

Child sexual abuse material (CSAM): understanding the problem, the offender, & risk concerns

Abstract

Users of Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM), Child Exploitive Sexual Materials (CESM), child porn and Child Related Erotica (CRE) pose a risk to communities everywhere. Erotica is anything that an individual finds sexually arousing. This can include child pornography, Child Sexually Exploitive Material (CSEM), Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM), and any CRE (e.g., pictures of clothed or partially clothed minors, children's underwear, toys, teaching or sports paraphernalia designed for minors, etc.). The use of any CRE/CSEM/CSAM strengthens deviant sexual arousal towards minors. Those who believe that continued use of CRE/CSEM helps prevent actual touch offenses against children and teenagers fail to understand theories of habituation, learning theory, and behavioral and cognitive theories. To put it simply, practice makes perfect. A small number of articles and research finds that those convicted of use or possession of child porn/CSEM/CSAM are not dangerous and pose little risk of engaging in contact offenses; however, these sources fall short of solid methodological standards, mainly that they rely on offender self-report and a lack of any sex related conviction for a contact sex offense. Most studies fail to utilize objective measures such as polygraph to offer support of the offender's claim to not have any undetected contact victims.

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Introduction

Pornography is a topic of much discussion. Child pornography is now referred to as *Child Sexual Exploitive Material- CSEM* in the United States and internationally referred to as *Child Sex Abuse Material- CSAM*.¹⁻⁴ The revised terms highlight that sexual material involving minors is both exploitive and abusive in nature. It is imperative that people understand that CSEM and CSAM involve a lifetime of ongoing victimization for the victims, the material never being removed from the porn sites.

From a mental health standpoint, any continued use of CSEM/CSAM or of erotica involving minors serves to strengthen deviant interest, arousal and fantasies thereby significantly increasing the likelihood of engaging in contact sex offense behavior. Treatment has the goal of mitigating against deviant and destructive thoughts and behavior. Yet some in the treatment field believe that sex offenders can somehow continue to engage in behavior (e.g., use of CSEM/CSAM or related erotica) regardless of the fact that it is contrary to the goal and purpose of treatment. Competent assessment must be made of a sex offender, which leads to an appropriate diagnosis, which in turn guides the goals of treatment. Yet some in the sex offender treatment field fail to appropriately understand or diagnose Paraphilic Disorders. It has been suggested that perhaps the better term for those who sexually abuse both children and adolescents is *Pedohebephilic* (having a primary or strong sexual interest in both children and adolescents).⁵⁻⁸

It is also easy to assume that the child pornography only perpetrator either has no contact victims or that a sex offender or child sex abuser only has the number of victims identified in the current criminal complaint. However, most, not some, sex offenders have many undetected victims.⁹⁻¹⁴ When polygraphy was used, multiple undetected victims are often discovered averaging around 62% having undetected victims.^{9-11,15-19} Polygraph offers the most reliable situation to determine the veracity of an offender's claim of having or not having contact victims or additional undetected victims.

It is important to understand that the average number of victims sex offenders have is 8 and that many child and adolescent victims do not report their victimization for 3 or more years.²⁰ This suggests that many victims are not identified because their case may not have resulted in a criminal conviction.

Supervision and treatment of the sex offender must include prohibiting the viewing, possessing or masturbating to any Child Related Erotica (CRE) (e.g., children's underwear, clothed pictures of minors, etc.). CRE only serves to strengthen the offender's deviant sexual thoughts, urges, and fantasies and significantly increase the likelihood of engaging in contact offense behavior.

This research is important and relevant because it serves to highlight and the overall problem of how Child Sex Abuse Material/Child Sexual Exploitive Material have been dangerously minimized by some professionals and present evidence to support more strict guidelines for those in sex offender treatment or on supervision. The overall goal of treatment is to significantly decrease overall sexual offense recidivism and therefore reduce the number of new victims. This goal appears impeded without an understanding of scope and impact of CSAM/CSEM/CRE.

This paper will address: the overall problem; the impact of pornographic material on society and on the sex offender (CSAM, CSEM, CRE); the impact of erotica (CRE); explore critical concerns for the child porn only offender; address concerns of the assessment & treatment of the sex offender and diagnosis concerns; and explore supervision & treatment concerns.

Definitions child sexual abuse material (CSAM) & child sexually exploitive material (CSEM)

The international community has changed the terminology from "Child Porn" to Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM).¹⁻⁴ The psychology and other fields have also lessened the use of the term "child porn" and have used Child Sexually Exploitive Material (CSEM). For purposes of this article, the term Child Sexual Abuse

Material (CSAM) will be used due to the international support for the term. CSEM and child porn are included in this definition. However, the term “child pornography” or “child porn” will be used when referring to research if the researchers used those terms to maintain the integrity of the source document.

The reason that the term Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM) is used is to highlight the true nature and representation of the material. CSAM includes a visual representation or depiction of a child engaged in a sexual display (real or simulated), an act or performance.^{1,2} CSAM better reflects the abuse that is depicted in the images and videos and the resulting trauma to the child. For this article, Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM) and Child Sexually Exploitive Material (CSEM) are used interchangeably. Again, the term “child porn” will refer to CSEM and CSAM but used to protect the integrity of research cited.

The form that CSAM/CSEM occur must be considered. “*Moreover, it is imperative that, with the advent of new technologies, mention be made of all the forms CSAM can take including, but not limited to: film, DVD, CD-ROM, diskette, CD-R, data files, data storage devices, software, information and communication technologies (ICTs), and other electronic or digital media; all the ways CSAM can be distributed, including via computer networks, smart phones, and the Internet; and all the ways in which CSAM can be possessed, including by simply knowingly viewing an image on the Internet or knowingly downloading an image to one’s computer, tablet, or smart phone.*”¹

Child porn only offender (CPO)

This refers to the offender who views or possesses CSAM, with no other known sexual offense convictions. Child pornography offenders include those collect any material related to or used for sexual activity involving minors (e.g., erotica). The child porn only offender allegedly does not have any contact victims.

Offender

This refers to anyone investigated for, charged or prosecuted for any sex related crime. I will use this term to refer to those offenders who are being investigated for or have engaged in any sex related crime against a minor.

Minors

This refers to anyone under the age of 18. Often the term “child” is used when referring to CSAM. This includes adolescents.

Contact offenses

This refers to any contact, online, direct or indirect, between the offender and minor. This can include online and in-person grooming, as well as any physical and sexual contact with the minor.

Erotica

Any material or item that serves a sexual purpose for a given person (e.g., objects, magazines, pornographic material (e.g., videos, pictures), fetish items, children’s underwear, writings, drawings, sexual paraphernalia, vibrators, sex toys, handcuffs, dolls, roll playing).²¹ Erotica is not deviant if it involves an age appropriate and consenting partner. However, erotica involving deviant or criminal fantasies, urges, thoughts, or behaviors is deviant in nature. Hazelwood & Lanning²⁵ suggest that erotica is deviant when:

- I. It is behaviorally related to a crime or paraphilias
- II. There is an abnormal amount of the material, and it serves no practical purpose

III. The material was secretive; and

IV. The financial investment is large

I would argue that if the first criteria is met, the material should be prohibited from the offenders’ use.

The problem

Some professionals in the sex offender assessment, treatment and research field are attempting to lessen the seriousness of the viewing of or possession of CSAM. They erroneously assert that viewing the deviant material helps to lessen the likelihood of the offender engaging in contact sexual offenses against minors (especially the *child porn only offender* in particular). Some legislators and politicians are working to lessen the seriousness of the child porn only offender and for those who view, use, or collect CSAM. The problem here is obvious and unavoidable- the viewing of, possession or making of CSAM serves to strengthen the deviant thoughts, fantasies and urges of the offender, not lessen them. Regardless of whether the offender has engaged in any contact sex offenses is not relevant. Strengthening deviant sexual arousal through continued use of CSAM or CRE (Child Related Erotica) is likely to lead to a contact offense. Unless polygraph or similar objective testing is utilized, there is often no way to know whether an offender has undetected victims. Research has consistently demonstrated that around 40-50% of the child porn only offenders admit in treatment that they have undetected contact victims.^{12,14}

The making of a sex offender

Conditioning may help to develop sexual attraction to children and adolescents for some offenders through having been sexually abused.²²⁻³⁷ This is stronger for those who experienced sexual abuse as more pleasurable (e.g., perhaps because of grooming and positive reinforcement from the offender). Adverse environmental experiences such as physical and sexual abuse are common. Psychological issues appear to also play a role. Early sexual development and engaging in sexual behavior at a younger age may help to develop sexual attraction to children and adolescents for some offenders.

However, many who sexually molest children and adolescents *were not* victims of childhood sexual or physical abuse. Most pedohebephilic men do not appear to present with childhood histories of sexual abuse.^{30,38-43}

There are multiple factors that may contribute to a person choosing to or developing a sexual attraction to children or adolescents. However, the decision to engage in the sexual abuse and exploitation of children appears to come down to one factor- **CHOICE!**

The view that use of CSAM is a victimless crime

There is an assumption that because the child porn only offender has no known contact victim, and they deny having any contact victims, that they are somehow engaged in a victimless crime. This could not be further from the truth. CSAM involves the exploitation and abuse of minors. Each time the CSAM files are shared the child victims are re-victimized, every time their file, photo or video is shared.³ Unlike contact offenses, the distribution of the CSAM never ends, pornography sites do not remove the victim’s material- the images and videos of the abuse, rape and exploitation are permanent.

“*Children often suffer a lifetime of re-victimization knowing the documentation of their sexual abuse is on the internet, available for others to access forever. Further, perpetrators are grooming minors to engage in sexually explicit conduct online. This can result in the*

minor being extorted or blackmailed to create additional CSAM, or pay a ransom, to prevent images from being distributed to their peer networks.”

CSAM is not just videos and pictures but a record of actual abuse and sexual exploitation of children/minors. Every sexually explicit photo or video of a minor is real evidence of that minor being a victim of abuse, rape, molestation, and/or exploitation.⁴ Further, the CSAM users create a demand for new and more egregious images and videos. This results in the continued abuse and exploitation of child victims, and the abuse of new children every day (U.S. Department of Justice, 2024).

*“This growing and thriving market for child pornographic images is responsible for fresh child sexual abuse—because the high demand for child pornography drives some individuals to sexually abuse children and some to “commission” the abuse for profit or status.”*⁴⁴

Children and adolescents involved in the child porn industry are victimized in ways that many may not clearly understand. *“Unlike children who suffer from abuse without the production of images of that abuse, these children struggle to find closure and may be more prone to feelings of helplessness and lack of control, given that the images cannot be retrieved and are available for others to see in perpetuity. They experience anxiety because of the perpetual fear of humiliation that they will be recognized from the images.”*^{44,45}

*“The fact that images/videos of a child’s sexual abuse were created at all, as well as the fact that they may still be possessed by the abuser and be publicly available for others to access, has an enormously negative impact on the individual. The impact can persist into adulthood and may significantly reduce the ability of survivors to cope with day to-day stressors, maintain healthy relationships, and reach their full potential in educational and occupational pursuits. Nearly 70% of respondents indicated that they worry constantly about being recognized by someone who has seen images of their abuse (n=103). Thirty respondents (30%) reported being identified by a person who had viewed the child sexual abuse imagery.”*⁴⁶

Most CPO’s had images of prepubescent children (83%) and images graphically depicting sexual penetration (80%). Approximately 1 in 5 arrested CP possessors (21%) had images depicting sexual violence to children such as bondage, rape, and torture.¹⁴ For more information on online sexual victimization of youth, see Wolak, et al.,⁴⁷ *“Unfortunately, emerging trends reveal an increase in the number of images depicting sadistic and violent child sexual abuse, and an increase in the number of images depicting very young children, including toddlers and infants.”*⁴⁸

The use of any CSAM strengthens deviant sexual arousal towards minors

Again, the term “porn” or “pornography” may be used to maintain the integrity of the source material- many researchers used these terms rather than CSEM or CSAM. However, in this article “porn” and “pornography” will refer to CSAM and CSEM.

In 2009, The Department’s Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section (CEOS) helped organize a Global Symposium for Examining the Relationship Between Online and Offline Offenses and Preventing the Sexual Exploitation of Children. The symposium members concluded *“...that there is sufficient evidence of a relationship between possession of child pornography and the commission of contact offenses against children to make it a cause of acute concern, and that the greater availability of child sexual exploitation materials has stimulated the demand and production of even more extreme,*

sadistic, and violent images of children and infants” US. Postal Inspection Service (USPIS).⁴⁹ The important conclusions of this study support the continued risk of the child porn (CSAM) user in engaging in contact sexual crimes against children.

The overall findings suggest that child porn offenders are more likely to have undetected contact victims. Self-report is not a valid not accurate means to determine the lack of any contact victims.⁵⁰ Many children will not report the abuse for several years, thereby making it less likely for the case to be prosecuted (. So again, why do we rely on the offender’s denial of contact offenses as somehow being factual or credible?⁴⁵

The admissions of the child porn only offender that led to disclosure of previously undetected victims occurred either while in treatment and being asked specific questions about the presence of undetected victims and/or when polygraphed.¹⁹ Polygraph offers the most reliable situation to determine the veracity of an offender’s claim of having or not having contact or additional victims. The literature supports that the child porn offender presents substantial risk for contact sexual offending, yet some of the literature minimizes this risk solely based on a short follow-up period (generally less than 3 years), offender self-report, the lack of any direct sex offense convictions, and few utilized polygraph exams. Child porn offenders admit to having on average 8-20 undetected victims of child sexual abuse¹⁵ and the overall results of their study indicated that as many as 53% had undetected victims, though another study found 85% had undetected victims.⁹

Literature reviews time and time again have shown that pornography use is linked to violent behavior, including sexually violent behavior.⁵¹⁻⁶⁷ In fact, even soft-core pornography use resulted in sex offender’s choice to engage in sexual aggression.⁶⁸ Malamuth et al.,⁶⁴ revealed in their meta-analysis that current heavy pornography use was found to be related to sexually aggressive behavior (p. 48). This does not mean that all child sexual abusers, rapists or child molesters regularly view or collect pornography, CSAM, etc., but most do.

Crossman⁵⁵ found that pornography use was the strongest correlate of sexual aggression and that the more frequently men used pornography and the more violent the pornography they used, the more likely they were to engage in coercive or physically forced sex. Heavy current users of pornography were approximately three times more likely to be sexually aggressive than those who used pornography less frequently.⁶⁹ In their meta-analysis of pornography and rape literature, Malamuth et al.,⁶⁴ *concluded that there is a significant association between habitual pornography use and attraction to sexually aggressive/harassing behaviors.* They also found that rapists were more aroused by violent pornography but that both nonviolent and violent pornography resulted in a greater likelihood for some form of sexual act for rapists (e.g., masturbation, consensual sex, or rape).

Some child molesters engaged in child sexual molestation before they possessed child pornography, though this appears to be a small percentage. McCarthy¹⁹ found that those child pornography users that crossed into contact offenses had dispositional factors related to substance abuse, antisocial orientation (including prior sex related arrests), and deviant sexual interests (including the diagnosis of Pedophilia).

McCarthy¹⁹ also found that contact offenders collected both pornographic and nonpornographic material depicting both children and adults and that all this material should be viewed as significant concerning the offender’s risk. The non-pornographic material would be referred to as “erotica”, and the use of and masturbation to deviant

erotica (e.g., even clothed pictures of children, children's underwear) would only serve to strengthen deviant sexual arousal.^{61,64} *Erotica becomes deviant and harmful when it behaviorally relates to a crime or other paraphilias (e.g., deviant sexual fantasies, preferences, behaviors).*⁷⁰⁻⁷³

Impact of pornographic material

Use of pornography material (even non-violent themes as well as deviant themes (CSAM & CSEM) increases physical and sexual violence

Literature reviews time and time again have shown that pornography use is linked to violent behavior, including sexually violent behavior and even soft-core pornography may lead to sexual aggression.^{51-59,61-68}

General learning theory and Cognitive-Behavior theory support the concept of habituation, that is, practice makes perfect. Use of any type of deviant pornography and CSAM/CSEM has been found to correlate with contact sex offenses.^{14,49,74-83} The issue of how pornography impacts deviant sexual thoughts, fantasies and behavior has been widely debated.^{84,85} I assert that the majority of people who view pornographic material are not likely negatively impacted unless they have a predisposition for violence or sexual violence, are using pornography frequently, or are using violent and/or extreme pornography. When pornography is used more frequently (e.g., several times per week, hours per week), then I assert that the pornographic material would likely have more negative and destructive impact on the viewer. The general finding is that the negative and destructive impact of pornography appears to significantly outweigh any positive benefit (*though again the frequency of viewing the pornographic material does not appear to be addressed or specified*). Consider the following research. For further research and information see.^{59,60,86-91}

Osanka & Johann⁹² found that pornography played a significant role in physical and sexual violence for both the physical abuser and sexual offender.^{86,93} Pornography of any theme, including CSEM and CSAM strengthens deviant thinking, fantasies and urges, which likely will result in the offender wanting to try the depicted behavior. Again, refer to the plethora of research on learning theory, habituation theory, and the cognitive and behavior theories. Practice makes perfect and repeated viewing of deviant material serves to significantly increase the likelihood of the offender wanting to try the depicted behavior. Pornography involves fantasies, and is almost always viewed in solitude, with no one to challenge the appropriateness of the material. Hazelwood & Warren²¹ indicate that sexual fantasies are an important component of any sexual crime. Zillman & Bryant⁹⁴ found that after massive exposure to pornographic materials, men found pornography less offensive and less objectionable. They found that massive exposure to pornography significantly increased men's sexual callousness toward women. When intoxicated, men found more extreme and violent pornography more acceptable.⁶⁰

Cramer & McFarlane⁹⁵ found that 40% of 87 battered women who filed charges reported that their male partner used one or more pornographic materials. Use of the pornographic materials was significantly associated with the women being asked or forced to participate in violent sexual acts, including rape. Some findings provided by Hazelwood⁹⁶ suggest that 1) 61% of serial killers (not necessarily sexual murders) used and/or had pornography collections and 2) at least 90% of pedophiles used and/or had pornography collections.

Viewing pornography and imitating what is depicted in the pornography have played a key role in the sexual victimization

of women as well as to the physical abuse of women.^{53,58,87,97-99} When pornography was used just prior to an abusive incident, the pornography appeared to have a tempering or lessening effect on the degree of violence in that episode of violence.¹⁰⁰ In addition, the younger the age of first pornography use, the more likely that individual will engage in physically and sexually assaultive behavior and cause a higher degree of humiliation in their victims than those who begin pornography usage as adults.¹⁰⁰ Violent pornography use resulted in significantly greater attitudes supporting aggressions and rape than nonviolent pornography,¹⁰¹ although nonviolent pornography still resulted in some sexually aggressive behavior.⁶⁴ In addition, studies have found that exposure to pornography containing nudity only versus sex acts of violence reduced aggression whereas pornography containing nonviolent and/or violent depictions increased aggressive behavior.⁵² Heavy pornography use was approximately three times more likely to result in sexually aggressive behavior.⁶⁹ Those with histories of childhood abuse and/or a family history positive for parental violence and were frequent users of pornography were much more likely to engage in sexual aggression versus those with similar childhood backgrounds but who were not using pornography often.⁶⁴

One significant study found that offenders who viewed deviant pornography were more likely to reoffend than those who did not.¹⁰² Johnson⁶¹ references studies that found that even soft-core (non-deviant) pornography use increased violent (including sexually violent) re-offense. The term "deviant" and "extreme" pornography refers to any pornography depicting or including any contact of the following (though not an inclusive list): ageinappropriate (e.g., child molestation), violence, harming, degrading, non-consenting, rape, sexual assault, murder, physical assault, and sadism.¹⁶ Regardless of whether the pornography was deviant or nondeviant in nature, use of pornography increased the likelihood of sexual offenders reoffending.^{59,61,62}

When examining the differences between the child porn offender and the dual and contact offender, most researchers have found more similarities than differences except that the child porn offender tended to have less antisociality traits.^{50,73,103-105}

Impact of erotica

Use of erotica

Any material or item that serves a sexual purpose for a given person (e.g., objects, magazines, pornographic material/CSAM (e.g., dvd's, pictures, websites), children's underwear, clothed or partially clothed pictures of children or adolescents, fetish items, writings, drawings, sexual paraphernalia, vibrators, sex toys, handcuffs, dolls, roll playing). Erotica is not deviant if it involves an appropriate aged and consenting partner. Erotica can add to the intimate experience of a person or couple. It is not deviant to engage in creative play, use sex toys, bondage, or any other type of erotica to enhance a consensual sexual experience. However, erotica can become deviant when it involves non-age-appropriate people (*CRE*) and/or non-consenting people Johnson⁴⁵).

Hazelwood & Lanning¹⁰⁶ suggest that in determining whether an object or specific material serves as erotica for a particular person the following should be considered: 1) is the material behaviorally related to the crime under investigation or to a fetish; 2) is there an abnormal amount of the material present and the amount of the material serves no practical purpose; 3) is the material secretive (e.g., hidden and/or protected for discovery); and 4) does the subject have a large financial investment in the material. Meeting only one of the above four criteria is enough to label something "erotica".

If the individual's erotica is now involved in a sex offense of any kind, then the erotica now serves to fuel the deviant fantasies, thereby increasing the likelihood of future re-offense. It has now become deviant material for the offender. For the Pedophile/Hebephile/Ephebophile/Child Molester & Child Sex Abuser (anyone that has fantasies involving sexual contact with children under the age of 18, or that has in anyway sexually abused a minor, or has engaged in any sexual contact with a person under the age of 18) if their erotica involves anything to do with their target victim population, or relates in any way to their offense behavior, they should be prohibited from possessing or viewing any of that specific erotica or pornographic material or objects. This includes the taking of or possessing photos of clothed children, being in the presence of children, or any material item associated with children (e.g., sporting equipment, teaching materials, underwear or other clothing, toys). In many cases, even children's clothing and clothed photos of children can serve the purpose of erotica and offense related stimulation for the Pedophile/Hebephile and Ephebophile. Therefore, the offender's erotica is now deviant, and the offender should be prohibited from engaging in the use or possession of any erotica deemed related to their sex offense behavior.

The continued viewing, owning, or making/taking pictures or videos of what is now deviant for the offender (e.g., they are taking pictures of children in the park and they have a history of sexually molesting children) is further reinforcing deviant and predatory thinking, feeding the offender's deviant fantasies and places the offender at higher risk for sexual and violent reoffense. The research clearly demonstrates the connection of any type of pornography to violent offenses and sexual offenses.

Child Porn Offenders

Child porn only offenders (CPO) have undetected victims

It is difficult to fully understand how many CPOs are undetected child molesters/contact offenders based solely on self-report. As already discussed in this article, the literature offers support that most have undetected contact victims. In treatment many CPOs admit to having numerous contact victims while other CPOs limit their deviant and illegal behavior to viewing child pornography (CSAM) - at least during the current assessment period or again, based on self-report. However, from my own experience as well as what the literature has to offer, CPOs should never be viewed as being at lower risk for contact offending simply because of not yet being detected for contact offenses. It is also important for law enforcement to find the child pornographers' and contact sexual offenders' pornography collection. The collection represents the themes of what the offender prefers and likes, and it is important in understanding the motives for a sex crime.

Use of polygraphy during the investigative process yields more admissions of contact victims^{9,15-18} and use of polygraph is essential to ascertain if the child porn offender has contact victims. It is estimated that likely 62% of child porn only cases would turn out to be contact offenses if polygraph is used.¹¹

Contact offenders often will have large pornography collections that may not involve direct child pornography, for example they may collect pictures of clothed children or adolescents but use these for sexual purposes. Other themes of what the offender prefers and enjoys or finds sexually arousing include themes of rape, power, control, or for some, an imaginary sexual relationship (e.g., fantasizing that the children or adolescents depicted in the pornography are in a relationship with the offender). Finding the offenders' pornography collection is important. In addition, it is common for sex offenders

to mix home-made pornography with the commercial pornography, often assuming that law enforcement will not review all of the images found.⁶³

Researchers have found that over half of child pornography users admitted to having one or more contact victims that they had yet to be caught for (*undetected offenders*).^{12,107} Child and adolescent victims may not report sexual abuse for some time, perhaps years. This is due to numerous factors, some of which include their developmental level, guilt, shame, having a relationship with the offender, and due to threats made to harm the victim or their family if they disclose sexual abuse.²⁰

Prosecutors may not charge an offender when the victim reports sexual abuse months or years after it occurred. The more time that passes, the less likely there is evidence or witnesses to the sexual abuse. Consider research about child abuse, time lapse between the abuse and reporting it.²⁰

How long does it take for a sex offender to be convicted of their first sex crime versus how long have they been offending undetected? There appears to be a lack of research in this area. Consider speeders: how often they speed before they receive their first traffic citation. Consider how many times a driver drives intoxicated before their first arrest. It is highly likely that a sex offender, especially a child sexual offender, goes undetected for months or years before their first sex related conviction.

Child porn only offenders have only been engaged in use of CSAM for a short period of time

Wrong! Little research has been done to ascertain the length of time an offender thought about or fantasized about sexually deviant behavior involving rape or child molestation before acting on the thoughts or fantasies. It is assumed that a person would have deviant thoughts perhaps at least 6 months or more prior to acting on them based on DSM-5 criteria for Paraphilias.¹⁰⁸ A thorough search of the child Porn only offender's electronics suffices to prove the point that they have been viewing CSAM for 6 or more months.

Demonstrating that any offender, especially the child porn only offender, has a paraphilic attraction involving deviant sexual thoughts, urges, or interests is quite simple- the proof is in the websites, chatrooms, etc., they visit and what material they view and/or download. A comfortability with and preference for deviant pornographic material, and specifically CSAM, is demonstrated in the repeated use of the material:

- I. Any *returning* to CSAM porn site or returning to any sexually deviant porn site proves the comfortability of and preference for the material.
- II. The *downloading* of any deviant material from a pornography or CSAM site proves the comfortability of and preference for the material.
- III. Engaging in any contact with other users to discuss or share the deviant material, chatting, texting, etc., not only proves the comfortability of and preference for the material but demonstrates a brazenness for discussing their deviant thoughts, fantasies and urges and pornographic/CSAM preferences with others. This brazenness relates to psychopathic traits, which in and of itself increases the likelihood of being detected- but the offender either does not care about getting caught or they truly believe that they will not get caught, which is naïve. These are traits of narcissism and psychopathy.

Law-enforcement agencies active in investigations of Internet related sex crimes committed against minors have reported the proportion of arrested offenders who both sexually victimized children and possessed child pornography was high, ranging from 35% to 51% when prior offenses also were counted.⁷⁵ They found 40% of the cases involving child porn possession in the N-JOV Study⁴⁴ involved dual offenses of child porn possession and child sexual victimization detected during the same investigation.⁴⁷

A conviction for CSAM/CSEM/child porn including possession or manufacture of child porn is the first indicator of the offender's deviant motivations^{10,105}

Continuing to strengthen the deviant motivations (e.g., sexual attraction to children or adolescents or of rape) with CSAM or rape porn significantly increases the offender's probability of wanting to try the deviant behavior. No one is spending time viewing and downloading deviant images (CSAM, CRE) unless it is interpreted as a positive event. Viewing CSAM may be a diagnostic marker for Paraphilic Disorder and Pedophilic Disorder.¹⁰⁵

Those seeking help with Paraphilic and/or Pedophilic Disorder may be at risk of committing child sexual abuse.^{105,109} Research suggests that most self-identified individuals with Pedophilic Disorder or respondents in anonymous online surveys endorse past or present CSAM viewing^{50,109-111} and nearly 70% reported engaging in previous child sexual offending behavior.⁵⁰ CSAM depicting the rape of infants and toddlers, bondage, humiliation through sexual assault, including self-mutilation, youth-on youth abuse, and child-on-child abuse, as well as bestiality, are not uncommon.¹¹²

It has been proffered that use of child porn may help some control sexual deviance while for others facilitates acting on preexisting fantasies and urges.¹¹³ However, there is no direct evidence to support the view that viewing child porn helps control deviant behavior, just opinion. Viewing deviant material may stimulate existing fantasies and lower inhibition leading to contact offenses.¹¹³ Repeated viewing of child porn and/or contact with other offenders may weaken resolve leading to contact offense.¹¹⁴ Remember that most sexual offenses against children are vastly undetected and unreported.¹¹⁵

The majority of child victims are less likely to report being victimized for 5 or more years.²⁰ Given that most research on child porn offenders typically spans up to but less than 3 years of a known offense, this means that many victims will likely remain undetected for the period researchers were checking the offender's criminal history. In addition, when victims report a crime years later, it is highly unlikely that prosecution will occur. Statute of limitations and most often a lack of any evidence after so many years prevents successful prosecution of the child sex abuser/molester/offender/monster.

Assessment & treatment of the sex offender assessing & appropriately diagnosing the sex offender

All people, not to mention any sexual or violent offender, referred for "treatment", "counseling" or any therapeutic intervention (e.g., psychoeducational classes) must first be appropriately assessed. **Assessment** involves:

I. The gathering of all pertinent, related material about the offender. This includes a review of all police reports, criminal complaints (*regardless of disposition, regardless of charges being dropped or plea agreement*), Presentence Investigation Reports (PSI's), and any treatment or intervention the offender has received, participated in, or was ordered to participate in but failed to comply. This sheds light into the offender's deviant behavior patterns.

II. Administering all relevant psychological and physiological testing and tools. Included here is personality testing (minimum of MMPI, though MMPI and another personality test is recommended to catch minimization and faking), tests and tools related to sexual abuse, rape, domestic abuse, etc. Psychosexual Assessment is the indepth assessment for anyone who is a sex offender of any type. Psychosexual assessments provide the most comprehensive understanding not only of the sex offender but of risk to the community.¹¹⁶ Sexual arousal and interest assessments need to be used as well. This includes Plethysmography and Visual Reaction Time (e.g., The Abel Assessment). The offender is being referred for a specialized treatment and intervention and this requires, not an option, that the sexual interests and arousals be assessed. Imagine being diagnosed with or having symptoms of Cancer and the Doctor not administering appropriate and relevant testing. In addition, the assessor and treatment provider are assuming risk of the offender's deviance and of reoffending, assessing a "risk Level". How does one assign an appropriate risk level to protect the community if competent and appropriate assessment is not completed? Lastly, the **diagnosis** depends on a thorough, competent and appropriate assessment.

III. Polygraph and/or Voice Stress Analysis is also a must. The treatment provider and the person administering the assessment are assuming responsibility for an accurate and thorough assessment, not just of sexual interests and arousals but also of how ingrained the deviant interests and behavior are. In addition, to simply take the offender's word that they have not been engaging in deviant behavior long, that they have no contact victims, or only one contact victim is ridiculous. The offender has little to gain to be honest with the extent of their deviant behavior and whether they have contact victims.

IV. Appropriate diagnosis must be made. Diagnosis guides treatment. A constellation of symptoms is defined by a specific diagnosis. Treatment strategies should follow evidence-based treatment. Treatment strategies are used to lessen or eliminate the symptoms identified in the diagnosis and to tailor the treatment plan.¹¹⁶⁻¹²² Without a diagnosis of a Paraphilic Disorder, you cannot effectively treat a sex offender, child molester, or child sex abuser. A sex offender should never, ever be "treated" without at least a Paraphilic Disorder diagnosis, and most will have specific Paraphilic diagnosis (e.g., Pedophilia- if even based only on their use and collection of CSAM). The fact that most child molesters, child sexual abusers, and sex offenders may lack any "distress" about their deviant behavior does not and should not interfere with an appropriate diagnosis. The "distress" criteria should be removed, and many experts concur.¹⁰⁵ The fact that there is deviant behavior that impacts children, adolescents and adults who are victimized by the use of CSAM and rape porn, is enough. Those offenders with psychopathic traits enjoy their deviant fantasies and behavior. The lack of "distress" should not impact the diagnosis.

Some suggest and I strongly agree that child pornography offending is a strong indicator of Pedophilia, regardless of whether contact occurs between the offender and victim.¹⁰⁵ The DSM-V¹¹⁷ mentions that the criteria include 1) having recurrent, intense sexually arousing fantasies, sexual urges, or behaviors involving sexual activity with a prepubescent child or children; and 2) that the individual has acted on these sexual urges, or that the sexual urges or fantasies cause marked distress or interpersonal difficulty; and 3) that the individual is at least 16 years of age. An offender "acting on" the sexual urge can include, but not be limited to viewing, downloading,

creating, and masturbating to, any CSAM.¹²³ The collecting, viewing, or masturbating to child pornography appears to more than meet the above criteria for Pedophilia.

In addition, three additional categories to consider, Hebephilia (primary or strong attraction to 12- to 15-year-olds) and Ephebophilia (primary or strong attraction to 15- to 19-year-olds)¹²⁴ or Pedehebephilia (primary of strong attraction to both children and adolescents). Which would warrant a diagnosis of **Paraphilia, Unspecified or Other, and then specifying either Hebephilia or Ephebophilia, or any accurate adjective. Pedehebephilic involves the sexual attraction to prepubescent and adolescent children which may be more accurate diagnosis for many of the child sex molesters/abusers.**

Remember that diagnosis guides treatment. How do you measure symptom reduction without specifying the name and behaviors of concern, which the diagnosis provides?

The **Pedophilic** has a primary sexual attraction to prepubescent children (typically 12 and under); the **Hebephilic** has a primary sexual attraction to early adolescents (approximately ages 11-14); the **Ephebophilic** has a primary sexual attraction to late aged adolescents (approximately ages 15-19);¹²⁵⁻¹²⁹ the **Pedehebephilic** has a primary or strong sexual interest in both children and adolescents,⁵⁻⁸ which is likely more accurate diagnosis than **Hebephilic** or **Ephebophilic** unless the offender presents with a very circumscribed age preference.

Some have argued that we should differentiate between the Pedophile and Pedehebephile who has urges to act on their deviant sexual interests, fantasies and arousals from those who do not experience the urge to act-out by engaging in sexual contact with minors.¹²³ This is a moot point as far as I am concerned. Almost exclusively, the determination of whether an individual wants to engage in sexual contact with a minor from those who do not is always based on self-report which is not a reliable test to assess risk of engaging in contact sex offenses. In addition, continued use of and masturbation to CSAM will strengthen the deviant arousal and increase the likelihood of contact sexual offenses in the future. The offender has demonstrated their deviant sexual urges, fantasies and arousals by their use of CSAM. At some point, highly likely to engage in contact offenses.

Risk assessment tools

Briefly, here are some of the effective risk assessment tools that appear most promising. The *Child Pornography Offender Risk Tool* (CPORT).¹³⁰ The CPORT predicts general sexual and child pornography recidivism among individuals adjudicated for CSAM offending but without known contact sexual offenses.

Dynamic measures for sexual offending risk among convicted offenders have been developed.¹³¹ Two such established measures are the *STABLE-2007* and *ACUTE-2007*. These address sexual preoccupation, self-regulation problems, and antisocial behavior.¹³² Please see other research for more on the risk assessment tools as that is not the focus of this article.

Treatment for sex offenders is based on Cognitive-Behavioral approaches and at times psychopharmacological treatments. ATSA¹¹⁶ specifies assessment, treatment and supervision guidelines for sex offenders. Treatment should be based on a cognitive-behavioral approach, utilize group sessions, adjunct therapies as recommended, and psychopharmacological intervention as recommended. **The goal is to lessen the offender's interest in, attraction to, deviant sexual and non-sexual behavior.** This needs to consider habituation theory,

learning theory, and behavioral and cognitive theories. Allowing an offender, whether CPO, noncontact or contact offender, to continue to view pornography, CSAM, or utilize CRE (*child related erotica*, e.g., children's underwear, picture of clothed or semi-clothed children) goes against everything about treatment- **it strengthens versus weakens the deviant interest and arousal.** *The literature included in this article and in the field supports the above information and the research spans decades.*

To argue, in any way, that allowing any sex offender, including the CPO sexual offender, that continued use of CRE, pornography of any type, and/or CSAM/CSEM, lessens the likelihood of contact offenses goes against every accepted theory for changing/modifying deviant thinking and behavior. If you believe that viewing and masturbating to any form of CSAM/porn (however you refer to the deviant material) or CRE somehow lessens the offender's risk of contact offenses or re-offense, the literature fails to support that view in any way. In fact, one significant study found that offenders who viewed deviant pornography were more likely to reoffend than those who did not.¹⁰² Approximately 80% of CSAM purchasers are actively sexually abusing children and approximately 40% of CPO's have engaged in contact sexual offenses against children in the past.¹³³ One study found that nearly 80% of those convicted of internet related crimes against children admitted to contact sex crimes with children that was yet undetected with a total of approximately 30 victims each.¹³⁴ In addition, child sex abusers often use CSEM to groom their victims.^{10,135,136} *So....* No rational reason to allow the sex offender continued access and use of any CRE or erotica used on any sex offense.

Some studies have found that even the use of soft-core (non-deviant) pornography increased violent (*including sexually violent*) re-offense. Soft-core pornography often contains child pornography and CSAM depictions (e.g., Playboy contains pictures of the centerfold as a toddler, young child and as a teenager), references and contains cartoons of minors involved in sex with adults, and many of the models are depicted often have non-consenting facial expressions (although I understand this is a subjective interpretation- Johnson⁶¹).

Remember that sex offenders do not amass deviant pornography, CSAM or CRE material or repeatedly view online deviant material unless they are interested in and aroused by the material. If it bothered the offender, they would stop doing it. Possession of or viewing or accessing of any material, erotica or pornography, that relates in any way to the offender's sex or violent behavior, should be banned. A collection in any amount of child porn, CSAM, CSEM, or CRE, or repeated viewing of deviant material online is in and of itself, proof of a Paraphilic disorder, including **Pedophilia, Hebephilia** (attraction to 12- to 15-year-olds) and **Ephebophilia** (attraction to 15- to 19-year-olds), **Pedehebephilic** (attraction to prepubescent and adolescent children), and as a last resort- **Paraphilia, Unspecified or Other, and then specifying either Hebephilia or Ephebophilia or Pedehebephilia or any/all adjectives to describe the behavior of concern.** **Pedehebephilic** appears the most accurate diagnosis as many or perhaps most child molesters have victims that span under and over age 13/14.

Supervision & treatment concerns

Allowing the CPO to continue to Use CSAM/CSEM/pornography or Child Related Erotica or and deviant sexual erotica in Treatment or While on Supervision

Remember that the standard for treating sex offenders is group treatment, ongoing risk assessment, and always assessing for re-

offense behavior (e.g., the offender seeking out situations that allow contact with potential victims). Cognitive-Behavioral and at times psychopharmacological treatments are the standard.^{116,121} If the goal is to lessen or eliminate a deviant sexual arousal, you would never allow the individual to engage in any behavior (fantasy or actual) that strengthens the deviance.

Cognitive distortions and fantasy play a significant role in the use of child pornography and contact sex offenses behavior.^{9,113,137-139} The vast majority of CPO's have preexisting and long-standing sexual interests in children that predated their use of child pornography.^{9,14,113,140} Deviant cognitive distortions are not lessened or eliminated by allowing the offender to continue to engage in deviant supportive behavior (use of child porn, use of CSAM/CSEM, or CRE).

When an individual's erotica has become intertwined in sex offense or other violent behavior, the erotica has now become part of the offender's deviant and/or violent fantasies and behavior. The offender should no longer have access to or possession of any erotica that involves the offender's offense behavior or target victim population. This has become an issue of constitutional rights and even some in the sex offender treatment profession fail to see the connection. For the Courts, this is an important issue to rethink when imposing probation, parole, or other restrictions on the sex offender. What follows is a discussion of the importance of restricting sex offenders from accessing or possessing any erotica or pornography that is related in any way to their sexual offense behavior or other violent crime.⁷²

To continue to allow a sex offender to own, view or act on erotica that is in anyway related to their offense behavior, is simply allowing the offender to continue to reinforce deviant and predatory thinking. In fact, masturbating to erotica (anything that a person finds sexually arousing) that is in any way related to a deviant sexual attraction or sexual offense behavior should be banned for use and possession by the offender. The cognitive distortions (e.g., rationalizations and excuses) offenders use to maintain their deviant sexual arousal and deviant sexual behavior help maintain the problem and may serve as permission giving¹⁴¹ which serves to increase the risk for reoffense.

Kingston et al.¹⁰² found that offenders who viewed deviant pornography were more likely to reoffend than those who did not. Studies have found that even soft-core (non-deviant) pornography use increased violent (including sexually violent) re-offense.⁶² The term "deviant" and "extreme" pornography refers to any pornography depicting or including any contact of the following (though not an inclusive list): age-inappropriate (e.g., child molestation), violence, harming, degrading, non-consenting, rape, sexual assault, murder, physical assault, and sadism. Regardless of whether pornography was deviant or nondeviant in nature, use of pornography increased the likelihood of sexual offenders reoffending.^{45,59,62,63,72} Remember that pornography, CSAM, CSEM, all involve significant fantasy and this most always occurs in solitude, not with others. So, the strengthening of deviant arousal is imminent and likely to lead to thoughts of wanting or actually engaging in sexual contact with minors.

How is it justified that child porn offenders can continue to view and possess CSAM or child related erotica (CRE)? It is crystal clear that continued use of any sexually deviant material, whether child porn or child porn related erotica strengthens deviant arousal and interest- this being based on the plethora of research involving behavioral and cognitive-behavior theories, habituation theories, and learning theories. Academic research supports the conclusion that repeated viewing of sexually deviant images (including CSAM), exposure to the community of other child porn (CSAM) or sexual offenders, and the resulting normalization of the aberrant behavior, along with the

community's encouragement of sexual abuse of children, increases the risk that offenders will sexually abuse children.⁴⁹

One of the main problems in allowing the child porn offender to view any type of pornography, including CSAM or CRE is that it further strengthens the offender's belief that they are not causing the depicted child harm, and that their behavior is in some way appropriate. Often the children depicted in the CSAM did not display signs of resistance or harm or may have appeared to enjoy the sexual contact, and the child is not believed to be harmed by the sexual contact or that in some way the child enjoys the sexual contact being depicted.^{79,141-146} This allows for the offender to strengthen their sexual beliefs involving children. This may help maintain a sense of entitlement to engage children or adolescents in sexual activities.¹⁴⁵ Continued use of child porn material further strengthens deviant sexual and aggressive beliefs and behavior and it is highly likely that the porn material will become increasingly more deviant and violent in nature.

The NDIC (National Drug Intelligence Center) found that 82 percent of respondents reported victims (all of whom were minors) in all age brackets, including infants. Also, according to the NDIC interviewees, 63 percent of respondents reported increased violence toward child pornography victims, 42 percent more bondage, 38 percent more sadism and masochism, and 15 percent more bestiality. Although 21 percent reported no change in violence, no respondents reported decreased violence. This suggests that with continued porn use (would likely include use of erotica as well), the child porn offender may become attracted to/desensitized to increasingly more aggressive and deviant porn which in turn may lead to the offender's decision to engage in contact offending and more extreme contact offending. There is a direct correlation between the themes of collected porn (including CSAM) of any type and criminal behavior. Remember that practice makes perfect- collecting, viewing, and masturbating to deviant porn strengthens deviant thinking which almost always will lead to deviant

The content of the child porn/erotica and the offender's behavior in the contact offense were similar in theme.^{11,147} Research also supports that the offender's child sexual related fantasies and contact offending behavior (e.g., modus operandi) were related.^{10,71,148-151} One could argue that continued strengthening of deviant sexual interests in minors increases risk for some to perpetrate contact sex crimes against minors- whether it be within a year or more, difficult to assess accurately.

Many of the child porn offenders view themselves as being unable to control their urges or behaviors, believing that they are unable to stop themselves and this has been referred to in the literature as external locus of control. This suggests that the child porn offender demonstrate characteristics of impulse control or feelings of addiction to the Internet and therefore believing that they are out-of-control.¹⁵²⁻¹⁵⁶ The offender who believes they are "out-of-control" there is minimal motivation to take responsibility for their deviant thoughts and behavior and therefore minimal motivation to cease their criminal and deviant behavior. There is simply no proof, no evidence to support the offender being "out-of-control". The offender's fantasies, thoughts and urges may be very strong, but the offender's behavior is 100% in their control (how and when they offend).

It is concerning that there is a lack of empirical evidence to support any claim made by child porn users and child molesters that continued use of CSAM and child related erotica (CRE) helps prevent them from engaging in actual or subsequent contact sexual offenses. Yet researchers continue to proffer that the claims made by offenders of

not having contact victims or not having urges to sexually offend with contact victims are somehow supported by the literature when in fact it is not.

The child porn offender is allowed in many states to purchase and masturbate to boys/girls' underwear (erotica) as well as to clothed pictures of children. This only serves to strengthen deviant sexual arousal yet somehow is legal for the offender to do. Unfortunately, some sex offender treatment professionals concur with this practice. There appears to be empirical support that continued use of the deviant materials (e.g., porn, erotica) strengthens deviant cognitions and beliefs and makes it more likely that the offender will engage in contact sexual offenses. Lastly, nearly 80-90% of child porn only offenders continued to offend (*use of CSAM is reoffending, again, victimizing the victims depicted in the material and creating a need for more CSAM*) while in treatment and after treatment.^{157,158}

So, most child porn offenders choose to keep viewing child porn material/child related erotica while in treatment what is treatment doing that is effective for the child porn offender? And again, that sex offender treatment professionals may allow the child porn offender to continue using and masturbating to child related erotica does not make any sense- in fact defies logic. That would be the same as telling the alcoholic that they should keep a bottle of booze handy to look at and smell-eventually they will drink it. Treatment becomes an accomplice to child sexual abuse and those children involved in the child porn industry are further imprisoned by the condoning of such behavior. Sex offenders, like other offenders, are creative in finding ways to circumvent the legal system and supervision restrictions. Many child molesters and epebophiles find ways to take pictures of the minors and justify this behavior. Some claim that having such pictures or videos help curb their appetite to engage in contact sex offense behavior. However, this is simply feeding a deviant and potentially violent urge. If someone were to be serious about ceasing their sexually abusive tendencies, then they would be hell-bent in not being around children or adolescents and would certainly not be taking pictures of minors. In addition, taking pictures of minors first requires being around minors, or at least in a place where minors are present.

Basic behavior theory, learning theory, habituation theory supports that the more a person practices something, the more habituated and comfortable they become with the behavior. In short, practice makes perfect. Possessing items of children's clothing or underwear, teaching or coaching materials, toys and craft supplies, all serve the sex offender's fantasies about the children or adolescents that may use such items. Again, possessing or masturbating to such items further strengthens the offender's deviant thinking and fantasies. Some of the sex offenders may find jobs or volunteer opportunities that place them in direct contact and even in positions of power or authority over minors, despite being restricted from doing so.

It is strongly recommended that anyone convicted of a sex offense be prohibited from owning, viewing, making, or in any way accessing erotica that relates in any way to the theme or content of their sex or violent offense behavior. When on supervision or sex offender registration, they should be banned from possessing, viewing, making, or accessing any erotica or pornographic material, including pictures of clothed children and adolescents as the clothed pictures play a role in the sexual fantasies of the sexual offender. Remember that sex offenders do not amass deviant pornography or erotic material unless they are interested in and aroused by the material. If it bothered the offender, they would stop doing it. Possession of or viewing or accessing of any material, erotica or pornography, that relates in any way to the offender's sex or violent behavior, should be banned.

Question-

Why is it that a violent offender cannot possess a bullet? Or someone convicted of DWI/DUI not being allowed to consume alcohol or drugs? Obvious reasons. If the violent offender possesses a bullet, they are very to have a gun, which they cannot have. For the substance abuser, while on probation or parole, cannot consume drugs or alcohol due to the nature of their offense. The mere presence of a bullet or drugs/alcohol indicate behavior related to re-offense. The CPO and any sex offender should not be allowed access to or possession of any erotica that is in any way related to their victim pool not be allowed to continue to access pornography of any kind.

There has been research suggesting that the child porn user presents with low risk for engaging in actual sexual contact with children. However, to date, there is no empirical evidence to support that claim. Most of the research based the "low risk" status on offender self-report of having no contact victims and/or on the offender having no criminal conviction for engaging in sexual contact with children. Professionals are making significant public safety decisions based on faulty evidence and without utilizing scientific procedures such as polygraph. Research on child porn users demonstrates that 50-85% admit to having undetected child victims, and the average number of undetected victims per offender was 8. So again, why are professionals relying on self-report and lack of criminal conviction to determine that the child porn offender poses minimal if any risk for sexually abusing minors? In addition, the use of child porn/child porn related erotica victimizes children involved in the child porn industry. The increased demand for more child porn and ways to collect and engage in the use of child related erotica results in the need for more and more material, which further sexually abuses children.⁴⁵

On what basis is the low-risk status of child porn users given? In most cases, this is based on two factors, the first being the lack of any criminal conviction for engaging in any sex related crimes against children (anyone under the age of 18). The second appears to be self-admission on the part of the offender. Approximately 20-25% of investigations for child porn (CSAM) related crimes uncover undetected contact child sex crimes.^{11,14} Owens et al.,¹¹ also found that 25% of child porn offenders had at least 1 contact victim, however, several had many contact victims. Others found that 26-85% of child porn offenders have multiple child contact victims that were previously undetected.^{9,10,12,13} The admissions of the child porn only offender that led to disclosure of previously undetected victims occurred either while in treatment and being asked specific questions about the presence of undetected victims and/or when polygraphed.¹⁹ Polygraph offers the most reliable situation to determine the veracity of an offender's claim of having or not having contact victims or additional undetected victims.

For child porn cases, it is imperative to always investigate for contact offenses. Look into any contact they may have with children/minors, any position of power/authority they may have had with minors.¹³ This should also include investigating the neighborhood they live in (e.g., playgrounds, churches, pools, schools) as the offender may hang around those areas watching children or engaging the children in activities. Child porn offenders with no prior sex offense convictions admitted having the most undetected victims, and their ability to remain undetected for so long requires special attention to investigate the offender's life. Of most concern is that the child porn only offender is more likely to confess to police and admit the child porn possession. They do this to lessen the chance that law enforcement would further investigate and detect that they have contact victims.¹⁵⁹ So, to the question of how long the offender

has been offending- likely years prior to any sex offense or child porn (CSAM) arrest. Remember that child victims are less likely to report the crime until 5 or more years later, reducing the likelihood of arrest or conviction.^{45,160–162}

Summary

Regardless of what factors an offender experienced as a minor that may have led to sex offending, the sexual abuse and exploitation of children appears to come down to one factor-

CHOICE!

Use of CSAM/CSEM and CRE play a significant role in the sex offender's decision to offend. Offending behavior includes use of pornography, use of CSAM/CSEM, use of CRE. To use pornography sites and materials, to download, to amass a collection of pictures and videos, is acting on deviant sexual urges, fantasies and impulses. Victims depicted in any pornography, CSAM, CSEM, are perpetually re-abused, re-victimized, every time the material is accessed. The use of CSAM material creates a need for more material, which serves to victimize more minors to create the material. And the very use of such material strengthens the deviant thinking and likelihood for contact offenses.

It is important to realize that child sex abusers/molesters, as with any violent offender, have likely been offending for years before arrested and convicted for the first time. Most child victims take years to report the abuse, which lessens the likelihood of arrest or conviction. The average number of victims sex offenders have is 8. Polygraphy play an important role in determining the number of victims any child sex offender has. For those on probation, parole or involved in any type of sex offender treatment intervention, it is strongly recommended they not continue any use of pornography, CSAM, or CRE.

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Conflicts of interest

The author declares there is no conflict of interest.

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