Criminal Careers of Extrajudicial Child Sexual Exploitation Material Users; a Longitudinal and Comparative Study

Anton van Wijk & Juno van Esseveldt

Bureau Beke, Turfstraat 1, 6811 HL, Arnhem, The Netherlands. E-mail: j.vanesseveldt@beke.nl

Abstract: Background: A lack of studies on the criminal careers of Child Sexual Exploitation Material (CSEM) users who have been subject to an extrajudicial settlement, compared to CSEM users who have appeared before criminal court. Objective: This study examined differences between two groups of CSEM users according to their criminal careers (i.e. criminal history and recidivism). Methods: Analyses of police records were performed regarding (sexual) offences before and after the index offence. The mean follow-up period was 57 months. Results: Extrajudicial CSEM users commit fewer offences (sexual and non-sexual) in their criminal careers than the comparison group, but experience a sexual offence recidivism more often, in particular a CSEM offence. The recidivism for both groups starts shortly after treatment and supervision by the probation service has ended. Conclusions: The results suggest that the higher incidence of sexual offence recidivism may be the result of 'over-treatment' and not enough time of supervision.

Keywords: child, sexual exploitation material, criminal career, recidivism, longitudinal and comparison group.

TO CITE THIS ARTICLE:

Anton van Wijk & Juno van Esseveldt (2021). Criminal Careers of Extrajudicial Child Sexual Exploitation Material Users; a Longitudinal and Comparative Study. *Journal of Crime and Criminal Behavior*, 1: 1, pp. 53-68

Introduction

Child sexual exploitation material (CSEM) on the internet is a global and growing problem. Despite being a relatively new phenomenon, CSEM users have been considered in numerous studies. Although there is no unequivocal profile for CSEM users, it is possible to provide a general outline of the backgrounds of this group. A consistent finding is that CSEM users are almost always white men. This is apparent from both registered offender populations and research among the general population (Aslan & Edelmann, 2014; Leukfeldt, Jansen & Stol, 2014; Ray *et al.*, 2014; Seigfried-Spellar, 2013). Review studies also showing that CSEM users are more likely to be white compared to

contact sexual offenders and the general population (Babchishin, Hanson & Hermann, 2011; Babchishin, Hanson & VanZuylen, 2014; Henshaw, Ogloff & Clough, 2015; Houtepen, Sijtsema & Bogaerts, 2014; Gottfried, Knight Shier & Mulay, 2020). Reported ages vary widely, although CSEM users among the general population are younger than registered CSEM users (Cohen & Spidell, 2016; Dombert *et al.*, 2016; Faust, Bickart, Renaud & Camp, 2015; Ray *et al.*, 2014). Studies also show that CSEM users are generally younger than contact sexual offenders (Ly, Dwyer & Fedoroff, 2018). A side note to the findings regarding the age of CSEM users is that by no means all studies are clear on the operationalisation of age; it may be the age at the time of the first CSEM offence, but also the age at which CSEM users were arrested.

Previous research indicates that CSEM users form a heterogeneous group. Various classifications have been developed to distinguish CSEM user subtypes. Lanning's well-known classification (2001) focuses on the motivation of the offender. He aligns with the common distinction between situational offenders who do not have a specific sexual interest in children, and preferential offenders who do. Krone's classification (2004) emphasises the combination of motivation, degree of sexual interest in children, and the potential level of risk (Prat & Joans, 2013). Based on psychological characteristics, Elliott and Beech (2009) distinguish four types that fit roughly into Krone's aforementioned classification (2004). Alongside contact sexual offenders and those who act for commercial reasons, they define the periodically prurient offenders, i.e. those who collect CSEM as a result of their impulsive actions or out of curiosity, and the fantasy-only offenders who collect and distribute CSEM from a sexual interest in children but who have no history of physical abuse. Houtepen, Sijtsema and Bogaerts (2014) argue that these two types have different risk factors: characteristics related to their criminal behaviour (self-control, impulsiveness and cognitive distortions), and their sexually deviant preferences and fantasies.

The criminal history of CSEM users has been researched in several studies. In these studies both non-sexual and sexual offences were included (see e.g. Eke, Seto & Williams, 2011; Leukfeldt *et al.*, 2014). The proportion of CSEM users with antecedents is between 22 and 62 percent of the total group (Eke *et al.*, 2011). Seto, Hanson and Babchishin (2011) conducted a meta-analysis including 24 studies on criminal history of CSEM users. The majority (n=18) of these studies were based on official registrations (arrest, conviction). The rest (also) contained self-reporting data. The total research group consisted of n=4,697. Approximately one in eight offenders (12%) had a history of contact sexual offences with children, at least according to official registrations. Concerning non-sexual offences, it is notable that CSEM users are not generally notorious criminals. They have almost no antecedents (see e.g. Burke *et al.*, 2002; Webb *et al.*, 2007). If there are previous offences, according to Webb *et al.* (2007), in about 20 percent of the cases these are not sexual. Faust, *et al.* (2015) believe that CSEM users are less associated with a criminal lifestyle than contact sexual offenders: they are older at the time of the first police contact and are more likely to be first offenders. Soldino, Carbonel and Seigfried-Spellar (2019) recently studied/

analysed/compared the criminal careers of CSEM users who committed only CSEM offences, CSEM users with other non-violent or non-sexually-violent crimes, and dual offenders. They found that CSEM users had fewer prior criminal records and were also less likely to be arrested for CSEM production. Dual offenders were more likely to have prior criminal records before they committed a sexual offence (Soldino *et al.*, 2019).

Studies on the criminal history of CSEM users have based their findings almost exclusively on registered crimes. A large number of the offences were not reported to the authorities (Eke *et al.*, 2011). As far as known, two studies focusing on sex crimes among CSEM users have been conducted among the general population (Neutze *et al.*, 2011; Seto, Wood, Babchishin & Flynn, 2012). These two studies showed that the proportion of CSEM users who have committed a sex-related offence in the past is higher (between 28 and 51 percent) compared to registered offenders (12 to 39 percent) (see e.g. Aslan & Edelmann, 2014; Leukfeldt *et al.*, 2014; Seto & Eke, 2017). Where it is not clear how CSEM users relate to contact sexual offenders in terms of non-sexual offences, contact sexual offenders appear to have committed sexual offences significantly more often than CSEM users (Babchishin *et al.*, 2014; Henshaw *et al.*, 2015).

A meta-analysis – based on studies of officially registered CSEM users – of Seto *et al.* (2011) studied the degree of recidivism among this group (n=2,630). They used a three-year follow-up period. Almost five percent of the research group turned out to have recommitted a sexual offence within these three years. In 3.4 percent of the cases, this was again a CSEM offence. Two percent committed a contact sexual offence during this time. In a follow-up study, Eke *et al.* (2011) investigated the recidivism of 541 convicted CSEM users over an average period of more than four years. This study revealed the following recidivism rates:

- Random crime   32.3%
- Violent crime   6.8%
- Contact sexual offence   3.9%
- Non-contact sexual offence   8.5%
- CSEM offence   6.8%

These percentages are higher than the percentages shown in the study by Seto *et al.* (2011). A possible explanation can be found in the duration of the follow up. In line with previous studies, more recent research also shows that there is virtually no recidivism in the group of CSEM users (Goller *et al.*, 2016; Seto & Eke, 2015). Seto & Eke (2015) found that eleven percent of the CSEM users commit a sexual offence again within five years. Nine percent committed a new CSEM offence, and three percent committed a contact sexual offence with a minor. The percentages are lower in the study by Goller *et al.* (2016). Only 5.8 percent would commit another offence within three years. Almost two percent committed another CSEM offence(1,6%), 0.2 percent committed a contact sexual offence against a minor, and 0.1 percent committed another type of sexual offence. Soldino *et al.* (2019) found that CSEM users-only presented fewer prior criminal records and lower

general (6.7%) and violent (1.1%) recidivism rates, whereas dual offenders had higher sexual recidivism rates (16.7%).

No research is available that subdivides the crime profiles of the heterogeneous group of CSEM users based on the juridical status of the CSEM user. This question is relevant to the extent to which these profiles differ, especially with respect to recidivism, for further judicial settlement, treatment and supervision. The aim of this retrospective longitudinal study is to determine whether the extrajudicial settlement reduces recidivism. The hypothesis is that this settlement makes CSEM users less likely to recidivate.

Method

Sample Description

Given the substantial increase in CSEM cases, the Dutch police have had the option of offering an extrajudicial settlement to CSEM users who meet several criteria since 2012. The officer of justice must give permission for this. These CSEM users do not have to appear before the criminal court if they agree to follow treatment for a period of two years. During this treatment they will be supervised by the probation service. Withdrawal from treatment or from the probation service supervision leads to criminal prosecution. For the police, this option saves investigative capacity, while also signaling that 'minor' cases will be addressed. The most important conditions for participation in the extrajudicial process are: the suspect is a first offender in terms of sex crimes, the absence of a profession or hobby in which the suspect may have potentially risky contact with children, and a limited amount of CSEM. This extrajudicial settlement is called the INDIGO settlement. INDIGO means Initiative Doing Nothing is No Option.

The research population in this study is 129 CSEM users who were offered an extrajudicial process in 2012 and 2013. As there was no available police information for 30 of them, they were left out of the analyses. Eleven individuals were removed because they turned out to have committed a sexual offence in their criminal history.[1]

Description of a Comparison Group

A comparison group of CSEM users was compiled to put the results in perspective in terms of criminal history and recidivism. The Public Prosecution Service was asked to provide an overview of random individuals who had appeared in court in 2012 and 2013 for violating the CSEM laws, and who have been sentenced to an (un)conditional prison sentence in combination with probation supervision and treatment at a forensic mental healthcare institution. In this way, an attempt was made to assemble a comparable group. However, the starting moment and length of the treatment for this group is unknown. Almost the half received an unconditional custodial sentence, in three quarters of those cases it was a

custodial sentence of less than half a year. Only seven percent of the CSEM users in the control group got a prison sentences for more than two years. Treatment for Dutch convicts is given after detention or with a conditional prison sentence. The 2012-2013 comparison group consisted of 198 CSEM users; 106 of these were selected at random.

File Research and Analyses

This study used a longitudinal design based on file research. Police systems were consulted in 2018 to determine the characteristics of the CSEM users from the research and comparison group. This covered information on: age; gender; criminal history; index offence and recidivism (generic, specific, special). Also, the data of the CSEM users were reviewed by the probation officer. This includes information about functioning in various areas of life (housing, education, income, substance use, relationships, thinking patterns and attitudes), risk assessment of recidivism and course of treatment (including dropout and motivation). The findings are included in a report to the court. These reports have been studied. For each domain, the assessment of the probation officer has been copied on an analysis matrix in which the data was scored per CSEM user. The criminal history was determined by looking at all (types of) offences before the index offence; the recidivism was determined on the basis of the offences committed after the index offence. The comparative analyses were conducted using ANOVA and Chi-square tests, and the recidivism was determined using Kaplan-Meier survival analysis techniques.

Results

The share of first offenders – persons who do not have a registration for any criminal offence – in the research group appears to be (significantly) larger (81%) than the share of first offenders in the comparison group (48%) (see Table 1). This difference is not a pure research result but is (largely) the result of the working method of the police or the selection of CSEM users who qualify for an INDIGO settlement.

Alongside the proportion of first offenders, the average age of the CSEM users at the time of the index offence was examined. The average age at the time of the first and last offence was also taken into account. Because the proportion of first offenders influences this average, the average age including and excluding first offenders is presented (see Table 1). Overall, the CSEM users from the research group are older than the comparison group. What is notable, at least compared to the criminal population in general, is that the average ages of both groups are high at the time of the index offence. With an average age of 44.9 years, the research group is older than the CSEM users in the comparison group (43.4 years). The average age decreases when the first offenders are not taken into account, in both the research and comparison groups.

CSEM users may also have committed (other) offences both before and after the index offence. The respondents in the research group are older when committing both the first

and the last offence (Table 1). In addition to the average age, we can also comment on the duration of the criminal career (difference in years between the first and the last offence) of the CSEM users. The criminal career duration is around three years for both groups. The difference in the duration of the careers between the research and comparison group is six months. This average increases when first offenders are not taken into account. In that case, the total criminal career for the research group lasts an average of more than ten years. This differs almost five years from the comparison group, where the average criminal career lasts 5.5 years.[2]

Table 1: General data by group (n=194)

	Research group (n=88)		Comparison group (n=106)		Total (n=194)	
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	*n*	*%*
First offender (n=205)						
Yes*	71	81%	51	48%	122	63%
No*	17	19%	55	52%	72	37%
Average age at first offence (in years)						
Including first offenders (n=194)	43.0 (SD = 15.16)		41.3 (SD = 15.91)		42.0 (SD = 15.55)	
Excluding first offenders (n=72)	29.2 (SD = 13.90)		37.4 (SD = 17.33)		35.5 (SD = 16.87)	
Average age at index offence (in years)						
Including first offenders (n=194)	44.9 (SD = 13.58)		43.4 (SD = 14.66)		44.1 (SD = 14.16)	
Excluding first offenders (n=72)	38.9 (SD = 12.28)		41.6 (SD = 15.81)		41.0 (SD = 15.02)	
Average age at last offence (in years)						
Including first offenders (n=194)	45.3 (SD = 13.77)		43.7 (SD = 14.60)		44.4 (SD = 14.22)	
Excluding first offenders (n=72)	38.9 (SD = 12.28)		42.1 (SD = 15.89)		41.3 (SD = 15.09)	
Average length of criminal career (in years)						
Including first offenders (n=194)	2.5 (SD = 5.66)		3.0 (SD = 5.01)		2.7 (SD = 5.37)	
Excluding first offenders** (n=72)	10.3 (SD = 7.01)		5.5 (SD = 6.94)		6.6 (SD = 7.22)	

* $\chi^2 (1) = 21.85$; p = .000.
** $F(1, 70) = 6.41$, p = 0.01.

The content of the criminal career was then mapped out on the basis of the police registrations. The CSEM users also committed other offences, both non-sexual and contact sexual offences. The CSEM users from the research group committed 152 offences in total. This is 165 less than the CSEM users from the comparison group, who committed a total of 317 offences (Table 2). Across the board, CSEM users from the research group were less criminally active than those from the comparison group. On average, CSEM users from the research group commit 1.7 (SD = 1.40) offenses, while the comparison group commit 3 offenses (SD = 6.06) they. This difference is almost significant (F (1, 192) = 3.66, p = 0.057).

Table 2: Number of offences (total) by unique offenders per group (n=194)

	Research group (n=88)		Comparison group (n=106)		Total (n=194)	
	n offences	n CSEM users	n offences	n CSEM users	n offences	n CSEM users
Property offences	17	10	34	13	51	23
Violent crimes (against persons)	18	11	62	17	80	28
Violent crimes (against objects)	3	3	16	7	19	10
Drug offences	4	4	3	2	7	6
Weapons crimes	2	2	2	2	4	4
Road Traffic Act	4	3	10	7	14	10
Hands-on sexual offences*3	2	2	71	48	73	50
Hands-off sexual offences**	101	86	117	85	218	171
Other	1	1	2	2	3	3
Total	**152**	**88**	**317**	**106**	**469**	**194**

* χ^2 (1) = 46.50; p = .000.
** χ^2 (1) = 14.15; p = .000.

Criminal history

The criminal career prior to the index offence for both groups lasts approximately two years (Table 3).[4] This picture changes when first offenders, who have no criminal history, are not taken into consideration. In that case, the research group has a criminal history of almost ten years up to the index offence, compared to four years of the comparison group.

Table 3: Average duration (in years) to index offence (n=194)

	Research group (n=88)	Comparison group (n=106)
Average duration to index offence (including first offenders)	1.9 (SD = 4.91)	2.2 (SD = 5.11)
Average duration to index offence (excluding first offenders)*	9.7 (SD = 7.07)	4.1 (SD = 6.52)

* $F(1, 70)$ = 9.18, p = .030.

For both groups, the offences committed previously consist mainly of violent and property crimes (see Table 4). The CSEM users in the comparison group committed more

sexual offences than the research group, but, as stated above, this is attributable to the selection criteria.

Table 4 : Number of offences (historical) by unique offenders per group (n=194)

	Research group (n=88)		Comparison group (n=106)		Total (n=194)	
	n offences	n CSEM users	n offences	n CSEM users	n offences	n CSEM users
Property offences	13	8	18	10	31	18
Violent crimes (against persons)	18	11	47	16	65	27
Violent crimes (against objects)	3	3	12	7	15	10
Drug offences	1	1	3	2	4	3
Weapons crimes	2	2	2	2	4	4
Road Traffic Act	2	2	7	5	9	7
Hands-on sexual offences*	0	0	39	30	39	30
Hands-off sexual offences**	0	0	27	19	27	19
Other	1	1	2	2	3	3
Total	**40**	**17**	**157**	**55**	**197**	**72**

* χ^2 (1) = 29.46; p = .000.
** χ^2 (1) = 17.49; p = .000.

Recidivism

Finally, recidivism was investigated among CSEM users. To what extent did they commit other offences after the index offence? The CSEM users were monitored until 1 January 2018.[5] The duration of the follow-up period was between 48 and 71 months. The average follow-up period was 57 months.[6] Three categories of recidivism are distinguished. *Generic recidivism* is recidivism of any offence. *Specific recidivism* is recidivism of a sexual offence. This may be both contact and non-contact sexual offences. If only a non-contact sexual offence is concerned, it is *special recidivism*.

Of the total group (n=194), 41 unique CSEM users experienced recidivism (21%) (Table 5). In the follow-up period, they committed a total of 79 offences, 32 of which are classified as sexual. Of the research group (n=88), 22 unique CSEM users experienced recidivism (25%). In total, CSEM users in this group committed 24 offences after the index offence, mainly non-contact sexual offences (n=15). Nineteen unique CSEM users (18%) from the comparison group (n=106) committed a total of 55 offences in the follow-up period. These were mainly property and violent offences (n=35), and – to a slightly lesser extent – sexual offences (n=17). It also emerged that CSEM users from the research group committed a non-contact sexual offence significantly more often after the index offence than the CSEM users from the comparison group.

Table 5: Average number of offences (recidivism) by unique offenders per group (n=194)

	Research group (n=88)		*Comparison group (n=106)*		*Total (n=194)*	
	n offences	*n CSEM users*	*n offences*	*n CSEM users*	*n offences*	*n CSEM users*
Property offences	4	4	16	5	20	9
Violent crimes (against persons)	0	0	15	4	15	4
Violent crimes (against objects)	0	0	4	1	4	1
Drug offences	3	3	0	0	3	3
Weapons	0	0	0	0	0	0
Road Traffic Act	2	2	3	2	5	4
Contact sexual offences	0	0	10	7	10	7
Non-contact sexual offences*	15	15	7	5	22	20
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	**24**	**22**	**55**	**19**	**79**	**41**

* χ^2 (1) = 7.90; p = .005.

For generic and specific recidivism, there appears to be no significant difference between the two CSEM groups. For special recidivism, significantly more CSEM users from the research group experienced recidivism (17%) than CSEM users from the comparison group (5%) (Table 6).[7] A reservation applies regarding the small absolute number of CSEM users. Thus, fifteen individuals from the research group experienced recidivism into a non-contact sexual offence.

Table 6 : Recidivism (prevalence) and duration to first recidivism by group (n=205)

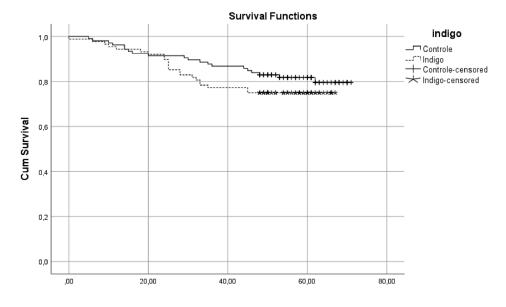|	*Research group (n=88)*	*Comparison group (n=106)*	*Total (n=194)*
Recidivism (prevalence)			
Generic recidivism	22 (25%)	20 (19%)	42 (22%)
Specific recidivism	15 (19%)	10 (9%)	25 (13%)
Special recidivism*	15 (17%)	5 (5%)	20 (10%)
First recidivism (duration in months)			
Generic recidivism	24.2 (SD = 11.61)	28.6 (SD = 17.14)	26.3 (SD = 14.49)
Specific recidivism	29.7 (SD = 8.74)	26.6 (SD = 13.28)	28.4 (SD = 10.63)
Special recidivism	29.7 (SD = 8.74)	29.6 (SD = 19.40)	29.7 (SD = 11.64)

* χ^2 (1) = 7.90; p = .005.

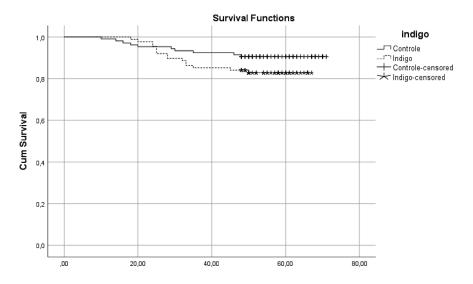**Figure 1: Survival analysis generic recidivism (in months) by group**

Figure 2: Survival analysis specific recidivism (in months) by group

For the time to the first recidivism, no significant differences between the two CSEM groups are found. The time to recidivism is between 0 and 62 months. On average, CSEM users reoffend between 24 and 30 months after the index offence (depending on the recidivism category).

Using survival analyses, the 'survival rates' of the two groups of CSEM users over time can be distinguished. In this case, recidivism leads to a lower 'survival rate'. Figures 1 to 3 present the chances of survival for the three categories of recidivism. It can be deduced from these figures that the survival chances of the two CSEM groups are virtually the same in the first two years after the index offence. Differences arise after approximately two years, for the different categories of recidivism. For generic and specific recidivism (Figures 1 and 2), as stated above, no significant difference is found between the two CSEM groups. CSEM users from both the research and comparison group reoffend just as often and quickly after the index offence. For special recidivism (Figure 3), the survival rates of the two groups of CSEM users differ (χ^2 (1) = 8.20; p = .004). Figure 1 and 2 should be after this sentence. So, figures 1, 2 and 3 come one after the other.
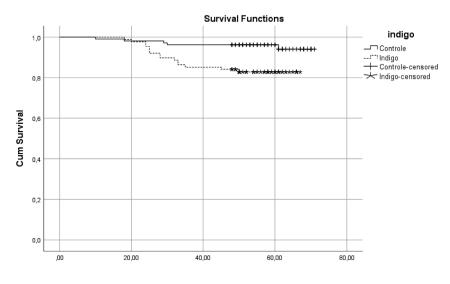

Figure 3: Survival analysis special recidivism (in months) by group

Discussion

Contrary to the usual studies, this study examined a group of CSEM users based on their legal status. It examined CSEM users who received an extrajudicial settlement because of their assumed low risk profile. This means that they do not have to go to court, but they do have to undergo treatment and are under the supervision of the probation service for a two-year period. A comparison group consisted of CSEM users who have been punished by the court and who have also undergone treatment.

The results show that almost three quarters of the research group (81%) are first offenders at the time of the index offence, compared to 48 percent of the comparison group.

This is because of the way the selection process is conducted by the police and the Public Prosecution Service. In line with previous literature a large proportion of the CSEM users have no criminal history (e.g. Eke *et al.*, 2011).

The aim of this study was to determine whether the INDIGO settlement reduces recidivism. The hypothesis of the researchers was that the INDIGO settlement makes CSEM users less likely to recidivate. The results of this study indicate that this hypothesis should be rejected: no evidence was found that INDIGO reduces recidivism. In fact, for special recidivism, recidivism is higher among the research group compared to the control group.

This study has mapped the crime patterns of CSEM users over a long period of time, both in terms of history and recidivism after the index offence (with an average follow-up period of almost five years). As far as the criminal history is concerned, it is notable that these are mainly non-sexual offences, including violence against persons and property offences. It should be noted that the comparison group committed more sexual offences, especially contact sexual offences.

When considering recidivism however, it is notable that more CSEM users (19%) from the research group recidivated into sexual offences than the comparison group (9%). This does not apply to generic and specific recidivism, but to special recidivism (downloading child sexual exploitation material).[8] In this respect, a reservation must be made for the relatively small numbers, but there seems to be an INDIGO effect, in other words, there appears to be a connection between undergoing the INDIGO settlement and sexual recidivism. This fact raises the question of the extent to which the duration and intensity of the treatment contribute to this. Based on the so-called Risk-Need-Responsiveness principle, the nature and intensity of the treatment must be tailored to the recidivism risk of the offender group (Smid, 2014). Schmucker and Lösel (2015) found no treatment effect among low-risk offenders, who are represented in the research group. There is a possibility of over-treatment in the research group, i.e. the counterproductive effect of the treatment. The CSEM users from the research group sometimes undergo treatment with contact sexual offenders. According to the literature, a very limited share (2%) of the research group experience recidivism into a contact sexual offence; in the comparison group this is four percent (see e.g. Goller, Jones, Dittmann, Taylor & Graf, 2016). The reason for the higher sexual recidivism in the research group – i.e. the lower recidivism in the comparison group – could also be related to the impact of the court case on the comparison group. This could have a deterrent effect. Although some of the CSEM users in the comparison group received an unconditional prison sentence, this will have no effect on the recidivism outcome, because the follow-up period is longer than the term of detention.

Given the criminal history of the comparison group, and particularly of its contact sexual offenders, the comparison group fit better into the category of dual offenders than purely a CSEM group. Offenders who commit both contact and non-contact sexual offences often have a sexual preference for minors (Long *et al.*, 2010; McCarthy, 2010).

This finding could not be verified in this study.

The period within which recidivism starts (all variants) is more than two years for both groups. Without immediately assuming any causal link, it is notable that the supervision by the probation service and the duration of treatment is often also two years. Possibly, though further research is required, supervision acts as a judicial 'big stick', and as soon as the CSEM users are no longer subjected to interference from the judicial authorities, they feel safe and quickly reoffend. This assumption may have far-reaching implications for the duration of the supervision, namely that the police should apply their authorizations to regularly check data carriers for child sexual exploitation material more frequently.

Distinguishing between types of CSEM users based on their criminal profile, as done in this study, has the advantage of being easily measurable, as opposed to classifications based on motives for downloading child sexual exploitation material, for instance. Police and the judiciary can easily distinguish types of CSEM users and adjust further judicial processes accordingly. Offering less intensive treatment and a longer duration of supervision could be considered for CSEM users of the low-risk offender group.

This study has a number of limitations. In the first place, the findings are based on official registrations. In reality, more (sex-) offenses may have been committed, by both groups. It is also a limitation that it is unknown what the starting moment and length of the treatment for this group was. However, since only seven percent of the control group received a prison sentence of more than two years, we may assume that for a significant part of the control group, treatment was offered fairly immediately after the court decision. Finally, the limited size of the samples is a limitation. Given the low recidivism rate for sex offenses, follow-up research should include larger samples to verify these initial findings.

Notes

1. In the original Dutch study, these eleven individuals were left in because the objective was mainly to consider what was known about the overall group in terms of criminal profiles (Van Wijk, Dickie & Van Esseveldt, 2019) The original study was commissioned by the Program Police & Science.

2. The total criminal career is calculated based on the date of the first offence and the date of the last offence.

3. In some instances, a contact sexual offence is registered as an index offence. This is because of the way registration is performed by the police. In such cases, it is likely that there are multiple sexual offences – including a non-contact sexual offence.

4. This is determined by taking the date of the first registered criminal offence as the date of the index offence.

5. The police registrations run up to and including December 2017.

6. The follow-up period is delineated as the time the suspects can be tracked in the systems.

7. An individual can experience recidivism to both a contact and non-contact sexual offence.

8. The Dutch study also showed that the research group had a higher specific recidivism. This can be explained by the respondents (n=11) in the research group who turned out not to be first offenders after all. They were excluded from this study.

References

Aslan, D., & Edelman, R. (2014). Demographic and offence characteristics: A comparison of sex offenders convicted of possessing indecent images of children, committing contact sex offences or both offences. *The Journal of Forensic Psychiatry & Psychology, 25*(2), 121-134.

Babchishin, K.M., Hanson, R.K., & Hermann, C.A. (2011). The characteristics of online sex offenders: A meta-analysis. *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment, 23*(1), 92-123.

Babchishin, K.M., Hanson, R.K., & VanZuylen, H. (2014). Online child pornography offenders are different: A meta-analysis of the characteristics of online and offline sex offenders against children. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, *44*(1), 45-66.

Cohen, T.H., & Spidell, M.C. (2016). How dangerous are they? An analysis of sex offenders under federal post-conviction supervision. *Federal Probation Journal, 80*(2), 21-32.

Dombert, B., Schmidt, A.F., Banse, R., Briken, P., Hoyer, J., Neutze, J., & Osterheider, M. (2016). How common is men's self-reported sexual interest in prepubescent children? *The Journal of Sex Research, 53*(2), 214-223.

Eke, A.W., Seto, M.C., & Williams, J. (2011). Examining the criminal history and future offending of child pornography offenders: An extended prospective follow-up study. *Law and Human Behavior, 35*(6), 466-478.

Elliott, I.A., Beech, A.R. & Mandeville-Norden, R. (2013). The psychological careers of Internet, contact, and mixed Internet/contact sex offenders. *Sexual Abuse, 25*(1), 3-20.

Faust, E., Bickart, W., Renaud, C., & Camp, S. (2015). Child pornography possessors and child contact sex offenders: A multilevel comparison of demographic characteristics and rates of recidivism. Sexual Abuse*: A Journal of Research and Treatment, 27*(5), 460-478.

Goller, A., Jones, R., Dittmann, V., Taylor, P., & Graf, M. (2016). Criminal recidivism of illegal pornography offenders in the overall population: A national cohort study of 4612 offenders in Switzerland. *Advances in Applied Sociology, 6*(2), 48-56.

Gottfried, E.D., Knight Shier, E. & Mulay, A.L. (2020). Child Pornography and Online Sexual Solicitation. *Current Psychiatry Reports, 22*(10).

Henshaw, M., Ogloff, J.R.P., & Clough, J.A. (2015). Looking beyond the screen: A critical review of the literature on the online child pornography offender. Sexual Abuse: *A Journal of Research and Treatment, 29*(5), 416-445.

Houtepen, J.A.B.M., Sijtsema, J.J., & Bogaerts, S. (2014). From child pornography of fending to child sexual abuse: A review of child pornography offender characteristics and risks for cross-over. *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 19*(5), 466-473.

Johnson, S.A. (2019). Child porn offenders, solicitation offenders and child abusers: what the literature has to say. *Forensic Research & Criminology International Journal, 7*(4), pp. 202-235.

Krone, T. (2004). A typology of online child pornography offending: Trends and issues in crime and criminal justice. *Trends & Issues in crime and criminal justice, no 279*. Canberra, Australia: Australian Institute of Criminology.

Leukfeldt, E.R., Jansen, J., & Stol, W.P. (2014). Child pornography, the Internet and juvenile suspects. *Journal of Social Welfare & Family Law, 36*(1), 3-13.

Long, M.L., Alison, L., & McManus, M.A. (2012). Child Pornography and Likelihood of Contact Abuse A Comparison Between Contact Child Sexual Offenders and Noncontact Offenders. Sexual Abuse: *A Journal of Research and Treatment, 25*(4), 370–395.

Neutze, J., Seto, M.C., Schaefer, G.A., Mundt, I.A., & Beier, K.M. (2011). Predictors of child pornography offenses and child sexual abuse in a community sample of pedophiles and hebephiles. *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment, 23*(2), 212-242.

Schmucker, M., & Lösel, F. (2015). The effects of sexual offender treatment on recidivism: An international meta-analysis of sound quality evaluations. *Journal of Experimental Criminology, 11*(4), 597-630.

Seigfried-Spellar, K.C. (2013). Individual differences of internet child pornography users: Peculiar findings in a community-based study. *International Journal of Cyber Criminology, 7*(2), 141-154.

Seto, M.C. & Eke, A.W. (2015). Predicting recidivism among adult male child pornography offenders: Development of the Child Pornography Offender risk Tool (CPORT). *Law and Human Behavior, 39*(4), 416-429.

Seto, M.C., & Eke, A.W. (2017). Correlates of admitted sexual interest in children among individuals convicted of child pornography offenses. *Law and Human Behavior, 41*(3), 305-313.

Seto, M. C., Hanson, R. K., & Babchishin, K. M. (2011). Contact sexual offending by men with online sexual offenses. *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment, 23*(1), 124–145.

Seto, M.C., Hermann, C.A., Kjellgren, C., Priebe, G., Svedin, C.G., & Långström, N. (2015). Viewing child pornography: Prevalence and correlates in a representative community sample of young Swedish men. *Archives of Sexual Behavior, 44*(1), 67-79.

Seto, M.C., Wood, J.M., Babshishin, K.M., & Flynn, S. (2012). Online solicitation offenders are different from child pornography offenders and lower risk contact sexual of-fenders. *Law and Human Behavior, 36*(4), 320-330.

Smid, W.J. (2014). Sex offender risk assessment in the Netherlands: Towards a risk need responsivity oriented approach (dissertation). Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam.

Soldino, V., Carbonell, E. & Seigfried-Spellar, K.C. (2019). Criminological differences between child pornography offenders arrested in Spain. Child Abuse & Neglect 98. 10.1016/j.chiabu.2019.104178.

Taylor, M., & Quayle, E. (2003). *Child pornography: An internet crime*. London, UK: Taylor & Francis Group.

Wijk, A. van (2018). *Slachtoffers zoeken en vinden. Een onderzoek naar het werk van de kinderpornorechercheurs*. Arnhem, Bureau Beke.

Wijk, A. van, Dickie, S. & Esseveldt, J. van (2019). NIET MEER DOEN! Een onderzoek naar de effecten en werking van de INDIGO-afdoening; de buitengerechtelijke aanpak van downloaders van kinderporno. Politiekunde 101, Politie en Wetenschap, Den Haag; Sdu Uitgevers, Den Haag.

Wijk, A. van, & Mulder, J. (2020). Kinderporno; achtergronden, behandeling en kenmerken van de plegers. In: K. Goethals (*et al.*) (eds). *De behandeling van daders van seksueel misbruik: een praktijkboek*. Gompel & Svacina, Oud-Turnhout.

Wijk, A. van, Dickie, S. & Ham, T. van (2019). *Downloaders van kinderporno; een literatuuronderzoek*. Arnhem, Bureau Beke.