

Poster presentation

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## A combination of viewing reaction time and incidental learning task in child molesters, rapists, and control males and females

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from International Society on Brain and Behaviour: 2nd International Congress on Brain and Behaviour  
Thessaloniki, Greece. 17–20 November 2005

Published: 28 February 2006

*Annals of General Psychiatry* 2006, **5**(Suppl 1):S114 doi:10.1186/1744-859X-5-S1-S114

### Background

The present study was designed to explore the interference effects of sexual interest on viewing reaction time and cognitive functioning, in a group of sexual offenders.

### Materials and methods

In order to test this hypothesis, 31 rapists, 27 child molesters, 53 control males and 24 control females, were given in a PC a viewing reaction time task while being distracted with photographs of semi-nude males and females of various ages and other stimuli. In the second part of the experiment, the subjects were instructed to attempt to recall whether or not the photograph had been presented during the first part or whether it was novel.

### Results

The results showed that extra familial child molesters had their longest viewing times with the photographs of girls, intra-familial child molesters and control women with the pictures of adolescent females, and rapists and control males with the photographs of women. The pattern of errors during the incidental learning task yielded several interesting findings. Intra- and extra-familial child molesters showed the best recognition with the photographs of boys and adolescents males. Especially, extra-familial child molesters showed the best recognition with photographs of boys, despite having looked at them for the shortest period of time, probably because of suppression. In general, the profile of child molesters seems to be between that of the control males' and the control females' profile, while the rapists' profile seems to have many common features with the control males' profile.

### Discussion

In summary, viewing reaction time, in combination with incidental learning tasks, can serve as an unobtrusive

measure of males' sexual interests. The results of this study encourage the development and use of such techniques in epidemiological studies, as well as on professionals working with children.

### References

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