Undetected and detected child sexual abuse and child pornography offenders

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Acknowledgements

Abstract

Current knowledge about risk factors for child sexual abuse and child pornography offenses is based on samples of convicted offenders, i.e., detected offenders. Only few studies focus on offenders not detected by the criminal justice system.

In this study, a sample of 345 self-referred pedophiles and hebephiles was recruited from the community. All participants met DSM-IV-TR criteria for pedophilia or hebephilia (paraphilia not otherwise specified), were assured of confidentiality, and self-reported lifetime sexual offending against prepubescent and/or pubescent children.

Two sets of group comparisons were conducted on self-report data of risk factors for sexual reoffending. Mea- sures of risk factors address the following dimensions identified in samples of convicted offenders: sexual preferences (i.e. co-occurring paraphilias), sexual self-regulation problems, offense-supportive cognitions, diverse socio-affective deficits, and indicators of social functioning (e.g., education, employment). Men who admitted current or previous investigation or conviction by legal authorities (detected offenders) were compared with those who denied any detection for their sexual offenses against children (undetected offenders). Group comparisons (detected vs. undetected) were further conducted for each offense type separately (child pornography only offenders, child sexual abuse only offenders, mixed offenders).

Although there were more similarities between undetected and detected offenders, selected measures of sexual-self regulation problems, socio-affective deficits, and social functioning data demonstrated group differences.

Introduction

Research on risk factors of child sexual abuse and child pornography offenses has predominantly relied on samples of incarcerated or convicted offenders, i.e., detected sex offenders. Several authors have therefore questioned the generalizability of previous study results on child sexual abuse and child pornography offenders to sex offenders not known to the criminal justice system, i.e., undetected offenders (Durkin & Bryant, 1999; Neutze, Seto, Schaefer, Mundt, & Beier, 2011; Okami & Goldberg, 1992). Although the group of undetected offenders is likely to be responsible for the majority of child sexual abuse and child pornography offenses and may be seeking help in outpatient departments, especially in countries without mandatory reporting, only few studies refer to this group. Thus, at present it is not known if undetected offenders differ in a systematic way from detected offenders and it remains unclear whether previous findings on risk factors for future offending behavior especially on those being described as "psychologically meaningful risk factors" (Mann, Hanson, & Thornton, 2010), and corresponding treatment needs can be generalized with regard to undetected offenders.

The question of generalizability also applies to research on pedophilia. Previous studies often focused on sexual behaviors of detected offenders rather than their sexual preference and therefore rarely assessed formal diagnostic criteria for pedophilia (or paraphilia not otherwise specified (NOS) in the case of hebephilia) according to the most recent Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders concerning the A-criterion of recurrent, intense sexually arousing fantasies, sexual urges, or behaviors involving sexual activity with a prepubescent child over a period at least 6 months (DSM-IV-TR: American Psychiatric Association, 2000). Moreover, because of the risk of legal or social sanctions for admitting a sexual attraction to children in forensic settings, some men may in fact be pedophiles or hebephiles but deny any such interests. Thus, the prevalence of pedophilia among convicted adult child sexual abuse offenders is assumed to be approximately 40%–50% (American Psychiatric Association, 2000; for a review see Seto, 2008).

In summary, empirical findings based only on detected sex offenders could be biased and current prevention strategies and treatment approaches may have weaknesses in theoretical

development as generalizability of findings can be doubted concerning the assumed relevance of risk factors which themselves could be influenced by detection status. The same applies for findings concerning pedophilia and hebephilia as most studies focus on sexual behavior rather than on sexual preference. Neutze et al. (2011) argued that studying only detected sex offenders in order to improve knowledge about predictors for sexual offenses may result in risk factors associated with increased psychological problems, or more frequent and serious offenses, which in turn might depend on the fact of being detected.

The present study aims at examining the generalizability of risk factors previously identified in samples of detected sexual offenders against children by investigating a sample of help-seeking men from the community who all have been diagnosed as pedophiles or hebephiles according to DSM-IV-TR. Those, who reported a previous or current detection by the criminal justice system, will be compared with those, who reported never having been detected for a respective offense.

Studies on risk factors in detected offenders against children

Prior research on detected sex offenders against children has identified sexual preferences such as sexual interest in children and co-occurrent paraphilic interests as well as problems with sexual self-regulation (i.e., sexual preoccupation) as important motivations for sexual reoffending (Hanson & Harris, 2000; Hanson, Harris, Scott, & Helmus, 2007). However there are further meaningful risk factors such as offense-supportive cognitions and socio-affective deficits that may influence if someone acts out upon a respective sexual motivation (Hanson et al., 2007). In addition, Barbaree and Marshall (1988) argued that an offender's ability to cope with everyday problems and sexual urges depends on his personal resources and circumstances, which are also moderated by indicators of social functioning such as socioeconomic status (education, employment).

Sexual preference

Sexual interest in children predicts sexual recidivism among identified sex offenders in correctional samples (Hanson & Morton-Bourgon, 2005) and distinguishes child sexual abuse offenders from

other offender groups and non-offending volunteers (Blanchard et al., 2006). In addition child pornography offending is assumed to be a valid indicator for pedophilia as phallometric test results show that in a sample of 685 men child pornography offenders present higher sexual arousal levels to depictions of children than to adults, and differ from groups of sex offenders against children, sex offenders against adults, and "general sexology patients" (Seto, Cantor, & Blanchard, 2006).

Concerning various paraphilic fantasies the co-occurrence of paraphilic interests in sex offenders predicts sexual recidivism in child sexual abuse offenders (Heil & Simons, 2008; Knight & Thornton, 2007). In a study of Galbreath, Berlin, and Sawyer (2002) nearly a quarter of the sample who were involved in illegal sexual activities over the internet were diagnosed as pedophiles. An additional 12% were diagnosed with either voyeurism or exhibitionism and half the sample met the diagnostic criteria of a paraphilia NOS.

Psychologically meaningful factors

Amongst further risk factors for sexual reoffending, problematic attitudes about sex with children have been identified in child sexual abuse offenders (Hanson et al., 2007; Whitaker et al., 2008). Further, victim empathy deficits distinguish sexual abuse offenders from controls in previous comparison studies (Hanson & Harris, 2000; Marshall, Hamilton, & Fernandez, 2001). Both offense-supportive attitudes to- ward adult child sex and empathy deficits have also been identified in child pornography offenders (Henry, Mandeville-Norden, Hayes, & Egan, 2010; Laulik, Allam, & Sheridan, 2007; O'Brien & Webster, 2007). So called socio-affective deficits in child sexual abuse offenders as described by Thornton (2002) include generalized social inadequacy, including internalized negative emotions, grievance thinking such as hostility toward women, and a lack of emotional intimacy. Intimacy deficits and loneliness in particular were found to have predictive value for sexual reoffending in samples of detected sex offenders (Hanson et al., 2007; Whitaker et al., 2008). Also comparison studies confirmed that child sexual abuse offenders experience more loneliness and intimacy deficits compared to other offenders or community controls (e.g., Seidman, Marshall, & Hudson, 1994) and use a more emotion-oriented coping style (e.g. wishful thinking, blaming) than non-sexual offenders (Feelgood, Cortoni, & Thompson,

2005). However, child pornography offenders were less likely to be involved in an intimate relationship than child sexual abuse offenders (McCarthy, 2010; Reijnen, Bulten, & Nijman, 2009).

Social functioning

In a sample of 35 untreated child sexual abuse offenders the combination of pedophilia and offense-severity, socioeconomic status (education, employment) and intelligence predicted the number of re-offenses (Barbaree & Marshall, 1988). In addition, in comparison to child sexual abuse offenders, child pornography offenders seem to reflect a higher degree of 'social functioning' similar to the general population: individuals who accessed child pornography have been found to be generally aged 25–50 years with no prior criminal back-ground, tended to be better educated, to have higher intelligence, and to be more likely to be employed than were individuals who com-mitted child sexual abuse offenses (Burke, Sowerbutts, Blundell, & Sherry, 2002). Reijnen et al. (2009) found child pornography offenders in comparison to other sexual offenders to be significantly younger on average and to appear more often to have no children of their own. Finally, child sexual abuse offenders reported twice as likely own childhood sexual victimization than other sex offenders in different studies (Lalumière, Harris, Quinsey, & Rice, 2005; Craissati & McClurg, 1996) and 20–50% of child pornography offenders self-reported childhood sexual victimization (McCarthy, 2010; Webb, Craissati, & Keen, 2007). In a recent meta-analysis both child sexual abuse and child pornography offenders reported childhood sexual victimization more frequently than found in the general population (Babchishin, Hanson, & Hermann, 2011).

Studies on risk factors in undetected offenders

To date only few studies have focused on samples of offenders undetected by the criminal justice system and provide some descriptive data, although many have been criticized for various methodological problems (see Schaefer et al., 2010). Within a sample of 99 currently undetected pedophilic and hebephilic child pornography and mixed offenders, indicators of sexual deviance were investigated (Grundmann, Neutze, & Beier, 2010). The majority (60%) of these pedophilic/hebephilic men endorsed sexual arousal to at least one

additional co-occurrent paraphilic content during masturbation. Co-occurrent paraphilias were associated with higher scores in measures of both sexual self-regulation problems (e.g., sexual preoccupation) and antisocial attitudes and behavior.

Bernard (1975) collected self-reports from fifty working group members on pedophilia and hebephilia. The vast majority admitted to one or more child sexual abuse offenses and three quarters to child pornography offenses. Less than half of the participants claimed that they had never been convicted. In an internet-based survey, Riegel (2004) received 290 anonymous responses from self-identified "Boy-Attracted-Pedosexual Males". Their age ranged from 18 to over 60 years, 77% reported at least one college degree. Nearly all participants admitted child pornography offenses. Three quarters reported having no involvement with the criminal justice system.

Neutze et al. (2011) compared child pornography, child sexual abuse, and mixed offenders within a sample of 155 currently undetected pedophiles and hebephiles on measures of risk factors for sexual offenses against children. About one third self-reported previous detection by the criminal justice system. Results showed elevated scores on most measures (i.e., indicating higher psychological problems) compared to reported norms or mean scores obtained from other offender samples, and revealed that child sexual abuse offenders were older, more often detected by the criminal justice system in the past, and less often employed than child pornography only offenders.

Present study

In order to examine the generalizability of research findings with detected offenders against children to offenders who have not been detected by the criminal justice system, the present study compares help-seeking detected and undetected offenders who have been diagnosed as pedophiles or hebephiles using DSM-IV-TR criteria.

Data on sexual preference, measures of "psychologically meaningful risk factors" (Mann et al., 2010), and social functioning were compared. First, individuals who self-reported sexual offending (undetected offenders) were compared to those who self-reported to be currently or previously having been detected by the criminal justice system (detected offenders). Second, group comparisons on detection status were also conducted separately for three groups based on their

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self-reported lifetime offending behavior: (1) participants who acknowledged using child pornography only (detected vs. undetected child pornography only offenders); (2) participants who acknowledged committing one or more acts of child sexual abuse (detected vs. undetected child sexual abuse only offenders); and (3) participants who acknowledged committing both offenses (detected vs. undetected mixed offenders).

This study is novel, as all participants were help-seeking, acknowledging a sexual interest in prepubescent or pubescent children, subsequently being diagnosed with pedophilia or hebephilia, and having admitted detected and/or undetected sexual offenses against children in the past. Thus, the sample enables a first examination of the relevance of previously identified risk factors for detected offenders to a group of help-seeking undetected offenders.

It was hypothesized that undetected offenders would generally score lower on measures of risk factors such as sexual self-regulation problems, offense-supportive cognitions, and socio-affective deficits. Based on prior studies, we also expected that undetected of- fenders would be younger and score higher on indicators of social functioning. Undetected offenders were expected to have higher levels of education, employment, and relationships, and to report lower incidence of childhood sexual victimization.

Method
Participants

All data are self-reported and collected between May 2005 and July 2010. Participants responded to an extensive German media campaign offering treatment to non-offenders and currently undetected offenders against children from the community, who were concerned about their sexual preference for children (Beier et al., 2009). Individuals who, at the time of assessment, had been detected and under supervision could not be offered treatment but for the purpose of this study data was assessed and included for evaluation. To those individuals the prospect of treatment was offered after having served their sentences and probation. Non-offending individuals were excluded from the present study. The final study group was composed of 345 males who 1) were diagnosed as pedophilic or hebephilic; 2) admitted one or more sexual offenses against children; 3) did not have

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any untreated major mental disorders, and 4) provided full data.

The mean age of the sample was 39.2 (SD= 11.19) ranging from 17 to 81 years. Almost one third of the total sample (32%) met DSM-IV-TR criteria for exclusive type pedophilia (56% attracted to boys) and another third (30%) was diagnosed with non-exclusive type pedophilia (63% attracted to girls). Ten percent of the participants were diagnosed as exclusive type hebephiles (53% attracted to boys), and 28% as non-exclusive type hebephiles (67% attracted to girls). Two thirds (67%) of the total sample self-reported additional paraphilic interests, with 42% indicating 1–2 additional paraphilic interests, 21% reporting 3–4 paraphilic interests and about four per- cent indicating sexual arousal to 5–6 additional paraphilic interests, covering voyeuristic, sexual sadistic, fetishistic, sexual masochistic, frotteuristic, and exhibitionistic contents.

51% reported having completed more than ten years of schooling, and 69% were employed. About 40% lived in a partnership and 31% reported being a person of reference to one or more children; 26% reported childhood sexual victimization.

Of the total sample 37% reported a lifetime offense history of child pornography offenses only, whereas 21% reported child sexual abuse offenses only, and 42% had committed offenses of more than one type (mixed offenders). 57% of the total sample reported their offenses having never been detected by the criminal justice system. At the time of assessment 29% faced legal charges. Another 14% reported prior legal charges. Of those classified as child pornography only of- fenders 38% had been detected by law enforcement. Of those classified as child sexual abuse only offenders 53% had been detected. In the group of mixed offenders only seven percent had been detected for both offenses, 15% for their child pornography offenses and 21% for child sexual abuse offenses.

Measures

Measures were selected in order to assess risk factors that have been identified in previous studies with detected offenders. All reliabilities refer to the German versions of the scales administered to the present sample.

Self-efficacy Scale Related to Minors (SESM; Neutze et al., 2011)

This 30-item scale consists of two subscales, rated on a 4-point Likert-type scale and assesses a positive sense of being able to control sexual impulses concerning minors. The 20-item Coping Self-Efficacy subscale (CSESM) assesses beliefs in one's own ability to control sexual urges regarding children. Higher scores indicate greater deficits in the perceived ability to maintain sexual self-control (Cronbach's alpha=0.95).

Sexual Behavior Involving Minors Scale (SBIMS; Neutze et al., 2011)

This measure consists of eight items regarding the frequency of the specified sexual behavior within the past six months, rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale. Three items pertain to child sexual abuse, one item to child pornography offending. Four items pertain to frequency of masturbation to different kinds of sexual fantasies involving minors and form a subscale, which aims to assess "sexual pre-occupation" (Cronbach's alpha= 0.74) in this study. Higher scores indicate a greater frequency of masturbation to sexual fantasies de- scribing different sexual activities between adults and prepubescent and/or pubescent children.

Empathy for Children Scale (ECS; Schaefer & Feelgood, 2006)

The 50 items scale (rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale) is a modified version of the Child Molester Empathy Measure (Fernandez, Marshall, Lightbody, & O'Sullivan, 1999) that uses three scenarios to assess both cognitive and emotional empathy of child sexual abuse offenders to three vignettes about child victims: an "accident victim", a "stranger child sexual abuse victim", and the "own child sexual abuse victim". For men with no "own child sexual abuse victim", such as child pornography only offenders, the last vignette has been changed and alternatively men are asked to imagine the child depicted in sexually abusive images as "own child sexual abuse victim". The present study adds the scores of the emotional victim empathy and cognitive victim empathy subscales separately. Higher scores indicate more emotional (Cronbach's alpha=0.95) and more cognitive victim empathy deficits (Cronbach's alpha=0.98).

Bumby MOLEST Scale (BMS; Bumby 1996; unpublished German version was obtained by Rambow, Elsner, Feelgood, & Hoyer, 2008, personal communication)

This 38-item scale is a measure of maladaptive cognitions and offense-supportive beliefs about children and sex with children, rated on a 4-point Likert-type scale (Cronbach's alpha= 0.95). Higher scores indicate more offense-supportive attitudes and a greater tendency to justify offending.

UCLA Loneliness Scale (Russell, Peplau, & Cutrona, 1980; German version; Bilsky & Hosser, 1998)

The scale assesses problems ascribed to intimacy deficits and loneliness via 20 items, rated on a 4-point Likert-type scale. Higher scores indicate greater feelings of loneliness (Cronbach's alpha= 0.92).

Coping Inventory for Stressful Situations (CISS; Endler & Parker, 1999; German version; Kaelin, 1995)

The 33-item inventory assesses emotional-, avoidance-, and task- oriented coping styles in response to stress, with items rated on a 5- point Likert-type scale. The present study focused on the "emotion-oriented coping style" subscale (Cronbach's alpha= 0.76). Higher scores indicate a stronger reaction with negative emotions in stress situations, as well as a higher degree of self-preoccupation.

Hostility toward Women Scale (HTW; Check, 1984; German version: Feelgood & Freese, 2004)

The 30-item instrument assesses the respondent's feelings and attitudes toward women in a yes/no format (Cronbach's alpha= 0.84). Higher scores indicate a greater tendency to have a negative stereotypic view of females as rejecting and untrustworthy and a lower level of intimacy toward friends and romantic partners (Cowan & Mills, 2004), therefore suggesting to reflect socio-affective deficits (Allan, Grace, Rutherford, & Hudson, 2007).

Procedure

The present study was approved by the Institutional Review Board of the Charité University Clinic where participants were assessed and treated. Self-referred individuals could report officially unknown sexual offenses against children without fear of legal sanction, because there is no mandatory child abuse reporting law in Germany. Participants submitted to a comprehensive psychosexual assessment including a clinical interview and paper-and-pencil questionnaires in order to collect information on socio-demographics, sexual preference, risk factors, criminal history, and sexual behavior.

All pedophiles in this sample met the diagnostic criteria of the DSM-IV-TR. A history of sexual interactions with children without admitting to concomitant sexual thoughts, fantasies, or urges was not considered to be sufficient for the diagnosis of pedophilia. Likewise, hebephilia was diagnosed if the participant reported that pubescent children rather than prepubescent children were the focus of sexual thoughts, fantasies, or urges. In addition, an exclusive type of para-philia was coded if a person exclusively reported recurrent and in-tense sexual thoughts, fantasies, or urges involving prepubescent or pubescent children and denied fantasies involving adults. A history of sexual interactions with adults was not sufficient for the specification of a non-exclusive type of paraphilia. Additional paraphilic interests were coded according to DSM-IV-TR; again focusing on self-reported sexual fantasies rather than sexual behavior. Sexual gender preference was coded according to the gender of persons that figured predominantly in the participant's sexual fantasies during masturbation, irrespective of age.

Results

Group classification

Based on their self-reported criminal history, all 345 participants were classified into different groups. According to their involvement with the criminal justice system, the group was divided into 149 detected offenders and 196 undetected offenders.

Participants were further classified into three offender groups: (1) child pornography only (80 undetected; 49 detected), (2) child sexual abuse only (33 undetected; 39 detected), and (3) mixed, having admitted involvement in both kinds of offending (83 undetected; 61

detected).

Statistical analysis

Previously detected and undetected individuals in the total sample were compared on measures of psychologically meaningful risk factors using multivariate analysis of variance, with Bonferroni post hoc comparisons set at the 0.01 level of significance. Using Hotelling's trace statistic, the full-factorial MANOVA revealed that there was a significant multivariate difference between the two groups concerning their detection status (T2 = 0.102, F (9)= 3.78, p = 0.000). For a more detailed analysis, comparisons between detected and undetected offenders were conducted for each offender group 1) child pornography only, 2) child sexual abuse only and 3) mixed offenders. This analysis was also done to assure that overall differences between detected and undetected offenders were not confounded by type of offense.

Three ANOVAs were calculated with Bonferroni post hoc comparisons set at the 0.01 level of significance. In cases of unequal variances the Welch's statistics is presented. Tendencies were interpreted in case a post-hoc result showed a probability located between p > 0.01 and p b 0.03. In addition, all group comparisons had been conducted on variables of sexual preference, social functioning, and offense behavior using X2-statistics set at the 0.05 level of significance.

Group comparisons

Group comparisons by detection status revealed differences on sexual self-regulation problems: undetected offenders scored higher on sexual preoccupation than detected offenders. Groups also differed on socio-affective deficits: undetected offenders demonstrated less emotion-oriented coping compared to detected offenders (Table 1). Overall, however, there were more similarities. No differences between detected and undetected offenders were found on measures of offense-supportive cognitions, regarding a lack of coping self-efficacy and measures of socio-affective deficits such as loneliness and hostility toward women. With respect to social functioning, undetected offenders had a higher degree of education and a higher probability of being currently employed. Undetected offenders reported less

childhood sexual abuse than detected offenders (Table 2). The undetected persons were significantly younger than previously or currently detected offenders (Table 1).

Undetected mixed offenders reported more additional paraphilic interests than did detected mixed offenders (Table 3). In parametric analyses, undetected child pornography only offenders were younger than detected ones (Table 4). Undetected child sexual abuse only offenders (Table 5) reported more sexual preoccupation and less emotion-oriented coping compared to their detected counterparts (F (1)= 6.05; p = 0.017).

Undetected child sexual abuse only offenders reported fewer incidents of sexual victimization in childhood compared to their detected counterparts (Table 6). Undetected mixed offenders were better educated, more likely employed, and less likely to having been sexually victimized in childhood.

Discussion

This study investigated, whether previous findings in detected child sexual abuse and child pornography offenders can be generalized to self-referred offenders who seek treatment and had not been detected by the criminal justice system. Self-referred undetected pedophilic and/or hebephilic offenders from the community were compared with detected offenders on risk factors for sexual offending against children and data on social functioning.

Psychologically meaningful risk factors

Undetected offenders, in particular undetected child sexual abuse only offenders, admitted more sexual self-regulation problems in terms of higher masturbation frequency (sexual preoccupation) than detected offenders. Undetected mixed offenders reported higher proportions of additional paraphilic interests compared to detected mixed offenders. These findings are in contrast to the authors' expectations who assumed undetected offenders would score lower on measures of sexual self-regulation problems and additional paraphilic interests. However, the results sustain previous findings in undetected offenders of the high co-occurrence of additional paraphilic interests and the association with sexual self-regulation-problems (Grundmann et al., 2010). One interpretation could be that undetected offenders are

more forthcoming about their sexual preferences in a non-forensic context. Moreover, for help-seeking undetected offenders, disclosure might result in positive rather than negative outcomes (e.g., receiving treatment). Actual levels of sexual preoccupation, (in the present study assessed by masturbation frequency related to sexual fantasies including children) might also not differ between detection groups in a homogeneous group of offending pedophiles and hebephiles.

No differences between detected and undetected offenders were found on measures of offense-supportive cognitions. Present findings and previous results in detected offenders (e.g., Arkowitz & Vess, 2003; Bumby, 1996) might reflect generally comparable levels of distorted attitudes. Generalizability is also sustained by anonymous internet surveys on self-identified pedophiles (arguably undetected) indicating high levels of problematic attitudes (Durkin & Bryant, 1999; Malesky & Ennis, 2004). Results suggest that offense-supportive cognitions are more indicative for offending behavior than for detection status.

Regarding socio-affective deficits, as predicted, undetected offenders scored lower on a measure of emotion-oriented coping than detected offenders did, regardless of their lifetime offense history. In line with previous findings, detected offenders in the present study were characterized by an emotion-oriented coping style, indicating a greater tendency to regulate emotions by ruminating, wishful thinking, or blaming (Feelgood et al., 2005; Marshall, Serran, & Cortoni, 2000). One explanation could be that previous or current detection is associated with experiences of shame, fear of negative social and personal consequences, helplessness, and loss of control, which might increase the use of an emotion-oriented coping style rather than task-oriented strategies. However, no group differences were found on measures of intimacy deficits and loneliness.

Social functioning

Undetected child sexual abuse offenders were younger, more educated, and more likely to be employed compared to detected offenders, consistent with prior findings in predominantly undetected offenders or self-identified pedophiles and hebephiles (Riegel, 2004). Undetected child pornography only offenders were younger, and undetected mixed offenders were better educated and more likely to be

employed compared to their detected counterparts at the time of assessment. One interpretation is that younger age might be associated with a lower frequency of sexual offending against children and therefore with a reduced likelihood of detection. Moreover, younger age, education and employment in those, who ever committed child pornography offenses (with or without additional child sexual abuse offenses), might also be associated with a greater expertise in internet-related media, which enables the avoidance of detection (e.g., password protection, file servers, evidence-eliminating software). Unemployment rates could also be a consequence of being detected rather than a precondition of detection, as current or previous investigations and/or convictions might result in a loss of employment.

Support for a higher level of social functioning is provided by reported childhood sexual victimization. About one fifth of the undetected offenders self-reported to having been sexually victimized during childhood, whereas rates up to 43% were reported in detected offenders. Differences were found in those offenders who reported lifetime child sexual abuse offenses (mixed offenders/child sexual abuse only offenders); undetected offenders reported considerably lower rates of victimization (20.4%/21.2%) than detected offenders (36.1%/43.5%). These results are in line with previous findings in detected offenders against children who reported high rates of child-hood sexual victimization (Babchishin et al., 2011; Lalumière et al., 2005; McCarthy, 2010; Webb et al., 2007). An explanation for the pre-sent findings is that higher rates of reported childhood sexual victimization in detected offenders reflects a tendency to justify offensive behavior by blaming adverse childhood experiences, thereby reducing cognitive dissonances in offenders. Emphasizing own childhood sexual victimization might be a reaction to experienced distress or embarrassment caused by the fact of being detected. Further, facing conviction as a consequence of being detected could motivate offenders to actively manipulate judicial decisions and claiming mitigating circumstances by focusing on their own victim status (Jespersen, Lalumière, & Seto, 2009). Apart from that, finding lower rates of own childhood sexual victimization in undetected sexual offenders might indicate lower socio-affective deficits in this group as less maltreatment in childhood being associated with a more secure parent–child attachment (Smallbone & McCabe, 2003).

Overall, there were more similarities between detected and undetected offenders than differences. Concerning generalizability of "psychologically meaningful risk factors" (Mann et al., 2010), the study results on offense-supportive cognitions and intimacy deficits in detected offender samples may apply to undetected offenders, as well. Findings on socio-affective deficits, sexual self-regulation, and social functioning are, however, ambiguous. The present study results indicate two sets of factors that are associated with detection status: 'preceding' ones that might influence whether an individual is detected for a respective offense, such as age or education, and 'resulting' ones that are either a behavioral response to the circumstances of detection (e.g., emotion-oriented coping, childhood sexual victimization) or reflect a bias in self-report measures (e.g., sexual self-regulation problems, paraphilic interests) in order to avoid negative consequences of detection (e.g., severe punishment). The present study also suggests that sexual preferences and sexual preoccupation are likely to be underestimated in samples of detected offenders. As sexual deviance is one of the major single risk factors (Hanson et al., 2007) more attention should be given to the variety of paraphilic interests (i.e. masturbation fantasies) and masturbation frequencies in risk assessment and treatment of sex offenders against children in order to address specific needs of individuals.

Study limitations

A limitation of this study is its reliance on self-report. For example, there were no official records of the participants' criminal history to confirm that the lifetime detection group and offender group classifications were correct. Another limitation is the confinement of the study sample to individuals, who voluntarily applied for the project. Differences or similarities between help-seeking offenders and those who do not seek help, independent of detection status, have, there-fore, not been targeted. Further, the group of detected offenders comprised one third of individuals having been previously detected by the criminal justice system. Previously detected individuals might differ from those detected at time of assessment (i.e. currently detected). Observed differences between groups by detection status, especially concerning 'preceding' factors may therefore be understated. Finally, no measure of socially desirable responding was included for the

present analyses. However, previous studies of project data revealed that no significant correlations were found between impression management scores and offense history (Neutze et al., 2011).

Future research

Results suggest that, besides factors for which generalizability of previous study results is supported, some factors identified in research with detected child sexual abuse, child pornography, and mixed offenders may not generalize to undetected offenders against children. As group differences suggest preceding and resulting factors that might explain differences between undetected and detected offenders, longitudinal designs involving multiple assessments are needed to shed more light on the chronologically appropriate assignment of the given factors. It is also noteworthy that group differences between detected and undetected offenders vary depending on lifetime offense history. Group comparisons between previously and currently detected individuals could be helpful in order to evaluate the immediate impact of detection on self-reports. In this regard a valid and reliable self-report measurement of sexual deviance, which is based on masturbation fantasies rather than sexual behaviors and suitable to both detected and undetected offenders against children, would be desirable to assess additional co-occurring paraphilic interests and to enhance treatment addressing the individual risks and needs of the person concerned.

Tables

Table 1
Group comparisons on risk factors by detection status (N = 345).

Risk factors[a]	Detection status		F (2)
	Never detected (n = 196)	Detected[b] (n = 149)	
	M (SD)[c]	M (SD)[c]	
Age	37.48 (11.10)	41.34 (10.95)	10.30**
Sexual self-regulation problems			
Lack of coping self efficacy	38.97 (12.64)	37.81 (13.93)	0.65
Sexual preoccupation	10.28 (3.80)	9.07 (4.19)	7.84**
Offense-supportive cognitions			
Cognitive empathy deficits	74.90 (30.14)	73.58 (31.08)	0.16
Emotional empathy deficits	46.18 (18.22)	45.36 (19.78)	0.16
Offense supportive attitudes	72.17 (19.19)	74.54 (18.54)	1.34
Socio-affective deficits			
Loneliness	48.30 (12.42)	50.07 (11.82)	1.79
Emotion oriented coping	25.35 (5.59)	27.09 (5.32)	8.49**
Hostility toward women	40.15 (5.42)	41.10 (5.86)	2.43

Notes:
[a] Lack of coping self-efficacy from SESM = Self Efficacy Scale related to Minors; Sexual preoccupation from SBIMS = Sexual Behavior Involving Minors Scale; Cognitive and emotional empathy deficits from ECS = Empathy for Children Scale; Offense supportive attitudes from Bumby MOLEST Scale; Loneliness from UCLA-LS-R; Emotion oriented coping from CISS = Coping Inventory for Stressful Situations; Hostility toward women from HTW.
[b] Current and previous detection for sexual offenses against children.
[c] Mean score differences between two groups are significant at **$p < 0.01$ (Bonferroni; post-hoc).

Table 2
Comparisons of descriptive data by detection status (N = 345).

Descriptive data	Detection status		df	X^2	p
	Never detected (n = 196)	Detected[a] (n = 149)			
Sexual preference (%)					
(Body) age preference			3	4.91	0.179
Exclusive prepubescent	70 (35.7)	41 (27.5)			
Non-exclusive prepubescent	51 (26.0)	52 (34.9)			
Exclusive pubescent	23 (11.7)	13 (8.7)			
Non-exclusive pubescent	52 (26.5)	43 (28.9)			
Gender preference			2	1.18	0.554
Attracted to boys	69 (35.2)	54 (36.2)			
Attracted to girls	112 (57.1)	79 (53.0)			
Attracted to both	15 (7.7)	16 (10.7)			
Any additional paraphilic interests	135 (68.9)	96 (64.4)	1	0.76	0.384
Social functioning (%)					
Years of education > 10	109 (55.6)	66 (44.3)	1	4.34	0.037
Employed	147 (75.0)	92 (61.7)	1	6.99	0.008
Relationship	78 (39.8)	60 (40.3)	1	0.01	0.929
Has children	71 (36.2)	57 (38.3)	1	0.15	0.699
Childhood sexual victimization	39 (19.9)	49 (32.9)	1	7.52	0.006
Offense history (%)			2	5.00	0.082
Child pornography only	80 (40.8)	49 (32.9)			
Child sexual abuse only	33 (16.8)	39 (26.2)			
Mixed[b]	83 (42.3)	61 (40.9)			

Notes:
[a] Current and previous detection for sexual offenses against children.
[b] Child sexual abuse with additional child pornography offending.

Table 3
Group comparisons on sexual preference data by offense history (N = 345).

Sexual preference	Child pornography only				Child sexual abuse only				Mixed offenses[a]			
	Undetected (n=80)	Detected[b] (n=49)			Undetected (n=33)	Detected[b] (n=39)			Undetected (n=83)	Detected[b] (n=61)		
	n (%)	n (%)	X^2	df	n (%)	n (%)	X^2	df	n (%)	n (%)	X^2	df
(Body) age preference			2.36	3			7.51	3			0.40	3
Exclusive prepubescent	25 (31.3)	10 (20.4)			10 (30.3)	8 (20.5)			35 (42.2)	23 (37.7)		
Non-exclusive prepubescent	25 (31.3)	18 (36.7)			6 (18.2)	17 (43.6)			20 (24.1)	17 (27.9)		
Exclusive pubescent	5 (6.3)	2 (4.1)			8 (24.2)	3 (7.7)			10 (12.0)	8 (13.1)		
Non-exclusive pubescent	25 (31.3)	19 (38.8)			9 (27.3)	11 (28.2)			18 (21.7)	13 (21.3)		
Gender preference			2.27	2			1.41	2			2.11	2
Attracted to boys	20 (25.0)	15 (30.6)			10 (30.3)	16 (41.0)			39 (47.0)	23 (37.7)		
Attracted to girls	55 (68.8)	28 (57.1)			17 (51.5)	19 (48.7)			40 (48.2)	32 (52.2)		
Attracted to both	5 (6.3)	6 (12.2)			6 (18.2)	4 (10.3)			4 (4.8)	6 (9.8)		
Any additional paraphilic interests	49 (61.3)	34 (69.4)	0.88	1	21 (63.6)	25 (64.1)	0.00	1	65 (78.3)	37 (60.7)	5.31[c]	1

Notes:
[a] Child sexual abuse with additional child pornography offending.
[b] Current and previous detection.
[c] $p < 0.05$.

Table 4
Group comparisons on age and offense-supportive cognitions by offense history (N = 345).

Risk factors[a]	Lifetime sexual offense history against children								
	Child pornography only			Child sexual abuse only			Mixed offenses[b]		
	Undetected (n=80)	Detected[c] (n=49)	F (1)	Undetected (n=33)	Detected (n=39)	F (1)	Undetected (n=83)	Detected (n=61)	F (1)
	M (SD)[d]	M (SD)[d]		M (SD)[d]	M (SD)[d]		M (SD)[d]	M (SD)[d]	
Age	34.36 (10.46)	39.69 (10.56)	7.84**	43.85 (10.83)	44.92 (10.16)	0.19	37.96 (10.77)	40.36 (11.38)	1.66
Offense-supportive cognitions									
Offense supportive attitudes	66.53 (17.18)	66.18 (17.42)	0.01	72.03 (18.34)	56.54 (17.36)	1.15	77.66 (19.96)	79.98 (18.02)	0.52
Cognitive victim empathy deficits	68.39 (27.85)	65.59 (30.44)	0.29	75.24 (34.02)	70.56 (29.06)	0.40	81.04 (29.70)	81.92 (31.26)	0.03
Emotional victim empathy deficits	44.60 (15.70)	45.84 (19.70)	0.16	40.94 (19.39)	40.97 (19.09)	0.00	49.80 (19.57)	47.77 (20.14)	0.37

Notes:
[a] Offense supportive attitudes from Bumby MOLEST Scale; Cognitive and emotional empathy deficits from ECS = Empathy for Children Scale.
[b] Child sexual abuse with additional child pornography offending.
[c] Current and previous detection.
[d] Mean score differences between two groups are significant at **$p<0.01$ (Bonferroni; post-hoc).

Table 5
Group comparisons on sexual self-regulation problems and socio-affective deficits by offense history (N=345).

Risk factors[a]	Lifetime sexual offense history against children								
	Child pornography only			Child sexual abuse only			Mixed offenses[b]		
	Undetected (n=80)	Detected[c] (n=49)		Undetected (n=33)	Detected (n=39)		Undetected (n=83)	Detected (n=61)	
	M (SD)[d]	M (SD)[d]	$F(1)$	M (SD)[d]	M (SD)[d]	$F(1)$	M (SD)[d]	M (SD)[d]	$F(1)$
Sexual self-regulation problems									
Lack of coping self efficacy	37.15 (12.29)	36.12 (9.93)	0.25	34.18 (13.03)	39.62 (17.09)	2.23	42.64 (11.91)	38.03 (14.51)	4.11[d]
Sexual preoccupation	9.88 (3.68)	9.37 (4.14)	0.53	9.64 (3.86)	6.77 (3.05)	12.38**	10.92 (3.83)	10.30 (4.33)	0.83
Socio-affective deficits									
Loneliness	48.34 (11.94)	50.92 (12.55)	1.37	45.18 (13.18)	46.21 (10.91)	0.13	49.49 (12.51)	51.85 (11.39)	1.35
Emotion oriented coping	25.41 (5.60)	27.31 (5.45)	0.27[d]	24.30 (5.82)	27.36 (4.49)	6.05[c]	25.71 (5.51)	26.74 (5.75)	1.18
Hostility toward women	39.81 (5.17)	39.59 (5.74)	0.05	39.79 (5.19)	41.33 (4.66)	1.77	40.61 (5.77)	42.16 (6.47)	2.29

[a] Lack of coping self-efficacy from SESM = Self Efficacy Scale related to Minors; Sexual preoccupation from SBIMS = Sexual Behavior Involving Minors Scale; Loneliness from UCLA-LS-R; Emotion oriented coping from CISS = Coping Inventory for Stressful Situations; Hostility toward women from HTW.

[b] Child sexual abuse with additional child pornography offending.

[c] Current and previous detection.

[d] Mean score differences between two groups are significant at **$p<0.01$ (Bonferroni; post-hoc).

Table 6
Group comparisons on social functioning data by offense history (N = 345).

Descriptive data	Lifetime sexual offense history against children											
	Child pornography only				Child sexual abuse only				Mixed offenses[a]			
	Undetected (n = 80)	Detected[b] (n = 49)			Undetected (n = 33)	Detected[b] (n = 39)			Undetected (n = 83)	Detected[b] (n = 61)		
	n (%)	n (%)	X^2	df	n (%)	n (%)	X^2	df	n (%)	n (%)	X^2	df
Social functioning												
Years of education > 10	43 (53.8)	31 (63.3)	1.13	1	15 (45.5)	13 (33.3)	1.11	1	51 (61.4)	22 (36.1)	9.06[**]	1
Employed	63 (78.8)	37 (75.5)	0.18	1	22 (66.7)	23 (59.0)	0.45	1	62 (74.7)	32 (52.5)	7.67[**]	1
Relationship	33 (41.3)	20 (40.8)	0.00	1	15 (45.5)	18 (46.2)	0.00	1	30 (36.1)	22 (36.1)	0.00	1
Has children	22 (27.5)	18 (36.7)	1.21	1	21 (63.6)	19 (48.7)	1.61	1	28 (33.7)	20 (32.8)	0.01	1
Childhood sexual victimization	15 (18.8)	10 (20.4)	0.05	1	7 (21.2)	17 (43.5)	4.03[*]	1	17 (20.4)	22 (36.1)	4.32[*]	1

Notes:
[a] Child sexual abuse with additional child pornography offending.
[b] Current and previous detection.
[**] $p < 0.01$.
[*] $p < 0.05$.

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