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INTIMACY DEFICITS, FEAR OF INTIMACY, AND LONELINESS AMONG SEXUAL OFFENDERS

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ABSTRACT: Intimacy deficits and loneliness recently have been theorized as influential factors in the etiology and maintenance of sexually offending behaviors, although to date there has been a lack of empirical research conducted to address this proposition. The present study examined intimacy deficits, fear of intimacy, and loneliness among intrafamilial child molesters, rapists, nonsexually offending inmates, and a community sample of adult males. The child molesters and rapists reported greater overall intimacy deficits than did the nonsexually offending inmates and community controls, with rapists reporting the greatest intimacy deficits. Fear of intimacy was found to be a particularly salient characteristic of die child molesters. The child molesters and rapists reported experiencing more overall loneliness and emotional loneliness. It is suggested that intimacy deficits, fear of intimacy, and loneliness should be addressed in comprehensive theories of sexual offending and incorporated into assessment and treatment approaches.

Sexual offending against both women and children remains a significant problem in the United States, with recent crime statistics revealing that the incidence of both rape and child molestation continues to rise (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1994). The widespread prevalence of sexual offending has fueled considerable empirical investigation into the etiology and continuance of sexually offend-

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ing behaviors. In the early years of the study of sexual offenders, the literature was plagued with theories attempting to emphasize single factors as responsible for deviant sexual behavior (Finkelhor, 1984). Contemporary approaches to the study of sexual offending advocate multifactor models, which suggest that a variety of elements are influential in the onset and continuation of sexually aggressive behavior (Finkelhor, 1984; Hall, 1990; Marshall, 1993). Included among the factors commonly believed to be related to sexual offending are deviant sexual arousal, physiological factors, personality and attitude characteristics, victimization histories, and deficient interpersonal relationships and social functioning.

In addition, clinical experience with sexual offenders has led investigators to speculate about the role of intimacy deficits and loneliness in sexual offending. Indeed, Marshall (1989, 1993, in press) has observed that many sexual offenders lack deep and intimate relationships, are emotionally isolated, and have had numerous superficial and unfulfilling relationships. With these observations in mind, Marshall and his colleagues have hypothesized that intimacy deficits and loneliness may be critical factors in a more general theory of sexual offending (Marshall, 1989, 1993, in press; Ward, Hudson, Marshall, & Siegert, 1995). Specifically, it has been suggested that poor-quality attachments that develop in childhood and persist into adulthood may lead to significant intimacy deficits and loneliness, which eventually may result in attempts to ameliorate the feelings of loneliness through inappropriate sexual contact with inappropriate partners.

Although a logical framework has been established that emphasizes intimacy deficits and loneliness as significant in the etiology and maintenance of sexual offending, very little empirical research has been conducted to specifically address these factors. Of the two empirical examinations addressing these elements thus far, both Garlick (1989) and Seidman, Marshall, Hudson, and Robertson (1994) have found support for an association among intimacy deficits, loneliness, and sexual offending. Garlick matched incarcerated child molesters and rapists with an incarcerated nonsexually offending inmate sample, who then completed the Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale (Russell, Peplau, & Cutrona, 1980) and Tesch's (1985) Psychosocial Intimacy Questionnaire. The child molesters and rapists reported significantly lower levels of intimacy and greater amounts of loneliness

than the nonsexual offenders, suggesting that intimacy deficits and loneliness perhaps were not simply a function of criminal behavior.

Seidman et al. (1994) conducted two studies comparing intimacy and loneliness among samples of incarcerated and nonincarcerated sexual offenders, wife batterers, violent nonsexual offenders, nonviolent nonsexual offenders, and community males. The measures used included the Miller Social Intimacy Scale (Miller & Lefcourt, 1982), the Waring Intimacy Scale (Waring & Reddon, 1983), and the Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale (Russell et al., 1980). Similar to the findings of Garlick (1989), the authors found that the sexual offenders suffered from greater intimacy deficits and loneliness than nonsexually offending inmates or community controls. Furthermore, the lack of intimacy was found to be a better predictor of indexes of violence than was the experience of loneliness.

These studies are important and significant initial contributions, although there are recognized limitations to both investigations. First, the investigators assessed sexual offenders' current levels of loneliness and intimacy, which clearly may differ from the degree of loneliness and intimacy experienced during their cycles of sexual offending. Second, levels of intimacy were examined only in terms of the offenders' relationship with a spouse or significant other, thereby limiting generalizability to only one distinct relationship type. Third, no assessments of factors related to intimacy deficits, such as fear of intimacy in relationships, were included. Finally, although emotional loneliness has been suggested as the more relevant form of loneliness with respect to precipitating sexual aggression, the researchers failed to differentiate between emotional and social loneliness in their analyses. Therefore, the present study sought to address these limitations while investigating the proposition that intimacy deficits and loneliness are influential in sexually offending behaviors.

METHOD

PARTICIPANTS

Four groups of individuals voluntarily participated in the current project: intrafamilial child molesters, rapists of adult women, vio-

lent but nonsexually offending inmates, and community controls. The child molester group consisted of 33 adult males incarcerated for a sexual offense(s) involving contact (e.g., penetration, fondling) with a minor child within the family. The adult rapist group consisted of 27 adult men incarcerated for forced sexual contact with an individual over 18 years of age. Participants in both sexual offender groups were currently involved or had been selected to participate in a voluntary treatment program for sexual offenders incarcerated in the Nebraska Department of Corrections' facilities.

A sample of 21 adult males incarcerated for violent but nonsexual offenses voluntarily served as a nonsexually offending inmate control group. The offenses committed by these inmates were crimes against persons and were violent in nature (e.g., murder, manslaughter, assault, armed robbery, kidnapping). Each of these inmates was involved voluntarily in mental health programming at the institution. Both self-reports of these inmates and an examination of the inmates' records were used in an attempt to ensure that they had not committed a prior sexual offense.

Finally, a sample of 20 adult males was recruited from a local community college to voluntarily serve as a community control group. These men were involved in introductory psychology courses at the community college and received extra credit in their class for participating in the project. Each of the community control participants denied any history of arrests or convictions for any crime and denied having ever committed a sexual assault.

Demographic information for each of the groups is presented in Table 1. ANOVAs revealed no significant overall age or educational differences across the groups, and a chi-square analysis revealed no significant racial differences.

MEASURES

Demographic and descriptive information. Participants completed a demographic data sheet to provide age, race, marital status, and number of years of education. Further descriptive data were gathered from inmate self-reports and from the inmates' mental health and institutional files to obtain additional information about their experiences with violence in childhood (i.e., childhood physical abuse, sex-

ual abuse, witnessing domestic violence) and criminal backgrounds (i.e., number of prior arrests, number of prior convictions, use of violence in adult relationships).

Miller Social Intimacy Scale. The 17-item Miller Social Intimacy Scale (MSIS) (Miller & Lefcourt, 1982) was designed to assess intimacy in adult relationships. The measure consists of 6 items that measure the frequency of intimate contacts and 11 items that assess the intensity of intimate relations. Each of the items are rated on 10-point scales, ranging from 1 (*very rarely or not much*) to 10 (*almost always or a great deal*). Higher scores indicate more intimacy in relationships. Psychometric properties of the scale are strong and suggest that it is a reliable and valid measure of social intimacy (Downs & Hillje, 1991; Miller & Lefcourt, 1982).

The MSIS is designed to assess intimacy in a variety of relationships (e.g., friendships, family, spouse), although these categories have not yet been examined with sexual offenders. Therefore, for the purpose of the present study, all participants completed the MSIS four times, describing typical relationships with (a) male friends, (b) female friends, (c) family members, and (d) a spouse/significant other.

Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale. The 20-item Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale (R-UCLA) (Russell et al., 1980) is perhaps the most influential and widely used and accepted measure for assess-

TABLE 1: Demographic Data for the Sample

Variable	Group			
	Child Molesters (n = 33)	Rapists (n = 27)	Nonsexually Offending Inmates (n = 21)	Community Controls (n = 20)
Age	33.4 (8.6)	29.7 (9.0)	28.5 (8.3)	28.2 (6.5)
Education	13.7 (7.6)	13.6 (1.3)	12.5 (1.0)	13.2 (1.2)
Race				
White	84.8	96.3	85.0	95.0
Black	12.1	0.0	5.0	5.0
Other ^a	3.0	3.7	10.0	0.0

NOTE: Age and education are in years, and racial composition is in percentages. Standard deviations are in parentheses.
a. Includes Asian American, Hispanic American, and Native American participants.

ing loneliness. The measure consists of 10 positively worded and 10 negatively worded items. Participants are asked to rate their agreement with each of the items on a 4-point scale ranging from 1 (never) to 4 (often). Half of the items are reversed scored, and all items are summed to obtain a total score. Higher scores are indicative of more loneliness. Two subscales of the R-UCLA, which represent the dimensions of emotional and social loneliness, have been identified (Russell, Cutrona, Rose, & Yurko, 1984). The R-UCLA is relatively short, easily administered, internally consistent, and appears to discriminate between loneliness and other related constructs. Detailed information regarding the psychometric properties of the R-UCLA and its subscales suggest that the scale is valid and reliable (Russell, Cutrona, et al., 1980; Russell, Peplau, et al., 1984).

Fear of Intimacy Scale. The 35-item Fear of Intimacy Scale (FIS) (Descutner & Thelen, 1991) was designed to assess individuals' anxieties about close relationships. Items were based on the definition that fear of intimacy is the inhibited capacity of an individual to exchange personally significant thoughts and feelings with another individual who is highly valued. Participants are instructed to complete the questionnaire while imagining themselves in a close dating relationship and rate each of the 35 items on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (not at all characteristic of me) to 5 (extremely characteristic of me). Fifteen items are reverse scored, and all items are summed to obtain a total score, with higher scores reflecting a greater fear of intimacy.

The psychometric properties of the FIS are strong, with high internal consistency and test-retest reliability, and robust construct validity (Descutner & Thelen, 1991; Doi & Thelen, 1993). Factor analysis procedures have revealed one primary factor, which provides support for the construct validity of the scale as unidimensional in nature. The scale is particularly useful and unique in that it can be used to assess fear of intimacy regardless of whether the individual is currently involved in an intimate relationship.

Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale. The 33-item Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (MCSDS) (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960) was designed to assess social desirability response biases, which occur when respondents attempt to underreport negative

behaviors and attempt to create an overly favorable impression of themselves. Thus, if the social desirability scale is correlated with a particular measure in a study, it is generally necessary to statistically control for the bias to prevent misleading interpretations of the results (Saunders, 1991). The MCSDS is one of the most commonly used measures of social desirability and is preferable to others because of its excellent psychometric properties and its lower association with psychopathology (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960, 1964; Saunders, 1991).

PROCEDURES

All participants were approached by the principal investigator or a research assistant who described the project to them. Those who voluntarily agreed to participate signed an informed consent form indicating their understanding of the nature of the project and procedures involved. Confidentiality and anonymity of their responses were emphasized. After giving informed consent, all participants received the packet of questionnaires and were instructed to complete the research packet individually and in private. With the exception of the community controls, participants were instructed to complete the intimacy, fear of intimacy, and loneliness measures from the perspective of their relationships and attitudes prior to their arrest.

This retrospective methodology was used in an indirect attempt to adjust for the potential effects of incarceration.

RESULTS

Pearson product-moment correlations were conducted between the various measures and the MCSDS. No significant associations were revealed, and therefore it was not necessary to include social desirability scores as covariates for the remaining data analyses.

A MANOVA revealed a significant group effect, $F(3,93) = 4.97$, $p < .001$, when including the MSIS (MSIS-males, MSIS-females, MSIS-family, MSIS-spouse/significant other), the FIS, and the R-UCLA (Emotional and Social Loneliness subscales). Further examination of the univariate F tests revealed that each of these measures, with the exception of the MSIS-spouse/significant other, was respon-

sible for the overall group effect. One-way ANOVAs with follow-up comparisons using Scheffé post hoc tests were conducted to examine further specific group differences on the measures and are presented in the following sections.

INTIMACY

Group means, standard deviations, and group differences for the MSIS are presented in Table 2.

Intimacy with male friends. The rapists and child molesters reported significantly less intimacy in their typical relationships with male friends than did the community controls. Furthermore, the rapists reported having significantly fewer intimate relationships than did the nonsexually offending inmates. There were no significant differences between the rapists and child molesters or between the nonsexually offending inmates and community controls.

Intimacy with female friends. The rapists and child molesters reported significantly less intimacy in female friendships than did the nonsexually offending inmates and community controls. No significant differences were revealed between the rapists and child molesters or between the nonsexually offending inmates and community controls. *Intimacy with family members.* The rapists' level of intimacy in their typical relationships with family members was significantly lower than that of the child molesters, the nonoffending inmates, and community controls.

Intimacy with spouse/significant other. Because there was no significant group effect for the level of intimacy experienced with a spouse/significant other, no subsequent comparisons were made.

Overall intimacy. To reflect an overall level of intimacy in adult relationships, the four intimacy scores were summed to create a total intimacy score. A one-way ANOVA was significant, $F(3,95) = 13.37, p < .001$. Follow-up Scheffé comparisons indicated that both the rapists and child molesters experienced significantly less overall

intimacy in adult relationships than did the nonsexually offending inmates or community controls. There was no significant difference in the overall amount of intimacy experienced between the rapists and child molesters or between the nonsexually offending inmates and community controls.

FEAR OF INTIMACY

The child molesters reported a significantly greater fear of intimacy in adult relationships than did the rapists, nonsexually offending inmates, and community controls. All other comparisons were nonsignificant.

LONELINESS

The group means, standard deviations, and group differences for the R-UCLA and its Emotional and Social Loneliness subscales are presented in Table 2. Although there was no significant difference in

TABLE 2: Means, Standard Deviations, and Group Differences on the Intimacy, Fear of Intimacy, and Loneliness Measures for the Sample

Variable	Group			
	Child Molesters (n = 33)	Rapists (n = 27)	Nonsexually Offending Inmates (n = 21)	Community Controls (n = 20)
MSIS				
Males	87.4 ^a (30.9)	71.3 ^{ab} (12.5)	105.9 ^{ac} (35.4)	111.7 ^c (28.3)
Females	99.7 ^a (31.9)	95.3 ^a (16.2)	122.5 ^b (30.4)	125.0 ^b (24.2)
Family	98.8 ^a (35.4)	69.5 ^b (32.4)	116.5 ^a (30.4)	120.6 ^a (31.4)
Spouse	120.2 (38.6)	123.9 (28.3)	124.9 (30.5)	136.5 (23.3)
Overall	406.2 ^a (100.5)	359.9 ^a (57.9)	476.2 ^b (72.3)	493.8 ^b (84.6)
FIS	108.8 ^a (28.5)	85.7 ^b (25.2)	75.2 ^b (29.0)	72.4 ^b (19.3)
R-UCLA				
Overall	58.8 ^a (13.3)	57.6 ^a (12.9)	45.0 ^b (15.6)	42.5 ^b (14.8)
Emotional	10.1 ^a (2.1)	9.8 ^a (2.4)	7.2 ^b (3.4)	6.5 ^b (2.6)
Social	7.8 ^a (3.2)	7.6 ^a (3.0)	6.4 ^{ab} (2.5)	5.2 ^b (2.2)

NOTE: MSIS = Miller Social Intimacy Scale; FIS = Fear of Intimacy Scale; R-UCLA = Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale. Means in the same row with different superscripts differ significantly at $p < .05$ by the Scheffé post hoc test.

the amount of overall loneliness experienced between the rapists and child molesters, both groups reported significantly greater amounts of loneliness than did the nonsexually offending inmates and community controls. No significant difference was found between the nonsexually offending inmates and community controls.

Emotional loneliness. The rapists and child molesters reported significantly more emotional loneliness than did the nonsexually offending inmates and community controls. No significant differences were found between the rapists and child molesters or between the nonsexually offending inmates and community controls.

Social loneliness. The rapists and child molesters reported significantly more social loneliness than did the community controls. All other comparisons were nonsignificant.

MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSES

Pearson product-moment correlational analyses were performed to examine the relationship between the various measures and (a) childhood experiences with various forms of violence (i.e., physical abuse, sexual abuse, witnessing domestic violence) and (b) various criminal history variables (e.g., number of prior arrests, number of prior convictions). Table 3 presents the correlations for the four groups.

Given the various significant correlations, exploratory multiple regression analyses were performed. To predict overall intimacy in adult relationships, the fear of intimacy in adult relationships, and loneliness (i.e., overall, emotional, and social), stepwise multiple regression analysis procedures were employed. The following variables served as predictors: perpetration of rape, perpetration of child molestation, criminality (i.e., inmate versus noninmate status), number of prior arrests, number of prior convictions, use of domestic violence in adult relationships, history of childhood physical abuse, history of childhood sexual abuse, and childhood witnessing of domestic violence. A summary of the regression analyses is presented in Table 4.

Rape perpetration, child molestation perpetration, and number of prior convictions were significant predictors of overall intimacy in adult relationships, with these variables accounting for 39% of the to-

tal variance $p < .001$). The single best predictor of overall intimacy was perpetration of rape. Perpetration of child molestation, number of prior convictions, and a history of childhood, physical abuse significantly predicted fear of intimacy in adult relationships, accounting

TABLE 3: Correlation Matrix for Intimacy, Fear of Intimacy, and Loneliness Measures With Violent Childhood Experience and Criminal History Variables

Variable	Measure				
	Overall Intimacy	Fear of Intimacy	Overall Loneliness	Emotional Loneliness	Social Loneliness
Violent childhood experiences					
Physically abused					
Molesters	-.21	.23	.24	.39*	.28
Rapists	-.25	.31	.51**	.52**	.32
Inmate controls	-.05	.02	.38	.50*	.19
Community	-.40	.47*	.14	.10	.26
Sexually abused					
Molesters	.29	-.05	.03	.06	.12
Rapists	.05	-.42*	.34	.22	.19
Inmate controls	-.42	.59**	-.08	.02	-.23
Community ^a					
Witnessed domestic violence					
Molesters	.04	.19	.16	.15	.39*
Rapists	-.12	.44*	-.11	.02	-.29
Inmate controls	.21	-.33	.04	.15	.07
Community	-.42	.52*	.29	.33	.21
Criminal history					
Number of prior arrests					
Molesters	-.52*	.59***	.39*	.21	.35*
Rapists	.35	-.08	-.13	-.37	.03
Inmate controls	.04	-.37	.11	.14	-.03
Number of prior convictions					
Molesters	-.52*	.59***	.39*	.21	.35*
Rapists	.43*	.13	-.34	-.54**	-.13
Inmate controls	-.39	.35	.27	.26	.50*

NOTE: $ns = 33$ molesters, 27 rapists, 21 inmate controls, and 20 community controls.

a. None of the community participants reported a history of sexual abuse.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

for 38% of the total variance ($p < .001$). Perpetration of child molestation was the single best predictor of fear of intimacy. The significant predictors of overall loneliness (R-UCLA scores) were rape perpetration, child molestation perpetration, and history of childhood physical abuse. These variables accounted for 29% of the total variance ($p < .001$). The same variables that predicted overall loneliness also predicted emotional loneliness, accounting for 38% of the total variance ($p < .001$). Finally, social loneliness was significantly predicted by criminality (i.e., inmate versus noninmate status), number of prior arrests, and history of childhood physical abuse. Together, these variables accounted for 20% of the total variance ($p < .001$).

DISCUSSION

Consistent with previous empirical research as well as anecdotal reports, the present findings provide additional support for the theory that intimacy deficits and loneliness may be distinctive and influential contributors to the multifaceted etiology and maintenance of sex-

ually offending behaviors. Overall, the child molesters and rapists in the present study were found to suffer from significant intimacy deficits in adult relationships and experienced more loneliness (particularly emotional loneliness) than the nonsexually offending inmates and community controls. The data further suggest that these intimacy deficits may be relationship specific.

With regard to fear of intimacy in adult relationships, an interesting pattern emerged. Although it was hypothesized that both the child molesters and rapists would report greater fears of intimacy in adult relationships than the nonsexually offending inmates and community controls, only the child molesters fit this pattern. Indeed, the child molesters not only reported significantly greater fear of intimacy in adult relationships than the nonsexually offending inmates and community controls but also reported greater fear of intimacy than did the rapists. This seems to suggest that fear of intimacy in adult relationships may be a particularly salient factor to consider during the assessment and treatment of child molesters. One might speculate that significant fears and anxieties about intimacy with adults may, in part, relate to molesters' seeking out intimacy and sexual contact with children. These men may have the perception that children will be less rejecting than adults and perhaps feel less vulnerable in their attempts at intimacy with children.

Finally, the child molesters and rapists reported experiencing significantly more overall loneliness and emotional loneliness than did the nonsexually offending inmates and community controls. Although the child molesters and rapists also reported experiencing significantly more social loneliness than did the community controls, there were no significant differences between the sexual offender groups and the nonsexually offending inmates. This suggests that the differences in overall loneliness experienced by sexual offenders may be best accounted for by emotional loneliness.

The exploratory multiple regression analyses offered additional support for the relationship of intimacy, fear of intimacy, and loneliness to sexual offending. More specifically, among the best predictors of the degree of overall intimacy, fear of intimacy, overall loneliness, and emotional loneliness were the perpetration of child molestation and the perpetration of rape, with these variables accounting for a relatively large proportion of the total variance. Also included among

TABLE 4: Summary of Regression Analyses for Variables Predicting Intimacy, Fear of Intimacy, and Overall Loneliness

Predictor	B	SE B	β	R ²	R ² Change
Intimacy					
Perpetration of rape	-125.56	19.15	-.58	.17***	
Number of prior convictions	-2.82	.72	-.32	.32**	.19
Perpetration of child molestation	-62.06	18.54	-.30	.39**	.07
Fear of intimacy					
Perpetration of child molestation	25.75	5.28	.41	.23***	
Number of prior convictions	.81	.23	-.30	.33***	.10
History of childhood physical abuse	13.25	4.93	.22	.38**	.05
Loneliness					
History of childhood physical abuse	9.65	2.99	.31	.15***	
Perpetration of child molestation	13.27	3.19	.40	.24***	.09
Perpetration of rape	8.75	3.67	.25	.29**	.05

** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

the various predictors of intimacy, fear of intimacy, and loneliness was a history of childhood physical abuse, indirectly suggesting an increased likelihood of the poor-quality attachments to which Marshall makes reference. It is important to note that although the overall number of prior convictions for any type of criminal behavior was found to be a significant predictor of overall intimacy and fear of intimacy in adult relationships, having engaged in and been convicted of criminal behaviors in general (i.e., inmate versus noninmate) was insufficient in predicting intimacy, fear of intimacy, overall loneliness, or emotional loneliness. Rather, the criminal behaviors that seemed to best predict these variables in the current analyses were specific to sexual offenses.

Taken together, the present findings offer support for Marshall's proposition that intimacy deficits and emotional loneliness may be distinguishing features of sexual offenders. As his theory further suggests, such intimacy deficits and experiences of loneliness may be associated with poor-quality attachments and the specific interpersonal problems associated with insecure attachment styles in adulthood (Marshall, 1989, 1993, in press; Ward et al., 1995). Therefore, one would presume that childhood experiences of abuse or violence, which may subsequently be associated with poor-quality attachments and specific expectations and functioning in interpersonal relationships, would be found in the histories of sexual offenders. Indeed, such experiences (i.e., physical abuse, sexual abuse, witnessing domestic violence) were prevalent within the samples of sexual offenders in the present study. Specifically, 39% of the child molesters and 78% of the rapists reported a history of childhood physical abuse, 45% of the child molesters and 19% of the rapists alleged a history of childhood sexual victimization, and 42% of the child molesters and 48% of the rapists reported having witnessed domestic violence during childhood. Although not directly assessed in the current study, it would seem logical that these offenders would have a predisposition toward developing insecure attachments and a subsequent proneness for intimacy deficits and experiences of loneliness. Inclusion of measures of adult attachment in future research clearly would assist in examining the potential relationships among sexual offending, intimacy deficits, loneliness, and attachment styles.

Some limitations of the current study should be recognized, including restricted sample sizes, use of self-report measures, and the use of retrospective methodology. In defense of the retrospective methodology in the present study, however, it has been suggested (Henry, Moffitt, Caspi, Langley, & Silva, 1994) that retrospective reports are most valid and defensible when they are used as indicators of relative rank within a distribution, as opposed to use as precise indicators of event frequencies and event dates.

A final consideration worth noting is the issue of whether intimacy deficits and loneliness precede sexually offending behaviors or simply result from the arrest for the sexual offense and subsequent incarceration. However, in light of Seidman et al.'s (1994) findings of greater intimacy deficits and loneliness in both incarcerated and non-incarcerated sexual offenders, it may be reasonable to suggest that intimacy deficits and loneliness are not merely aftereffects of incarceration. Given the apparent significance of intimacy deficits, fear of intimacy, and loneliness in relation to sexual offending, it is imperative not only to incorporate these factors into comprehensive theoretical models of sexual offending but also to address these elements in the assessment and treatment process. For example, Ward et al. (1995) have stressed the importance of assisting sexual offenders in understanding the close relationship among emotions, behaviors, and intimate relationships. By doing so, the authors suggest that the sexual offenders may be able to identify "chains" of emotions and behaviors associated with their intimate relationships and subsequently develop specific interventions to modify the problematic patterns that exist in those relationships. Moreover, by identifying and addressing these offenders' specific relationship deficits, the various treatment modules in sexual offender treatment programs that relate to troublesome interpersonal interactions, such as social skills training, may be more effective.

Cognitively based interventions may be particularly effective and worthwhile in teaching offenders appropriate strategies for coping with experiences of emotional loneliness and for modifying deficits in their adult relationships, as such approaches have utility in challenging specific underlying attitudes and beliefs that are related to intimacy avoidance, such as fears of intimacy, vulnerability, and rejection.

tion (Horowitz, Rosenberg, & Bartholomew, 1993; Marshall, 1994; Ward et al., 1995). Optimally, they would lead to a reduction in attempts to obtain intimacy through deviant sexual contact.

In conclusion, it appears that the assessment of intimacy deficits, fears of intimacy, and loneliness may facilitate a more thorough understanding of the factors associated with the initiation and maintenance of sexually deviant cognitions and patterns of behaviors. Clearly, single factors, such as intimacy deficits and loneliness, are not plausible as fully explanatory in the cycle of sexual offending. However, it is undoubtedly important to thoroughly investigate the various elements that may be consolidated into the comprehensive and multifactorial theories of deviant sexual behavior. As is becoming more evident, intimacy deficits and loneliness may be particularly salient factors to address. Treatment programs for sexual offenders should incorporate approaches for addressing intimacy deficits and loneliness, and future research should continue to examine these and other issues, including adult attachment styles, with the paramount objective of reducing the sexual victimization of women and children.

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