


Online Child Sexual Abuse: some findings from Europe

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Overview

- Trends in sexual crimes against children
- Challenges
- What does European research tell us?
- Some examples from ROBERT













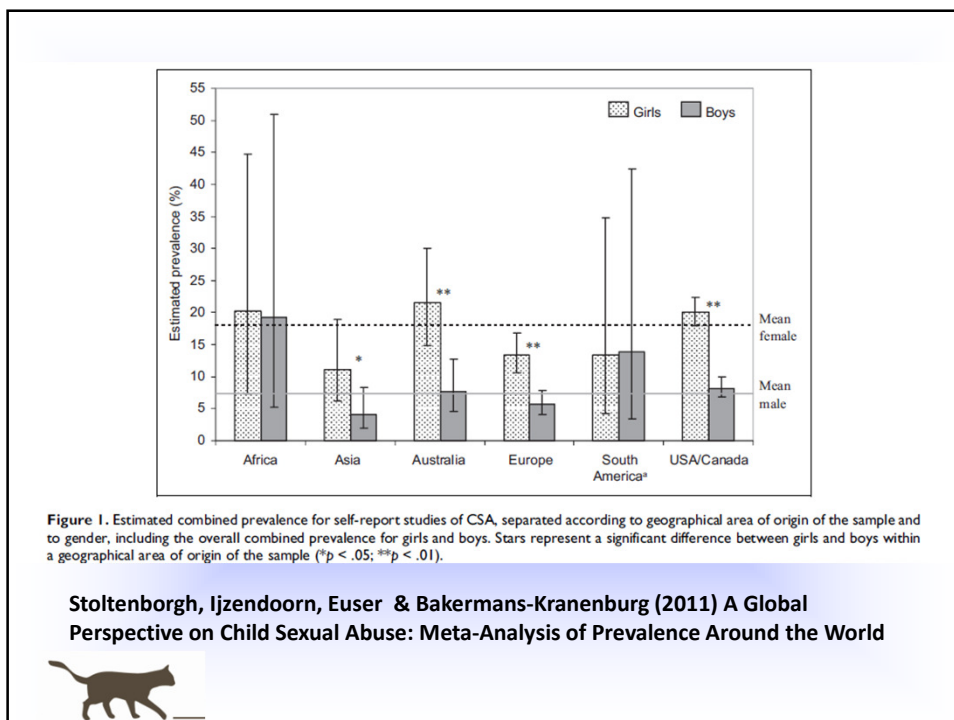


Risktaking Online Behaviour Empowerment through Research and Training

- Knowledge Enhancement Project funded by the EU Safer Internet Programme (EUR 400 000)
- June 2010 until June 2012
- Coordinated by the Expert Group for Cooperation on Children at Risk, Council of the Baltic Sea States

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Stoltenborgh et al.'s conclusions?

“The results of our meta-analysis show a lower limit estimate of self-reported CSA prevalence in girls of 164/1000 and an upper limit estimate of 197/1000. For boys, the lower limit is 66/1000 and the upper limit is 88/1000. Even the lower bound estimates are alarming in their demonstration that CSA is a global phenomenon affecting the lives of millions of children” (p 90).



Declining Rates of Child Sexual Abuse

A Bibliography

2011

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A contentious issue and an emotive topic?



Three European studies: 1

- Laaksonen et al., (2011):
 - Finnish population sample 4561 men and 8361 females m=29 yrs
 - Prevalence varied between 0.7 – 4.6% for men and 1.8 – 7.5% for women.
 - Younger cohorts reported less CSA
 - Suggest real decline in CSA and it's mirrored by decline in factors associated with CSA.



Three European studies: 2

- McGee, Garavan, Byrne, O'Higgins & Conroy (2011)
 - National cluster-randomised telephone interview of 3120 adults in Ireland
 - CSA contact abuse in 20% women and 16% of men
 - Adult sexual violence 20% for women and 10% for men
 - Prevalence of any sexual violence across the lifespan was 42% for women and 38% for men.



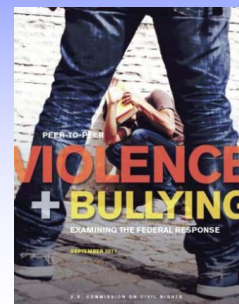
McGhee et al (2011) conclude:

- Analysis by year of birth indicated a curvilinear pattern with lowest prevalence in oldest and youngest participants.
- Sexual violence in young adulthood showed a linear pattern with higher prevalence in youngest participants.



Study 3: Child Abuse and Neglect in the UK today (Radford et al., 2011)

- 65.9% of contact abuse of children and young people (based on reports for 0-17 yrs) was perpetrated by other children and young people under the age of 18 rather than by adults in or outside the home.



But none of these studies included items that related to technology-mediated sexual offending



Denmark (Helweg-Larsen, Schütt & Larsen, 2012)

- Internet use, chatting with unknown person, unwanted contacts, harassments and online solicitation + predictors and protective factors
 - 4000 14-17 yrs olds through audi-CASI
 - 0.8% boys and 2.3% girls had sexually explicit photos of themselves placed on Internet
 - 7.0% boys and 11.8% girls duped by false profile
 - 4.3% boys and 13.3% girls had been harassed
 - 5.4% boys and 16.2% girls sexually solicited
 - 2.2% boys and 7.7% females had been offered money or gifts for sex



Case example:

- *Y was 14 and spent most of her spare time online because she found the people there nicer and more interesting. She was talking to more than 200 people when she met J. They exchanged mobile phone numbers and he offered her €250 to be able to touch her. She told him she was 16 and knew he was 25. He met her in his car and they went back to his house where he lived with his parents (who were out). She insisted that they had sex and they then drove to a cash machine where he took out the money for her. She spent it on clothes and perfume.*



Denmark study conclusions:

- 18.8% of boys and 35.8% of girls had received some form of online harassment
- Knowledge about safe internet use did not decrease the prevalence of online victimisation
- BUT parental surveillance did



Internet safety education? (Mishna, Cook, Saini, Wu & MacFadden, 2011)

- Systematic review of the effectiveness of cyber abuse interventions in increasing Internet safety knowledge and decreasing risky online behaviour.
- Results provide evidence that participation in psychoeducational Internet safety interventions is associated with an increase in Internet safety knowledge but is not significantly associated with a change in risky online behaviour.



Netherlands, Baumgartner & Valkenburg (2010)

- Online survey of 1765 Dutch adolescents (12-13; 14-15; 16-17) and 1026 adults. Even gender split.
- Unwanted sexual solicitation measured by 2 items:
 - How often in last 6 months did anyone ask you online to talk about sex when you didn't want to
 - How often in the past 6 months did anyone ask you online to do something sexual that you didn't want to



Risky behaviour in the Dutch sample:

- Searched online to talk to someone about sex
- Searched for someone to have sex with
- Sent a photo/video in which you were partly naked to someone only known online
- Sent an address or telephone number to somebody known only online



Dutch results:

- 5.6% male adolescents and 19.1% females reported an unwanted sexual solicitation at least once in last 6 months
- 18.2% males and 17.0% females took at least one of the online risks
- Levels of unwanted online sexual solicitation greatest among females 14-29 years.
- Young female adults should be considered a risk group.



Online and offline victimisation?

- Sumter, Baumgartner & Valkenburg (2012) – development and consequences of offline and online victimisation during adolescence
- Reported levels of online victimisation were lower compared to offline victimisation
- BUT “Adolescents who experienced high off-line victimization were always victimized online as well” (p 6).



Case example:

- *On her way back from the stables, A was raped by a boy who attended the same school. On a later occasion he raped her again. A was 13 years old at the time. After the rapes A felt bad and started regularly contacting men online whom she sold sex to. One of the clients/men turned out to be A's sister's boyfriend. He was very violent and almost killed her on several occasions. In an earlier interview, A related that “he had a penchant for broken” bottles. He threatened to tell her family if she said something. It is during a meeting with the sister's boyfriend that A is filmed.*



Sweden (Shannon, 2008)

- Four studies:
 - SAFT (2003) 32% of a nationally representative sample of children 9-16 yrs reported having someone talking to them about sex on the Internet against their wishes
 - Medierådet (2006) 15% of postal sample of 12-16 yrs reported being exposed to unwanted sexual communications



Sweden (Shannon, 2008)

- Brå (2007; 2008) 7,500 students (14-15 years of age). 30%+ (48% girls and 18% boys) received some form of sexual contact in last 12 months:
 - 9% (girls 11% and boys 6%) had been sent an invitation of a sexual nature through their mobile phone.
 - Only 2% of both girls and boys had been contacted with sexual suggestions by an adult outside the Internet.



Sweden (Shannon, 2008)

- Police data referring to reported online sexual solicitations to under 18 yr olds (14 of 21 police authorities) between 2004-6
- 315 reports
 - 179 online only
 - 45 online and offline but with no sexual offence
 - 22 offline moving to online
 - 69 online moving to online



Case example:

- *D was 11 years old when he met his abuser on World of Warcraft. He was feeling very unsure of himself at the time and enjoyed chatting with him. They exchanged telephone numbers and agreed to meet. He knew that M was 19. He knew that the meeting would be sexual, and it was followed by frequent meetings at his flat which left him feeling guilty as he couldn't tell his parents. When he tried to stop M threatened to tell his parents. D wrote a note to his father and they then phoned the police.*



Switzerland (Eisner, Müller-Johnson & Averdijk, 2011)

- Population survey of 6745 8th grade students (CASI) using JVQ and SAVQ
 - 15% experienced some type of sexual victimisation at least once in their lives (8% boys and 22% girls)
 - 29% reported non-contact victimisation (20% boys and 40% girls)
 - Cyber-victimisation reported most often – in last year 7.6% males and 18.6% females.



Switzerland (Eisner, Müller-Johnson & Averdijk, 2011)

- Sexual victimisation before 12 relatively rare but steep increase in risk in 12-14 yr olds
- 71% indicated that one or more of offenders was below 18 (but females reported 34% 18 or over)
- Peak in adolescence suggests that respondents were often victimised by peers or partners



Case example

- *When D was 14 years old some boys at school subjected her to a group rape. The rape was filmed and the boys threatened to spread the film if D did not agree to meet them again. For three months she was in contact with the perpetrators and additional men. When they stopped contacting her, D started contacting other men online to sell herself to.*



“Not surprisingly, more time spent on the Internet was related to a higher risk of non-contact victimization. More surprisingly, this variable was also related to a higher risk of contact victimization. Perhaps Internet activities increase the likelihood that young people come into contact with potential sex offenders, in turn increasing their risk of contact victimization” (Eisner et al., 2011 p 72).



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