

PARAPHILIAS AND THEIR SOCIAL ASPECTS COMPARED IN SLOVAKIA AND CZECH REPUBLIC

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Abstract:

Paraphilias are so-called sexual deviances. It is a condition that is characterized by permanent disposition or compulsive urge to unusual and socially unaccepted sexual objects or activities.

Paraphilias are a serious social and health topics which have a very significant overlap into other disciplines. Overall, pedophilia is considered to be the most dangerous paraphilia by almost 71 %. Sadism is rated as the second most dangerous paraphilia with 21 %. Fetishism (39,5 %) is considered the least dangerous paraphilia.

The research is conceived as a quantitative study using a questionnaire survey and focuses on attitudes and views of the general public to persons with paraphilia.

Key words: sexual deviance, sexuality, paraphilias

Introduction

The disorder of sexual preference is a sexual problem where the sexual arousal is in response to objects or stimuli not associated with normal sexual behaviour patterns and that may interfere with the establishment of normal sexual relationships. (Berger, 2005) Paraphiliac tendencies can be realized in masturbation fantasies and practices in partner sexual life. The subject may be forced to commit sexual offense. Paraphilias can be primarily divided to deviation

in activity and deviation in object. (Weiss, 2008; Zvěřina, 2012)

Our scientific understanding of paraphilia is extremely limited. Paraphilias are rarely diagnosed clinically, but the large commercial market in paraphilia-related materials suggests that it is more prevalent than clinical samples indicate. Paraphilias, with the exception of sexual masochism, are only rarely diagnosed in females. (Klykylo, Kay, 2012).

Paraphilia and violence

The number of people who suffer from a paraphilia is thought to be difficult to estimate for a number of reasons. Many people with one of these disorders suffer in secret or silence out of shame, and some are engaging in sexual offending behaviours and so are interested in not reporting their paraphilia. Therefore, many of the estimates on the prevalence of paraphilia are gained from the number of people involved with the criminal-justice system due to paedophilia. (Dryden-Edwards, 2015; Novotná, Vojáčková, 2016).

Prevalence rates for paraphilias are difficult to obtain due to changes in criterion over time and between cultures. Ahlers et al. found 62,4 % reported at least one paraphilia-associated sexual arousal pattern, and that this caused distress in only 1,7 % of cases. According to this study, it would appear that prevalence of paraphilic arousal was within the majority and further not considered as distressing. Alternatively, Langstrom and Seto in their research found that 3,1 % of participants reported at least one incident of being sexually aroused by exposing their genitals to a stranger and 8 % admitted being sexually aroused spying on others having sex. Such large variance in paraphilia prevalence rates in general sampling raises validity concerns over inconsistency. This is possibly due to the intimate and private nature of questionnaires, which may impair validity.

In terms of more standardized studies, most data are based on criminal reports or studies using clinical populations referred for legal reasons, rather than for self-help in the general population. For instance, Briken et al. reported that in a study of sexual murderers, there were higher levels of sexual sadism alongside other paraphilic-related interests and disorders. However, prevalence rates are still difficult to report with any certainty. (McManus et al., 2013)

Paraphilia and sexual delinquency are different concepts. Every paraphilic does not commit sexual delinquency. This is just a small group of these people. The most dangerous paraphilias in relation to sexual delinquency include pathological sexual aggression, sadism and pedophilia. (Pavlovský, 2009)

Aggression can be the same identified by the man or woman, especially due to reasons of family history, social pathology and other sexual disease in the context of high-risk behavior. (Ludvigh Cintuová, Buzalová, 2018).

High-risk sexual offenders are a complex and heterogeneous group of offenders about whom researchers, clinicians, and law enforcement agencies still know relatively little. Data analysed in Woodworth research revealed significant differences between offender types for reasons of criminal history differences including past sexual and nonsexual convictions, number of victims, weapon use, and age of offending onset. Further, there were significant differences between offender types for sexual fantasy themes, paraphilia diagnoses, and levels of psychopathy.

For example, results revealed that offenders' sexual fantasies were significantly more likely to correspond with the specific type of index of sexual offence they had committed. Further, offenders scoring high in psychopathy were significantly more likely to have a sadistic paraphilia than offenders with either low or moderate psychopathy scores. Results from the current study provide a refined and informed understanding of sexual offending behaviour with important implications for future research, assessment, and treatment, as well as law enforcement practices when working with high-risk sexual offenders. (Woodworth et al., 2013)

Paraphilia in the perception of social work

Paraphilias are multidisciplinary issues. To help these people there participate a wide range of professionals from different professions. Among the most prominent specialists, sexologists, psychologists and social workers are included. When working with paraphiliacs, social workers play an irreplaceable role.

A social worker plays an important role in the provision of benefits, empowers the client, encourages client's reflection before starting treatment and significantly contributes to the client's own resocialization.

The qualitative research Novotná and Vojáčková (2016) aimed at the life of paraphilic persons concluded that this disorder affects many other life activities and spheres of these peoples'. Family, business, society are the most important spheres. The most important areas include the family sphere. In the context of social work, it is necessary to focus on these areas and to support these individuals in coping with a wide range of difficult live situations they are urged to deal with because of their handicap.

The results of the research explains new information about the public's view of individuals with paraphilia. These findings can be of benefit to social work, especially in the process of re-socializing these individuals back into society. The main goal of this resocialization is to ensure the highest quality of life of the paraphilicians while ensuring the high security of society.

Research methodology and aims

The survey was designed as a quantitative research using the technique of the survey. Data were collected in electronic and physical form using the snowball method. The questionnaires consisted of 27 closed or semi-open questions. The actual implementation of data collection took place in December 2018.

The research sample consisted of 1 434 persons in the age range from 15 to 70 years. The gender composition of the research sample was 63 % (906) of women and 37 % (528) of men. Regarding respondents' residence, 54 % (774) of respondents indicated they lived in cities and 46 % (660) in the countryside.

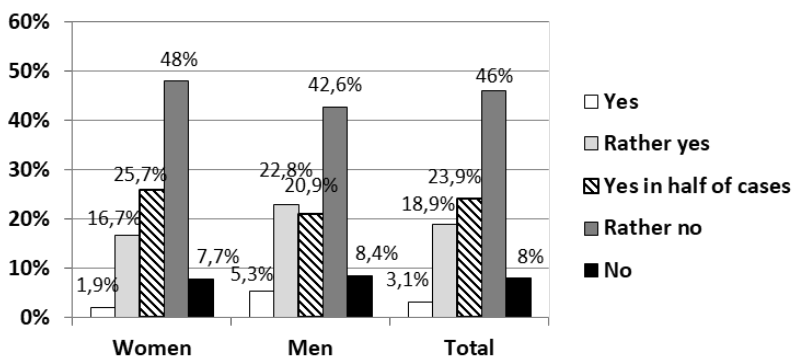
Table 1: Education respondents by gender

EDUCATION RESPONDENTS BY GENDER						
	Women		Men		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Primary school	202	22,3%	125	23,7%	327	22,8%
Secondary vocational school	45	5%	66	12,5%	111	7,7%
Secondary school	430	47,4%	220	41,6%	650	45,3%
Tertiary technical school	35	3,9%	12	2,3%	47	3,3%
University	180	19,9%	95	18%	275	19,2%
University - postgraduate studies	14	1,5%	10	1,9%	24	1,7%
Total	906	100%	528	100%	1434	100%

The research population was most represented by respondents with secondary education (45,3 %). The fewest respondents have graduated postgraduate studies (1,7 %).

Research results

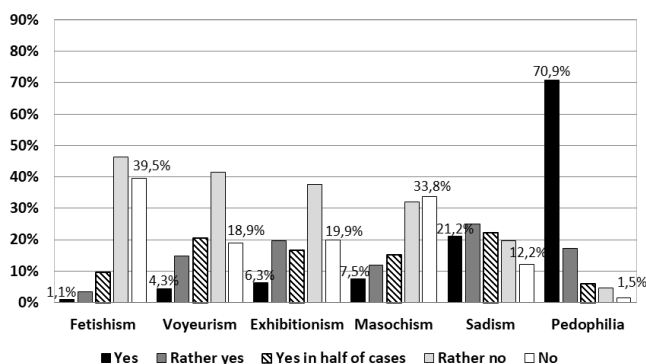
Chart 1: The objectivity of information about paraphilias in the media



Source: research

Research results show that more than 50 % of respondents do not consider information about paraphilia presented by the media to be objective. From a gender perspective, women have been slightly more skeptical about this issue.

Chart 2: The danger of paraphilias in the perception of the general public - total

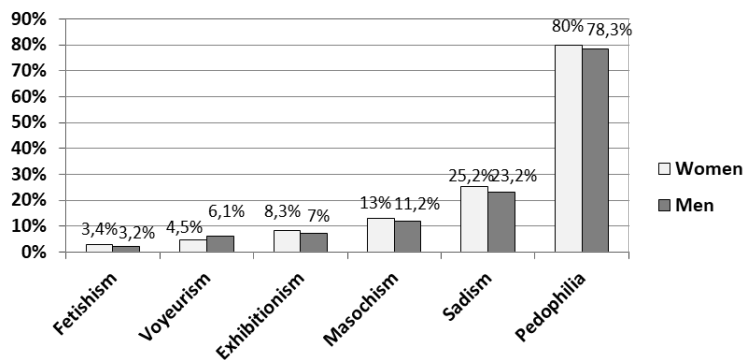


Source: research

Overall, pedophilia is considered to be the most dangerous paraphilia by almost 71 %. Sadism is rated as the second most dangerous paraphilia with 21 %.

Fetishism (39,5 %) is considered the least dangerous paraphilia.

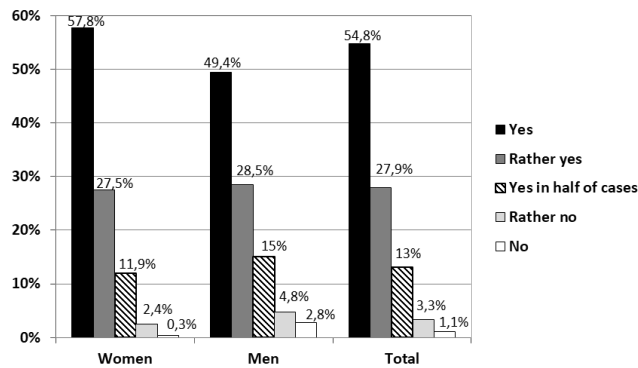
Chart 3: The danger of paraphilias in the perception of the gender



Source: research

The results shows that paraphilia is considered to be dangerous (or rather dangerous) more by female than men. Voyeurism is the only paraphilia that men (6,1 %) rated as more dangerous than women (4,5 %), but the difference is only 1,6 %. Both sexes consistently judge pedophilia and sadism as the most dangerous parafilia. Fetisism is considered the least dangerous paraphilia.

Chart 4: Paraphilia as a stigma in the perception of the general public



Source: research

Research has shown that more than a half of respondents (54,8 %) admit that paraphilicians are stigmatized by companies. 27,9 % of the respondents chose

the option rather yes. The opinion that parafilia is not socially stigmatized accounts for 3,3 % of respondents. The answer that these individuals are not at all stigmatized was 1,1 %. Women perceive the stigmatization of individuals with paraphilia more than men.

Discussion

Paraphilias are a serious social problem that has consequences in many spheres. Social work is an industry that helps paraphilicians to return to normal life after termination of sexual treatment or imprisonment. In order to resocialize them effectively, it is necessary to know the attitudes of the general public towards these individuals. This quantitative research brings this information.

Most companies are confronted with paraphilia issues mainly in the media. The media present various cases, most often cases of individuals with pathological sexual aggression, sadism, and especially pedophilia.

This is confirmed by the Gross (2014), which states that paedophilia, a scientific term which refers to subjects being predominantly attracted to prepubescent children, gets virtually and predominantly all media coverage.

Media reports often fail to distinguish between child abuse, which is a crime regardless of the drives and motivations of the perpetrator, and paedophilia, which is a sexual orientation carried by around one percent of the male population. Both are immense problems, but not synonymous.

This problems is narrow linked with the different social, cultural and psychological aspects that can be difficultly identified at the beginning and there is need to give a multidisciplinary care for the clients (Radková, Ludvigh Cintulová, Bundzelová, 2016).

Our research shows that people in the Czech Republic consider information about paraphilia presented by the media to be rather untrustworthy in more than 53 % (see Chart 1).

Jahnke et al (2014) conducted two studies aimed at the stigmatization of paraphilic persons. Both studies revealed that nearly all reactions to people with pedophilia were more negative than those to the other groups, including social distance. Fourteen percent (Study 1) and 28 % (Study 2) of the participants agreed that people with pedophilia should better be dead, even if they never had committed criminal acts. The strongest predictors of social distance towards people with pedophilia were affective reactions to this group (anger and, inversely,

associated, pity) and the political attitude of right-wing authoritarianism (Study 1). Results strongly indicate that people with pedophilia are a stigmatized group who risk being the target of fierce discrimination. We discuss this particular form of stigmatization with respect to social isolation of persons with pedophilia and indirect negative consequences for child abuse prevention.

These findings fully correspond with results of our research, which shows that both men (78,3 %) and women (80 %) consider pedophilia as the most dangerous paraphilia. In spite of the fact that socially far more dangerous is the pathological sexual aggression and sadism, which only 25,2 % of women and 23,2 % of men regards as dangerous (see graphs 2 and 3).

These attitudes have also been confirmed in the question of stigmatization where most respondents believe that paraphillias are socially stigmatized or rather stigmatized. (see Figure 4). These results correspond with the findings in research conducted by Jahnke et al (2014).

Conclusion

Life with paraphilia brings many problems to paraphilic individuals they have to face. Despite the fact that sexual delinquency is committed only by a small part of the paraphilic, it is a group that is perceived rather negatively by society.

The results of the research conducted explore attitudes of the general public to paraphilic individuals. It is considered to be beneficial to social work in the area of resocialization of these individuals. These results also show the need for information campaigns for the general public to be better informed on the subject of paraphilias, since media presentations of the most vicious sex offending offenses committed by paraphilic offenders certainly are not an objective source of information.

Resources

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