

From the Literature

by Joseph A. Custer, Esq.*

Editor's Note: *A subset of psychological-ly oriented social scientists has long endeavored to find clues in the life histories and psyches of violent and sadistic offenders to identify those at greatest risk for such conduct. Though the goal of preventing these individuals from acting on their violent compulsions is likely unattainable, identifying generally applicable risk factors would allow professionals to introduce therapeutic interventions. This issue's literature review column presents an annotated bibliography of the research discussing and assessing possible indicators for homicidal sex offenders.*

Bibliography:

Predicting Sexual Offending

Screening Tests for Pedophilia

by G.G. Abel, et al.

21 Crim. Justice and Behav. 115-132 (1994)

In this article, Abel, et al., examine the effectiveness of screening tests for pedophilia. The authors state that volumetric and circumferential phallometry have considerable effectiveness. However, these tests prove to be very intrusive, costly, and lengthy, while a new portable screening test has been shown to be much less intrusive. The screening test, called the Abel Screen, uses both psychophysiological and self-report data. It identifies those at risk for involvement with pubescent and prepubescent boys. The Abel Screen matches the arousal pattern and cognitions of younger and older men who have been given a pedophile diagnosis and have admitted to an arousal susceptibility involving children. The arousal patterns and the cognitions of these pedophile tendencies are matched against the arousal patterns and cognitions of a control group of men who deny any suggestion of pedophile behavior.

Stopping Sexual Violence

by G.G. Abel and C. Osborn

22 (6) Psychiatric Annals 301-306 (1992)

The authors are of the opinion that psychiatry's approach to therapies needs to be

*Joseph Custer, JD, a contributing editor to SLR, serves as associate director at the University of Kansas School of Law Library. Submissions for his review should be sent to him c/o Civic Research Institute, Inc., 2067 Broadway, Suite 50, New York, NY 10023.

altered somewhat from that of helping the victim to one of helping the potential sex offender. Victims certainly need help but these therapies cannot be expected to reduce sexual violence since they are employed only after the sexual violence has been committed. The authors feel a preventive approach to treatment of a potential sex offender would be much more effective. Strong consideration needs to be given by psychiatrists and psychologists as to what can be done to prevent sexual violence. The article also discusses how potential sex offenders should be interviewed, what the treatment needs of potential sex offenders are, what sort of treatment would prove effective, and the role of medication in a treatment plan.

Animal Abuse and Youth Violence

by Frank R. Ascione

U.S. Dep't of Justice Res. Report (2001)

Ascione states that animal abuse may be characteristic of the childhood histories of up to nearly two in three men who become violent adult offenders, many of a sexual nature. The tie between animal abuse and later physical abuse, sexual abuse, and domestic assault as an adult is strong. The author states that animal abuse by children has received insufficient attention to this point. It could help identify youth at risk for perpetrating interpersonal violence as they get older.

Children Who Are Cruel to Animals: A Review of Research and Implications for Developmental Psychopathology

by Frank R. Ascione

Paper based on presentation to Society for Research in Child Development (1993).

Ascione reviewed the findings of quantitative and qualitative research studying the relationship between childhood cruelty toward animals and interpersonal aggression later as adults. The research conducted shows a significant connection between childhood cruelty to animals and later aggressive behavior toward humans. The author also reviews studies that suggest that parents who do not display empathy can really affect their children, who may then respond by not showing any empathy for harmed animals.

Nature and Status of Research on the Link Between Animal Cruelty and Child Abuse

by Frank R. Ascione

13(2) Protecting Children 12-14 (1997).

In this article, Ascione focuses on therapies that may be effective in treating children who display violence towards animals. He states that teaching children anger management techniques has a lot of potential benefits. It helps assist troubled youths in their emotion regulation and it also helps to develop empathy, a trait lacking among children who abuse animals.

Preventing Sexual Abuse and Assault

by Judith V. Becker and

Daniel W. Reilly

11(4) Sexual Abuse: A J. of Res. and Treatment 267-278 (1999).

This article examines a public health approach to prevention of sexual abuse and sexual assault. This approach identifies three levels of prevention:

1. Primary: identifies and stops the inappropriate sexual behavior before it starts;
2. Secondary: identifies people who are at risk of abusing or being abused and reduces the risk. The focus on this second level is to change the behavior of potential offenders;
3. Tertiary: targets those who have a history of sex offending and emphasizes intervention strategies.

Information from both offenders and victims is reviewed to provide insight.

Comparative Profile of the Incest Perpetrator: Background Characteristics, Abuse History and Use of Social Skills

by D.T. Ballard, et al.

in *Incest Perpetrator: A Family Member No One Wants to Treat* 43-64 (1990).

Ballard, et al., analyzed the social skills of 373 incest perpetrators, pointing out that incest offenders knew that incest was inappropriate and unnatural before they committed their offenses. However, due to their poor social skills, they did not assert themselves and discuss their inappropriate thinking with others.

See LITERATURE, next page

LITERATURE, from page 37

Sexual Homicide—A Motivational Model

by A.W. Burgess, et al.

1 (3) *J. of Interpersonal Violence* 251-272 (1986).

This study of the histories of 36 sexual murderers found many similarities among these individuals. Indicators of adolescent and childhood behavior problems were found among a majority of the 36. These behavior problems included:

- Chronic lying;
- Rebelliousness;
- Enuresis;
- Excessive masturbation;
- Social isolation; and
- Excessive day dreaming.

The examination of the subjects' early fantasy development revealed a high degree of egocentricity in their sexual and aggressive fantasy and play.

Serious and Violent Juvenile Offenders: Why Should You Pay Attention?

by John Brigham

35 (5) *The Prosecutor* 40-48 (2001).

This article examines serious and violent juvenile offenders (SVJOs) and discusses what is known about them and possible predictors for the development of future SVJO's. Identifying and then deterring the SVJO is an extremely important and essential part of any workable prevention strategy. Identified predictors for SVJO include:

1. Aggressiveness and early violent behavior;
2. Hyperactivity, attention-deficit, restlessness, and risk-taking;
3. Family dysfunction and criminality;
4. Anti-social behavior and beliefs;
5. Peer influence;
6. School and academic factors;
7. Childbirth and metabolic factors; and
8. Neighborhood and community influences.

The author states that programs that target juveniles and which treat multiple risk factors are much more likely to prevent future violent behavior compared to those programs focusing on just a single risk factor.

Assessing Dangerousness: Violence by Sexual Offenders, Batterers, and Child Abusers

ed. by J.C. Campbell (1995)

Campbell, who serves as editor of this book, assembled experts in the fields of criminal justice, mental health, and physical health to assess dangerousness in the prediction of violence, spouse abuse, child abuse, and sexual assault. Some experts in the book discuss the prediction of child abuse using the Child Abuse Potential Inventory. Prediction of homicide is explored regarding spousal abuse. Prediction of violence and assault is explored in regard to sex offenders and batterers. One part of the book deals specifically with the prediction of sex offenses, including rape and child molestation.

Behavioral Sequelae of Physical and/or Sexual Abuse in Adolescents

by A.A. Cavaiola and M. Schiff

12 (2) *Child Abuse and Neglect* 181-188 (1988).

A study of 500 patients, ages 12 to 18, was conducted in the work reported in this article. The subjects were admitted to an eight-week residential adolescent chemical dependency treatment program. One hundred fifty cases of physical or sexual abuse were identified among the 500 patients. The chemically dependent group was compared to a nonabused and nonchemically dependent adolescent group. There was a higher incidence of acting out, running away, legal involvement, and sexual promiscuity among the abused group.

Sex Offenses—Behavioral Aspects

by P.E. Dietz

in *Encyclopedia of Crime and Justice* 1485-1493 (1983).

In this article, Dietz presents a biopsychosocial view for understanding sex offenders. This view of sex offenses postulates that a person's aggression and sexual expressions vary according to a host of factors. Primary factors include genetics, and hormonal and environmental factors at critical developmental periods in a person's life. Recent health, life experiences, and the transient configuration of hormonal state, mood, and thoughts in addition to possible intoxication and various external events are also viewed as influential.

Childhood Cruelty to Animals and Later Aggression Against People: A Review

by Alan R. Felthous and

Stephen R. Kellert

144 *Am. J. Of Psychiatry* 710-717 (1987)

The authors contend that the existing research on childhood cruelty to animals and its relationship to later violent offending is inconsistent. They state that methodological factors contribute to the inconsistency. Despite their findings, the authors appear to believe in some sort of relationship between the two factors. They emphasize that parents, teachers, clinicians, and others who work with children should be aware of any child who displays cruelty to animals.

Sexual Trauma in the Life Histories of Rapists and Child Molesters

by A.N. Groth

4(1) *Victimology* 10-16 (1979).

This study examines the life history of 348 men convicted of sexual assault in an attempt to trace the causes. Questionnaires submitted to the convicted men were also administered to a control group of 62 male law enforcement officers. The questionnaire chronicled any sexual trauma witnessed or experienced in the childhood of the men. Thirty-one percent of the convicts experienced sexual trauma while only 3% of the control group experienced sexual trauma in childhood. In regard to this study, the predominant type of trauma experienced by child molesters was forcible sexual assault while rapists predominantly experienced being pressured into sexual activity by an adult.

Appraisal and Management of Risk in Sexual Aggressors: Implications for Criminal Justice Policy

by Grant T. Harris, Marie Rice, and

Vernon L. Quinsey

4 (1/2) *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law* 73-115 (1998).

This article states that all interventions should receive high priority. Therapy, drugs, community notification, registration, and supervision must be appraised. New treatment strategies should be continually developed and evaluated. The authors address actuarial methods for predicting future offending. They say actuarial methods do have some validity, but caution that these methods do not identify all types of sex offenders and there is a high false-positive rate.

See LITERATURE, next page

LITERATURE, from page 38

Introduction to the Serial Rapist: Research by the FBI

by R.R. Hazelwood and A.W. Burgess
56 (9) FBI Law Enforcement Bull. 16-24 (1987).

Interviews with convicted serial rapists responsible for over 400 attempted rapes and for 837 actual rapes were conducted to provide further insight into serial rapists. The interviews were designed to achieve several goals, but the most significant was that of finding possible commonalities in the background history of serial rapists and offenders.

Natural Born Killers?: The Development of the Sexually Sadistic Serial Killer

by B.J. Johnson and J.V. Becker
25(3) J. of the Am. Acad. of Psychiatry and the Law 335-348 (1997).

Nine 14- to 18-year-old boys who had clinically significant fantasies of becoming a serial killer were studied. The goal of the study was to see if these fantasies are later fulfilled, thus examining the possibility of whether the actions of a serial killer can be predicted. The article focuses on how a sadistic sexual fantasy can be acted out and what motivates a person to repeat the terrible act multiple times. The progression from fantasy to actual killing is studied for any possible predictors. The article also recommends methods for assessing and treating youngsters who harbor these fantasies with the goal of interrupting the progression to actual killing.

Childhood Cruelty Toward Animals Among Criminals and Noncriminals

by S.R. Kellert and A.R. Felthous
38 (12) Human Relations 1113-1129 (1985)

A standardized, closed and open-ended interview, requiring approximately 1 to 2 hours to complete, was administered to 152 criminals and noncriminals in Kansas and Connecticut. Three hundred seventy-three separate acts of cruelty to animals during childhood were reported from the 152 participants. Childhood cruelty toward animals occurred significantly more often among aggressive criminals than among nonaggressive criminals or noncriminals. Family violence, including that of a sexual nature, was significantly more common among

aggressive criminals with a history of childhood cruelty toward animals.

Sexual Deviance and Number of Older Brothers Among Sexual Offenders

by M. L. Lalumiere; G. T. Harris; V. T. Quinsey and M. E. Rice
10(1) Sexual Abuse: A J. of Res. and Treatment 5-15 (1998)

There have been a number of studies showing that the probability of a male being homosexual increases with the number of older brothers the male has. The studies suggest that a progressive maternal immunosensitization occurs sometimes with gestation and delivery of several males, which may result in the development of homosexual tendencies. What made these authors particularly interested in the maternal immunosensitization hypothesis is that a recent study of the older brother effect in homosexual pedophilia showed a positive relationship—the more older brothers involved, the more pedophilia homosexual preferences appeared. The authors decided to test their hypothesis with other sexual offenders. Twenty-nine child molesters, 38 rapists, and 11 individuals who committed both offenses were tested for phallometrix data. With all three groups, the phallometrix index of all three types of sexual deviance was positively correlated with the number of the males' older brothers. The study concludes with the suggestion that the maternal immunization hypothesis may indeed explain some variations in male sexual violence preferences.

Serial Murderers: Four Case Histories

by F.L. Leibman
53(4) Federal Probation 41-45 (1989)

The author of this article attempts to determine common emotional and environmental characteristics particular to four serial murderers: Theodore Bundy, Albert DeSalvo, Edmund Kemper, and Jerome Brudos. The author then attempts to develop criteria to identify people with these tendencies and offers suggestions for early treatment of individuals who show such tendencies.

Guilty by Reason of Insanity: A Psychiatrist Explores the Minds of Killers

by D.O. Lewis (1998).

Based on interviews with Theodore Bundy, Arthur Shawcross, Mark David Chapman,

and some others, the author attempts to discover why they became violent offenders. D. O. Lewis theorizes that no genetic abnormality exists that is specifically associated with violent crime and contends that no ethnic, racial, or national group has a greater tendency toward serious violent behavior. Lewis states that there is a need for more studies to better determine why people kill.

In a given murder, our desire to learn its causes, and the time we are willing to spend doing that, are inversely proportional to the grisliness of the crime and the pleasure we anticipate deriving from the execution.

Juvenile Sexual Offenses in the Histories of Adult Rapists and Child Molesters

by R.E. Longo and A.N. Groth
27(2) Intern'l J. of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology 150-155 (1983)

Two hundred thirty-one sexual offenders were studied with respect to progression of sex crimes. The study showed that many sexual offenders started their sexually inappropriate behaviors in early adolescence. The study concludes that many sexual offenders start out sexually at an early age and if this behavior is not treated it may escalate to more serious sexual assaults.

Integrated Theory of the Etiology of Sexual Offending

by W.L. Marshall and H.E. Barbaree
(from *Handbook of Sexual Assault: Issues, Theories, and Treatment of the Offender* 257-275 (1990)).

The authors state that there is a biological inheritance that makes it natural for males to be sexually aggressive. The key is to have social inhibitions instilled which nullify such behavior. Inconsistent parenting or harsh parenting without love can fail to instill these inhibitions. As a matter of fact, poor parenting, according to the authors, may even facilitate the fusion of male biological inherited aggression and sex rather than separate these two tendencies.

Exploration of Incest in the Childhood Development of Serial Rapists

by A. McCormack, et al.
7(3) J. of Family Violence 219-228 (1992).

Forty-one incarcerated serial rapists were studied. Fifteen of these 41 serial rapists had

See LITERATURE, next page

LITERATURE, from page 39

experienced incest as a child. The incest experiences were analyzed in the following terms:

- Length of first experience;
- Age of victim at first experience;
- Type of abuse; and
- Sex of perpetrator.

These incest victims were compared to nonincest victims and the former group was much more likely than the nonincest victims to reenact this behavior in the family setting later on.

Violence Prediction: The Past Twenty and the Next Twenty Years

by J. Monohan

23 (1) *Crim. Justice and Behav.* 107-120 (1996)

The author states that much more violence prediction research is now being conducted due to fact that constitutional rights and civil liberties are taking a back seat to tort law and actuarial risk assessment research. He states that the next 20 years will include more violence prediction research than the last 20 years.

Clinical Prediction of Violent Behavior

by J. Monohan (1995)

This monograph is intended to help mental health professionals understand the scientific and technical issues involved in violence prediction so the professionals can improve the accuracy and appropriateness of their clinical predictions of individual violent behavior.

Evolution of Multiple Murder in Historical Perspective

by T. O'Reilly-Fleming

(from *Serial and Mass Murder: Theory, Research and Policy* 1-37 (1996))

O'Reilly-Fleming reviews cases of serial murderers throughout history, including Jack the Ripper, Albert Fish, Henry Lee Lucas, John Wayne Gacy, Ted Bundy, Jeffrey Dahmer, and others. The author intended to shed some understanding on the diversity of the murderers. He examined their method of operation, societal reaction to the killings, and selection of victims in an effort to understand their actions.

Murderers Who Rape and Mutilate

by R.K. Ressler, et al.

1(3) *J. of Interpersonal Violence* 273-287 (1986)

This article reports on a study of 28 sexually oriented murders that took place from 1979 to 1983. Sixteen of the 28 sex murderers had been victims of sexual abuse in childhood or adolescence. Differences between the 16 with a history of abuses and the 12 without such a history are chronicled in the article. Sexually abused murderers were likely to engage in sexual contact with animals, obscene phone calls, bondage sex, indecent exposure, and cross-dressing. An assessment of the relationship between sexual abuse in childhood and the mutilation of murder victims after death showed a positive correlation.

Sexual Homicide: Patterns and Motives

by R.K. Ressler, A.W. Burgess, and J.E. Douglass (1988).

Extensive interviews of 36 convicted sex murderers were conducted by FBI agents. Each murderer's childhood, family background, lifestyle, and sexual history were analyzed in depth. What makes this study somewhat unique is the fact that the book often uses the murderers' own words to describe their feelings and actions.

Patterns of Childhood Neglect

by R.K. Ressler and Tom Shachtman in *Serial Killers* 98-105 (2000)

Ressler and Shachtman explore the role of neglect from birth through adolescence and its subsequent impact on the development of violent murderers. Thirty-six murderers were studied, the majority of whom were serial killers. Many of the murderers had similar patterns of childhood neglect. Most had poor relationships with their mothers. Experiences with school systems that were uncaring or unable to help were another common element in sex murderers' developing years.

Potential Sex Murderer: Ominous Signs, Risk Assessment

by Louis B. Schlesinger

1 (1) *J. of Threat Assessment* 47-72 (2001)

The author reviewed 10 signs that are frequently found in the background of sex murderers. The author argues that these signs, seen in combination, are an indication of the potential of an individual to engage in sexual homicide. The author conducted substantial research in the area of risk assessment. Numbers of different studies were examined. The 10 signs were:

1. Childhood abuse;
2. Inappropriate maternal (sexual) conduct;
3. Pathological lying and manipulation;
5. Sadistic fantasy with a compulsion to act;
5. Need to control and dominate others;
6. Repetitive fire setting;
7. Voyeurism;
8. Fetishism and (sexual) burglary;
9. Unprovoked attacks on females, associated with generalized misogynous emotions; and
10. Evidence of ritualistic (signature) behavior.

Role of Pornography in the Etiology of Sexual Aggression

by Michael C. Seto, Alexandra Maria, and Howard E. Barbaree

6 (1) *Aggression and Violent Behav.* 35-53 (2001)

The three authors examine the research literature on the association between pornography and sex offending. From the existing evidence, the authors state that individuals predisposed to sexually offending will show the greatest sensitivity to the effect of pornography. Men who are not predisposed are unlikely to show an effect.

Sexually Sadistic Serial Killer

by J. Warren; R. R. Hazelwood and P. Dietz

(from *Serial and Mass Murder: Theory, Research and Policy* 77-91 (1996))

According to the authors, the evidence they examined was strong and consistent that almost all of the 20 sexually sadistic serial murderers who were studied had experienced traumatic experiences early in life. From a young age, almost all of these men

Learn More About CRI Publications

To learn more about *Sex Offender Law Report* and other Civic Research Institute periodicals and books, please visit our website:

www.civicrosearchinstitute.com

See *LITERATURE*, page 44

showed above average intelligence. More than half of the 20 men engaged in many diverse paraphilias in addition to sexual paraphilias. Almost all of the men engaged in violent sexual fantasy. Probably the most disturbing aspect of the crimes was the great degree and high level of planning, detail, and thoroughness of execution involved in these highly thought-out murders. The authors suggest that the high level of expertise and thoroughness of the sexually sadistic murderer makes him a distinct type of serial murderer.

Enuresis, Fire Setting, and Animal Cruelty in Male Adolescent Delinquents—A Triad Predictive of Violent Behavior

by Douglas Wax and Victor Haddox
2(1) *J. of Psychiatry* and L. 45-71 (1974)

This article studied 46 cases returned for psychiatric referral, six of which demonstrated the triad of enuresis, fire setting, and excessive animal cruelty. The article main-

tains that someone exhibiting these three traits will ultimately engage in sexually aberrant behavior, marked violence deviation, and sexual perversion, among other abnormal behaviors. The authors propose that any child who manifests all three symptoms needs immediate consultation and therapeutic intervention.

Violence Prediction Scheme: Assessing Dangerousness in High Risk Men

by C.D. Webster, et al. (1994).

The violence prediction scheme (VPS), stated in the title of the article, uses what is known about predicting violent behavior and presents it in a form for use by administrators, clinicians and administrators. The VPS is founded on such predictive factors as:

- Family and childhood history;
- Medical and psychiatric history;
- Current offense information;
- Adult functioning and sex history;
- Criminal history;

- Substance use;
- Education;
- Occupational history; and
- Circumstances leading to evaluation.

Destined for Murder: Profiles of Six Serial Killers, With Astrological Commentary

by S.H. Young and E. Rowland (1995)

This book explores the life stories of six serial murderers, their childhoods and families, their murders, their captures, and pivotal points in their lives with respect to astrological charts. The book focuses on whether someone is destined to murder from the moment of their birth due to the way in which the stars are aligned. The discussion also explores whether murderers select their victims and time their murders based on astrology. Finally, the authors discuss the possibilities of using astrology charts to determine which people have a potential for violence and then using interventions to prevent murders. ■