

So what about the stories? Public perceptions of Narrative Child Pornography

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Outline

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Background Literature

Narrative Child Sexual Exploitation Material (NCSEM)

- Terminology
- Includes written stories or poems...describing sexual encounters involving minors (Merdian, 2012)

Classification

- Obscene Publications Act (1959, 1964)
- Current research mainly focused on visual CSEM (Merdian & Hogue, 2012).

Use of narratives amongst offenders

- Merdian (2012): high popularity of sexually explicit narratives amongst CSEM users
- 54.5% and 35.3%

Current Research

Rational

- Limited research within this area of forensic psychology.

Aims

- Identifying community knowledge and attitudes.
- Severity of NCSEM
 - NCSEM vs visual CSEM vs direct sexual offending
 - In relation to general attitudes towards sexual offenders

Methodology

Participants

- Cross cultural sample, $n = 804$. (English, $n = 383$; German, $n = 243$; Greek, $n = 178$)
- Gender (60.9 female; 39.1 male)
- Age (mean = 35.8; SD = 14.23)
- Internet Usage (95% at home; 74.5 at work)

Procedure

- High street recruitment
- Online recruitment

Questionnaires

1a. Classification of CSEM

Should the following material be classified as child pornography, if it describes/depicts a child in a sexual context or describes/ depicts sexual actions involving a child?

	very strongly disagree	disagree	somewhat disagree	somewhat agree	agree	very strongly agree
a photo	1	2	3	4	5	6
a digital image	1	2	3	4	5	6
a magazine	1	2	3	4	5	6
a movie or video	1	2	3	4	5	6
a digital video	1	2	3	4	5	6
a story	1	2	3	4	5	6
an audiotape or sound file	1	2	3	4	5	6
a cartoon drawing	1	2	3	4	5	6
computer-generated images	1	2	3	4	5	6
an animated sequence or animation video	1	2	3	4	5	6

Questionnaires

1b. Classification of CSEM

Should the following material be classified as child pornography?

	very strongly disagree	disagree	somewhat disagree	somewhat agree	agree	very strongly agree
a non-sexual photo of a child used for sexual arousal	1	2	3	4	5	6
a non-sexual photo of a child with a sexual heading	1	2	3	4	5	6

Questionnaires

2. Rating of appropriate penalty

Which do you think is the most appropriate penalty for the following sexual behaviours?

Please indicate what you consider most appropriate punishment from

0 = No Punishment to 10 = Most severe punishment.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Sexual assault or rape of a person over 16 years											
Indecent exposure to a person over 16 years											
Sexual assault or rape of a child											
Indecent exposure to a child											
Viewing adult pornography											
Viewing child pornography											
Distributing adult pornography											
Distributing child pornography											
Taking photos of a child for sexual purposes without the child noticing it											
Reading sexual stories about a child											
Writing sexual stories about a child known to the person											
Writing sexual stories about a child unknown to the person											
Creating sexual drawings or computer-generated images of a child											

Questionnaires

3. Definition for the term 'Sex offender'

This section refers to sex offenders in specific and your opinion towards public policy.

Would you describe the following people as *sex offenders*?

	very strongly disagree	disagree	somewhat disagree	somewhat agree	agree	very strongly agree
Someone who touches a child in a sexual manner	1	2	3	4	5	6
Someone who views child pornography	1	2	3	4	5	6
Someone who views commercial pictures of children for their sexual arousal	1	2	3	4	5	6
Someone who takes photos of a child for sexual purposes without them knowing it	1	2	3	4	5	6
Someone who watches a child for sexual arousal, without the them knowing it	1	2	3	4	5	6
Someone who reads stories about children with a sexual theme	1	2	3	4	5	6
Someone who writes sexual stories about a child that he or she knows	1	2	3	4	5	6
Someone who writes sexual stories about a child that he or she does not know	1	2	3	4	5	6

Results

1. Classification of CSEM

- Visual material depicting real child most homogenous
- Agreement lessened with a lack of identifiable victim
- Almost 85% included narrative material
- Non sexual photo of a child also classified as CSEM.

Material	Total sample (%)
Digital video	94.6
Movie	94.1
Digital image	93.4
Photo	93.2
Magazine	93.2
Audio or sound file	91.4
Computer generated image	88.4
Animated sequence or video	87.9
Story	84.9
Cartoon drawing	83.8
Non sexual photo of a child, with a sexual heading	81.9
Non sexual photo of a child used for sexual arousal	61.9

Results

2. Rating of appropriate penalty

- Direct sexual contact rated most severe
- Active engagement more severe than passive engagement
- Influence of context; demand characteristics and legal material with illegal material (adult pornography)

Sexual behaviour	Total Punishment score (mean)
Sexual assault or rape of child	9.8
Sexual assault or rape of person over 16 years	9.4
Distributing CP	9.3
Viewing CP	8.9
Writing sexual stories about a child known to the person	7.8
Writing sexual stories about a child unknown to the person	7.7
Reading sexual stories about a child	6.9
Distributing adult pornography	3.7
Viewing adult pornography	2.9

Results

3. Definition of term ‘sex offender’.

- High agreement across all behaviours
- Higher agreement in defining sexual offender if actively engaged, compared to passive.
- Narrative users less likely to be defined as sexual offender.

Material. Someone who...	Agreement (%)
Touches a child in a sexual manner	93.5
Takes photos of a child for sexual purposes without them knowing it	91.0
Watches a child for sexual arousal, without them knowing	89.2
Views CP	86.5
Writes sexual stories about a child that he or she knows	85.2
Writes sexual stories about a child that he or she does not know	81.2
Reads stories about children with a sexual theme	76.9

Summary

- First study to be conducted on narrative material used for sexual exploitation
- NCSEM is considered as CSEM
 - Findings support the notion presented by Taylor, Quayle & Holland (2001) that a legal classification is not sufficient to capture the range of CSEM.
- Individuals who use NCSEM widely classified as sex offenders
- Continuum of severity
 - Presence of real, identifiable victim
 - Active versus passive engagement.
- Context of material
 - Demand characteristics
 - Legal material, or 'grey areas' in with illegal material.

Future Directions

- Data presented are preliminary findings → guide follow up analysis and research hypothesis.
- Need for interviewing experts within the area about their opinions (MSc thesis, Crookes)
- Need for interviewing offenders about their own usage and motivations of NCSEM (MSc thesis, Hassett), to then extend the findings, aiming to compare function of NCSEM to CSEM (ATSA research grant).

References

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Any questions?

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