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# Pedophilic, Rapist, and Mixed Sexual Offenders: An Application of the Self-Regulation Model

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# Self-Regulation Model (SRM)

- ◎ Sex offenders are diverse (Hudson, Ward, & McCormack, 1999). However, relapse-prevention-based treatment involves an “one size fits all” approach (Ward, T., Bickley, J., Webster, S. D., Fisher, D., Beech, A., & Eldridge, H., 2004):
  - Offenders want to avoid offending and offense is the result of coping deficits and leads to feelings of guilt.
  - Ward & Hudson (1998) found that many offenders actively sought to offend, engaged in planful behavior, and experienced satisfaction after the offense.

# Self-Regulation Model cont'd

- ◎ SRM posits that sexual offenses involve the use of two types of goals, avoidant or approach, and two types of strategies, passive/automatic or active/explicit (Ward, T., Loudon, K., Hudson, S.M., & Marshall, W.L., 1995).
- ◎ Yates & Ward (2008) developed 10 phases of the offense process based on the Self-regulation Model
  - Each phase may involve approach or avoidant goals and they may change as the offense progresses.
  - Eventually, all offenders' goals become approach, since they end up committing the offense.
  - Offense strategies may vary depending on the offender and/or the particular offense.

# The 4 Pathways

- ◎ Based on the aforementioned goals and strategies, four possible combinations, or pathways, arise:
  - Avoidant-Passive
    - Low coping skills/ Covert Planning / Underregulation.
  - Avoidant-Active
    - Inappropriate or ineffective attempts to manage desire to offend or to prevent the offense.
  - Approach Automatic
    - Impulsive / Lack of self-regulation even if possesses general coping skills
  - Approach Explicit
    - Explicit offense planning / Intact Regulation/ Positive evaluation of offense/ Learns from offense for future offenses.

# Validation of SRM

- ◎ The Self-Regulation Model has been supported empirically (Bickley & Beech, 2002, 2003; Keeling, Rose, & Beech, 2006 & Proulx, , Perreault, & , Ouimet, 1999; Simons, , McCullar , & Tyler, 2006; 2008; Ward, Loudon , Hudson, & Marshall, 1995 Webster, 2005; Yates & Kingston, 2006).
  - It has been found to differentiate between offender types, offense characteristics, use of pornography, planning, static and dynamic risk to reoffend, treatment performance/change; and use with special needs offenders (Yates, 2009).
- ◎ However, these studies have been limited by small sample sizes (i.e. N=96, N=86) and did not examine the possibility of differences between ethnic groups.

# Goals

- ① Empirical support of the Self-Regulation Model using archival data.
- ① Assessment of differences in offense pathways depending on offender type.
- ① Assessment of potential ethnic differences in offender pathways.

# Methods

## ○ Participants

- 163 Adult male convicted sex offenders serving state prison sentences at the Massachusetts Treatment Center.
  - Rapists- 57.1% (n=93) Child Molesters- 31.9 (n=53) Mixed Offenders - 11% (n=18)
  - Age at the time of evaluation: 21-76(M = 41.76, SD = 9.80)
  - Ethnicity: Caucasian- 72.4% (n=118) African American- 17.2 (n=28) Latino- 10.4% (n=17)
  - Marital Status: Single- 46.6% (n=69) Married- 8.8% (n=13) Separated- 6.8% (n=10) Divorced- 37.2% (n=55)
  - Average Level of Education: 10.34 (SD=1.92)
- Subjects participated in comprehensive assessments as part of their participation in treatment.



## ◎ Measures

- Demographic data gathered from assessment reports obtained at the Massachusetts Treatment Center
- Self-Regulation Model Coding Protocol (2009)
  - 7 items:
    - Offense-related Goal (desire to prevent offending, attitude toward offending/schema, cognitive distortions, post-offense evaluation)
    - Offence strategies (self-regulation skills, offense planning, control over offending behavior)
  - Combination of goals, strategies yields offense pathway

## ■ Procedure

- Assessment reports coded for demographical information by graduate student research assistants.
- SRM coding performed by one primary and one secondary rater. Inter-rater reliability was substantial (ICC = .830).

# Results

- Confirmed utility of the SRM Coding Protocol (94.5% of sample was assigned a pathway).
- There was no significant difference in pathway assignment among ethnic groups ( $X^2 = 10.46, p = .234$ ).

# Results

Groups differ significantly on rates of pathway assignment ( $X^2 = 22.77, p < .01$ )

Offense Pathway					
	Avoidant Passive	Avoidant Active	Approach Automatic	Approach Explicit	CND*
Rapists n = 93	1 (1.1%)	1 (1.1)	43 (46.2) <sup>a</sup>	45 (48.4)	3 (3.2)
Child Molesters n = 52	1 (1.9%)	4 (7.7) <sup>b</sup>	10 (19.2) <sup>c</sup>	34 (65.4)	3 (5.8)
Mixed Offenders n = 18	1 (5.6%)	0 (0.0)	3 (16.7)	11 (61.1)	3 (16.7) <sup>d</sup>

<sup>a</sup> z=2.0, <sup>b</sup> z=1.9, <sup>c</sup> z=-1.9, <sup>d</sup> z=2.0

\* Could not determine pathway (either goal, strategy, or both)

# Discussion

- ⦿ Rapists had higher rates of assignment to the Approach-Automatic pathway than expected. The opposite was the case for Child Molesters.
- ⦿ Child Molesters had higher rates of assignment to the Avoidant-Active pathway.
- ⦿ Findings similar to those reported by Yates and Kingston (2006) for Rapists. Child molesters could not be compared.

# Implications

- Provides support for the notion that current treatment methods based on relapse prevention are not helpful to many sex offenders.
- The observed higher rates of assignment into the approach pathways expected given the nature of the data.
- Use of SRM interview assessment recommended in order to explore goals (avoidant vs. approach) more accurately.

# Limitations

- ⦿ The present study is retrospective
- ⦿ It is solely based on archival data
- ⦿ It did not include information/coding for the Good Lives Model, in which the Self-Regulation Model is embedded.

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