

POSTER

Pedophilia and its (Non-) Association with Physical Height among Sex Offenders

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Historical evidence lends support to the theory that adult sexual interest in pre-pubescent children is resistant to time and cultural influences. Although much empirical attention has been given to the assessment (e.g., phallometry, Camilleri & Quinsey, 2008; SSPI, Seto & Lalumiere, 2001) and treatment of pedophilia (e.g., Marshall, Marshall, Serran, & Fernandez, 2006), a more limited number of studies have been conducted in search of pedophilogenic factors that would lead to a better understanding of pedophilia and therefore, development of more effective prevention measures. The objective of this study was to contribute to the limited literature on biological indicators, such as physical height, that may help detect and prevent pedophiles from acting on their sexual interest against children. There is consistent support for neurodevelopmental differences between pedophiles and non-pedophiles. One of the differences includes the shorter height that is seen among pedophiles (Cantor, Kuban, Blak, Klassen, Dickey, & Blanchard, 2007). However, two of three studies has small samples (see Mellan et al., 1969; Taylor et al., 1993) and the third with a large-scale database used one indicator of pedophilia, phallometric testing. There are several other useful diagnostic indicators, including the criteria listed in the DSM-IV-TR (American Psychiatric Association, 2004), Screening Scale of Pedophilic Interests (Seto & Lalumiere, 2001), and the use of child pornography (Seto, Cantor, & Blanchard, 2006). This poster presentation examines the association between physical height and pedophilia, using several pedophilic indicators. Researchers used the data of 180 sex offenders. Several of the indicators are continuous or ordinal (e.g., SSPI) or categorical (e.g., age of victim in index offence); hence, both correlational analyses and means comparisons were conducted. Unlike previous empirical endeavours, no significant findings emerged in support of an association between pedophilic interests and height. Therefore, this study did not support physical height as a biological indicator of pedophilia. Implications of these findings are discussed and a call for additional empirical support is made to address other pedophilogenic factors that may be relevant.