix N for a summary).

Cognitive Functioning

An independent assessment of Sam's cognitive ability was previously conducted using the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale, Fourth Edition (WAIS-IV; Wechsler, 2008), the standardised assessment used within HMPS. This was completed to determine whether Sam had the cognitive capacity to engage with the intervention and to determine whether participation in the programme would be meaningful. Results indicated that his overall IQ was 79, falling within the borderline learning disability range; however he did not meet the criteria for an Adapted SOTP

programme (requiring an IQ less than 70) and so was assessed as suitable for the Core SOTP.

Collateral Review

Prior to interview (see below), Sam's prison records were reviewed in order to gather relevant background information. Information was gathered from a careful review of his core prison record, OASys assessment, Parole Dossier and SOTP file containing information from both the Core and Extended programmes. Discussions were also held with SOTP facilitators and with the psychologists who had written his previous SARN reports.

Clinical Interview

For the purpose of this assessment, Sam was seen on three occasions for a total of approximately 5 hours to discuss his offending and to identify risk factors that might relate to the escalation in the seriousness of his behaviour over time.

Psychological Formulation

Problem

When considering his sexual offending, it appears Sam has displayed evidence of between-offence escalation: he has previous convictions for Indecent Exposure and his current convictions are those of Indecent Exposure and Sexual Assault. He has also displayed evidence of escalation within his index offences, as is apparent from the specific offence behaviours he displayed over the course of these crimes. Sam's initial behaviours consisted of him showing his penis to the victims. However, during the index offences, Sam achieved an erection and would attempt to speak to the victims whilst masturbating. With regards to the Sexual Assaults, Sam initially exposed his penis to the victims before progressing to forcing the victims to touch him whilst he attempted to touch their breasts, displaying an increasing level of violence towards his victims in order to secure their compliance and mirroring his own abusive experiences.

Sam's behaviours are formulated using the 5 P's model (Weerasekera, 1996, cited in Logan, 2014) in terms of the factors that are hypothesised to have contributed towards the onset of each of his sexual convictions, and the reasons behind the apparent

escalation in his behaviour over time. A diagrammatical representation of the formulation is provided in Appendix O.

Predisposing Factors

Sam experienced an unstable childhood, frequently moving home and school due to his parent's Army commitments. This led him to become emotionally guarded in an effort to prevent him getting close to people, which may have impacted upon his ability to establish long-term friendships and relationships, and contributed to feelings of loneliness. Parental absence, coupled with the negative experiences to which Sam was subjected at the hands of his father may have further impacted on the development of a secure attachment style and subsequent relationships.

Within their theory of sexual offending, Marshall and Barbaree (1990) suggest that this may cause an individual to view their caregivers as emotionally absent, resulting in a view of themselves as unworthy of being loved and feelings of low self-esteem. In the case of Sam, this may have created a distorted internal working model of relationships, which subsequently impacted upon his ability to achieve intimacy in a more pro-social manner and resulted in further feelings of inadequacy and low self-esteem, causing him instead to seek intimacy from his victims. This may have been

further reinforced by his experience of bullying during his school years.

As a result of the demands placed on him by his father to be able to manage his emotions, Sam may have learnt to suppress strong emotional states, particularly when he found it difficult to cope with the stressful situations that precipitated both his previous and index offences. This served to lower his self-esteem, and resulted in him adopting the unhelpful avoidant strategy of absenting himself from work and escaping to the local parks. However, it seems that this strategy only served to reinforce his negative self-views as a result of struggling to effectively provide for his family. Sam may therefore have engaged in sexually aggressive behaviour to alleviate negative emotional states and to mediate stressful experiences. Emotional competency deficits meant that Sam was unable to express his emotions in a healthy way. An inability to effectively regulate strong emotional states may have resulted in a loss of control, which in conjunction with sexual desire may have led to disinhibition or the use of sex as a soothing strategy.

The fact that Sam was both a witness to and a victim of physical abuse within the family home may have contributed to the escalating level of aggression displayed within his index offences. According to Social Learning models (Bandura, 1977, cited in

McLeod, 2016), Sam's father may have acted as a model upon which he chose to base his behaviour. This may have normalised the perpetration of violence, particularly towards females, and contributed to a general perception of women as vulnerable and submissive, and of males as strong and dominant. Growing up in an environment in which such negative attitudes were held may have also contributed to an escalation in Sam's offending, whereby he used considerable force against his victims when they did not comply with his demands.

The sexual abuse Sam experienced during childhood may have contributed to the behaviours displayed during the index offence through the development of a deviant sexual preference. According to the tenets of Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977, cited in McLeod, 2016), Sam's exposure to a deviant sexual model through his victimisation experiences may have shaped his sexual beliefs in a developmentally inappropriate and dysfunctional fashion, and led the development of maladaptive beliefs characterised by thoughts such as such as "this must be normal" and "this isn't a bad thing" (e.g. Faupel, 2014; Ward & Beech, 2006), which was perhaps further compromised by his poor intellectual functioning and later served to justify and maintain his offending behaviour.

These views may, in turn, have been reinforced by his parents' ambivalent reaction to his experiences. The fact that Sam

did not observe the perpetrator receiving any negative consequences for her actions may have continued to reinforce and normalise such behaviours, leading to an increased likelihood of them being repeated in the future. This may have resulted in the development of distorted, offence-supportive attitudes surrounding such behaviours (Bourton, Miller, & Schill, 2002) and led to the development of unhelpful, offence-related sexual fantasies present throughout Sam's index offences. Indeed, the behaviours displayed during this time mirrored his victimisation experiences, whereby Sam forced the victims to touch his penis whilst he attempted to touch their breasts.

Further, such fantasies may have contributed to an escalation in Sam's behaviour from non-contact to contact sexual offences. Sam acknowledged that the strength of these fantasies increased over the course of his offending and this may have become increasingly difficult for him to control. Given this, his earlier offending behaviours may have become less fulfilling, meaning he had to escalate his behaviours in order to achieve the same outcome.

Sam began viewing pornography from a young age, a pattern of behaviour that has continued throughout his life. The influence of such material on sexual aggression towards women for some men has been well researched (Lussier, Prolux, & LeBlanc, 2005),

although the conclusions drawn are mixed. According to Social Learning Models (e.g. Laws & Marshall, 1990) viewing pornographic material could lead to sexual coercion by some due to its depiction of women in a way that promotes sexually aggressive attitudes. This may therefore have served as a model for Sam's sexually aggressive behaviour and may have impacted upon his already distorted attitude towards women, resulting in a lack of victim empathy that also allowed him to continue his behaviour. This may have been further reinforced by the fact that the women are often depicted as enjoying and desiring the sexual activity, which may have contributed to Sam's belief that the victims of the offences would respond to his advances in a positive way.

Precipitating Factors

In the lead-up to both his previous and index offences, Sam was experiencing a level of stress that he felt unable to manage. Stemming from pressure placed upon him by his father, his subsequent inability to manage this may have reinforced feelings of inadequacy and low self-esteem, which resulted in him becoming emotionally overwhelmed. This resulted in him utilising avoidant coping strategies such as sex, drug use, and frequenting the local parks. However, difficulties in establishing meaningful, consensual relationships meant that Sam turned to offending and sexual

fantasy as a method of meeting his needs. Coupled with a lack of behavioural controls, Sam's offending may be a product of an inability to manage stressful situations and negative emotional states in a more prosocial manner.

In addition to low self-esteem contributing to the onset of Sam's sexual offending and re-offending, this also appears to be linked to an escalation in the severity of his offending behaviours over time. During his previous offences, Sam reported that exposing his penis to the victims was enough to increase his self-esteem. However, during his index offences, Sam wanted to evoke similar feelings by having the victims touch him, evidenced through an increase in the frequency and strength of his thoughts during his index offences (*"you do something to make me feel better"*, *"you touch me, I'll touch you, and it'll make me feel good"*).

Linked to this is Sam's level of sexual preoccupation. Sam attributed this to not being able to meet women due to him working two jobs, and not being in an intimate relationship. Sam reported having thoughts of *"I can't meet girls, I can't get the stress out…I need to get the sexual tension out"*. He acknowledged that in the lead-up to the offences he was masturbating more frequently and watching 'Babe Station' in order to relieve the stress he was experiencing and to satisfy his sexual needs. However, this was insufficient to fulfil him sexually due to the escalation in the content

of his sexual fantasy. It is hypothesised that this contributed to an escalation in Sam's offending to a contact offence due to his level of sexual arousal and desire to have his sexual needs met, coupled with the fact that he lacked an appropriate sexual outlet and an inability to control his sexual urges.

Sam acknowledged that the strength of his sexual fantasies and preoccupation increased during the course of the index offences, which may have additionally contributed to the escalation in the severity of the behaviours displayed within each of his Sexual Assaults. Sam acknowledged that over the course of his index offences, he wasn't getting the same *"buzz"* as he had from previous offences and described having thoughts such as *"I'm getting nothing out of exposing anymore, I'm going to make you touch me"*. Further, whilst thinking about what he had just done, Sam began thinking about his next offence, having thoughts of *"next time I want her to see me ejaculate, I want her to help me. I want to grab her boobs whilst she is wanking me off"*. This demonstrates a clear increase in his sexual thoughts, with Sam becoming more determined to act them out. Sam may therefore have escalated his behaviour as he was not achieving the same level of sexual satisfaction as he had through previous offences, and his earlier sexual thoughts may have become less fulfilling and gratifying as his offending progressed.

Within this, there appears to be a persistent behavioural response pattern which links Sam's behaviour to impulsivity and a distinct lack of behavioural controls, which were further weakened by his substance misuse and subsequent disinhibition. Research also suggests that risk-taking increases as sexual arousal increases (Hart, 2015). During interview, despite knowing his behaviour was wrong, Sam disclosed that his desire for sexual gratification overrode such other knowledge and feelings. The reinforcement value of ejaculation and sexual gratification may therefore have undermined the potential deterrent of getting caught, causing 'danger signals' to be ignored that may otherwise have served to impede his behaviour (Hart, 2015). Another study has shown a significant relationship between sexual arousal, over-interpretation of sexual intent, and level of coercion (Bouffard & Miller, 2014), which in the case of Sam may have contributed to a belief that the victims would respond to his behaviour in a positive way and the level of force used throughout his index offences. It is therefore hypothesised that sexual arousal contributed to Sam's sexual offending through adversely affecting his decision-making process and altering the perceived consequences of his behaviour (Bouffard, 2011).

The escalation in Sam's behaviour also appears to be linked to entitlement thinking that served to justify his desire to touch his

victims. After Sam had initially exposed his penis to his victims, he described having thoughts of *"she's seen me so I'll see her"*, and *"if you're getting something out of it then so will I"*. Sam acknowledged that this linked to his offending as when the victims rejected his advances, this triggered feelings of inadequacy, which in turn contributed to entitlement thoughts of *"I'll go out to get what I want to make me feel good"*. It is thought that upon the victims' refusal, a desire for control took over, whereby Sam used considerable force to overpower his victims and allow him to escalate his behaviour.

Perpetuating Factors

Sam admitted that through his previous offences, he started to get a *"buzz"* from exposing himself, which he reported strengthened over time, particularly over the course of his index offences. This 'buzz' served to increase his self-esteem and lessened his feelings of inadequacy. This may have served to negatively reinforce his offending behaviour through alleviating the negative feelings he was experiencing at the time and making him feel better about himself. Further, the fact that he masturbated following the commission of his index offences may also have served to positively reinforce his behaviour and increase the likelihood of it being repeated. Similarly, the fact that Sam was able to avoid detection and continue

offending for a considerable period of time prior to his eventual arrest may have maintained his behaviour through a belief that he would not be caught.

Sam also endorsed cognitive distortions that served to justify and maintain his behaviour. Sam described having thoughts such as *"one more won't hurt"*; *"it's OK as long as I'm not raping them"*; *"she might enjoy it"*; and *"I want her wank me off…she probably will"*, which justified his behaviour in terms of minimising the seriousness of his offending and the level of harm it would cause to his victims. Sam also convinced himself that the victims would respond positively to his advances, and disclosed having thoughts such as *"I'm trying to ejaculate, maybe she can help, she probably will"*.

Protective Factors

Several factors have been hypothesised to reasonably assist an offender in managing their risk, including social support, experiences of self-efficacy and an adequate self-concept, active coping with stressors and experiencing a sense of structure and meaning in life, and lack of drug or alcohol abuse (Packard, 2006). In relation to this, Sam has the support of his family (mother, aunt, and sister) who visit him regularly in custody. Sam also expressed

that one of his primary motivations to desist from offending was to care for his mother who is currently in poor health. It was also apparent during interview that Sam had developed a vastly improved self-concept in addition to cognitive and behavioural strategies for managing his self-esteem, including completing schema logs to manage his negative, unhelpful thoughts by developing healthier alternatives, and speaking to his support network. Sam has completed several accredited programmes to address his offending behaviour, including TSP to address thinking deficits and impulsivity, Drug and Alcohol programmes, and CORE and Extended SOTP. It was evident during the interview process that Sam had developed insight into his areas of risk and engaged well during the treatment process, which is in itself a protective factor.

Discussion

The present case study aimed to assess the contributing factors to the onset and escalation of the offending behaviours of a repeat sexual offender; Sam. Using the 5 P's formulation model (Weerasekera, 1996, cited in Logan, 2014), the following factors were identified as contributing to the onset of Sam's offending: emotional suppression during childhood, sexual abuse, poor problem-solving (e.g. isolation, substance misuse), the experience of negative emotional states and emotional dysregulation, low self-esteem, early exposure to pornography and lack of an appropriate sexual outlet. With regards to risk factors that contributed to the escalation in Sam's behaviour, it seems that low self-esteem, having an offence-related sexual interest, deviant sexual fantasies, sexual preoccupation and entitlement thinking are all relevant.

Interestingly, a difference in the factors that were hypothesised to contribute to the onset versus escalation in Sam's offending was observed. Specifically, it seems that sexual self-regulation, preoccupation and distorted sexual interests are important to consider when thinking about the escalation in Sam's sexual behaviour over time, which all relate to the 'Sexual Interests' domain of the SARN, suggesting that such factors may be important to consider when evaluating risk. Conversely, the onset of Sam's

sexual offending appears to relate to more distal factors such as negative early developmental experiences, and the domains of 'Self-Management' (e.g. lack of emotional control, poor problem solving and 'Relationships' (e.g. inadequacy, lack of an intimate relationship) included within the SARN. Although it is difficult to extrapolate these findings, they do pose useful questions for further research. Specifically, do a different set of risk factors contribute to the onset of sexual offending compared to offence escalation, and do the latter risk-factors generally relate to the domain of deviant sexual interests and sexual preoccupation?

Although there is little existing research investigating the offence patterns of exhibitionists or the potential for their behaviour to escalate to a more serious offence, the present results corroborate existing concerns surrounding the potential dangerousness of those committing 'lower order' sexual offences such as Indecent Exposure (Lea, Auburn, & Kibblewhite, 1999), and act in support of studies investigating potential risk factors for sexual offending. In particular, the present findings provide sustenance for the role of stress and negative affect (e.g. Cortoni & Marshall, 2001) to suggest that deviant sexual activity may be utilised as a soothing strategy for managing stressful situations and moderating negative emotional experiences.

The formulation was also congruent with theories seeking to explain sexual aggression. Specifically, the principles of Hall and Hirschman's (1991) Quadripartite Model and the ITSO (Marshall & Barbaree, 1990) were supported, particularly the role of offence-related sexual arousal and affective dyscontrol. Within this, and drawing on more recent research (e.g. Hart, 2015) it is possible that sexual offending serves as a powerful reinforcer through alleviating negative emotional states, overriding the offender's inhibitions causing 'danger signals' to be ignored, something that might otherwise deter an individual from offending (Thakker & Ward, 2015). The findings also provide support for the role of sexual preoccupation (Kafka, 2003; Långström & Seto, 2006), particularly in the escalation of sexual offending from a non-contact to a contact offence.

Implications

Overall, the current results could have important implications for professionals tasked with the assessment and treatment of sexual offenders in England and Wales, particularly those committing offences of Indecent Exposure. When considering the assessment of sexual offenders, the findings could contribute towards identifying those potentially at greater risk of committing a more serious sexual offence, in addition to the identification of risk factors that

may suggest an offender is at greater risk of escalating in their behaviour. Specifically, practitioners should consider the role of deviant sexual interests and sexual preoccupation as not only contributing to the onset of sexual offending, as highlighted within widely cited meta analyses (e.g. Hanson & Morton-Bourgon, 2005), but also the role this may play in offence escalation.

Following more widespread research, practitioners may wish to consider prioritising individuals assessed as having risk in these domains for more intense forms of treatment, as is currently the case within the Prison Service. This is of particular importance considering offences of Indecent Exposure are commonly prosecuted through the imposition of a fine (if, of course, they are reported to the police in the first instance). Given the potential risk in this area, if further research corroborates these findings, law enforcement officials may wish to re-evaluate sentencing options for this group to include attendance at a Sex Offender Treatment Programme, or at least a comprehensive assessment of the individual's risk. Whilst the majority of the risk factors identified as a result of this study are already targeted, at least on some level, by the Core and Extended SOTP's currently offered within the Prison Service, this study also highlights the role of more distal factors such as emotional neglect and the impact of disrupted attachments as possible antecedents to sexual offending.

However, the assessment tools (e.g. SARN-TNA) used within this can be highly directive, meaning there is less scope for consideration of other, case-specific factors that may affect an individual's decision to offend. It is argued that there should be scope within such pre-treatment assessments for evaluators to consider risk factors on a case-by-case basis to ensure that all areas of risk are fully addressed and that the process is individualised. The findings also suggest that assessors should incorporate the potential for escalation in the severity of an individual's offending, as captured to some extent by the Risk of Sexual Violence Protocol (RSVP; Hart et al., 2003).

Limitations

The present findings were a result of an assessment of one individual; therefore it would be unrealistic to extrapolate these findings to suggest that the above-identified risk factors are predictive of the onset of sexual offending and offence escalation in those convicted of offences of Indecent Exposure and Sexual Assault. Further, large-scale research is required in order for such generalisations to be made.

Limitations are also noted in that some of the information utilised during this study came from Sam's self-report of events, which is limited for a number of reasons. Firstly, recall bias may

have been an issue, as Sam was asked about events that in some instances happened several years prior; therefore his recall may have been limited or distorted. Second, Sam may have minimized aspects of his offence, or over-exaggerated troubled aspects of his childhood in order to present himself in a more favourable light. However, this was overcome to some extent through corroborating information that was obtained during interview with existing file information and discussions with SOTP facilitators.

Finally, the assessments used formed the standard assessment framework adopted by HMPS for individuals completing SOTP. As the assessment process was fairly prescriptive, other, relevant risk factors may have been missed meaning Sam may not have had the opportunity to address all areas of risk during treatment. More useful information may have been obtained if a broader range of assessment tools were adopted, for example, a formal personality assessment or the selection of psychometric measures that were more specific to the individual. However, regarding the latter, as Sam participated in the case study following the completion of two sex offender treatment programmes, administering additional psychometric measures at this time may not have provided an accurate picture of Sam's functioning at the time the offences were committed, which would not have been useful in informing the formulation.

Recommendations

In terms of further work that could be completed in order to manage Sam's risk of sexual reoffending, given that the majority of the risk factors that contributed towards escalation fell within the domain of 'Sexual Interests', Sam should be referred to the Healthy Sex Programme (HSP), which specifically addresses risk in this domain. The Core and Extended SOTP do not target such risk factors in-depth; therefore risk present in this area may not have been fully addressed through the work Sam has currently completed, particularly since Sam experienced severe difficulties in this area. The waiting list for HSP in the Prison Service is currently approximately two years; therefore in the interim Sam could complete some sexual thought diaries utilising a CBT-informed approach to enable him to monitor and challenge problematic sexual thoughts. Finally, Sam requires one-to-one psychological support to develop strategies to manage stress and negative emotional states, which could be achieved through utilising a DBT-informed approach.

Ethical Considerations

One potential ethical concern could relate to the risk of Sam feeling coerced to undertake the assessment. In order to overcome this, it was clearly explained that his participation in the case study would

not affect his treatment or progress through custody, and that his participation was independent from the work completed as part of SOTP. Efforts were also made to check Sam's understanding of the implications of his participation in the case study. Consent was sought from Sam for the use of his information within this Case Study. This is in line with BPS (2009) guidelines.

Conclusion

This case study aimed to identify the factors contributing to offending and offence escalation in the case of a repeat sexual offender. Overall, the findings suggest that a largely different set of risk factors precipitated the onset of the client's offending compared to those that contributed to the escalation in his behaviour over time. These findings constitute a step towards achieving a more comprehensive understanding of the offence-patterns of those convicted of Indecent Exposure and Sexual Assault, and suggest that Indecent Exposure may not be such a 'nuisance offence' as initially thought. Also highlighted is the need for professionals to consider the potential for escalation towards the commission of more serious and harmful offences, and identify the factors that contribute to such behaviour to ensure that any potential risk in this area is adequately addressed within the structured HMPS assessment and intervention framework. However, it is not

currently clear whether there are indeed a specific set of risk factors that contribute to offence escalation in sexual offending and therefore it is recommended that further efforts are directed towards identifying factors that are relevant to the risk of offence escalation, and to consider whether this is accurately captured within current intervention.



Chapter Five:

A Critical Appraisal of the Community Attitudes Toward Sex Offenders (CATSO) Scale

Abstract

Existing research indicates that the attitudes of the public towards those convicted of a sexual offence are complex and inherently negative. Such attitudes have influenced the development of public policies aimed at managing the perceived level of risk posed by these individuals, and together these can impede rehabilitation and successful community reintegration. Given these implications, it is essential that assessment tools designed to measure attitudes towards sexual offenders provide an accurate picture of the public's views, in order to identify areas of discrepancy with factual information about sexual offending. This review examines the Community Attitudes Toward Sex Offenders scale (CATSO; Church, Wakeman, Miller, Clements, & Sun, 2008), labelled by its developers as the most promising measure of attitudes towards sexual offenders, in terms of its validity, reliability, practical utility and its usefulness in accurately capturing the attitudes of the public towards those convicted of a sexual offence. It concludes that further work is required to develop a measure that accurately captures public 'attitudes', as many researchers have proposed revisions to the original factor structure. In light of this, it is suggested that further empirical support is required regarding the utility of the CATSO in measuring public attitudes towards sexual offenders.

Introduction

Much of the existing research in relation to sexual offending has focussed on identifying risk factors, recidivism rates, and the impact of such behaviour on victims. Those addressing attitudes towards sexual offenders, and tools to measure such, have remained comparatively under-researched. However, more of a focus in this area is required given the impact public attitudes may have on the successful rehabilitation of sexual offenders. For example, Corabian and Hogan (2015) argued that the negative attitudes of the public might actually contribute to increased rates of sexual offending through preventing reintegration back into the community; for example, through limiting access to employment and restricting where an offender can live. Further, if attitudes are based on misinformation and sensationalised media reporting, the policies influenced by these attitudes may not accurately reflect the needs of the public and create unnecessary sanctions and consequences for those convicted of a sexual offence.

Given the findings from Chapter 2 that highlight the complexity of public attitudes, in addition to issues associated with the inconsistent measurement of 'attitudes', it is necessary that existing attitude measures are robustly evaluated to determine their utility

in accurately capturing the attitudes of the public towards those convicted of a sexual offence.

Existing Attitude Measures

Breckler (1984) proposed that attitudes consist of three dimensions: a cognitive component, an affective component and a behavioural component. In light of this, in order to develop a comprehensive understanding of the attitudes held regarding a particular topic or entity, all three dimensions should be explored. Currently, there is no 'gold standard' for the measurement of attitudes towards sexual offenders. Consequently, researchers have utilised a variety of different methods, some of which were developed by study authors solely for the purpose of the research, whereas others have simply relied on qualitative data through interviewing participants about their perceptions (e.g. Brown, Deakin, & Spencer, 2008). This makes synthesising and comparing the results of studies difficult, meaning accurate conclusions regarding the nature of public attitudes as a whole are difficult to achieve.

One existing tool that has been utilised in the general measurement of such attitudes is the Attitudes Toward Sex Offenders scale (ATS; Hogue, 1993). This is a 36-item tool that was originally developed

from the Attitudes Toward Prisoners scale (ATP; Melvin, Gramling, & Gardner, 1985), where the word 'prisoner' in each of the statements was substituted for 'sex offender'. The ATS can be considered to capture all three attitudinal components through evaluating affect-based judgments, stereotypical evaluations and behavioural responses. However, the scale is limited in that it may not capture the specific and unique attitudes relevant to sexual offenders. This is important, as public attitudes towards this group are frequently measured as being overtly negative, and have influenced policy and legislative developments that may act as a barrier to their successful reintegration into the community. Further, existing studies have largely utilised this measure to assess attitudes of professionals working with sexual offenders, and not attitudes of the public (e.g. Hogue, 1993). The utility of the ATS as a measure of assessing public attitudes is therefore currently limited.

Other scales have been developed to measure more specific areas of the public's attitude towards sexual offenders. The Attitude Toward the Treatment of Sex Offenders scale (ATTSO; Wnuk, Chapman, & Jeglic, 2006) is a 15-item questionnaire examining attitudes towards sex offender treatment programmes. It comprises three sub-scales reflecting attitudes towards the incapacitation of offenders, treatment effectiveness and the use of mandatory

treatment programmes. The ATTSO has been cited as a promising means to address both public and professional attitudes (Church et al., 2008). Similarly, the Public Attitudes Toward Sex Offender Rehabilitation scale (PATSOR; Rogers, Hirst, & Davies, 2011) explores public attitudes towards the rehabilitation and reintegration of sexual offenders into society. However, the sole focus of these scales is on attitudes towards the treatment and rehabilitation of sexual offenders respectively; therefore such measures are best used in conjunction with a more versatile measure of public attitudes, such as the CATSO.

CATSO Development and Overview

Within their study examining attitudes towards sexual offenders, Church et al. (2008) sought to develop a standardised assessment tool to measure public attitudes relating to specific domains highlighted by the literature and through discussions with experts in the field of sexual offending. The CATSO was developed as an alternative to existing scales that the authors perceived had not been adequately validated, used a predominately qualitative design or were based on measures designed to examine attitudes towards other offender groups.

Following a number of analyses and re-analyses, exploratory and subsequent confirmatory factor analyses found a four-factor,

18-item version to best represent the domains of interest (Church et al., 2008). These domains were labelled as 'Social Isolation' (F1; 5 items); 'Capacity to Change' (F2; 5 items); 'Severity/Dangerousness' (F3; 5 items) and 'Deviancy' (F4; 3 items). Cronbach's alpha was used to determine the internal consistency for the CATSO and each of its factors.

When completing the scale, respondents are required to rate their level of agreement for each statement using a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 to 6, with one being 'Disagree Strongly' and six being 'Agree Strongly', with overall scores ranging from 18 to 108. Church et al. (2008) purported that *"higher scores on the individual factors represent beliefs in which sex offenders are considered to be persons who are loners* [F1]*, are unlikely to change* [F2]*, are especially dangerous and commit overly serious crimes* [F3]*, and are sexually preoccupied* [F4]*"* (p.257), with higher overall scores reflecting more negative attitudes.

However, issues with the latter domain arise in that it implies that sexual deviance and preoccupation are the same thing. Within the literature, deviant sexual behaviours are considered by some to be a mental disorder (e.g. Laws & O'Donohue, 2008), or are more simply considered as behaviours *"that involve individuals seeking erotic gratification through means that are considered odd, different or unacceptable to either most or influential persons in one's community"* (Tewksbury, 2007, p.4238), with no reference to the

frequency of engaging in or thinking about these behaviours, which may otherwise indicate a level of preoccupation. Preoccupation is instead defined as a persistent Total Sexual Outlet (TSO) of seven or more orgasms per week for a period of six months (Kafka, 1997), or a high frequency of impersonal sexual activity (Langstrom & Hanson, 2006). This suggests that the constructs of sexual preoccupation and deviancy are fundamentally different from one another. In addition to measuring the attitudes of the public, the authors also claim that the scale could be used in other settings such as correctional and mental health facilities to address the attitudes of professionals.

Church et al. (2008) have since attempted to update their original measure by replacing one item (item 5; 'sexual fondling [inappropriate unwarranted touch] is not as bad as rape') with 'a lot of sex offenders use their victim to create pornography', resulting in the CATSO Revised (CATSO-R). However, Church et al. (2008) did not provide an explanation for the revision, and not all researchers have adopted the newer version of the scale (Shackley et al., 2014). The original scale will therefore be evaluated, a copy of which is provided in Appendix P.

Given the importance and implications of public attitudes towards sexual offenders and the limitations of existing tools used to

measure such, it is necessary for a single, validated assessment tool to be developed that is consistently adopted and accurately captures these attitudes. Despite the CATSO being labelled by several researchers as being the 'most promising' measure of attitudes towards sexual offenders (e.g. Shackley et al., 2014), the scale is not without its limitations.

Validity

External Validity

External validity is the degree to which a measure can be generalised to other groups of people or situations. The CATSO was originally developed and validated using a sample of undergraduate psychology students from a southern university in the United States (US), located in the 'Bible Belt', an area in which there are typically strong conservative beliefs (Church et al., 2008). This sample is unlikely to be representative of the university student population, or of the general population as a whole, meaning the conclusions that can be drawn regarding the specific factor domains that accurately capture public attitudes are limited.

Specific sample demographics may have introduced further bias into the development study. For example, the majority of the sample (70%) consisted of females, who were mostly born-again Christians. Existing studies have shown that females generally

display more negative attitudes towards sexual offenders (e.g. Brown, Deakin, & Spencer, 2008; Kernsmith, Craun, & Foster, 2009). Further, the average participant age was reported to be 19.4 years. Some studies have found that younger participants hold more punitive attitudes towards sexual offenders, for example, in terms of having the least support for a sex offender treatment centre being located in their neighbourhood (Brown, 1999). However, given the findings from Chapter 2, it seems that overall participant age does not influence punitive judgments towards sexual offenders. Further, Brown (1999) appears to assume that negative attitudes and not wanting to live in close proximity to a sex offender are the same thing. Without specific examination of this, conclusions cannot be drawn with regards to whether there were other reasons why participants of the study did not want a sex offender living nearby. Studies have also shown that higher educational attainment may be associated with less negative attitudes and less support for sex offender management policies (Comartin, Kernsmith, & Kernsmith, 2009; Willis, Malinen, & Johnston, 2013). The CATSO does not, therefore, have full external validity.

The above research calls into question whether the original factors identified as capturing 'public' attitudes towards sexual offenders would actually do so in a more representative sample,

and suggests that gender, age and education should all be considered when evaluating such attitudes.

Responses to the CATSO may also be influenced by cultural factors. Traditional Chinese and Asian cultures tend to uphold attitudes that differ to those found in Western societies (Chui, Cheng, & Ong, 2014). Typically, Asian cultures hold very conservative attitudes towards sex. For example, from a young age, Chinese women are taught to dress appropriately so not to attract trouble, including sexual assaults. Owing to the importance placed upon chastity and female virginity, blame is frequently placed upon victims of sexual assault, and victims are often shamed for disgracing family honour (Chui et al., 2014). Due to the way women are socially constructed, the responsibility is placed on victims to prevent their own sexual victimisation. Rape is instead attributed to a man's desire for sex (Chui et al., 2014). This in in contrast to Western societies, whereby women are portrayed as particularly vulnerable to sexual victimisation.

Studies have shown that Chinese and Asian cultures are more likely to endorse rape myths (commonly held false beliefs that serve to justify sexual aggression by men against women; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994) compared to Western societies. Lee, Pomeroy, Yoo, and Rheinboldt (2005) found that Asian college students attributed greater responsibility to women in preventing rape,

believing that it was the victims themselves that precipitated rape, and cited sex as the main motivation for such offences. Because of this and their apparent justifications of male sexual behaviour, it could be assumed that people from China would be more lenient towards sexual offenders (Chui et al., 2014). Given this possibility, it would be important that the CATSO be adapted to capture these cultural differences.

Construct Validity

Construct validity can be described as the degree to which a scale measures what it claims to measure. Within their development study, Church et al. (2008) suggested that the CATSO "*was designed specifically to address perceptions and stereotypes of sex offenders"* (p.258). However, the term 'sex offender' assumes that all sex offenders are viewed in the same way and promotes a homogenous view of this population.

It is possible that different types of sex offender (e.g. child molesters, rapists, non-contact offenders) are perceived differently by the public, with some offences eliciting more negative attitudes than others (e.g. Challinor & Duff, 2017). For example, Brillon (1998) suggested that, in relation to sexual offenders, the public tend to consider the most severe and violent instances of such crimes. Coupled with the tendency of the media to sensationalise

sex crimes and devote coverage to offences that are particularly violent or abhorrent, this may help reinforce myths surrounding the dangerousness of sexual offenders, and increase the likelihood that these were the types of offences being considered by public samples. To further illustrate this point, Weekes, Pelletier, and Beaudette (1995) examined the perceptions of prison officers towards different types of sexual offending, and found that more negative attitudes were displayed towards those committing offences against children compared to those committing offences against adult women. However, Ferguson and Ireland (2006) found no significant differences between ATS scores, indicating that attitudes did not differ in relation to offender type.

More recently, Harper and Hogue (2015) argued that, in contrast to the definition of 'attitudes' widely adopted by studies, 'stereotypes' are conceived as archetypal traits associated with a specific social group (Greenwald & Banaji, 1995). This differentiates the two concepts, as attitudes "*require affective evaluations of particular subjects, whilst stereotype judgements require knowledge-based evaluations"* (Harper & Hogue, 2015, p.3).

In light of this, it was argued that the CATSO might actually be evaluating respondent's perceptions about sexual offenders, rather than their attitudes *per se*. The CATSO may therefore provide a limited view of the public's attitudes through only evaluating one

domain (Breckler, 1984). This neglects other components that may offer a broader picture of the complexity of attitudes towards sexual offenders, as individuals may hold negative attitudes in one domain, but may hold less punitive attitudes in another. It was subsequently proposed that the CATSO and the ATS be used in conjunction; with the former capturing perceptions of the characteristics of sexual offenders and the latter capturing more direct attitudes (Harper & Hogue, 2015).

Within their study, Harper and Hogue (2015) sought to redevelop the CATSO for use as an outcome measure, rather than a measurement of attitudes, by establishing the CATSO's factor structure and underlying reliability coefficients. Using a sample of 400 members of the UK public, a new 20-item 'Perceptions of Sex Offenders' (PSO) scale was developed with a three-factor structure: 'Sentencing and Management' (α=.93), 'Stereotype Endorsement' (α=.85), and 'Risk Perception' (α=.81). The overall scale produced a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of α=.92, indicating excellent internal consistency. However, some of the new items (e.g. 'the death penalty should be reintroduced for sex offenders') may not be applicable to other jurisdictions where this law is already in place. Due to its novelty, further validation of this scale is required before generalisations can be made. However, this suggests that it may be necessary to re-consider how the CATSO is used, and that its use

should be considered alongside alternative measures to ensure attitudes are accurately captured.

When the construct validity of the CATSO was analysed by Wevodau, Cramer, Gemberling, and Clark (2016), the two factors of 'Social Isolation' and 'Capacity to Change' were not significantly correlated, a finding consistent with previous studies (e.g. Conley, Hill, Church, Stoeckel, & Allen, 2011). This suggests that, with regards to public perceptions of sexual offenders, these factors are distinct constructs that are largely uninfluenced by each other. That is, believing sexual offenders are socially isolated is theoretically different from beliefs that they are unable to change (Wevodau et al., 2016).

Predictive Validity

Predictive validity can be defined as the extent to which scores on a particular measure are subsequently related to the outcome that the measure was trying to predict. The predictive validity of the CATSO has been largely overlooked by previous studies. This was recently addressed within a recent publication by Wevodau et al. (2016), who investigated whether the proposed factor structure of the CATSO could predict legal perceptions or decisions using jury panel members who read a vignette of a sexual assault case.

Results showed that the 'Capacity to Change' subscale demonstrated significant predictive validity, whereby more negative capacity to change beliefs were associated with more perpetrator and less victim blame, more lengthy sentencing recommendations and less likelihood of recommending parole eligibility. Conversely, the 'Social Isolation' subscale was not found to be a significant predictor of punitive attitudes.

However, this study is limited in that the vignette presented to participants consisted of one offence type (Rape), meaning attitudes towards other offence categories were not captured by the research. The scope for extrapolating these findings to predict outcomes for other sexual offence categories is therefore limited. Further, utilising a 'mock juror' paradigm is not reflective of a true court case, given that participants in this sample did not deliberate on their decisions. Given this, it is questionable whether the study accurately represented a mock juror paradigm, with no reported evidence of a group decision-making process. Nevertheless, this study is the first to evaluate the CATSO using the scale developers' intended population (members of the public).

Factor Structure

The factor structure of a measure relates to the correlational relationship between variables that are thought to measure a

particular construct. Several studies have attempted to validate the CATSO's original factor structure across different populations and cultural contexts. The results have been varied, with researchers proposing alternative two-, three-, and four-factor models. Table 10 outlines current research in this area.

A number of studies have attempted to replicate the CATSO's factor structure using samples of professionals working directly with sexual offenders (Conley et al., 2011; Shelton et al., 2013; Tewksbury et al., 2013; and Tewksbury & Mustaine, 2013). The results of these studies suggest that the CATSO is not a useful tool for capturing the attitudes of professionals towards sexual offenders, with significant revisions being proposed. For example, Tewksbury et al. (2012) suggested that Factor 2 (untitled) was the only theoretically meaningful factor that most consistently represented the original 'Capacity to Change' factor. The remaining factors in this study were comprised of a combination of items from the original 'Social Isolation', 'Severity/Dangerousness' and 'Deviancy' factors. These factors remained unnamed due to the lack of conceptually meaningful loadings. Tewksbury et al. (2012) concluded that significant modifications to the CATSO are required in order for the scale to be effective in capturing the attitudes of professionals working with sexual offenders.

Table 10: CATSO Factors Analysis Results by Previous Study in the Literature

Study	Sample	Location	Factor Structure	Subscale Title (Items)
Church et al. (2008)	Public	U.S.	Four Factors	Social Isolation (6, 7, 8, 14, 16) Capacity to Change (1, 2, 11, 12, 18) Severity/Dangerousness (4, 9, 13, 15, 17) Deviancy (3, 5, 10)
Conley et al. (2011)	Corrections and Probation Officers	U.S.	Two factors	Social Isolation (6, 7, 8, 16) Capacity to Change (1, 11, 12, 18)
Shelton, Stone & Winder (2013)	Prison Officers and University staff	U.K.	Two factors	Social Isolation (6, 7, 8, 14, 16) Capacity to Change (1, 2, 11, 12, 18)
Tewksbury, Mustaine & Payne (2012)	Criminal Justice professionals	U.S.	Three factors	Untitled* (4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 14, 16) Untitled* (1, 2, 9, 11, 12, 13, 18) Untitled* (3, 15, 17)
Tewksbury & Mustaine (2013)	Law enforcement officials	U.S.	Four factors	Social Isolation (6, 7, 8, 14, 16) Capacity to Change (1, 2, 9, 11, 12, 18) Severity/Dangerousness (5, 13, 15, 17) Deviancy (3, 4, 10)
Chui, Cheng, & Ong (2014)	Public	China	Three factors	Social Isolation (6, 7, 8) Deviancy (3, 4, 10) Punitive Attitudes (2, 12, 18)
Shackley et al. (2014)	Public	Australia	Four factors	Social Tendencies (6, 7, 8, 14, 16) Treatment and Punishment (1, 2, 9, 11, 12, 13, 18) Crime Characteristics (5, 15, 17) Sexual Behaviour (3, 4, 10)
Klein (2015)	Public	U.S.	Four factors	Social Isolation (6, 7, 8, 14, 16) Capacity to Change (1, 2, 11, 12, 18) Severity/Dangerousness (4, 9, 13, 15, 17) Deviancy (3, 5, 10)
Wevodau et al. (2016)	Public	U.S.	Two factors	Social Isolation (6, 7, 8, 16) Capacity to Change (1, 11, 12, 18)

Tewksbury and Mustaine (2013) are the only authors to report the same factor structure as the original development study by Church et al. (2008), who concluded that the CATSO is an efficient method of categorising law-enforcement officials' views of sexual offenders.

With regards to public samples, results are again mixed. Although the factors were renamed in Chui et al's. (2014) study, the former two factors largely resembled the original factors described by Church et al. (2008) in terms of capturing perceptions of sexual offenders' social isolation and deviant behaviour (Chui et al., 2014), suggesting that attitudes towards these individuals may be consistent across cultures.

However, whilst Shackley et al's. (2014) results revealed a similar factor structure to the original development study, several of the items were found to load on to different components, resulting in the components being re-labelled. These authors suggested that differences in factor loadings could be attributed to a larger sample size being obtained relative to the original development sample, and the fact that the present study sample can be considered to be more representative of the general population.

In a more recent study, Wevodau et al. (2016) sought to clarify the CATSO's factor structure in a US community sample for which the scale was originally intended for use. Specifically, each of

the previously described CATSO structures were tested to determine the model of best fit. Results showed that the two-factor structure proposed by Conley et al. (2011) was the only model to demonstrate above-average fit to the data, with the factors of 'Capacity to Change' (4 items) and 'Social Isolation' (4 items) demonstrating good to excellent fit.

Overall, studies measuring the factor structure of the CATSO have provided varying levels of support, with a variety of different structural models being obtained. The results suggest that the variables included within the original scale are not strongly correlated with one another; therefore it may not reliably measure public 'attitudes' towards sexual offenders. Further, the majority of studies have failed to replicate the original factor structure when measuring attitudes of various professional groups. This refutes Church et al's. (2008) claims that the CATSO can be utilised within clinical settings, and suggests that an alternative measure may be necessary to specifically address the attitudes of professionals. Collectively, the results from the above studies suggest that the 'Social Isolation' and 'Capacity to Change' subscales are the most consistent features when assessing attitudes towards sexual offenders. However, differences in the findings may be attributed to differences in jurisdictions between the studies. For example, policies in the US are far more publicly available compared to those

in Australia. The resulting heightened knowledge and awareness of sexual offenders may therefore have impacted upon participant's attitudes to some extent. Further, it may be necessary to re-develop some of the items to ensure that they are individualised to the particular culture being examined.

Reliability

Internal Consistency

Internal consistency is the degree to which every item within a particular measure, measures the same construct. Many of the aforementioned studies have utilised Cronbach's alpha to determine the CATSO's reliability. Table 11 outlines the reliability estimates reported within previous research.

In their original development study, Church et al. (2008) concluded that the CATSO has adequate internal consistency, with the exception of Factor 4 'Deviancy'. Higher reliability estimates were reported for Factors 1 and 2 ('Social Isolation' and 'Capacity to Change'). Subsequent research has largely been consistent with this (Conley et al., 2011; Hoing et al., 2016; Klein, 2015), leading Shackley et al. (2014) to conclude that only items relating to the first two factors should be considered when investigating public attitudes. Similar to Church et al's. findings, studies have shown the

'Deviancy' subscale to be the least reliable with poor internal consistency, suggesting the items within this factor do not actually capture the public's views of sex offender deviancy.

Table 11: CATSO Reliability Estimates

Study	Sample	Location	Cronbach's Alpha
Church et al. (2008)	Public	U.S.	Social Isolation: α= .80 Capacity to Change: α= .80 Severity/Dangerousness: α= .70 Deviancy: α= .43 Total scale: α= .74
Conley et al. (2011)	Professional	U.S.	Social Isolation: α= .84 Capacity to Change: α= .77 Total scale: α= .73
Chui et al. (2014)	Public	China	Social Isolation: α= .80 Deviancy: α= .69 Punitive Attitudes: α= .64 Total scale: α= .69
Shackley et al. (2014)	Public	Australia	Social Tendencies: α= .86 Treatment and Punishment: α= .83 Crime Characteristics: α= .59 Sexual Behaviour: α= .58
Hoing et al. (2016)	Public	Europe	Social Isolation: α= .84 Capacity to Change: α= .77 Severity/Dangerousness: α= .76 Deviancy: α= .64 Total scale: α= .81
Klien (2015)	Public	U.S.	Social Isolation: α= .81 Capacity to Change: α= .78 Severity/Dangerousness: α= .74 Deviancy: α= .70 Total scale: α= .84

Overall, evidence surrounding the reliability of the CATSO is mixed. However, few studies have measured the reliability of the CATSO's original factor structure, instead focussing on evaluating the revised versions developed within each of the respective studies. Höing,

Petrina, Duke, Völlm, and Vogelvang (2016) added a neutral mid-point answer (4 = 'undecided') to the original CATSO scale and reported alpha estimates that demonstrated a good level of internal consistency. Similar results were reported by Klein (2015), who also examined the reliability of the original scale. Despite these more positive findings, it is considered that the findings overall are too varied and limited for firm conclusions to be drawn surrounding the reliability of the CATSO as a measure for accurately capturing the attitudes of the public.

Other Limitations

In terms of the structure of the CATSO, the term 'sex offender' is adopted within each of the items. However, this is a very broad term for such a heterogeneous group. Research shows that the public's attitude may vary depending on the specific category of sexual offence being examined. For example, Kernsmith et al. (2009) reported that participants indicated they would be most fearful of paedophiles, with 80% reporting that they would be 'somewhat' or 'very' afraid if they knew a paedophile had moved into their neighbourhood. Similarly, these offenders elicited the most support for registration requirements. More recent research has shown that rapists were perceived as the most dangerous, whilst voyeurs were perceived as the least dangerous in a sample of

the public and professionals working with forensic populations (Challinor & Duff, 2017). It may therefore be appropriate for the CATSO to specifically distinguish between different types of sexual offender in order to more accurately examine the complexity of public attitudes.

In terms of scoring, no cut-off scores are provided by the authors to determine what might constitute an individual holding 'more negative' attitudes. Judgements in this case are therefore subjective and may vary depending on both the participant completing the scale and individual evaluating their responses. However, categorisation of attitudes into 'negative' or 'positive' may not sufficiently capture the complexity of public attitudes in this domain and reflect the subtle differences in attitudes (Conley et al., 2011).

Finally, many of the studies cited within this chapter have evaluated the scale with professional populations, which does little to inform regarding the effectiveness of the CATSO in effectively capturing the attitudes of the public.

Conclusion

This critical appraisal has highlighted the strengths and concerns in relation to the reliability and validity of the CATSO scale, and has demonstrated the limitations of this tool in practice. The scale,

originally designed to assess community attitudes, was developed using a sample of undergraduate university students. Subsequent attempts to validate the scale using both community and professional samples have failed to replicate the CATSO's original factor structure, with revisions being proposed. Further, attempts to validate the tool within different jurisdictions and populations (community, professionals) have concluded that further revisions to the scale are first required before the scale can be utilised in this way. It is therefore questioned whether the CATSO is a useful measure to capture public attitudes towards sexual offenders. The scale also fails to adequately capture the complexity of public attitudes, for example, by focussing solely on respondent's stereotypical perceptions and portraying sexual offenders as a homogenous population. Given the significance of public attitudes in the development of management policies, there is a fundamental need to be able to more accurately measure attitudes towards sex offenders.



Chapter Six:

General Discussion

This research thesis aimed to provide a broad overview of contemporary issues and challenges in relation to sexual offending. The thesis was motivated, in part, by the need to address the disparity between perceived levels of risk as reported by the public, which are often misinformed and have significant implications for desistance and the rehabilitation of those convicted of a sexual offence; and offer a more accurate perspective on risk. It is hoped that this will allow practices to be adopted that increase desistance of those convicted of a sexual offence and better support community reintegration and rehabilitation, in addition considering how opportunities for community reintegration can be improved (Willis et al., 2012).

To achieve its aims, this thesis incorporated a variety of methods. It systematically reviewed the literature exploring public perceptions towards those convicted of a sexual offence, with specific focus on identifying the role of demographic characteristics as predictors of these attitudes (Chapter 2); explored the offence patterns of repeat sexual offenders in relation to whether they escalate, de-escalate or remain stable in terms of the severity of their offences over time (Chapter 3); identified the factors that may have contributed to the onset of and escalation in the offending behaviour of a sexual recidivist through the use of an individual case study and psychological formulation (Chapter 4); and critically evaluated a tool

commonly used in the assessment of public attitudes towards sexual offenders (Chapter 5).

Summary of Findings

The objective of Chapter 2 was to examine the complexity of public attitudes towards those convicted of a sexual offence through determining the extent to which specific demographic characteristics of the public influenced punitive judgements. A systematic approach was utilised to review the 14 identified studies. The way in which attitudes were defined and measured, in addition to the quality of included studies and overall findings varied. Generally, public perceptions were negative, with misperceptions commonly being endorsed including beliefs about high recidivism rates.

With regards to the influence of demographic variables, only one of the 14 included studies specifically focussed on such characteristics as predictors of punitive attitudes, with others incorporating participant demographics as additional or control variables. No consistent relationship was identified in relation to the influence of participant age on perceptions of sex offenders. The majority of studies in this respect found no significant differences between age groups, and where significant differences were identified, the results were mixed. Inconsistency was also observed in relation to participant gender; however, overall, females tended

to be more punitive compared to males. Level of educational attainment was the only demographic variable that was consistently associated with perceptions, with those with higher levels of educational attainment holding more positive attitudes compared to those with lower levels of educational attainment.

Given the findings from Chapter 2, and that that perceptions of high recidivism rates were cited within several of the included studies, Chapter 3 aimed to examine the heterogeneity of sexual recidivists with respect to their offence patterns and potential for escalation. This builds on existing research that focuses on the stability versus versatility of the offence patterns of sexual recidivists, and can add some perspective towards determining whether the attitudes of the public, and the sex offender management policies they influence, are justified.

The present study constitutes the first of its kind to explore patterns in offence escalation through considering whether sexual offenders escalate through increasingly serious offence categories, adopting a broader focus from existing research in this area. In doing this, transition matricies were utilised to examine the offence patterns of a sample of repeat sexual offenders detained within HMPS. Results indicated an overall pattern of stability, suggesting that sexual recidivists commit the same type of offence from one offence to the next. These results add to the limited existing

research in this area (Hewitt & Beauregard, 2014; Leclerc, Lussier, & Deslauriers-Varin, 2015), and contribute to the continuing specialization versus versatility debate, supporting the fact that sexual offenders may specialize within the domain of sexual offending (e.g. Howard, Barnett, & Mann, 2013; Soothill, 2000).

However, when considering offenders who changed their behaviour, escalation was also common. In fact, when Rape (the most serious offence included within the analysis) was removed from the equation, escalation was the most common offence pattern. It may therefore be useful to explore the offence of Rape specifically to identify whether rapists escalate within this offence category, for example, using increased levels of violence, or committing homicide or humiliation of the victim. Unfortunately, it was not possible to identify whether individuals committing a particular type of sexual offence were more likely to escalate, with none of the analyses reaching significance.

As a pattern of escalation was identified in Chapter 3, Chapter 4 subsequently focussed on identifying the factors that contributed to the onset of and escalation in the offence behaviours of a repeat sexual offender, who had committed the offences of Indecent Exposure and Sexual Assault. This was achieved through the use of psychological assessment and formulation. The results suggested that in this case, a different set of risk factors contributed to the

onset of the client's offending compared to those that contributed to the escalation in his behaviour over time. Specifically, factors that were hypothesised as contributing to offence escalation fell within the domain of sexual deviancy, including a lack of sexual self-regulation, sexual preoccupation, and distorted sexual interests. Conversely, negative emotional states, low self-esteem, poor problem-solving and more distal factors such as adverse developmental experiences appear to have contributed to the onset of his offending.

Chapter 5 offered a critical appraisal of the Community Attitudes Toward Sex Offenders scale (CATSO; Church et al., 2008), a measure frequently used to measure public attitudes towards sexual offenders, and one that was adopted by several studies included within Chapter 2. The scale was considered in terms of its reliability, validity, practical utility and its usefulness in accurately capturing the attitudes of the public towards those convicted of a sexual offence. At the time of its development, the CATSO was proposed as the most promising measure of attitudes towards sexual offenders and an alternative to existing measures. However, the validity and reliability of the tool was questioned, with many studies advocating the need for revisions. This is consistent with concerns raised by Harper and Hogue (2015), and Harper et al. (2017), who further argue that what the CATSO actually considers are the *perceptions* of

sexual offenders through mostly evaluating stereotypical views, offering little insight into other attitudinal domains (Breckler, 1984; Harper & Hogue, 2015). The tool is also limited in capturing the complexity of public attitudes, and it is suggested that the CATSO should be used in conjunction with other measures in order to obtain a more accurate picture of public attitudes.

Implications

The findings from Chapter 2 are too varied and weak for firm conclusions to be established regarding the influence of demographic variables on public perceptions towards sexual offenders. Nevertheless, the findings contribute to more recent efforts to determine the complexity of public attitudes (e.g. Challinor & Duff, 2017; King & Roberts, 2017). Further, gaining an understanding of which demographic groups are more disposed to experiencing negative perceptions could help inform the development of training programmes aimed at improving public attitudes, in terms of highlighting where training efforts need to be targeted. Specifically, a broad approach should be adopted, though this should include females and those with lower levels of educational attainment. In general, training programmes focussed on improving public attitudes towards sexual offenders have been shown to have a positive effect (e.g. Craig, 2005). More recently,

Harper et al. (2017) advocated the need for current perceptions to be challenged through the use of 'humanized exemplars' in order for sex offenders to be seen as people, rather than 'monsters', and to create an environment that supports desistance. Providing the public with a more realistic awareness of who commits sexual offences could help achieve this through re-directing management policies towards protecting those who are at greater risk of victimisation.

At a broader level, the results here could have implications for the reintegration and desistance of those convicted of a sexual offence, and supports the conclusions drawn from existing research (e.g. Willis et al., 2013) that public attitudes, as they currently stand, are not conducive to the successful rehabilitation of sexual offenders. In contrast, negative public attitudes are in conflict with the propositions made by the ITDSO (Göbbels, Ward, & Willis, 2012) and the GLM (Ward & Maruna, 2007), in that an external environment that does not support and maintain rehabilitative efforts could have the opposite and unintended effect of increasing recidivism through misguided intervention and management efforts. Further, whilst many researchers have advocated the need for strengths-based and desistance-focussed approaches to be incorporated within treatment efforts (e.g. Willis, Yates, Gannon, & Ward, 2013), in order for this to be effective in the longer-term, additional thought needs to be given to promoting this at a

community-wide level. In order to achieve this, more accurate information needs to be provided regarding who is actually 'at risk', rather than promoting a 'one size fits all' approach to offender management. However, given that many of the studies within Chapter 2 did not differentiate between different categories of sex offender or sexual offence types, the complexity of attitudes cannot accurately be determined in terms of whether a particular type of sex offender evokes more negative attitudes, and this could perpetuate the view of a homogenous sex offender. Emerging research examining sex-offending hierarchies as perceived by the public and individuals working with forensic populations suggests that contact sexual offenders are perceived to be more dangerous compared to non-contact offenders. More specifically, rapists were perceived as the most dangerous, whilst voyeurs were perceived as the least dangerous (Challinor & Duff, 2017). This supports the conclusions drawn in Chapter 2 and suggests that it is perhaps worthwhile to examine attitudes in greater depth in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding.

The results from Chapter 5 suggest that the way public attitudes towards sexual offenders are measured needs to be re-thought. Despite the CATSO being proposed as the most promising method by which to assess public attitudes towards sex offenders, subsequent research evaluating its effectiveness have highlighted

issues and proposed revisions to its structure. Coupled with the limitations noted in Chapter 2, it is argued that the methods used to measure attitudes are flawed, and current efforts do not adequately capture all dimensions of attitudes as advocated by Breckler (1984); therefore vital information is being missed. This could potentially result in a biased and inaccurate view of the nature of public attitudes towards sexual offenders and limits the conclusions that can be drawn in this respect.

The results of Chapter 3 have clinical implications for determining best practice regarding the assessment and management of repeat sexual offenders within the Prison Service. Specifically, the results could inform guidelines as to where intervention efforts should be targeted through identifying the potential level of risk posed and the possibility of a more serious offence being committed in the future. As a pattern of escalation was identified for most offence categories, this information could be utilised to prevent the circumstances under which a more serious sexually harmful event may occur, through the earlier identification of individuals potentially at risk of escalation and the provision of an appropriate assessment and treatment. Further support in this respect could have been provided if significant differences were observed in terms of the frequency of offence escalation between offence categories.

These findings are also relevant to policy makers. In this respect, the findings suggest that of the small subgroup of offenders who do recidivate, the majority remain stable in their offence patterns. This suggests that it is unnecessary to universally subject all individuals convicted of a sexual offence to restrictive management policies. However, there is also the potential for these individuals to escalate in the severity of their behaviour, suggesting that potentially there should be some reason to be concerned about this sub-group, although further research is required in order to confirm this pattern of behaviour. It was not possible from the present results to determine whether a person committing a particular category of offence was more likely to escalate than a person committing another category of offence. Having such insight would help to better inform where management policies need to be directed. Overall, whilst it is necessary to legislate against those committing sexual offences and protect the public, we also need to ensure that these are directed towards those who are more likely to reoffend.

Similarly, the results from Chapter 4 constitute a starting point towards identifying potential factors that could contribute to offence escalation, and whether a particular set of risk factors are more likely to result in an individual escalating in the seriousness of their behaviour over time. In the present case, the factors that

contributed to the escalation in Sam's behaviour related to the domain of deviant sexual interests, suggesting that such factors may be important to consider when evaluating the potential for escalation. If the present findings are replicated within further research, this could inform practitioners whether current assessment efforts within the Prison Service need to be revised to incorporate the risk of offence escalation. This would have further implications for the reduction of reoffending and public protection, arguably the main objective of those working within the Prison Service.

Thesis Limitations

In Chapter 2, a broad definition of the term 'sex offender' was adopted to include any individual convicted of a sexual offence. Heterogeneity in the sample could have been reduced by restricting the focus to a specific type of sexual offender (e.g. those who had the offended against adults or those who had offended against children). However, few studies exist that examine public attitudes towards a specific type of offender; therefore this reflects a broader issue and something that could be addressed by future research.

Further, the review's criteria were limited to focussing on demographic characteristics of the public, only including age, gender and educational attainment. A number of other characteristics (both of the public and the offender) have been proposed as mediating

public perceptions (e.g. King & Roberts, 2017; Willis et al., 2013) and therefore it is essential that further work is carried out in this area in order that the complexity of public attitudes is fully explored.

In Chapter 3, offence patterns were only evaluated at one point in time, due to time limitations for completion. This ignores the potential for offenders included within the sample to subsequently be released from custody and commit further sexual offences; meaning potential future offence patterns were unaccounted for. A more accurate picture of offence patterns could have been obtained if a more longitudinal methodological approach was adopted; however, this was not possible within the time constraints of the study. Second, only official data sources were utilised; therefore the true rate of sexual recidivism is inevitably underestimated, and the full picture of offence patterns may not have been captured.

Finally, in Chapter 4 the conclusions drawn are based on a single case study; therefore further research is required to offer a more accurate perspective on the factors contributing to offence escalation in sexual offenders.

Directions for Future Research

Chapter 2 highlighted the need for more research of high methodological quality to be completed in order for more accurate conclusions to be drawn regarding the nature and complexity of

public attitudes towards sexual offenders, and to better direct intervention efforts. Specifically, future research could be conducted in regards to assessing whether attitudes are particularly negative towards a specific category of sexual offender (e.g. Challinor & Duff, 2017), further exploring broader demographic characteristics of the public, in addition to victim and offender characteristics. This would have implications for determining where more accurate information needs to be provided. Understanding public attitudes towards sexual offenders is not as straightforward as obtaining an overall view of attitudes, for example, through looking at overall CATSO scores; this approach is fairly simplistic. More research needs to be completed, focussed on the complexity of public attitudes and the factors that influence them. Supported by the findings from Chapter 5, there is a need for the way in which public attitudes towards sex offenders are measured to be revisited. Many researchers do not consider all dimensions of attitudes within their studies, mainly focussing on the cognitive domain and the endorsement of stereotypes. Further, other studies do not use pre-existing or validated means by which to assess attitudes; therefore they may not provide an accurate picture of 'attitudes' *per se*.

Chapter 3 presented some interesting findings. However, in order for more firm conclusions to be drawn more longitudinal research is required in order to determine if the present findings are maintained

over a lengthier duration. Further, the present research was limited to focussing on the offence patterns of offenders against adult female victims. It would therefore be interesting to observe whether the same findings are observed in offenders against children. Finally, and expanding the findings reported in Chapter 4, researchers could examine what factors contribute to offence escalation, to determine the extent to which the conclusions drawn in this chapter are supported and whether a distinct set of risk factors contribute to offence escalation. If this is found to be the case, this could have important implications for best practice in the assessment and management of sexual offenders.

Conclusion

The present thesis has met its aims in terms of offering an overview of some of the current issues associated with sexual offending, both at a societal and clinical level. Within this, it has also offered some insight into a previously under-researched area of sexual offending: the potential for escalation. The findings suggested that public attitudes towards sexual offenders are largely negative, with misperceptions frequently being endorsed, in particular by females and those with lower levels of educational attainment. In relation to this, it is suggested that the current view of sexual offenders held by the public is incompatible with desistance and successful

rehabilitation. More work needs to be done in relation to providing the public with more accurate information regarding the nature and characteristics of sexual offenders and their offence patterns. Further exploration of the complexity of public attitudes is also advocated, in addition to reviewing the way in which public attitudes are measured, particularly given the findings from Chapter 5. The offence patterns of repeat sexual offenders were also explored, where it was found that whilst sexual recidivists commonly repeat the same type of offence from one offence to the next, there is also the potential for escalation in the severity of their behaviour. Some proposals were also made in regards to factors that potentially contribute to offence escalation in repeat sexual offenders following a formulation of an individual case; however, further research is required in this domain.

It is suggested that future research builds on the findings of this thesis, through further exploration of the complexity of public attitudes, the offence patterns of sexual recidivists and the factors that contribute to such, and the development and utilisation of measures that incorporate all attitudinal domains. It is hoped that the findings reported within this thesis will highlight some of the contemporary issues associated with sexual offending, both at the individual and societal level, and highlight where intervention efforts need to be directed in order to promote desistance and public

safety. However, it has also demonstrated that more work needs to be done both in terms of understanding the complexity of public attitudes and sexual offence patterns, and evaluating and developing tools by which the former are measured in order for this to be successfully achieved.


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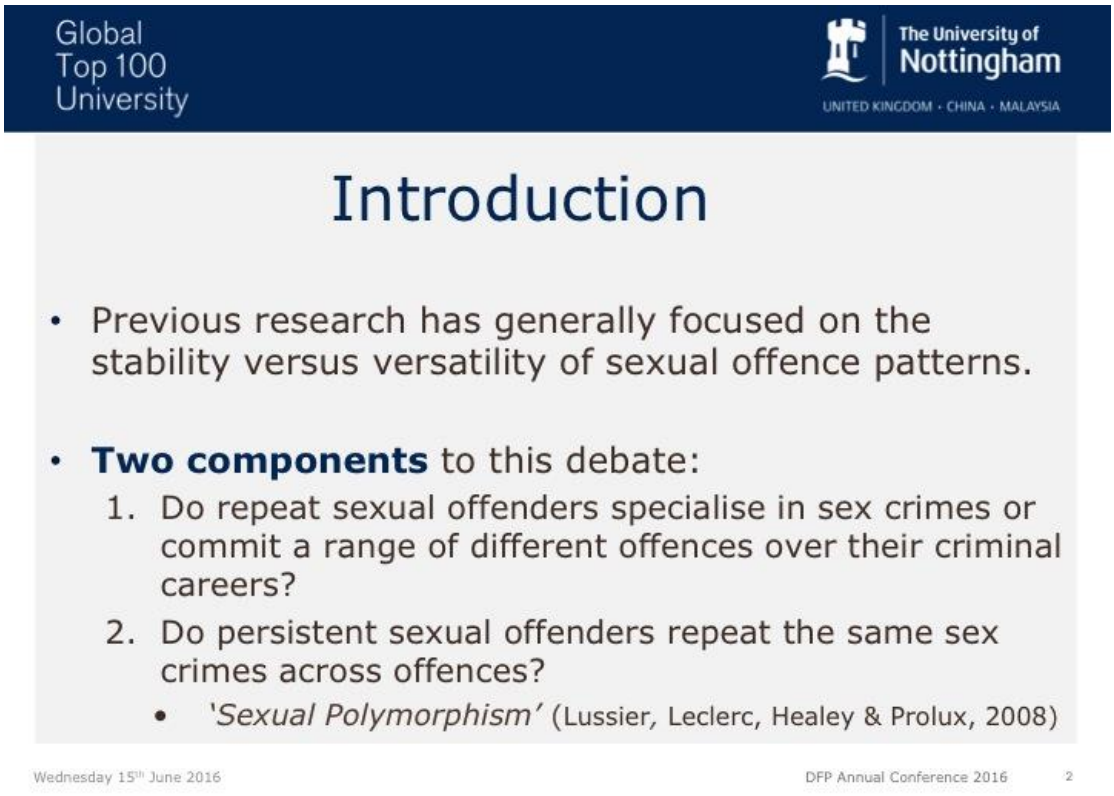
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Appendices

Appendix A: BPS DFP Conference Presentation Slides





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Escalation in Sexual Offending

- Currently a limited number of studies in this area

Hewitt & Beauregard (2014)

- Found much evidence of versatility in relation to sexually intrusive behaviours.
- A level of stability was observed with regards to the use of physical force.
- Overall, stability in offence patterns was most common for both sexually intrusive behaviours (80%) and physical force (85%)

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Escalation in Sexual Offending

Leclerc, Lussier and Deslauriers-Varin (2015)

- For offence strategies, stability was mostly observed for the use of seduction and physical violence.
- Versatility was more noticeable for other strategies
- For sexual behaviours, versatility was more prevalent.
- Also identified co-variates including self-control and high sexualisation, which were important in explaining crime-switching patterns.

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Research Questions

1. Do the offending patterns of repeat sexual offenders escalate, de-escalate, or remain stable from one offence category to the next?

2. Is an offender committing one category of sexual offence more likely to escalate than an offender committing another category of sexual offence?

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Method

Participants:

- 140 adult male sexual offenders identified within two Category C HMP establishments within the North West
- Committed at least two sexual offences against an adult female victim
- Identified using pre-anonymised SOTP databases

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Method

Procedure:

- Data collected using pre-anonymised SOTP databases
- Term 'seriousness' was operationalised
- Categories of escalation developed from guidelines provided by Sentencing Guidelines Council:
  - *Voyeurism, Indecent Exposure, Non-penetrative Sexual Assault, Penetrative Sexual Assault, Rape*

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Results

Analytical Strategy

- Data examined using Transition Matrices

> *"A grid where the offender's behaviour against victim$_X$ is cross tabulated with the offender's behaviour against victim$_{X+1}$"*
> Leclerc *et al.* (2015, p. 180)

- To construct the Matrix, data were coded from 1 – 5 to reflect the level of seriousness
- Probabilities were then calculated for each of the crime transitions
- Crime transitions analysed for first five victims only

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Results

	Voyeurism	Indecent Exposure	N/P Sexual Assault	Pen. Sexual Assault	Rape
Crime 1	2	15	48	29	46
Crime 2	1	12	33	22	72
Crime 3	0	4	21	18	55
Crime 4	0	2	5	10	34
Crime 5	0	1	3	6	20

T_1 = transition from Victim 1 to Victim 2 $n = 140$
T_2 = transition from Victim 2 to Victim 3 $n = 98$
T_3 = transition from Victim 3 to Victim 4 $n = 50$
T_4 = transition from Victim 4 to Victim 5 $n = 30$

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Crime T	Crime T+1				
	Voyeurism	**Indecent Exposure**	**Non-penetrative Sexual Assault**	**Penetrative Sexual Assault**	**Rape**
Voyeurism	T_1 = 0.50 (1) T_2 = 0.00 (0) T_3 = 0.00 (0) T_4 = 0.00 (0)	T_1 = 0.50 (1) T_2 = 0.00 (0) T_3 = 0.00 (0) T_4 = 0.00 (0)	T_1 = 0.00 (0) T_2 = 1.00 (1) T_3 = 0.00 (0) T_4 = 0.00 (0)	T_1 = 0.00 (0) T_2 = 0.00 (0) T_3 = 0.00 (0) T_4 = 0.00 (0)	T_1 = 0.00 (0) T_2 = 0.00 (0) T_3 = 0.00 (0) T_4 = 0.00 (0)
Indecent Exposure	T_1 = 0.00 (0) T_2 = 0.00 (0) T_3 = 0.00 (0) T_4 = 0.00 (0)	T_1 = 0.40 (6) T_2 = 0.25 (3) T_3 = 0.25 (1) T_4 = 0.00 (0)	T_1 = 0.40 (6) T_2 = 0.42 (5) T_3 = 0.00 (0) T_4 = 0.50 (1)	T_1 = 0.00 (0) T_2 = 0.00 (0) T_3 = 0.00 (0) T_4 = 0.00 (0)	T_1 = 0.20 (3) T_2 = 0.33 (4) T_3 = 0.25 (1) T_4 = 0.00 (0)
Non-penetrative Sexual Assault	T_1 = 0.00 (0) T_2 = 0.00 (0) T_3 = 0.00 (0) T_4 = 0.00 (0)	T_1 = 0.08 (4) T_2 = 0.03 (1) T_3 = 0.00 (0) T_4 = 0.00 (0)	T_1 = 0.42 (20) T_2 = 0.36 (12) T_3 = 0.24 (5) T_4 = 0.20 (1)	T_1 = 0.23 (11) T_2 = 0.36 (12) T_3 = 0.29 (6) T_4 = 0.20 (1)	T_1 = 0.27 (13) T_2 = 0.09 (3) T_3 = 0.19 (4) T_4 = 0.60 (3)
Penetrative Sexual Assault	T_1 = 0.00 (0) T_2 = 0.00 (0) T_3 = 0.00 (0) T_4 = 0.00 (0)	T_1 = 0.03 (1) T_2 = 0.00 (0) T_3 = 0.00 (0) T_4 = 0.10 (1)	T_1 = 0.07 (2) T_2 = 0.00 (0) T_3 = 0.00 (0) T_4 = 0.00 (0)	T_1 = 0.18 (5) T_2 = 0.23 (5) T_3 = 0.22 (4) T_4 = 0.30 (3)	T_1 = 0.72 (21) T_2 = 0.55 (12) T_3 = 0.56 (10) T_4 = 0.30 (3)
Rape	T_1 = 0.00 (0) T_2 = 0.00 (0) T_3 = 0.00 (0) T_4 = 0.00 (0)	T_1 = 0.00 (0) T_2 = 0.00 (0) T_3 = 0.02 (1) T_4 = 0.00 (0)	T_1 = 0.11 (5) T_2 = 0.04 (3) T_3 = 0.00 (0) T_4 = 0.03 (1)	T_1 = 0.13 (6) T_2 = 0.01 (1) T_3 = 0.00 (0) T_4 = 0.06 (2)	T_1 = 0.76 (35) T_2 = 0.50 (36) T_3 = 0.35 (19) T_4 = 0.41 (14)

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Category	Offence
Stable	T_1 = 0.48(67)
	T_2 = 0.56(55)
	T_3 = 0.57(29)
	T_4 = 0.60(18)
Escalators	T_1 = 0.39(55)
	T_2 = 0.39 (38)
	T_3 = 0.41(21)
	T_4 = 0.27(8)
De-escalators	T_1 = 0.13(18)
	T_2 = 0.05(5)
	T_3 = 0.02(1)
	T_4 = 0.13(4)

Overall:

- Majority of offenders in sample classed as 'stable'
- However, a significant proportion of offenders escalated in their behaviour
- De-escalation relatively uncommon

Note: Percentages are displayed with the sample size included in brackets.

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Implications

Practical Implications

- Findings could help inform the risk assessment and treatment of sexual offenders within the Prison Service
  - Earlier identification of potential risk
  - Treatment prioritisation
  - A specific set of risk factors?

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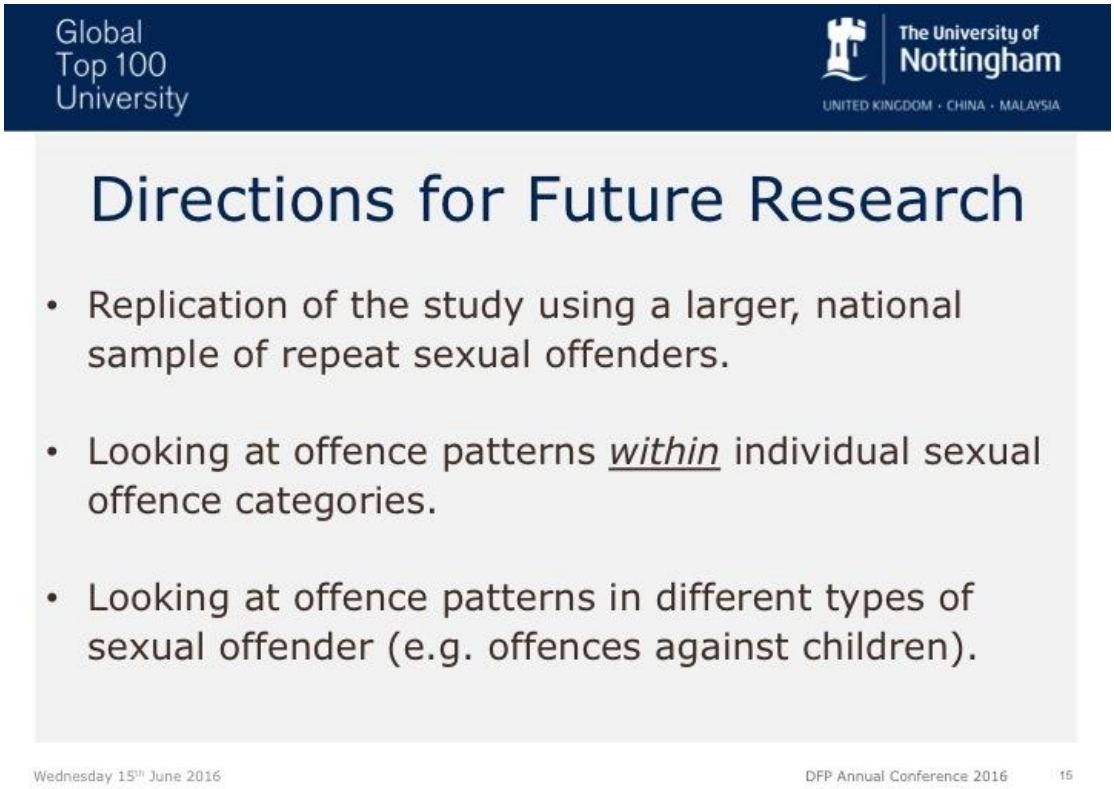
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Limitations

- Issues with design – cross sectional
- Participants only included individuals who had been *convicted* of a sexual offence
- Only a small percentage of sample committing lower order offences (i.e. Voyeurism and Indecent Exposure)

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Directions for Future Research
• Replication of the study using a larger, national sample of repeat sexual offenders.
• Looking at offence patterns within individual sexual offence categories.
• Looking at offence patterns in different types of sexual offender (e.g. offences against children).
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Thank You
Any Questions?
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Dr. Simon Duff:
simon.duff@nottingham.ac.uk
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Appendix B: Systematic Review Search Syntax

PschINFO

	Searches	Results
1	exp Public Opinion/	7607
2	exp Social Perception/	45451
3	exp SOCIETY/	69851
4	(public* or people* or societ* or comment* or citizen* or resident*).mp.	748393
5	1 or 2 or 3 or 4	820168
6	exp DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS/	30997
7	(age* or gender* or sex* or educat* or employ*).mp.	1638230
8	6 or 7	1647766
9	exp attitudes/ or *adult attitudes/ or *community attitudes/ or *explicit attitudes/ or *female attitudes/ or *implicit attitudes/ or *male attitudes/ or *stereotyped attitudes/	308767
10	exp PREJUDICE/	6907
11	exp STIGMA/	9364
12	(attitude* or opinion* or view* or thought* or belie* or perspective* or perception* or misconception* or preconception* or stereotype* or prejudice* or judge* or stigma*).mp.	1342970

13	9 or 10 or 11 or 12	1364948
14	exp Sexual Abuse/ or exp Child Abuse/ or exp Sex Offenses/ or exp Paraphilias/	51141
15	exp PEDOPHILIA/	1454
16	exp RAPE/ or exp ACQUAINTANCE RAPE/	5478
17	((sex* adj3 (offen* or abus* or assault* or violin* or predator? or perpetrator?)) or paraphil* or rape? or rapist? or (child adj (molest* or abus*)) or p?edophil* or voyeur* or (indecent adj (expos* or exhib*))).mp.	64050
18	14 or 15 or 16 or 17	66283
19	5 and 8 and 13 and 18	5404

Medline

	Searches	Results
1	exp Public Opinion/	17649
2	exp Social Perception/	20509
3	exp Social Stigma/	4245
4	(public* or people* or societ* or comment* or citizen* or resident*).mp.	2037380
5	1 or 2 or 3 or 4	2054909
6	exp Attitude/	317173
7	exp Prejudice/px [Psychology]	1254
8	exp Social Stigma/	4245
9	exp Stereotyping/	10185
10	(attitude* or opinion* or view* or thought* or belie* or perspective* or perception* or misconception* or preconception* or stereotyp* or prejudic* or judg* or stigma*).mp.	1842218

11	6 or 7 or 8 or 9 or 10	1843164
12	(demographic* or age * or gender* or sex* or educate* or employ*).mp.	1787455
13	exp Sex Offenses/	21741
14	exp Paraphilic Disorders/	5359
15	exp Pedophilia/	885
16	exp Rape/	6183
17	exp Child Abuse, Sexual/	9569
18	((sex* adj3 (offen* or abus* or assault* or violen* or predator? or perpetrator?)) or paraphil* or rape? or rapist? or (child adj (molest* or abus*)) or p?edophil* or voyeur* or (indecent adj (expos* or exhib*))).mp.	55138
19	13 or 14 or 15 or 16 or 17 or 18	56737
20	5 and 11 and 12 and 19	2439

Web of Science

Set	Results	
# 45	**5,740**	#44 AND #28 AND #14 AND #7 *Indexes=SCI-EXPANDED, SSCI, A&HCI, CPCI-S, CPCI-SSH, BKCI-S, BKCI-SSH, ESCI, CCR-EXPANDED, IC Timespan=All years*
# 44	**103,845**	#43 OR #42 OR #41 OR #40 OR #39 OR #38 OR #37 OR #36 OR #35 OR #34 OR #33 OR #32 OR #31 OR #30 OR #29 *Indexes=SCI-EXPANDED, SSCI, A&HCI, CPCI-S, CPCI-SSH, BKCI-S, BKCI-SSH, ESCI, CCR-EXPANDED, IC Timespan=All years*
# 43	**566**	ts=exhibitionis* *Indexes=SCI-EXPANDED, SSCI, A&HCI, CPCI-S, CPCI-SSH, BKCI-S, BKCI-SSH, ESCI, CCR-EXPANDED, IC Timespan=All years*
# 42	**99**	ts=indecent expos* *Indexes=SCI-EXPANDED, SSCI, A&HCI, CPCI-S, CPCI-SSH, BKCI-S, BKCI-SSH, ESCI, CCR-EXPANDED, IC Timespan=All years*
# 41	**678**	ts=voyeur* *Indexes=SCI-EXPANDED, SSCI, A&HCI, CPCI-S, CPCI-SSH, BKCI-S, BKCI-SSH, ESCI, CCR-EXPANDED, IC Timespan=All years*
# 40	**274**	ts=paedophil* *Indexes=SCI-EXPANDED, SSCI, A&HCI, CPCI-S, CPCI-SSH, BKCI-S, BKCI-SSH, ESCI, CCR-EXPANDED, IC Timespan=All years*
# 39	**1,039**	ts=pedophil* *Indexes=SCI-EXPANDED, SSCI, A&HCI, CPCI-S, CPCI-SSH, BKCI-S, BKCI-SSH, ESCI, CCR-EXPANDED, IC Timespan=All years*

# 38	**36,261**	ts=child abus*
		Indexes=SCI-EXPANDED, SSCI, A&HCI, CPCI-S, CPCI-SSH, BKCI-S, BKCI-SSH, ESCI, CCR-EXPANDED, IC Timespan=All years
# 37	**1,421**	ts=child* molest*
		Indexes=SCI-EXPANDED, SSCI, A&HCI, CPCI-S, CPCI-SSH, BKCI-S, BKCI-SSH, ESCI, CCR-EXPANDED, IC Timespan=All years
# 36	**1,165**	ts=rapist*
		Indexes=SCI-EXPANDED, SSCI, A&HCI, CPCI-S, CPCI-SSH, BKCI-S, BKCI-SSH, ESCI, CCR-EXPANDED, IC Timespan=All years
# 35	**23,268**	ts=rape
		Indexes=SCI-EXPANDED, SSCI, A&HCI, CPCI-S, CPCI-SSH, BKCI-S, BKCI-SSH, ESCI, CCR-EXPANDED, IC Timespan=All years
# 34	**983**	ts=paraphil*
		Indexes=SCI-EXPANDED, SSCI, A&HCI, CPCI-S, CPCI-SSH, BKCI-S, BKCI-SSH, ESCI, CCR-EXPANDED, IC Timespan=All years
# 33	**5,674**	ts=sex* predator*
		Indexes=SCI-EXPANDED, SSCI, A&HCI, CPCI-S, CPCI-SSH, BKCI-S, BKCI-SSH, ESCI, CCR-EXPANDED, IC Timespan=All years
# 32	**20,563**	ts=sex* violen*
		Indexes=SCI-EXPANDED, SSCI, A&HCI, CPCI-S, CPCI-SSH, BKCI-S, BKCI-SSH, ESCI, CCR-EXPANDED, IC Timespan=All years
# 31	**8,552**	ts=sex* assault*
		Indexes=SCI-EXPANDED, SSCI, A&HCI, CPCI-S, CPCI-SSH, BKCI-S, BKCI-SSH, ESCI, CCR-

EXPANDED, IC Timespan=All years

# 30	**34,697**	ts=sex* abus* *Indexes=SCI-EXPANDED, SSCI, A&HCI, CPCI-S, CPCI-SSH, BKCI-S, BKCI-SSH, ESCI, CCR-EXPANDED, IC Timespan=All years*
# 29	**9,109**	ts=sex* offen* *Indexes=SCI-EXPANDED, SSCI, A&HCI, CPCI-S, CPCI-SSH, BKCI-S, BKCI-SSH, ESCI, CCR-EXPANDED, IC Timespan=All years*
# 28	**2,868,883**	#27 OR #26 OR #25 OR #24 OR #23 OR #22 OR #21 OR #20 OR #19 OR #18 OR #17 OR #16 OR #15 *Indexes=SCI-EXPANDED, SSCI, A&HCI, CPCI-S, CPCI-SSH, BKCI-S, BKCI-SSH, ESCI, CCR-EXPANDED, IC Timespan=All years*
# 27	**40,269**	ts=stigma* *Indexes=SCI-EXPANDED, SSCI, A&HCI, CPCI-S, CPCI-SSH, BKCI-S, BKCI-SSH, ESCI, CCR-EXPANDED, IC Timespan=All years*
# 26	**7**	ts=judj* *Indexes=SCI-EXPANDED, SSCI, A&HCI, CPCI-S, CPCI-SSH, BKCI-S, BKCI-SSH, ESCI, CCR-EXPANDED, IC Timespan=All years*
# 25	**18,927**	ts=prejudic* *Indexes=SCI-EXPANDED, SSCI, A&HCI, CPCI-S, CPCI-SSH, BKCI-S, BKCI-SSH, ESCI, CCR-EXPANDED, IC Timespan=All years*
# 24	**43,649**	ts=stereotyp* *Indexes=SCI-EXPANDED, SSCI, A&HCI, CPCI-S, CPCI-SSH, BKCI-S, BKCI-SSH, ESCI, CCR-EXPANDED, IC Timespan=All years*
# 23	**4,760**	ts=preconception*

Indexes=SCI-EXPANDED, SSCI, A&HCI, CPCI-S, CPCI-SSH, BKCI-S, BKCI-SSH, ESCI, CCR-EXPANDED, IC Timespan=All years

22 **13,280** ts=misconception*

Indexes=SCI-EXPANDED, SSCI, A&HCI, CPCI-S, CPCI-SSH, BKCI-S, BKCI-SSH, ESCI, CCR-EXPANDED, IC Timespan=All years

21 **443,915** ts=perception*

Indexes=SCI-EXPANDED, SSCI, A&HCI, CPCI-S, CPCI-SSH, BKCI-S, BKCI-SSH, ESCI, CCR-EXPANDED, IC Timespan=All years

20 **677,459** ts=perspective*

Indexes=SCI-EXPANDED, SSCI, A&HCI, CPCI-S, CPCI-SSH, BKCI-S, BKCI-SSH, ESCI, CCR-EXPANDED, IC Timespan=All years

19 **407,983** ts=belie*

Indexes=SCI-EXPANDED, SSCI, A&HCI, CPCI-S, CPCI-SSH, BKCI-S, BKCI-SSH, ESCI, CCR-EXPANDED, IC Timespan=All years

18 **346,395** ts=thought*

Indexes=SCI-EXPANDED, SSCI, A&HCI, CPCI-S, CPCI-SSH, BKCI-S, BKCI-SSH, ESCI, CCR-EXPANDED, IC Timespan=All years

17 **906,009** ts=view*

Indexes=SCI-EXPANDED, SSCI, A&HCI, CPCI-S, CPCI-SSH, BKCI-S, BKCI-SSH, ESCI, CCR-EXPANDED, IC Timespan=All years

16 **128,987** ts=opinion*

Indexes=SCI-EXPANDED, SSCI, A&HCI, CPCI-S, CPCI-SSH, BKCI-S, BKCI-SSH, ESCI, CCR-EXPANDED, IC Timespan=All years

15 **280,804** ts=attitude*

Indexes=SCI-EXPANDED, SSCI, A&HCI, CPCI-S, CPCI-SSH, BKCI-S, BKCI-SSH, ESCI, CCR-EXPANDED, IC Timespan=All years

14 **6,110,800** #13 OR #12 OR #11 OR #10 OR #9 OR #8

Indexes=SCI-EXPANDED, SSCI, A&HCI, CPCI-S, CPCI-SSH, BKCI-S, BKCI-SSH, ESCI, CCR-EXPANDED, IC Timespan=All years

13 **1,193,965** ts=employ*

Indexes=SCI-EXPANDED, SSCI, A&HCI, CPCI-S, CPCI-SSH, BKCI-S, BKCI-SSH, ESCI, CCR-EXPANDED, IC Timespan=All years

12 **886,488** ts=educat*

Indexes=SCI-EXPANDED, SSCI, A&HCI, CPCI-S, CPCI-SSH, BKCI-S, BKCI-SSH, ESCI, CCR-EXPANDED, IC Timespan=All years

11 **3,616,389** ts=age*

Indexes=SCI-EXPANDED, SSCI, A&HCI, CPCI-S, CPCI-SSH, BKCI-S, BKCI-SSH, ESCI, CCR-EXPANDED, IC Timespan=All years

10 **791,218** ts=sex*

Indexes=SCI-EXPANDED, SSCI, A&HCI, CPCI-S, CPCI-SSH, BKCI-S, BKCI-SSH, ESCI, CCR-EXPANDED, IC Timespan=All years

9 **428,862** ts=gender*

Indexes=SCI-EXPANDED, SSCI, A&HCI, CPCI-S, CPCI-SSH, BKCI-S, BKCI-SSH, ESCI, CCR-EXPANDED, IC Timespan=All years

8 **249,475** ts=demographic*

Indexes=SCI-EXPANDED, SSCI, A&HCI, CPCI-S, CPCI-SSH, BKCI-S, BKCI-SSH, ESCI, CCR-EXPANDED, IC Timespan=All years

# 7	**3,228,780**	#6 OR #5 OR #4 OR #3 OR #2 OR #1 *Indexes=SCI-EXPANDED, SSCI, A&HCI, CPCI-S, CPCI-SSH, BKCI-S, BKCI-SSH, ESCI, CCR-EXPANDED, IC Timespan=All years*
# 6	**222,467**	ts=resident* *Indexes=SCI-EXPANDED, SSCI, A&HCI, CPCI-S, CPCI-SSH, BKCI-S, BKCI-SSH, ESCI, CCR-EXPANDED, IC Timespan=All years*
# 5	**89,477**	ts=citizen* *Indexes=SCI-EXPANDED, SSCI, A&HCI, CPCI-S, CPCI-SSH, BKCI-S, BKCI-SSH, ESCI, CCR-EXPANDED, IC Timespan=All years*
# 4	**909,255**	ts=communit* *Indexes=SCI-EXPANDED, SSCI, A&HCI, CPCI-S, CPCI-SSH, BKCI-S, BKCI-SSH, ESCI, CCR-EXPANDED, IC Timespan=All years*
# 3	**961,914**	ts=societ* *Indexes=SCI-EXPANDED, SSCI, A&HCI, CPCI-S, CPCI-SSH, BKCI-S, BKCI-SSH, ESCI, CCR-EXPANDED, IC Timespan=All years*
# 2	**623,411**	ts=people* *Indexes=SCI-EXPANDED, SSCI, A&HCI, CPCI-S, CPCI-SSH, BKCI-S, BKCI-SSH, ESCI, CCR-EXPANDED, IC Timespan=All years*
# 1	**853,806**	ts=public* *Indexes=SCI-EXPANDED, SSCI, A&HCI, CPCI-S, CPCI-SSH, BKCI-S, BKCI-SSH, ESCI, CCR-EXPANDED, IC Timespan=All years*

ASSIA

Set	Searched For	Results
S1	SU.EXACT("Public support") OR SU.EXACT("Public concerns") OR SU.EXACT("Public opinion") OR SU.EXACT("Public perception")	1972°
S2	(public* or people* or societ* or comment* or citizen* or resident*)	465587°
S3	(SU.EXACT("Public support") OR SU.EXACT("Public concerns") OR SU.EXACT("Public opinion") OR SU.EXACT("Public perception")) OR (public* or people* or societ* or comment* or citizen* or resident*)	465587°
S4	SU.EXACT("Attitudes") OR SU.EXACT("Irrational beliefs") OR SU.EXACT("Beliefs") OR SU.EXACT("Mistaken beliefs") OR SU.EXACT("Negative attitudes") OR SU.EXACT("Implicit beliefs") OR SU.EXACT("Stereotypes") OR SU.EXACT("Opinions") OR SU.EXACT("Prejudice") OR SU.EXACT("Negative beliefs")	26087°
S5	(attitude* or opinion* or view* or thought* or belie* or perspective* or perception* or misconception* or preconception* or stereotype* or prejudic* or judg* or stigma*)	343040°
S6	(SU.EXACT("Attitudes") OR SU.EXACT("Irrational beliefs") OR SU.EXACT("Beliefs") OR SU.EXACT("Mistaken beliefs") OR SU.EXACT("Negative attitudes") OR SU.EXACT("Implicit beliefs") OR SU.EXACT("Stereotypes") OR SU.EXACT("Opinions") OR SU.EXACT("Prejudice") OR SU.EXACT("Negative beliefs")) SU.EXACT("Negative beliefs")) OR (attitude* or opinion* or view* or thought* or belie* or perspective* or perception* or misconception* or preconception* or stereotype* or prejudic* or judg* or stigma*)	343040°
S7	(demographic* OR age* OR gender* OR sex* OR educat* OR employ*)	488103°
S8	SU.EXACT("Violent sex offenders") OR	5574°

	SU.EXACT("Rape") OR SU.EXACT("Date rape") OR SU.EXACT("Gang rape") OR SU.EXACT("Acquaintance rape") OR SU.EXACT("Sex offenders") OR SU.EXACT("Serial rape") OR SU.EXACT("Marital rape") OR SU.EXACT("Paraphilia") OR SU.EXACT("Child sexual abuse") OR SU.EXACT("Paedophilia")	
S9	("sex* offen*" or "sex* abus*" or "sex* assault*" or "sex* violen*" or "sex* predator*" or paraphil* or rape? or rapist? or "child molest*" or "child abus*" or p?edophil* or voyeur* or "indecent expos*")	20626°
S10	(SU.EXACT("Violent sex offenders") OR SU.EXACT("Rape") OR SU.EXACT("Date rape") OR SU.EXACT("Gang rape") OR SU.EXACT("Acquaintance rape") OR SU.EXACT("Sex offenders") OR SU.EXACT("Serial rape") OR SU.EXACT("Marital rape") OR SU.EXACT("Paraphilia") OR SU.EXACT("Child sexual abuse") OR SU.EXACT("Paedophilia")) OR ("sex* offen*" or "sex* abus*" or "sex* assault*" or "sex* violen*" or "sex* predator*" or paraphil* or rape? or rapist? or "child molest*" or "child abus*" or p?edophil* or voyeur* or "indecent expos*")	24428°
S11	(SU.EXACT("Public support") OR SU.EXACT("Public concerns") OR SU.EXACT("Public opinion") OR SU.EXACT("Public perception")) OR (public* or people* or societ* or comment* or citizen* or resident*)) AND ((SU.EXACT("Attitudes") OR SU.EXACT("Irrational beliefs") OR SU.EXACT("Beliefs") OR SU.EXACT("Mistaken beliefs") OR SU.EXACT("Negative attitudes") OR SU.EXACT("Implicit beliefs") OR SU.EXACT("Stereotypes") OR SU.EXACT("Opinions") OR SU.EXACT("Prejudice") OR SU.EXACT("Negative beliefs")) OR (attitude* or opinion* or view* or thought* or belie* or	8270°

	perspective* or perception* or misconception* or preconception* or stereotype* or prejudic* or judg* or stigma*)) AND (demographic* OR age* OR gender* OR sex* OR educat* OR employ*) AND ((SU.EXACT("Violent sex offenders") OR SU.EXACT("Rape") OR SU.EXACT("Date rape") OR SU.EXACT("Gang rape") OR SU.EXACT("Acquaintance rape") OR SU.EXACT("Sex offenders") OR SU.EXACT("Serial rape") OR SU.EXACT("Marital rape") OR SU.EXACT("Paraphilia") OR SU.EXACT("Child sexual abuse") OR SU.EXACT("Paedophilia")) OR ("sex* offen*" or "sex* abus*" or "sex* assault*" or "sex* violen*" or "sex* predator*" or paraphil* or "sex* predator*" or paraphil* or rape? or rapist? or "child molest*" or "child abus*" or p?edophil* or voyeur* or "indecent expos*"))

Cochrane Collaboration

	Search Terms	Results
1	MeSH descriptor: [Public Opinion] explode all trees	82
2	MeSH descriptor: [Social Stigma] this term only	114
3	MeSH descriptor: [Stereotyping] explode all trees	334
4	MeSH descriptor: [Social Perception] this term only	774
5	(public* or people* or societ* or comment* or citizen* or resident*) .mp. (public* or people* or societ* or comment* or citizen* or resident*) .mp.	4981
6	MeSH descriptor: [Attitude] explode all trees	10231
7	(attitude* or opinion* or view* or thought* or belie* or perspective* or perception* or	3758

	misconception* or preconception* or stereotyp* or prejudic* or judg* or stigma*) .mp. (attitude* or opinion* or view* or thought* or belie* or perspective* or perception* or misconception* or preconception* or stereotyp* or prejudic* or judg* or stigma*) .mp.	
8	MeSH descriptor: [Demography] explode all trees	57038
9	(age* or gender* or sex* or educat* or employ*) .mp.	9339
10	MeSH descriptor: [Sex Offenses] explode all trees	433
11	MeSH descriptor: [Child Abuse, Sexual] explode all trees	216
12	MeSH descriptor: [Rape] explode all trees	105
13	MeSH descriptor: [Paraphilic Disorders] explode all trees	39
14	MeSH descriptor: [Pedophilia] explode all trees	15
15	((sex* adj3 (offen* or abus* or assault* or violen*)) or paraphil* or rape? or rapist? or (child ask (molest* or abus*)) or p?edophil* or voyeur* or (indecent adj expos*)).mp. ((sex* adj3 (offen* or abus* or assault* or violen*)) or paraphil* or rape? or rapist? or (child ask (molest* or abus*)) or p?edophil* or voyeur* or (indecent adj expos*)) .mp.	216
16	(#1 or #2 or #3 or #4 or #5) AND (#6 or #7) AND (#8 or #9) AND (#10 or #11 or #12 or #13 or #14 or #15) (#1 or #2 or #3 or #4 or #5) and (#6 or #7) and (#8 or #9) and (#10 or #11 or #12 or #13 or #14 or #15)	214

Appendix C: Inclusion and Exclusion Form

Inclusion Criteria	Criterion Met?	Comment
Study Design: Is the study a cohort, case-control or cross-sectional design?	Yes ☐ Unclear ☐ Discuss ☐ No ☐	
Population: Does the population consist of adult members of the public (aged 18 or over)? AND Are participants individuals who do not work with sex offenders in either a professional or paraprofessional capacity?	Yes ☐ Unclear ☐ Discuss ☐ No ☐	
Comparator: Does the study compare differences demographic characteristics when measuring attitudes?	Yes ☐ Unclear ☐ Discuss ☐ No ☐	
Outcome: Does the study assess attitudes towards sexual offenders? N.B Sex offenders are defined as adult males convicted of a sexual offence of any type.	Yes ☐ Unclear ☐ Discuss ☐ No ☐	

Appendix D: Quality Assessment Forms

Cross-Sectional

	Y (2)	P (1)	N (0)	U (?)	Comments
Screening Questions					
Was the population a genuine public sample?					
Did the authors clearly describe how attitudes were to be measured?					
Was a clear description provided regarding the way in which attitudes were measured?					
Sampling and Selection Bias					
Was the sample size justified?					
Was the target population clearly defined?					
Were the participants representative of the population from which they were selected?					
Was the sample recruited in an acceptable way? (i.e. likely to select a representative sample?)					
Risk of selection bias: Low Unclear High					
Measurement Bias for Comparator					
Were the demographic characteristics considered clearly defined?					
Was the distribution of participants in each demographic sub-category likely to introduce any bias?					
Risk of measurement bias: Low Unclear High					
Measurement Bias for Outcome					
Were the outcome variables measured appropriate to the aims of the study?					
Were 'attitudes' clearly					

defined in terms of how they were measured?					
Were attitudes measured with a valid tool/measure?					
Were attitudes measured with an objective tool/measure?					
Can the measures used be considered to be reliable?					
Were the measurement methods the same for all participants?					
Has the study accounted for all potential confounding variables in measuring outcome?					
Risk of measurement bias: *Low* *Unclear* *High*					
Other Issues					
Does the response rate raise concerns about non-response bias?					
Was the statistical analysis appropriate? *(Were the assumptions of the data tested?)*					
Were confounding factors accounted for?					
Can the results be generalised?					

Case-Control:

	Y (2)	P (1)	N (0)	U (?)	Comments
Screening Questions					
Was the population a genuine public sample?					
Did the authors clearly describe how attitudes were to be measured?					
Was a clear description provided regarding the way in which attitudes were measured?					
Sampling and Selection Bias					
Was the sample size justified?					
Were the cases recruited in an acceptable way? (i.e. likely to select a representative sample?)					
Were the controls selected in an acceptable way? (i.e. likely to select a representative sample?)					
Were cases clearly defined from controls?					
Were cases appropriately matched to controls?					
Risk of selection bias: *Low* *Unclear* *High*					
Measurement Bias for Comparator					
Were the demographic characteristics considered clearly defined?					
Was the distribution of participants in each demographic sub-category likely to introduce any bias?					
Risk of measurement bias: *Low* *Unclear* *High*					
Measurement Bias for Outcome					
Were the outcome variables measured appropriate to the aims of the study?					

Were 'attitudes' clearly defined in terms of how they were measured?					
Were attitudes measured with a valid tool/measure?					
Were attitudes measured with an objective tool/measure?					
Can the measures used be considered to be reliable?					
Were the measurement methods the same for all participants?					
Has the study accounted for all potential confounding variables in measuring outcome?					
Risk of measurement bias: *Low* *Unclear* *High*					
Other Issues					
Does the response rate raise concerns about non-response bias?					
Was the statistical analysis appropriate? *(Were the assumptions of the data tested?)*					
Were confounding factors accounted for?					
Can the results be generalised?					

Appendix E: Data Extraction Form

Title:
Source/year/volume/pages:
Country of Origin:
Reviewer ID:

Specific Information:
1) Study Characteristics
Re-verification of study eligibility:
Population ( ) Comparator ( ) Outcome ( ) Study Design ( )

Study design:

2) Population Characteristics

a. Target population:

b. Recruitment procedures:

c. Were any potential participants excluded? Why?

d. Was there a control group?

e. Characteristics of participants ('Public'):
Sample size:
Age range:

Ethnicity:

Country/region:

f. Was there a control group?

g. Characteristics of 'sex offenders':
Type of sexual offender (if applicable):

Type of sentence:

Setting (e.g. community or prison):

3) Exposure/Comparator

a. What demographic characteristics were assessed?

b. Were demographic characteristics the main focus of the study?

4) Outcomes

a. How were attitudes defined?

b. How were attitudes measured?

c. What was used to measure attitudes? (e.g. self-report measure, attitude scale – CATSO, ATS, scale created for the purpose of the study)

Notes:

5) Analysis

a. Statistics used:

b. Do the statistics adjust for confounding variables?

c. How were missing data dealt with?

Notes:

6) Conclusions

a. What were the main conclusions of the study?

b. Author correspondence required?

Appendix F: Escalation Checklist

Participant Number:
Participant Age:
Number of convictions for a sexual offence:

Offence Type	Offence Number				
	1	2	3	4	5
	Presence (date offence committed)				
Voyeurism					
Indecent Exposure					
Non-Penetrative Sexual Assault					
Penetrative Sexual Assault					
Rape					

Appendix G: Email from Sponsorship (University of Nottingham)

Hi Chelsea,

If all you are doing is collecting archived data that is fully anonymised then you do not need ethical or NOMS approval at all. Providing the data is anonymised and you have no contact with the prisoners then you do not need to obtain informed consent. You do not need to submit a protocol to an ethics committee (you will need to write something down to ensure the prison know fully what you are doing and you can use and edit the template accordingly for that) and you won't need a declaration of research sponsorship.

If you have any further questions please feel free to contact us.

Many Thanks

Please quote the Sponsor’s reference number in the subject line of your emails

Appendix H: Email from NOMS Lead Psychologist

Email response from CB:

To: National Research [NOMS]
Subject:

I confirm that Chelsea can proceed with this research.
CB
NW Lead Psychologist
Public Sector Prisons

Appendix I: Calculations for Transition Matrix

Stability:

$$\frac{\text{Number of offenders engaging in [Crime X] at Crime 1 and [Crime X] at Crime 2}}{\text{Total number of offenders engaging in [Crime X] at Crime 1}}$$

Example:

$$\frac{\textit{Number of offenders engaging in Indecent Exposure at Crime 1 and at Crime 2}}{\textit{Total number of offenders engaging in Indecent Exposure at Crime 1}}$$

Escalation:

$$\frac{\text{Number of offenders engaging in [Crime X] at Crime 1, but escalating to [Crime Y] at Crime 2}}{\text{Total number of offenders engaging in [Crime X] at Crime 1}}$$

Example:

$$\frac{\textit{Number of offenders engaging in Indecent Exposure at Crime 1, but escalating to Non-penetrative Sexual Assault at Crime 2}}{\textit{Total number of offenders engaging in Indecent Exposure at Crime 1}}$$

De-escalation:

$$\frac{\text{Number of offenders engaging in [Crime Y] at Crime 1, but de-escalated to [Crime X] at Crime 2}}{\text{Total number of offenders engaging in [Crime Y] at Crime 1}}$$

Example:

$$\frac{\textit{Number of offenders engaging in Non-penetrative Sexual Assault at Crime 1, but de-escalated to Indecent Exposure at Crime 2}}{\textit{Total number of offenders engaging in Non-penetrative Sexual Assault}}$$

Appendix J: Description of Sam's Index Offences

Sexual Assault

The victim was walking her dog in a local park when Sam exited from nearby bushes and stated *"oi you, there you are, you know you want it, sex sex sex"*, before putting his hands up the victim's top and grabbing her breast. The victim's cries led Sam to cease his attack before retreating to the bushes as other park users came to her aid. Aggravating factors to this offence are that the victim was 87 years old and suffering with Alzheimer's disease.

Sexual Assault and Inflicting GBH:

The details of these offences are that the victim was alone walking her dog in a local park when she passed Sam who appeared to be urinating in nearby bushes. She continued walking, and at this point Sam exposed his penis to the victim before reaching out to her from behind. He then pushed the victim down into the bushes and put his hand down her top and touched her breasts over her bra. Sam used his other hand in an attempt to force the victim to touch his penis, which he reported happened *"a couple of times"*. Sam then forced the victim to hold his penis whilst the victim made attempts to get away, and continued the assault by touching the victim's breasts. During the struggle, the victim received a broken wrist and collarbone. Aggravating factors to this offence are highlighted by

the fact that during the attack the victim shouted for help approximately six times, which did not deter Sam despite her apparent distress. Sam then hit the victim over the head and fled the scene.

In discussing his sexual arousal, Sam identified that he *"wanted someone to love him"*. On examining his use of language, he initially stated that his desire for 'love' related to him wanting someone to *"like me, hold me"*. However, upon further analysis, it was apparent that this was based on a level of sexual intent with him wanting to be masturbated. Upon seeing the victim, Sam stated that he felt a *"rush"*, wanting the victim to *"touch"* him and a desire to *"grab"* the victim. In discussing why he thought his behaviour escalated to a contact offence, Sam stated that he *"wanted to feel good"*, *"them to make me feel good"*. He initially denied forcing the victim to touch his penis, in addition to making any physical contact with the victim that led her to sustaining the injuries related to the offence.

<u>Sexual Assault</u>

The facts of this offence are that the victim was walking her dog in a local park when she saw Sam masturbating. The victim then made attempts to leave the area; however, Sam shouted, *"come here"* and followed her, before putting his arms around her neck.

The victim then attempted to escape; however Sam kept hold of her, put his hands up her top and grabbed her breast. It is documented that during this time, Sam's genitals were exposed. Whilst Sam again reported to have little recollection of this offence, he denied grabbing the victim by the neck or masturbating prior to the offence.

Sexual Assault

The victim of this offence (aged 18) was walking through a local park when Sam, who had his penis exposed, confronted her. Prior to this, Sam admitted to exposing himself some distance away from the victim, which she had not seen. Sam then told the victim to "*have a look at this* [his penis]", before the victim made attempts to walk away. Sam then grabbed the victim by both arms and pushed her to the floor. He continued his assault by rubbing his penis on the side of the victim's neck, jaw and cheek, and then pulled at her collar and put his hand underneath her top. He grabbed her breasts under the bottom of her bra and squeezed them hard. Sam then ran away and returned a minute later, grabbing the victim by both arms and pushing her to the floor once more. During this time, the victim was screaming for help, but Sam continued with the assault by rubbing his hips against the victim's body.

It was during this offence that Sam first acknowledged entering the park with the specific intention of committing a sexual offence. He admitted that when he saw the victim he wanted her to touch his penis whilst he touched her breasts. Sam denied any intent to push the victim to the floor or rub his penis against the victim, instead stating that they both fell down a hill and during this time he may have *"accidentally"* come in to contact with the victim.

Sexual Assault and Making Threats to Kill

File documentation indicated that the victim was walking her dogs in a local park when she saw Sam who appeared to be urinating. Sam stated that he took his penis out of his trousers with the intent of exposing himself. Sam then knocked her to the ground and at the point of attempting to get up Sam put one hand over the victim's mouth and the other around her throat, before pushing her back to the floor. Sam spoke to the victim, saying *"show me your boobies"* before putting his hands down the victim's bra and grabbing her breast. The victim screamed for her husband, at which point Sam made threats (*"shut up or I'll kill you"*). The victim then made attempts to dissuade Sam from the attack by telling him she was 61 years old; however, he proceeded to rub his testicles over his clothing whilst holding the victim. Sam then continued the assault by grabbing by the victim's ankle, pulling her to the floor and putting his hands over her throat and mouth. Sam then forced

his hands below her underwear and touched the victim's vagina. The injuries sustained by the victim included bruising to the left forearm, chest, right breast, groin and shoulder. Sam explained that immediately after threatening the victim, he experienced feelings of shame and guilt, and that he asked the victim for *"help"* and to *"take me back to her house and phone the police"*, and *"wanting her to touch me"* as a way of reassurance that everything was okay.

At this time, Sam acknowledged thoughts of *"needing her* [the victim] *to want me"*. In examining how his behaviour escalated to a contact offence, it was apparent that Sam assumed a level of sexual entitlement. He stated that he followed the victim with the specific intent of making sexual contact and that this increased his arousal levels. Again, Sam denied grabbing the victim, putting his hands around her throat and mouth and pushing her to the floor. He also denied making contact with her breast, insisting that he *"only"* touched her bra, touching her vagina and rubbing his testicles over his clothing.

<u>Indecent Exposure</u>

Sam stated that immediately after committing the above offence, he ran away from the scene and secreted himself in bushes as he was scared that he would get arrested. He remained hidden for

approximately two hours where he continued to smoke Cannabis. The victim of this offence was again walking her dog in a local park when she heard a noise coming from the bushes. She subsequently saw Sam masturbating with his erect penis exposed and observed semen coming out of the end of his penis. Sam denied that his penis was erect or that he ejaculated.

Appendix K: Case Study Information Sheet

I am a Forensic Psychologist in Training, and I am working within [the Prison Service] on placement as part of my qualification to become a Chartered and Registered Forensic Psychologist with the British Psychological Society (BPS) and the Health & Care Professions Council (HCPC). As well as working within different forensic settings and with different client groups, this qualification requires me to produce an Academic Thesis, which involves completing several pieces of work around a specific area in Forensic Psychology. The 'theme' I have chosen for my Academic Thesis is 'The Offence Patterns of Repeat Sexual Offenders'.

One of the pieces of work I am required to complete as part of my Academic Thesis is a Case Study that relates to my overall 'theme'. This involves an in-depth study of one person. You are being presented with this Information Sheet and the attached Consent Form, as I would like to invite you to take part in the Case Study. You are being invited to take part as the 'pattern' of your offending has changed over time.

Participating in the Case Study would involve reviewing your file information held within the Prison, and being interviewed by myself about information relating to your offending history and about your life in general. This information will then be written up into a Case

Study report that will be submitted to the University of Nottingham for examination.

It is important to note that you do not have to take part in the Case Study. Regardless of whether you choose to participate in this Case Study, it will have **no impact on your treatment or care during your time in custody**, and **will not affect your progress**. It will have **no positive or adverse consequences on your access to any services, including Psychological Services, within custody or beyond**. The information you give will be written up and used **solely as part of the Trainee's Academic Thesis**. Further, if you do decide to take part, any information obtained during the Case Study will be fully anonymised. This means that your name and address, and location of your offences will not be included anywhere in the Case Study, so **it will not be possible for you to be identified**. Any information collected from files or obtained during interview would be **stored securely and kept strictly confidential** in line with the Data Protection Act 1998. The exception to this would be if you disclosed that you were going to put yourself or others at risk of harm, or if you disclosed additional offences to which the Police and the Prison Service are already aware.

If you are happy with the above information and agree to take part in the Case Study, please read and sign the Consent Form.

Appendix L: Case Study Consent Form

Title of Case Study: Research Case Study

Name of Trainee: Chelsea Wynn

Name of Participant: **Please initial box**

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the Information Sheet regarding my information being used as a Case Study, and have had the opportunity to ask questions. ☐

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I can refuse for my information to be used in this way. I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving reason, and without my psychological care or legal rights being affected. I understand that should I withdraw then the unidentifiable information collected so far will not be used for the Case Study; however, may be passed on to the relevant department(s) if the terms of confidentiality are broken, as outlined in the information sheet. ☐

3. I understand that regardless of whether or not I choose to consent, this will have no impact on my treatment and care during my time in custody. It will have no positive or negative consequences to my progress, either within custody or beyond. ☐

4. I understand that the information collected during the course of the Case Study will be fully anonymised, and may be looked at by authorised individuals from the University of Nottingham, including the Trainee's supervisors and regulatory authorities where it is relevant to my taking part in the study. I give permission for these individuals to have access to these records and to store and publish anonymous information obtained from my participation in this study. I understand that my personal details will be anonymised and kept strictly confidential. ☐

5. I give my permission for the anonymous information obtained during the course of the Case Study to be ☐

written up as part of the Trainee's Research Portfolio, and that the information contained within the submitted Case Study will have no impact, positive or negative, on my progress.

6. I agree to take part in the above study. ☐

_____	_____	_____
Name of Participant	Date	Signature
_____	_____	_____
Name of Researcher	Date	Signature

2 copies: 1 for participant, 1 for researcher

Appendix M: Summary of SARN Dynamic Risk Factors

Domain	Risk Factor
Sexual Interests	• Preoccupied with sex • Sexual preference for children • Preferring sex to include violence or humiliation • Other, offence-related sexual interest
Offence Supportive Attitudes	• Believing men should dominate women • Believing you have a right to sex • Child abuse supportive beliefs • Believing women can't be trusted
Relationships	• Feeling inadequate • Feeling more comfortable with children • Suspicious, angry and vengeful towards other people • Not having an emotionally intimate relationship with an adult
Self-management	• Impulsive, unstable lifestyle • Not knowing how to solve life's problems • Out-of-control emotions and urges

Appendix N: Summary of Psychometrics

Interpersonal Reactivity Index

A 28-item measure of the cognitive and emotional components of empathy. It is comprised of four subscales: fantasy, empathic concern, perspective-taking and personal distress.

Locus of Control

An 18-item scale that assesses the extent to which an individual believes that what happens to them is determined by external, uncontrollable factors, or by factors under their control.

Emotion Control Questionnaire

A 56-item scale that assesses the tendency to inhibit the expression of emotional responses. There are four subscales: Rehearsal, Emotional Inhibition, Aggression Control and Benign Control.

Relationship Style Questionnaire

A 30-item self-report questionnaire measuring attachment patterns.

Paulhus Deception Scales

A 40-item self-report questionnaire measuring the tendency of an individual to give socially desirable responses. Contains two subscales: Self-Deception and Impression Management.

Social Problem Solving Inventory Revised

A 52-item self-report measure assessing an individual's ability to solve problems in every day living. Consists of five subscales, including: Positive Problem Orientation, Negative problem Orientation, Rational Problem Solving, Impulsivity/Carelessness style and Avoidance style.

Sex Offence Attitudes Questionnaire

A 50-item scale relating to denial; specifically, denial of harm, denial of premeditation, denial of responsibility, denial of offence, denial of repetition and denial of control.

The Opinions Questionnaire (comprising various scales)

A 67-item questionnaire measuring three domains: attitudes and beliefs that support the sexual abuse of children, attitudes and beliefs that support the sexual abuse of women, and openness/emotional congruence with women and men.

Children and sex Questionnaire

An 87-item questionnaire that measures an individual's attitudes, thoughts and feelings about children and sex. Consists of two subscales: Cognitive Distortions and Emotional Congruence with Children.

Hypermasculinity Inventory

A 30-item questionnaire that measures adversarial sexual attitudes. Consists of three subscales: calloused sex attitudes towards women, violence as manly, and danger as exciting.

Multiphasic Sex Inventory

A 300-item questionnaire measuring sexual behaviour and interests.

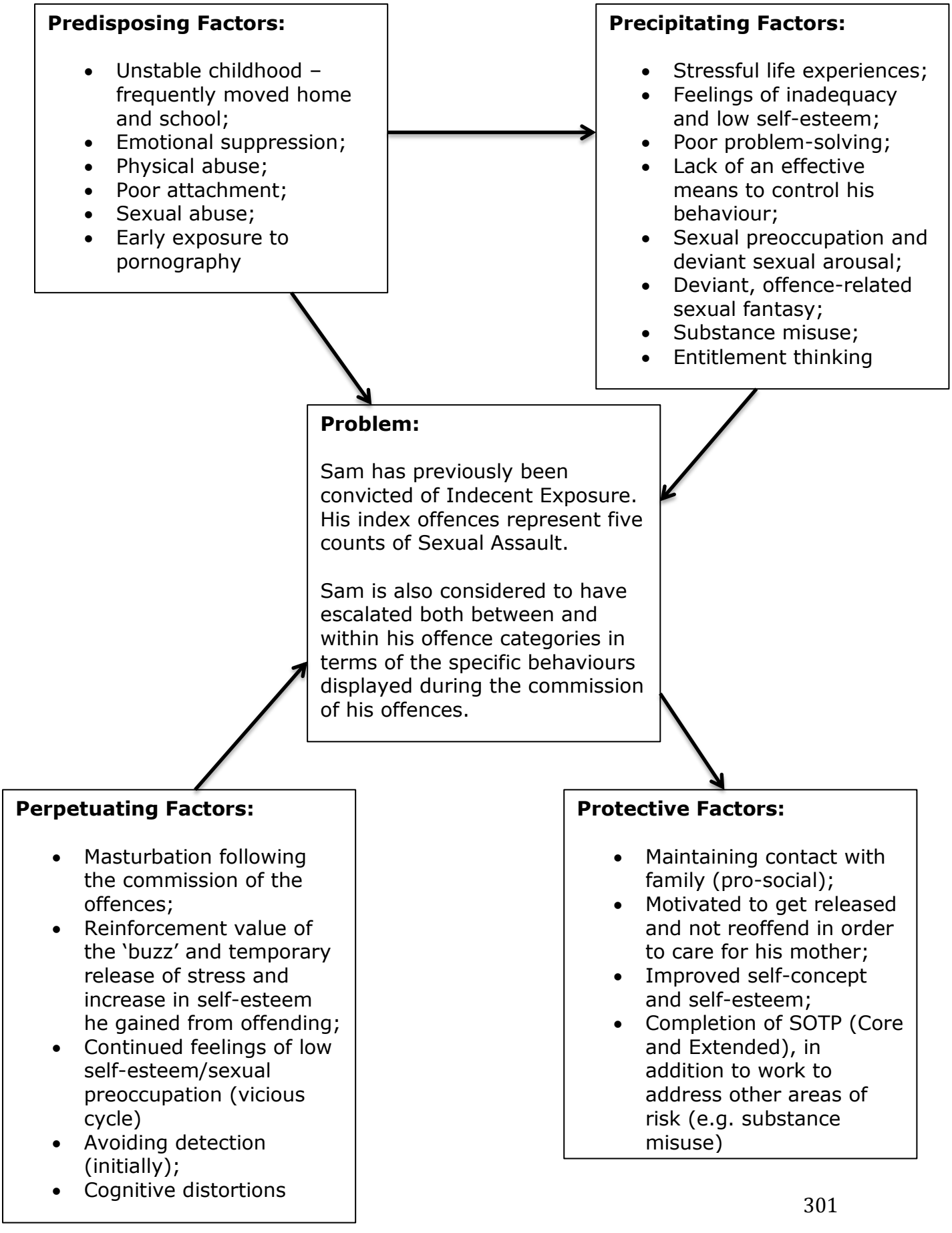
UCLA Emotional Loneliness Questionnaire

A 19-item questionnaire identifying the extent to which respondents believe they have meaningful relationships, have people close to them or are lonely.

Personality Questionnaire

Measuring self-esteem, impulsivity and ruminations.

Appendix O: Diagrammatical Formulation of Sam's Offending



Appendix P: Copy of CATSO Scale (Church et al., 2008)

1. With support and therapy, someone who committed a sexual offence can learn to change their behaviour **(C)**

2. People who commit sex offences should lose their civil rights (e.g. voting and privacy) **(C)**

3. People who commit sex offences want to have sex more often than the average person **(D)**

4. Male sex offenders should be punished more severely than female sex offenders **(SD)**

5. Sexual fondling (inappropriate unwarranted touch) is not as bad as rape **(D)**

6. Sex offenders prefer to stay at home alone rather than be around lots of people **(SI)**

7. Most sex offenders do not have close friends **(SI)**

8. Sex offenders have difficulty making friends even if they try real hard **(SI)**

9. The prison sentences sex offenders receive are much too long when compared to the sentence length for other crimes **(SD)**

10. Sex offenders have high rates of sexual activity **(D)**

11. Trying to rehabilitate a sex offender is a waste of time **(C)**

12. Sex offenders should wear tracking devices so their location can be pinpointed at any time **(C)**

13. Only a few sex offenders are dangerous **(SD)**

14. Most sex offenders are unmarried men **(SI)**

15. Someone who uses emotional control when committing a sex offence is not as bad as someone who uses physical control when committing a sex offence **(SD)**

16. Most sex offenders keep to themselves **(SI)**

17. A sex offence committed against someone the perpetrator known is less serious than a sex offence committed against a stranger **(SD)**

18. Convicted sex offenders should never be released from prison **(C)**

SI = Social Isolation

C = Capacity to Change

SD = Severity/Dangerousness

D = Deviancy