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PROFILING OF ONLINE PEDOPHILES

ABSTRACT: Paraphilias represent a group of disorders characterized by a pathological sexual tendency or anomaly, with the impulses including intense sexual fantasies and urges that keep returning in regard to the unusual objects, activities, circumstances, and/or certain category such as the children. Pedophilia belongs to this group of disorders and it is alternatively labeled as a pedophile disorder, which includes specific incriminated actions, which in addition to prison sentences, generally result in a social stigmatization of not only perpetrators but victims too. It is a sexual affinity disorder mostly found in adults who have expressed sexual fantasies and a tendency to enter the sexual relations with children of the same or the opposite sex. Nowadays, a “digital space” has become a unique environment where these specific crimes take place, and the border between the virtual and real world is practically indistinguishable. In this digital environment, pedophiles and other sexual predators have got a new space in which they establish spontaneous contacts with potential victims (often with children). In a manipulative way, they recruit vulnerable individuals with the aim of various forms of abuse and sexual exploitation. Considering the fact that it is a delicate and variable disorder, which calls for an interdisciplinary approach, profiling these persons is crucial in relation to any countermeasure. Profiling is also necessary to systematically investigate the symptoms, nature, and factors of psychopathological conditions and deviations in the existences of the affected persons. After all, it is one of the ways of reaction to make pedophilia more visible as a part

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of preventive programs before the late manifestation. In this paper, there are applied the methods of a quantitative and qualitative content analysis, comparative analysis (reaction to pedophilia) as well as a descriptive and analytical statistics. The purposeful goal is to recognize pedophilia as a sociopathological phenomenon that requires an adequate response from the social community.

Keywords: *pedophilia, online pedophiles, profiling, treatment of pedophiles.*

1. Introduction

Pedophilia, among paraphilias, is the most prevalent phenomenon and is rooted in all layers of society. Based on the available epidemiological data, 10% to 20% of children in the general population were abused by the age of 18, and 20% of adult women were victims of persons who prefer exhibitionism and voyeurism. The word “pedophile” itself is used in everyday communication in an expansive sense and is very often identified with the qualification of individuals who have been convicted as “sexual abusers of children” (Bjelajac, 2020). “Pedophilia does not always occur in isolation, because men with this disorder often have a significant history of psychiatric disorders, which in extreme cases can overshadow the discovery of etiology. Whether it is a secondary phenomenon related to this tendency’s emotional and social consequences or whether these are true comorbidities is still difficult to prove” (Tenbergen et al., 2015). So, from a clinical point of view, there are people with pedophilic disorder who limit their obsession with sexual contact with children exclusively to fantasy, as opposed to the category of pedophiles whose behavior inevitably leads to the commission of a criminal act, due to the inability to refrain, that is, the inability to achieve self-control. Namely, fantasy itself has no potential to satisfy an exaggerated sexual desire (Bjelajac, 2020). Following the patterns of behavior, the third category of perpetrators of crimes against children, who were not the initial product of pedophilia, is also recognized. “These are surrogate types of sexual offenders, and they can be diagnosed with a condition in the category of impulse control disorder, which represents a lack of sexual inclination towards children, but the act of *Child Sexual Abuse* has been committed” (Tenbergen et al., 2015).

“According to the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (Chapter 5 – Mental and Behavioral Disorders – F00-F99; Personality and Behavioral Disorders of Adults – F60-F69), pedophilia (F65.4) is designated as sexual inclination towards children, (boys

and/or girls), usually in prepubescent or early pubertal age” (World Health Organization, 2016). According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-5), in order to be diagnosed with the pedophilic disorder, the following criteria must be met:

“1) Recurrent, intense sexual fantasies, urges, or behaviors involving sexual activity with a prepubescent child (13 years of age or younger) for at least six months; 2) these sexual urges act or have caused significant distress or deterioration in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning; 3) the person is at least 16 years old and at least 5 years older than the child in the first category. However, this does not include an individual in late adolescence who is involved in a permanent sexual relationship at age 12 or 13” (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

Pedophilia, as a phenomenon, is evidently complicated by the causes of the disorder itself, because despite the fact that there is evidence that pedophilia is generated in destructive families, it is unclear whether it is innate mental anomalies or patterns of learned behavior. By placing childhood sexual abuse in a historical context, we can gain interesting insights into pedophilia in ancient Greece, ancient Rome, and Islamic culture. Girls married older men, and at the same time, flirtation and sexual relations between bearded men and immature boys were not uncommon, but only in certain circumstances, in certain circles, in certain cities and at certain times. Among other things, family historians have found that adults in elite households in 15th- and 16th-century Europe sometimes treated young children as sex toys. It goes without saying that according to the values of the time, the modern concept of pedophilia could not exist, nor could the modern psychiatric definition be applicable.

“The causes of pedophilia (and other paraphilias) are unknown. There is evidence that pedophilia can run in families, although it is not clear whether this stems from genetics or learned behavior. A history of sexual abuse in childhood is another potential factor in the development of pedophilia, although this has not been proven. Behavioral learning models suggest that a child who is a victim or observer of inappropriate sexual behavior may be predisposed to imitate those same behaviors. These persons, who are deprived of normal social and sexual contact, may seek satisfaction through less socially acceptable means. Physiological models explore the potential link between hormones and behavior, particularly the role of aggression and male sex hormones. Individuals may become aware of their sexual interest in children during puberty. Pedophilia can “be a lifelong condition, but pedophilic disorder includes elements that can change over time (Psychology Today,

2022).” “Research related to the etiology of pedophilia suggests a complex and multifactorial phenomenon in which genetic influences (Blanchard et al., 2007), stressful life events, and specific learning processes influence (Jespersen, Lalumiere & Seto, 2009), as well as disturbances in the structural integrity of pedophile brains can generate this specific phenotype of sexual orientation (Schiffer et al., 2007). Initial theories relied mainly on psychological mechanisms to explain pedophilic tendencies, including classical and operant conditioning, as a behavioral mechanism through which abuse-abuser theory (Freund, Watson & Dickey, 1990) attempts to explain childhood attachment style as a marker of dysfunctional cognitive sexual schemas in adulthood (Beech & Mitchell, 2005). Social factors such as childhood abuse, as well as easy access to social platforms, including pornography spread over the Internet, have also been identified as potential contributors and/or identifying factors for pedophilia and sexual abuse” (Beech, Elliott, Birgden & Findlater, 2008). However, the fundamental causes of pedophilia for the professional public are still disputed and largely unfathomable. However, several different factors have been identified as potential causes or indicators of pedophilic tendencies of individuals. Biological, psychological and social factors suggest that pedophilia can be multifactorial.

2. Digital media as an unlimited space for the concentration and multiplied presence of sexual predators

“The digital world has led to new variability in the development of the situation since the circumstances that can lead to digital crime can develop in both the real and the virtual world. Crimes committed on the basis of and under the influence of computer games, communication on social networks, and various forms of Internet fraud require a criminological analysis. Scientists increasingly point to the discrepancy between old, traditional forms and methods of information research and “new” crimes with new illegal manifestations in the digital sphere or with the use of the digital sphere of life” (Bjelajac & Filipović, 2021a). “Generally speaking, the space of digital media is unfathomable. Certain digital media have a dominant social component, and through which, in addition to the possibility of exchanging text, audio, photo and video content, it is also possible to achieve close and detailed communication, which together can result in the creation of a real relationship between two or more users in the virtual world. Social networks, or social media, provide users with these opportunities through the activation of certain

psychological mechanisms. And that is the initial reason for their popularity and spread” (Bjelajac & Filipović, 2021b).

“In fact, modern society is a society of countless illuminated screens. Those screens are not just a two-dimensional representation of traditional media content, on the contrary – they are a means of realizing the greatest interconnection between people and content. There is another defining feature of this new media space and new digitized culture and society, and that is the nominal anonymity of users. To use the largest number of Internet platforms, services, and media, it is not necessary to leave verifiable personal data, which leads to a dualistic perception of ethics – different from either side of the monitor. And while a real human being sits in front of the display, his or her avatar lives and acts in the digital space, which most often cannot in any way suggest the real identity of the user of that avatar” (Bjelajac & Filipović, 2021b). Moving to the digital spaces allowed sexual offenders to have a “new playground”, primarily due to the element of nominal anonymity, which is achieved through numerous options of fictional identities and obscurity in the virtual space, at least until they decide to come out of the comfort zone and become exposed. That is a moment of particular exposure for victims.

It is evident that with the global use of the Internet, sexuality in full light has reached wherever there is a person. Nature, often primal human instincts, acquired the “right of citizenship”. Videos of pornography, pedophilia, and child prostitution dominate the networks. Research by the website ExtremeTech showed that about one-third of all traffic on the Internet falls on sexually-connoted content, and the largest site for the distribution of “adult” content, Xvideos, has 4.4 billion visits per month (Roeder, 2014). About 29 petabytes of pornographic material are sent every month, which means that 50 gigabytes of explicit sexual content are transferred every second (Ferreira, 2014). “It is surprising that children visit the Internet even at the age of 4, and before starting school they have almost mastered surfing the net. For several hours a day, the little ones are faced with a world without any restrictions, so different from the world in which they normally live. So naive and innocent easily fall prey to internet predators. With the Internet, predators have gained fast and anonymous access to children, a place where they can hide their identity and roam the net without restrictions. Internet predators are, in principle, sexual predators. We usually imagine them as people who wander around school playgrounds and lurk there for their potential victims. However, reality has changed. Today’s sexual predators stalk victims by hiding behind computer screens and taking advantage of children’s excessive curiosity and gullibility, with the anonymity offered by the Internet” (Bjelajac & Filipović, 2020a).

Indeed, it is about “modern pedophiles”, exaggerated and vile personalities, who, with the help of modern communication technologies, widely remove photos of children from the Internet that are carelessly posted by relatives, then comment on them and try to reach the victims.

“Pedophiles use the Internet in a variety of ways, whether they use it to: connect with children, make friends, arrange live dates, or as a means of finding, storing, and distributing child pornography. They also use the Internet as a means of connecting with each other, in pedophile networks, where they share experiences, advice, videos, and pictures. However, the Internet is not useful for pedophiles only because of their easy access to children, their identities, and child pornography. The Internet is an ideal accessory for pedophiles because it offers them complete security and absolute anonymity. Most pedophiles live seemingly normal lives. In the past, most of these people, for fear of society’s reaction, did not dare to realize their sexual fantasies. Now the Internet gives them that possibility” (Bjelajac & Filipović, 2020b). Far from the reach of law enforcement, in the warmth of their own home with their favorite beverage in hand and dimmed lights, in complete anonymity, they cruise the Internet and enter someone else’s private virtual world. In it, through interaction with children, they heal their sick frustrations. They watch child pornography and give plenty of “freedom” to illicit and unlive sexual fantasies. Additionally, they are not subject to the code of society and the environment in which they work, because the activities they engage in are not observable in the real world in which they would be stigmatized and subjected to protective measures.

3. Sociopathological profile of online sexual predators

In our digital/virtual world, we encounter programs every day that led many individuals to be fascinated by criminal behavior and have an interest in what causes people to commit such acts. “Deviant behaviors, related to disorders that are socially conditioned, harmful and unacceptable, because they deviate from established standards and norms, are known as social pathology. Under social deviations in social pathology, we include those types of individual and group behavior that result in the appearance of socially destructive, pathological, and delinquent behavior. In a broader sense, we mean all those cases that cause a social reaction due to the threat of universal social values” (Bjelajac & Filipović, 2021b). In most cultures, pedophilia is defined as deviant behavior, which is immoral and unacceptable and can be considered a social pathology, because it violates social norms.

Most pedophiles, after all, like other abusers, have an antisocial personality disorder. Such people lack empathy, violate social norms, put themselves, their rights and interests above the rights and interests of others.

“People with antisocial personality disorder usually do not care about what is right and what is wrong and often do not respect the rights, wishes and feelings of other people. These individuals tend to contradict others, manipulate them, be rude or treat them with cold disinterest. They can often break the law and get into trouble, showing no guilt or remorse. They may lie, act violently or impulsively, and have a problem with drug or alcohol abuse. These traits often make people with antisocial personality disorder unable to fulfill their family, work or school obligations” (Psihoterapijsko savetovalište Sinteza, 2015). Signs and symptoms include:

- neglect of personal and the safety of others,
- continuous distortion of reality, deception, intimidating others, for personal gain where feelings of remorse are excluded,
- absence of understanding or acceptance of positions and thoughts of others, feeling of superiority and exhibitionism,
- affinity to criminal activities often accompanied by prison experiences,
- abuse of substances and alcohol,
- permanent uprising against authority,
- child and spousal abuse,
- hate, irritability, impulsiveness, aggressiveness and violence,
- absence of empathy.

A universally accepted profile of online sexual molesters does not exist, although statistics point that these usually are adult males. It is a stereotype that online sexual predators/pedophiles are people who are easy to identify, because they are individuals from the social margins, uneducated, low intelligence, and indisposed. This is of course wrong and in real situations very often different. Namely, the age, formal education, occupation, and drives of these persons vary depending on their “interests”, but in the mechanisms of their actions in recruiting victims, some common traits can be identified.

“Recruitment on the Internet consists, as a rule, of several steps. The first step is to gather information about the potential victim. Internet predators visit various places on the Internet (profiles on social networks, blogs, forums, chat rooms) in order to collect as much personal information as possible about the victim: his age, gender, physical appearance, place of living, personality traits, interests, hobbies, people with whom communicates and the content

of communication. Once they have gathered enough information about the potential victim, the next step is to initiate communication with them. When communicating with a potential victim, Internet predators almost always conceal their true identity, pretend to be someone else, usually peers (of similar age and interests), hide behind fake names, nicknames, photos, etc. At the beginning of communication, as a rule, they ask general and not too personal questions, make jokes, tell jokes or in other ways try to entertain, win over a potential victim and establish a *friendly relationship* with them” (Žunić-Cicvarić & Kalajdžić, 2021). “When they *get closer* to the victim, they ask her more direct questions: from which device is she communicating (personal or shared), where is that device located, is she alone in the room, at home, where are her parents, what time are they present, etc. Internet predators try to show themselves in the best possible light. They show a willingness to listen and understand, discuss important topics and current problems (relationships with peers and important adults) and provide unreserved support. They usually offer free gifts, give unselfish praise, say what they think the victim wants to hear, and take their side. When they win the victim over and gain their trust, they begin to show their true face, manipulate and control their behavior. They can insist on getting accurate information about what the victim does, where and when they stay, and who they hang out with, but also show resentment, anger, and rage if they don’t get the requested information” (Žunić-Cicvarić & Kalajdžić, 2021). Online pedophiles usually ask their victims to send them photos and/or videos of themselves naked. In order not to arouse suspicion, they assume someone else’s identity and send someone’s photos, and videos, as their own. Under the veil of secrecy, they exchange messages and links with explicit sexual content. This is followed by a phase of blackmail with an ultimatum to deliver as much such content as possible with a tendency to get to know the victim.

“Staying true to its commitment to making the internet a safer place for children, Microsoft has come up with an effective solution in the form of *Project Artemis*. It is an automated system designed to track pedophiles by looking into their conversations with children to spot similar patterns of speech and words. *Project Artemis* has a rating-based system that, after examining the conversation, determines the possibility of including pedophiles in communication and assigns a rating to the person” (Informacija, 2020). Although these people are difficult to recognize, some general characteristics are visible (B92, 2010):

- They are usually respectable people in society;
- Most of them have a better education;

- A large percentage of them have a job that allows them to be close to their children;
- They prefer the company of children, rather than adults;
- They try to gain trust and friendship with children. They rarely force sexual contact, but the physical contact itself comes gradually from touching, lifting, and holding on one's lap, to hugging and kissing;
- They try to please children with sweets, toys, video games, money...;
- Their target group is children in trouble, with a sad life story or emotionally neglected;
- They are mostly family people, who have no other criminal offenses;
- Many were victims of sexual violence in their childhood;
- Some marry mothers who have children, who are their target group;
- They derive pleasure from children in various ways. Some just look at children live, or in photos, others take photos of them, and others need physical contact...;
- Even though they don't have children, they often keep items in the house that could be of interest to children.

4. Significance of profiling pedophiles

There is no way you can reliably conclude that someone is a pedophile. It is wrong that some people who, because of their occupations, show special attention and affection towards children (such as teachers and sports coaches), are easily classified as pedophiles. Most people who sincerely work for the love of children are not pedophiles. Moreover, it often happens that a child can be sexually abused in the family, but also by a friend or a trusted adult. Parents, social workers, and authorities that perform tasks related to the protection of citizens' safety, do not have patterns for recognizing pedophiles, because they do not look different from anyone else. Namely, everyone in the environment can be a pedophile. Therefore, identification can be quite difficult, especially since abused children initially trust most pedophiles. This especially applies to "friends through social networks". Signals, such as strange comments about children, what he searches on the Internet, and what he is fond of, can indicate pedophilic tendencies. The only way to recognize a pedophile is to not close your eyes to the indicators that something is wrong.

There is a clear classification of pedophiles depending on which developmental stage of children they are attracted to. Persons whose attention is occupied by prepubescent children are called *hebephiles*. Those who are attracted to pubertal children are *ephebophiles*. It goes without saying that the

circumstances of each case are special and not all peculiarities are applicable in all situations, certain elements could be considered common for different types of pedophiles (Bjelajac, 2020):

- They are usually men in their thirties and fifties;
- Mostly the perpetrators attack and/or show sexual excitement toward the victims between the ages of 8 and 13;
- In the case of sexual abuse, which is less often carried out by women, the age can vary, the victims can be younger than 5 years old or they are adolescents;
- Pedophilia in the case of a preference for male children is chronic, while in the case of a preference for female children, there is a possibility that this model of sexual excitement may be lost over time;
- The presence of very low self-esteem, lack of tolerance for stressful situations, the presence of a state of reservedness, reticence with difficulties in mutual relations, and insecurity with adult women is observed;
- Experiences indicate that many did not have sexual relations with adult women at all;
- Some pedophiles are married and have children, and are considered respectable members of the community;
- They permanently seek contact with minors and show persistence and willingness to patiently “build a relationship”;
- In individuals, previous traumatic experiences, mostly in connection with abuses in childhood, were noted;
- Very often they refrain from violence even though there were sexist and cruel elements in practice. Their method of operation is based on approaching and establishing a relationship of trust with the minor victim of abuse;
- They try to minimize the importance of the act and the mental and physical damage caused to the victim;
- In general, as a rule, they have a significant lack of empathy.

In the classification of the profile of pedophiles, the presence of two basic types was noted. Situational/accidental pedophiles may engage in sexual activities with children under certain circumstances. These are adults whose sexual preference is not limited exclusively to minors and they have no special preference for the type and age of the victim. Their children served as spontaneous “sexual substitutes” to satisfy their psychopathological urges due to various stressful situations. Preferential pedophiles have a clear and consistent preference for sexual contact with children rather than adults. For

this broad category of child abusers, patterns of child abuse and the tendency towards children as sexual objects are part of life habits. They have elaborate techniques for having children and absorption into sexual fantasies aimed at children. They have a strong urge to search for their objects of desire and this channels them to places where minors usually stay. Preferential pedophiles can be classified as persons with a disorder who seduce children into sexual activity during a certain period; to people with a disorder that we can call “introverted pedophiles”, who impulsively pick up small children they don’t know for brief sexual contact; and on persons with the features of a “sadistic pedophile”, who is not only sexually attracted to children but also physically abuses them.

There is quite a wide range of activities that pedophiles direct toward children. Many of them generally restrain themselves and only touch children and their intimate parts or satisfy themselves with oral sex with children. Vaginal and anal penetration are a less frequent form of pedophile affinities. Some pedophiles simply never act on their pedophile tendencies, but everything remains at the level of perception or satisfaction with Internet addresses and pedophile literature. On the other hand, some pedophiles cannot help themselves and carry out their pedophile activities. In essence, the following activities against children dominate: undressing, masturbation, touching children genitals, removing the clothes of children, demanding oral sex...

From everything mentioned before, it can be concluded that pedophilia is a challenging and multilayered disorder, the consequences of which children/victims feel through constant psychophysical traumas that often follow them in different ways throughout their lives. Therefore, the profiling of pedophiles is very important, not only because of the characteristics of the perpetrator’s behavior based on the analysis of the committed crime but for the identification of potential perpetrators in the context of early detection signs, before the crime takes place. Criminal profilers specialize in identifying potential perpetrators and those behind serious crimes. They link established patterns and motives to make perpetrators more predictable and easier to catch. Using techniques such as extensive knowledge of behavior and statistical probabilities, profilers conduct their activities in collaboration with forensic teams and other members of law enforcement.

By combining technical skills and applying traditional basic methodologies, profilers can help catch online pedophiles. Today, this type of pedophile is on the rise and represents one of the fastest-growing types of illegal activities and the biggest threat to children’s safety. Consequently, understanding this type of criminal behavior requires specific skills and knowledge to address it, which is a vital focus in current profiler training programs.

5. Discussion

Pedophilia is a mental disorder that induces a sexual obsession with children of the same, opposite, or both sexes. Due to the severity of the consequences, this type of perversity is strictly punishable by law in all countries. It is a kind of personality disorder that can be generally defined as characteristic patterns of thinking, and emotions in interactions with others, which are exhibited in certain life circumstances. In other words, it is about long-term and inadequate patterns of own experience and behavior that differ significantly from what is expected in the respective culture. Considering that with the advent of the Internet and social networks, pedophilia has become more dynamic and intense, and child victims are increasingly vulnerable and exposed, the perspective of detection and treatment of pedophiles is increasingly discussed. Since the “army” of online pedophiles is invisible, mobile, and inventive, profiling these sexual predators is crucial to their demystification.

“In addition to the above, setting up fake profiles on social networks can be particularly effective in detecting pedophiles. For example, the internet profile *maloletna13bg* (trans. underagegirl 13bg) is designed to inform the visitor that the person is a 13-year-old underage girl from Belgrade, and the profile was created at the Internet chatroom Krstarica (it is a server that enables textual communication by IRC (Internet Relay Chatting)). Krstarica’s forum is the best-known forum in the country and the region, it can be accessed from anywhere in the world, with 1.8 million monthly visitors and 35 million exchanged messages. The person behind the decoy waited for potential pedophiles to establish communication, and every contact was established by visitors and not initiated by the decoy. The profile was visited by 1,095 Internet users for seven days, in intervals between 9-12h and 22-01h, with the fact that the number of visitors to the profile increased in the evening and during the weekend. The data collected using the virtual profile *maloletna13bg* indicate that the majority of visitors were men (89.86%) and of that number 74.08% tried to establish contact with the girl from the profile directly or indirectly alluding to sex. Some visitors were predisposed to send explicit photos to the girl without any provocation on her part” (Bjelajac, Merdović & Banović, 2020). On the one hand, this research tells us how vulnerable children are on the Internet, and on the other hand, it suggests that it is necessary to develop special models and preventive programs to help pedophiles. In those programs, pedophiles are not necessarily treated as criminals, but as patients who require different treatment modalities.

“Some countries that offer programs of preventive treatment often have different treatment modalities. Some countries established programs of therapy led by professionals, while other countries only have anonymous support programs on the Internet. The basic problem of implementation of such programs on a global level is the anticoincidence of laws and regulations on an international level. Countries that managed to organize and realize a string of programs for pedophilia prevention are Germany, Canada, and the USA. The success of certain programs helped to spread them to other countries (the UK, Netherlands, etc.). The majority of programs are dedicated to helping individuals with sexual affinities toward children to report to counseling services to get the necessary help. Other programs are dedicated to the post-penal period after the sentence is served, to prevent recidivism” (Bjelajac, Merdović & Banović, 2020). “When we discuss the treatment of pedophiles, it is limited only to the cases of expressed pedophile behavior, the offenders, and its goal is to prevent recidivism. There are numerous variations in the application of treatment measures depending on the country. One of the methods that are used is castration. In some countries, castration is chemical (hormonal therapy) while in others the castration is performed physically (surgically). In the United States of America, both chemical and surgical castration is permitted only in certain states, and these states are significantly different in financial obligations, castration method, and whether castration is discrete, mandatory, or voluntary” (Scott & Holmberg, 2003). In many legislations, such forms of sanctions are not prescribed, because preference is given to a combination of behavioral-cognitive therapies and pharmacological treatment, which are evaluated individually for each person. The goal of this treatment approach is to change sexual affinities and activities, that is, to help patients refrain from illegal actions caused by an uncontrolled sexual drive towards children. Although the castration-based approach is considered invasive, it should be considered, especially in terms of the feasibility of chemical castration for recidivist pedophiles who have failed to progress with previous psychiatric interventions and pharmacological therapy.

6. Conclusion

Although the conceptual definitions of pedophilia are essentially agreed upon, the word pedophile is too easily pronounced following the prevailing opinion that any older person who approaches children and shows intrusive attention shows pedophile tendencies. Even though this disorder of sexual

choice has recently been increasing in the focus of the professional public, in terms of more intensive and extensive research, there are conflicting opinions as to what causes this disorder. In the past, many scientists believed that the triggers for pedophilia should be sought in psychological and social influences during the early phase of life, growing up in dysfunctional families with traumatic experiences related to violence, neglect, and sexual abuse. Today, the thinking is that it is a deep-rooted predisposition that does not change. Some scientists go so far as to discover a series of associations that indicate that pedophilia has biological roots, and they believe that pedophilia is the result of a brain disorder, most likely caused by bad connections in the brain.

There is a different perception among the professional and general public about who pedophiles are and whether they differ from the rest of the population. They can be of any profession, education, socioeconomic status, religion, and nationality. They are often trusted and respected members of the community. They can be heterosexual, homosexual, or bisexual. They prefer contact with children, and are mostly attracted to pre-pubescent boys and girls, and find different ways and places to be around them. Usually, through trust and friendship, they gradually tend towards physical contact. Their marital union is often troubled by disorder in sexual function and serves as a shield for true affinities and practices of pedophiles. It is important to note that they can operate independently or be involved in organized chains within the Internet, such as NAMBLA (North American Man/Boy Love Association), and other specific platforms where groups with interest in pedophilia operate.

Today, the *modus operandi* of pedophiles has left the framework of children's playgrounds and moved to the digital/virtual world, where their manipulative strategies, mobility, inventiveness, and invisibility due to false identities come to the fore. In that online space, there are numerous opportunities to select a target child/victim with the traits they prefer. The victim exposed to the violence of these abusers remains with psychophysical trauma and consequences, and the level of impaired mental health is difficult to balance and bring to the extent of a satisfactory state of health.

By profiling online pedophiles, chances are created for early detection of these sexual predators and frameworks for preventive action to prevent the crime from happening. Profiling is a good format for educating children and their self-defense through learning to recognize the personal traits of online pedophiles. Among other things, profiling people with this disorder can help identify triggers for impulses that encourage behaviors that include this form of paraphilia, and ways to avoid these stimuli, that is, to not think about them. Finally, through the study of the psychology of crime, profilers

can be useful for choosing a therapeutic approach model for the purpose of breaking the learned chain of unacceptable sexual behavior and modifying it towards socially acceptable sexual behavior. In this direction, social skills training and sexual education not only encourage efforts to prevent crime but also stimulate the spirit of tolerance and the development of empathy for the victim.

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PROFILISANJE ONLINE PEDOFILA

REZIME: Parafileje su grupa poremećaja koje karakterišu patološka seksualna sklonost ili seksualna anomalija, sa impulsima koji uključuju intenzivne seksualne fantazije i porive koji se stalno vraćaju u odnosu na neobične predmete, aktivnosti, okolnosti i/ili određene kategorije, poput dece. Pedofilija pripada ovoj grupi poremećaja i alternativno se označava kao pedofilni poremećaj, koji obuhvata specifične inkriminisane radnje, koje obično imaju za ishod pored lišenja slobode, žigosanje ne samo izvršilaca već i žrtava. U pitanju je poremećaj seksualne sklonosti, pretežno odraslih osoba koje imaju izražene seksualne fantazije i tendenciju da stupe u seksualne odnose sa decom istog ili suprotnog pola. U današnje vreme “digitalni svet” je postao jedinstveno okruženje u kome se vrše ovi specifični zločini a granica između virtuelnog i stvarnog je praktično nevidljiva. U tom digitalnom ambijentu, pedofili i drugi seksualni predatori dobili su prostranstvo, u kojem uspostavljaju spontano kontakte sa potencijalnim žrtvama (često i sa decom). Na manipulativan način regrutuju ranjive pojedince u cilju različitih oblika zloupotreba i seksualnog iskorišćavanja. S obzirom da se radi o delikatnom i varijabilnom poremećaju, koji zahteva interdisciplinarni pristup, značaj profilisanja ovih lica od krucijalne je važnosti u odnosu na bilo koju protivmeru. Profilisanje je takođe važno kako bi se sistemski istražili simptomi, priroda i činioци psihopatoloških stanja i

odstupanja u bivstvovanju ovih pojedinaca. Uostalom, to je jedan od načina reakcije da se pedofilija učini vidljivijom, kao deo preventivnih programa pre zakasnele manifestacije. Primenjene su metode kvantitativne i kvalitativne analize sadržaja, komparativne analize (reakcija na pedofiliju) i deskriptivne i analitičke statistike. Svrsishodan cilj je da se pedofilija prepozna kao sociopatološka pojava koja zahteva delotvoran odgovor društvene zajednice.

Ključne reči: pedofilija, online pedofili, profilisanje, tretman pedofila.

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