

Efficacy of relapse prevention techniques and social skills training for juveniles who have sexually offended

Submission date 29/11/2011	Recruitment status No longer recruiting	<input type="checkbox"/> Prospectively registered
		<input type="checkbox"/> Protocol
Registration date 08/12/2011	Overall study status Completed	<input type="checkbox"/> Statistical analysis plan
		<input type="checkbox"/> Results
Last Edited 29/06/2015	Condition category Mental and Behavioural Disorders	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual participant data
		<input type="checkbox"/> Record updated in last year

Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims

Both in the USA and the UK, approximately 20% of sexual assaults have been committed by juveniles under the age of 18. Comparable data have been found for sexual assaults in Switzerland (Swiss Federal Institute for Statistics, 2009). Thus, sexual crimes committed by juveniles represent a serious problem in society. Quite often adequate responding to juveniles who have sexually offended (JSO) is a major challenge for the judicial and social systems. In the interest of public safety and reduction of the risk of re-offending, courts have to decide on incarceration, detention placement, and treatment responses to JSO. A number of studies found that juveniles who have sexually offended (JSO) have deficits in social and sexual functioning. In order to prevent further offences by these youths, forensic treatment programs have been developed that include specific relapse preventions techniques and social skills training. However, so far it is unclear if these treatment programs for JSO work and may finally reduce the risk of further sexual and non-sexual reoffending. Therefore, the present study aims to evaluate two versions of a treatment program for an adequate sexual behaviour.

Who can participate?

Juveniles of both sexes between 10 and 18 years who have been convicted of a sexual offence (other than pornography offences) in the Canton of Zurich or the Canton of Basel (Switzerland) may participate in the study.

What does the study involve?

Two versions of a sexual offender treatment program will be compared. One version includes specific relapse prevention techniques based on the understanding of the own offending behaviour, the other version includes training of social and emotional skills associated with juvenile sexual behaviour. JSOs will be allocated to one of the two treatment groups (at random) or will be included in a control group that will receive no treatment. The juvenile prosecutors will decide if a JSO receives treatment or is included in the control group. All participants will be invited to complete questionnaires at three assessment points at the beginning, after six month (post treatment) and after 12 month follow up.

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?

Treatment is part of the sanction applied by the juvenile prosecutors and is not voluntary. However, JSO and their parents are free to decide if they participate in the study and complete the questionnaires. If a treatment is made compulsory by the juvenile prosecutors the participants will be informed that they will randomly allocated to one of the two treatments. It is expected that participants will benefit from social skills training and from teaching relapse prevention techniques equally in order to prevent further criminal behaviour. Participants will receive 50 Swiss Francs for each of the three assessment points of the study. There are no side effects of the two treatment conditions expected.

Where is the study run from?

The study is running in Zurich and Basel and includes two centres: 1) Child and Adolescent Forensic Psychiatry, University of Zurich and 2) Child and Adolescent Forensic Psychiatry of Basel. The lead centre is in Zurich.

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?

The study officially started on 01/10/2011 and is expected to run until 30/03/2016. Recruitment and randomization will start on 07/12/2011 and end on 01/10/2014.

Who is funding the study?

The study is funded by the Swiss Department of Justice.

Who is the main contact?

Dr Cornelia Bessler

Cornelia.bessler@kjpdzh.ch

Contact information

Type(s)

Scientific

Contact name

Dr Cornelia Bessler

Contact details

Neptunstrasse 60

Zurich

Switzerland

8032

+41 43 556 40 40

cornelia.bessler@kjpdzh.ch

Additional identifiers

Protocol serial number

N/A

Study information

Scientific Title

Efficacy of relapse prevention techniques and social skills training for juveniles who have sexually offended: a randomized study

Study objectives

1. Knowledge on individual risk factors for sexual re-offending will increase in juveniles who receive specific relapse prevention techniques compared to juveniles who receive social skills training
2. Social problems and withdrawal will decrease in juveniles who receive social skills training compared to juveniles who receive specific relapse prevention techniques
3. Do juveniles who receive specific relapse prevention techniques differ from juveniles who receive social skills training regarding self and official reported sexual and non-sexual recidivism?

Ethics approval required

Old ethics approval format

Ethics approval(s)

Local Ethics Committee of the Canton of Zurich, Switzerland, 17/11/2011 ref: KEK-ZH-Nr. 2010-0483

Study design

Longitudinal randomized blinded treatment study

Primary study design

Interventional

Study type(s)

Prevention

Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied

Child and adolescent forensic psychiatry

Interventions

Treatment arm 1: Social skills training is conceptualized as a cognitive behavioural training that includes communication training, problem solving training, resistance against delinquent peers and enhancement of emotional skills.

Treatment arm 2: Relapse prevention techniques include the individual understanding of the own sexual crimes by self-analyzing of their own behaviours, thoughts and emotions before, during and after the offense. Juveniles are invited to identify own individual risk factors and to formulate alternative behaviours.

Both treatment arms consist of 12 sessions of 120 minutes within 3 to 4 months (1 session per week). Treatment can be applied in group or individual sessions. Both treatment arms, will include sexual and judicial education and victim empathy training.

Intervention Type

Other

Phase

Not Applicable

Primary outcome(s)

Knowledge of individual risk factors, social problems and withdrawal measured using the Youth Self Report and RiskFact-KJ at the beginning, after six month (post treatment) and after 12 month follow up using self report instruments

Key secondary outcome(s)

Sexual and non-sexual recidivism assessed at the beginning, after six month (post treatment) and after 12 month follow up using self report instruments

Completion date

30/03/2016

Eligibility

Key inclusion criteria

Juveniles of both sexes aged between 10-18 years who are officially adjudicated of a sexual offense other than pornography

Participant type(s)

Patient

Healthy volunteers allowed

No

Age group

Child

Lower age limit

10 years

Upper age limit

18 years

Sex

All

Key exclusion criteria

1. Intelligence Quotient (IQ) < 70
2. Insufficient knowledge of the German language
3. Other serious violent offenses such as murder, manslaughter and serious assaults
4. Psychiatric disorders such as drug dependence, schizophrenia, major depression, suicidality and any form of paraphilia
5. Neurological disorders

Date of first enrolment

07/12/2011

Date of final enrolment

01/10/2014

Locations

Countries of recruitment

Switzerland

Study participating centre

Neptunstrasse 60

Zurich

Switzerland

8032

Sponsor information

Organisation

Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Service, Canton of Zurich (Switzerland)

ROR

<https://ror.org/02crff812>

Funder(s)

Funder type

Government

Funder Name

Swiss Department of Justice (Switzerland)

Funder Name

Juvenile Prosecution of the Canton of Zurich (Switzerland)

Results and Publications

Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan

IPD sharing plan summary

Not provided at time of registration

Study outputs

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
Participant information sheet	Participant information sheet	11/11/2025	11/11/2025	No	Yes