Personality characteristics of sexual offenders

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Psychiatriki 2003, 14:181-190

A large proportion of sex offenders meet the criteria for a personality disorder and demonstrate high levels of impulsivity and aggression. The aim of the present study was to investigate the interrelations between the personality dimensions and the levels of impulsivity, aggression and suicidality in a sample of sex offenders. For this purpose, 59 rapists, 37 child molesters, and 25 healthy controls completed: (1) The Temperament and Character Inventory (TCI), which measures the heritable temperament dimensions Novelty Seeking (NS), Harm Avoidance (HA), Reward Dependence (RD), and Persistence (PE), and the character dimensions Self Directedness (SD), Cooperativeness (CO), and Self Transcendence (ST), (2) The Aggression Questionnaire (AO), (3) The Barratt Impulsivity Scale (BIS), (4) The Suicide Risk Scale (SRS), and (5) The Life-Time History of Aggression (LTHA). In both rapists and child molester, the aggression, impulsivity, and suicidality scores, as well as the score of NS dimension was significantly increased, while the scores of RD, SD, and CO were significantly decreased, in comparison with the controls. In both sex offender groups, the total score of BIS was positively correlated with LTHA, while LTHA was positively correlated with NS, and negatively with PE, SD, and CO. In rapists, aggression was correlated positively with NS and negatively with PE, while in child molesters aggression was correlated with suicidality. Novelty seeking behavior, impulsiveness, and lack of empathy were found to be common characteristics in both rapists and child molesters. In addition, rapists' aggressiveness seems to be associated with lack of personal intimacies, while child molesters' aggressiveness with suicidal behaviour. The identification of specific personality dimensions and aggression-impulsivity variants in subjects demonstrating sexual aggressivity and/or deviance may be helpful in their assessment process and treatment outcome.

Key words: sexual abuse, pedophilia, rape, temperament, character aggression, impulsivity, suicidality.

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БИБЛИОГРАФИЯ


