

POSTER

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Sexual Offenders in Japan

Akiko Tamamura, M.A.

Misaki Watanabe, M.A.

In Japan, sexual offenders and people with paraphilia are seldom able to receive adequate treatment for recovery and prevention of recidivism. Reasons for this may include, among others, a lack of insurance coverage, no court-ordered treatment, and limited knowledge among the general public and professionals about clinical needs and available treatment for this population. Given such circumstances, in 2011 we launched Sex Offenders Medical Treatment Center (SOMECC), a non-profit organization in Tokyo, to provide medical and psychological assessment and treatment for adults and adolescents with paraphilias. Our patients have initiated treatment voluntarily or out of encouragement from their families, and are divided into separate groups based on their needs and requests. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy is provided for groups consisting of 3-5 patients, and one session is three hours once per month, along with weekly homework and ongoing feedback from the therapist. In a separate group, patients with intellectual difficulties co-participate with family members in working on concrete tasks during the session and while at home. Pharmacological intervention by a psychiatrist specializing in paraphilias is also available upon patient request. Furthermore, there is a non-treatment group where offenders released on bail reflect on their offences and mentally prepare themselves for trial. Finally, family support groups for relatives of sexual offenders offer a place for family members to support one another while receiving psychoeducational information on sexual offences and recidivism prevention. Outside the clinic we have also taken an active role in creating systems for treatment of sexual offenders.

Although at a slower pace than weekly sessions, many of our patients undergoing CBT have made notable progress and have not engaged in sexually offending behaviors since the start of their treatment. Furthermore, support for families of adult patients seems to create a therapeutic environment that facilitates recovery of the offenders. In the future we hope to create a social environment where treatment is available to all sexual offenders and there is increased public awareness as to the necessity of proper interventions to reduce sexual crimes and recidivism.