



Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences Section – 20??

I6 Practical Approaches to Risk Assessment and Report Writing in Sexual Offenders: Information Review, Integration and Interpretation

Dean M. De Crisce, MD; Merrill Main, PhD*, Evan Feibusch, MD*; and Jason Cohen, MD*, Ann Klein Forensic Center-Special Treatment Unit, 8 Production Way, Avenel, NJ 07001*

At the end of this panel presentation, the attendees will understand the components of a sex offender evaluation, have some practical guide- lines on report writing and the use of the Static-99, and understand the current state of treatment in commitment centers for 'sexually violent predators.'

Psychiatric involvement with sexual offenders is a rapidly growing field. Sexually violent predator laws have been increasingly enacted throughout the United States and frequently utilize psychiatric and psychological expertise to guide legal decision-making. This presentation will impact the forensic science community by demonstrating how the process of evaluation of sexual offenders usually requires the determination of a necessity for involuntary civil commitment, often defined by statutory criteria.

Evaluators must combine a thorough review of the discovery material, such as police investigations and prior treatment records, with a mental status examination, the use of actuarial instruments and knowl- edge of the increasing literature on sexual reoffense to conclude a deter- mination of dangerousness. Static risk factors must be weighed against mitigating factors such as treatment effect, age, and the coexistence of personality disorders and paraphilias.

The process of a thorough evaluation, in essence, is comprised of three phases: Information gathering, such as document review and a mental status examination; information integration involving the organi- zation of information in a useful manner to provide for a consistent approach to evaluation; and information interpretation, in which all factors in a particular case are compared against known contributors to reoffense risk. This can be an intensive and lengthy process.

In this presentation, Dr. Main, Clinical Director of New Jersey's Special Treatment Unit, a commitment center for "sexually violent pred- ators" will review the history of the creation of commitment centers for these offenders and the current state of treatment in such facilities. Dr. Feibusch will review methods of gathering and reviewing both clinical and discovery material, including the mental status exam in the perform- ance of these evaluations. Dr. De Crisce will discuss useful approaches to organize and categorize the information gained during the review and examination, including the use of the Static-99 to place offenders within an actuarial risk category, and report writing. Finally, Dr. Cohen will discuss general guidelines on the determination of risk of reoffense, providing practical approaches to report writing and conclusion.

Forensic Psychiatry, Sex Offender, Risk Assessment