

Introduction to Sexual Deviance

The video associated with this presentation can be found at:

<https://youtu.be/mtVKfMhdW5I>

Some slides in this PPT were adapted from materials created with Dr. Jill Levenson.

Inconsistency

One of the greatest hurdles to defining sexual deviance is a lack of clarity as to what actually constitutes offensive sexual behavior.

- ❖ What do you consider to be sexually offensive?
- ❖ How well might your “morality” match that of others or your community?

Conceptualizations of Problematic Sexual Conduct

❖ Deviant

- Unusual or very atypical sexual interests and preferences
- Not necessarily unlawful (e.g., fetishism, consenting BDSM)

❖ Unlawful

- May be deviant, but does not have to be (e.g., rape, child molestation)

❖ Hypersexual

- Very high frequency of engagement in behavior
- May or may not be either deviant or unlawful

Sexually Deviant

- ❖ Behaviors that are quite atypical, unusual, or abnormal, to the extent that most “normal” individuals would consider the behaviors strange, odd, or concerning
- ❖ Not all sexually deviant behaviors are necessarily illegal (e.g., fetishes, consensual BDSM sex play), but some sexually deviant conduct is illegal in most or all circumstances (e.g., sexual molestation of prepubescent children, exhibitionism)

Sexually Inappropriate

- ❖ Is there something about the circumstances or context in which the behaviors occurred that would suggest some degree of sexual impropriety?
- ❖ For instance, were both parties consenting to the sexual behaviors (i.e., was there some element of sexual coercion?), or was there something about the relationship between the two parties that would make the conduct sexually inappropriate (e.g., sex between blood relatives)?
- ❖ In most circumstances, sexually inappropriate conduct is also unlawful.

Socially Inappropriate

- ❖ Is there something about the circumstances of the behaviors that gives cause for concern, but the conduct itself might not be necessarily deviant or inappropriate
 - e.g., consenting sex in a public place, sex between parties where a power differential might be implied, influence of alcohol or drugs
- ❖ Depending on the circumstances, socially inappropriate sexual behaviors might be illegal, but this is not absolute
 - e.g., streaking, (which is more often intended to be a joke than sexually alarming).

An important distinction?

- ❖ Is it important to distinguish between our sexual preferences and our sexual appetites?
- ❖ While everyone likely has a “perfect partner” or “scenario,” how often do we actually get that?
- ❖ Are we open to consideration of sexual partners or behaviors that are outside of our preferences (e.g., bi-curious, multiple partners)
- ❖ Does this happen in the offense histories of some of our clients?

Sexual Offender ...

- ❖ ...is a legal term and not a clinical term
- ❖ “Sexual Offender” encompasses a wide range of unlawful sexual behaviors, not all of which are diagnosable as “paraphilic” (APA, 2013)
- ❖ Indeed, it is likely that a minority of people labeled as sexual offenders are actually paraphilic or have a “sexual condition” that causes them to offend
 - Those that do, however, are likely to be at higher risk to reoffend (Hanson & Morton-Bourgon, 2005)

Consent

A particularly important concept to consider when looking at sexual offending is that of consent; especially age of consent.

- ❖ What constitutes consent?
- ❖ Who can give it?
- ❖ Under what circumstances?
- ❖ Are there personal or situational variables that would also impinge on consent?

Age of Consent

Laws vary from country to country and state to state regarding consent to sexual activity.

- ❖ Most common AOC in USA is 16 (range = 16-18)
- ❖ AOC in Canada is 16
- ❖ AOC in most European countries is 14
- ❖ Some countries have no AOC, or consent can only be given between couples who are married

More Inconsistency

Not only has inconsistency affected our ability to clearly define what constitutes an offense, it has also clouded our perceptions of cause and effect in sexual offending.

- ❖ Various theories of sexual deviance are often simultaneously complementary and contradictory

Is there a single unifying theory of sexual deviance that will ever be satisfactory to the field?

Social Learning Theory

- ❖ Modelling, observation, repeated exposure to a stimulus object, and intermittent reinforcement
- ❖ Is pornography pertinent?
 - ❖ The research literature has failed to show a connection between pornography and sexual offending, but the results are a bit complicated (Diamond, 2009; Kingston et al., 2008)

Medical Model

- ❖ Deviant sexual behavior is the result of a clinically-diagnosable syndrome
 - Paraphilia – DSM-5 (APA, 2013)
- ❖ Treatable by medical/psychiatric means
 - Therapeutic sex drive reduction (chemical castration)
- ❖ However, the problem is that there is no general psychiatric profile of a “sexual offender”
 - That is, few are “mentally ill” in the traditional sense

DSM-5 Definition of Paraphilias

“..any intense and persistent sexual interest other than sexual interest in genital stimulation or preparatory fondling with phenotypically normal, physically mature, consenting human partners”... or alternatively “sexual interests greater than or equal to normophilic sexual interests”.

“A *paraphilic disorder* is a paraphilia that is currently causing distress or impairment to the individual or a paraphilia whose satisfaction has entailed personal harm, or risk of harm, to others”

Paraphilic Preferences

Activity

Voyeurism
Exhibitionism
Frotteurism
Sexual Masochism
Sexual Sadism

Courtship Dx

Algolagnic Dx

Telephone Scatalogia
Blastophilia

Target

Pedophilia
Fetishism
Transvestism
Urophilia
Coprophilia
Necrophilia
Gerontophilia

Dimensionality

- ❖ Most sexual (and paraphilic) interests are not taxonic (either yes, they are or no, they are not)
- ❖ They're more likely to be dimensional – on a continuum
- ❖ This appears to be true of both chronophilic interests (children through elderly adults) as well as sexual dangerousness (coercion through sexual sadism)
- ❖ We can look at this two ways:
 - Strength – primary or exclusive
 - Relativity – greater than or equal to “normophilic” interests

Male sexual arousal

Masters & Johnson (1966) demonstrated that the best place to measure male sexual arousal is in the penis, which experiences changes in volume and circumference in response to both internal and external stimuli

- ❖ A description of methods to measure male sexual arousal and interest is found in Wilson & Miner (2016)

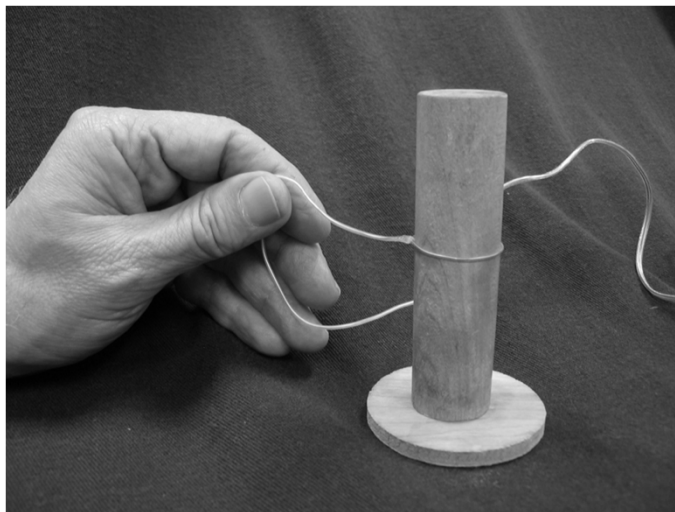
Penile Plethysmograph (PPG)

- ❖ Bayliss (1908) is believed to be the first to attempt to measure sexual arousal, in dogs
- ❖ Hynie (1934) was the first to use penile changes in study of human sexuality
- ❖ Ohlmeyer et al. (1944) constructed a crude on/off circumferential device to study nocturnal erections
- ❖ Freund (1957) is acknowledged to be the pioneer of the modern phallometric method for use in forensic and sexological research and practice

PPG Chair



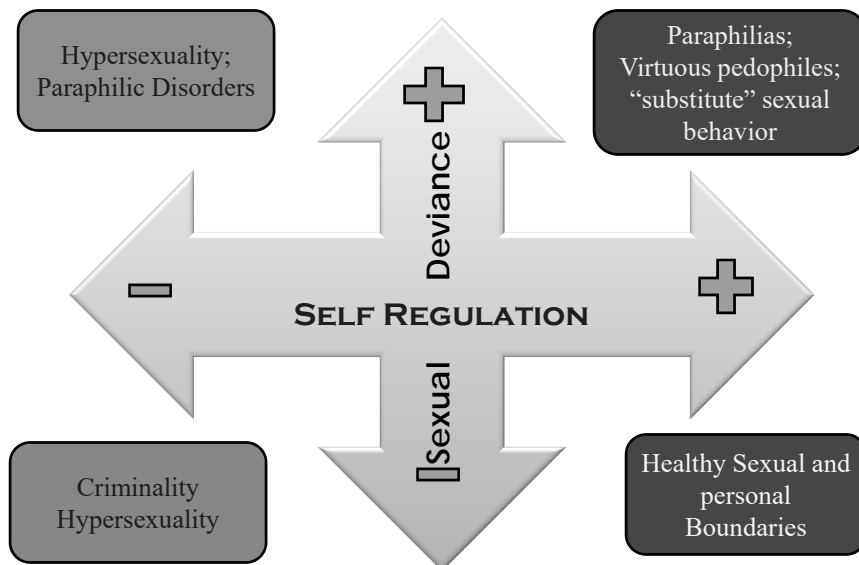
Circumferential PPG



Alternative Methods

- ❖ Controversies exist regarding stimuli used in PPG evaluations
- ❖ Visual Reaction Time methods have emerged
 - Abel Screen (Abel et al., 1998), Affinity (Glasgow et al., 2003), etc.
 - Sexual arousal vs. sexual interest?
 - Extent and quality of research may be an issue

Jill Levenson's attempt at conceptualizing sexual deviance



References

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