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Understanding the sexual fantasies of sex offenders and their correlates

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Abstract

Sexual fantasy is proposed to be an important factor in sexual offending. However, the existing research on this topic suggests that its role is multifaceted and interrelated with various other important factors associated with sexual offending. In this paper, we begin by examining some of the conceptual and definitional issues regarding the term “deviant sexual fantasy”™. We then discuss the literature relating to sexual fantasies and some of its chief correlates, including: (1) sexual arousal, (2) affective states, (3) personality, and (4) behavior. Throughout the paper we discuss the relevant research and theories; identify possible areas for future research; and offer some suggestions for theoretical development.

Highlights

– Deviant fantasy is reconceptualized as *high risk sexual fantasy*. – Two recent,

non-behavioral theories are applied to deviant arousal and fantasy. Negative affect is closely associated with deviant fantasy use in sex offenders. Personality constructs, such as psychopathy, are important influencing factors. Deviant fantasies can increase the risk of offending and shape offending behavior.



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Keywords

Sexual fantasy; Sex offending; Deviant fantasy; Sexual arousal; Affect

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