

B4QR

B4U-ACT Quarterly Review

Volume 6, Issue 2

June 14, 2026

Allen Bishop

Editor-in-Chief

Isaac Aschenbach

Russell Dick

Ellie Woodward

Editors

Quincy Briar

Jessica Gaudette

Stephanie Pakrul

Reviewers

Allen Bishop

Étienne Garant

Line Christophersen

Amy Lawrence

Maylee Sexton

Crys Carman

Richard Kramer

Ashley Curtis

Denise Oliveira

Table of Contents

Introduction by Allen Bishop, Editor-in-Chief.....	3
Reviewed Publications	5
Making Sense of the Life Stories of Minor-Attracted Persons Who Have Not Engaged in Child Sexual Abuse	5
The Role of Coping Strategies, Impulsivity and Hypersexuality on the Fear of Offending Among Minor Attracted Persons (MAPs)	9
Understanding the use of child-related sexual fantasy and fictional sexual materials by people who are attracted to children	12
Distinguishing Pedohebephebophilic Actors and Non-Actors: A Meta-Analysis	17
Opening the Discussion on the Costs of Pedophilic Disorder as a Mental Health Concern	22
Meet the New Generation: Maylee Sexton	26
B4U-ACT Resources	27

Introduction by Allen Bishop, Editor-in-Chief

Welcome to the second issue of the sixth volume of B4QR. This issue contains reviews of five articles published in 2026, with very diverse methodologies and topics relating to minor attraction.

We begin with a qualitative study on the sexual identity development of MAPs. Fernandes and Farrants (2026) recruited six MAPs through B4U-ACT and asked them to prepare for interviews by imagining their lives as a book, creating chapter titles for each stage of their lives. The results highlighted different paths that MAPs can take to preserve dignity and build a positive self-image in the face of a society that portrays them as “deviant” and dangerous. The authors note a generational difference in the results, with older participants taking longer to accept and name their attraction than younger ones.

We continue with two quantitative studies, each combining two separate studies into a single paper. Garant and Proulx (2026) examined factors that influence the fear of committing a sexual crime among a sample of 299 MAPs recruited online. In their first study, they investigated the impact of impulsivity and of different coping strategies on self-reported fear of breaking the law, and in their second study, they examined the role of sexual fantasies on that same type of fear. A key finding across both studies is that neither impulsivity, fantasy patterns, nor fear of breaking the law significantly predicted self-reported criminal history, which suggests that fear of offending is not a proxy for actual risk, but instead reflects psychological distress and concerns about self-regulation. Lievesley and Harper (2026) similarly studied the link between sexual fantasies and sexual crimes, with a focus on the willingness to commit such crimes rather than on the fear of committing them. Their first study (n=265) examined the prevalence of the use of different types of fictional sexual materials, while the second study (n=733) tested how such use impacted self-reported willingness to commit sex crimes. The findings support the view that use of sexual materials has a neutral impact on the risk of committing offenses. The authors also found that sexual satisfaction predicted reduced willingness to commit sex crimes – a key finding that surprisingly receives little discussion in the paper.

Our fourth reviewed article is similar to Lievesley and Harper (2026) in that the authors aim to identify factors that can predict the risk of committing sexual crimes. Chronos and Jahnke (2026) conducted a meta-analysis of 22 studies and identified 54 potential risk factors, i.e., factors that distinguish “actors” from “non-actors”. The factors that had the most significant effect were “male sex,” “prior therapy,” “older age,” and “adverse childhood sexual experiences.” The authors are careful to note that no causal relation can be inferred from these factors, and that some of these factors (e.g., prior therapy) are more plausibly interpreted as resulting from the crime (e.g., mandatory therapy) rather than predicting it.

Our last reviewed article presents a very unique discussion on the diagnosis of pedophilic disorder in the DSM-5. Amelung et al. (2026) argue that “cost-of-illness” frameworks should be applied to that disorder, in the same way they have been applied to other mental health conditions found in the DSM. This economics approach highlights the societal costs associated with the disorder, which stem from both the impairment (psychological distress) of the individual with the diagnosis, and the impact on victims of sex crimes in those cases where the diagnosis is associated with an offense. Our reviewers commend this reframing of the debate around the

pedophilic disorder in the DSM, which challenges the norms of treating it primarily through a criminal justice lens.

We conclude this issue, as usual, with our “Meet the New Generation” section. Our honored young scholar is Maylee Sexton. Maylee has an impressive and unique resume for someone her age. As part of her B.A. in Social Science at New York University Shanghai, she explored the general public’s opinions on minor-attracted people. She uncovered a paradox in progressive individuals’ attitudes towards MAPs: the more supportive of resources towards MAPs these people claimed to be, the stronger their negative biases towards MAPs were. Maylee has also collaborated on research projects with Michael Seto and Aya Gruber, and is now serving as a reviewer for B4QR. She will begin a graduate program in the Law and Society track at Peking University.

We hope you find this journal issue informative and helpful. For comments or questions, or if you wish to join our team, contact us at science@b4uact.org.

Allen Bishop
B4U-ACT Science Director
B4QR Editor-in-Chief

Reviewed Publications

Fernandes, M. and Farrants, J. (2026)

"Making Sense of the Life Stories of Minor-Attracted Persons Who Have Not Engaged in Child Sexual Abuse"

Archives of Sexual Behavior, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-025-03376-z>

In this article, Fernandes and Farrants (2026) present an exploration of how individuals who are attracted to minors construct identity, meaning, and moral frameworks in the absence of social acceptance or supportive cultural narratives. Rather than approaching the topic through a purely clinical or risk-oriented lens, the authors adopt a qualitative methodology grounded in Critical Narrative Analysis (CNA), allowing for a nuanced examination of how participants interpret and communicate their lived experiences.

At the center of the study are six non-exclusive minor-attracted persons (MAPs) who have never committed a sex crime. The participants, who were selected randomly after being recruited through B4U-ACT, were asked before their interview to “imagine their lives as a book and create chapter titles for each stage.” Through CNA, the authors could move beyond simply documenting what participants had to say, instead analyzing how their stories are structured, what themes are emphasized, how language is deployed, and how individuals position themselves in relation to broader societal

narratives – which the authors refer to as “master narratives.”

After conducting the interviews, the authors applied the six-stage analytical process typical of Langdridge’s (2007) hermeneutic circle of CNA, which led them to question their own role as “co-constructors of meaning” in the interpretation of the data, and to search for overarching themes in the process of identity development described by the participants in their chapter-based life stories. Five key themes were identified. The “Foreshadowing Childhood Narratives” theme highlights how participants tend to present their childhood in terms of struggle, of feeling different from peers and not truly fitting in. The authors accurately note that qualitative research on MAPs typically skips childhood experiences, moving straight to the discovery process in adolescence, which can result in key pieces missing from how individuals make sense of their own identity development.

Each of the other themes illustrates in some way how MAPs can use very different, even opposing, approaches to identity building in the face of a hostile society. In the “Narratives of Awareness”

theme, where Fernandes and Farrants (2026) present participants' discovery of attraction in adolescence, they note a significant generational difference among participants, with older ones taking longer to accept and name their attraction than younger ones. Other key differences between participants are described in "Working Hard at Identity," which presents the core work of identity negotiation. In the absence of positive master narratives, some MAPs build their sexual identity in opposition to prevailing social norms, while others instead ground it in culturally valued traits (compassion, control, responsibility, etc.) to counter the dominant harmful stereotypes of the master narratives. Similarly, while some participants describe their attraction as a pillar of their identity, others view it as just one element among others that does not define them. Citing Pedersen (2017), the authors insightfully interpret both approaches (either downplaying or emphasizing the centrality of the attraction) as strategies for managing stigma and resisting the dominant pathologizing narrative. In the fourth theme, "Narratives of Ending: Redemption in Dystopia," the authors explain that while some MAPs frame their life stories around meaning-making, personal transformation, and resilience, others reject this redemption narrative, explaining that they never really experienced their attraction as challenging. Finally, in "Destabilizing the Narrative", Fernandes and Farrants (2026) briefly explain how the interviewed MAPs each had to challenge in some way the binaries of "normal" and "abnormal" in

their identity construction, especially in the discovery phase.

A great strength of this article is how it highlights the pervasive impact of stigma on participants' lives. Experiences of isolation, fear of disclosure, and anticipation of rejection are common across narratives. This stigma operates both externally, through societal attitudes, and internally, as individuals come to absorb and reproduce negative beliefs about themselves. The expectation of condemnation frequently leads to secrecy, which in turn restricts access to social support, professional help, and meaningful connection. In this way, stigma not only shapes how individuals are perceived by others but also influences how they understand and narrate their own identities.

The narratives themselves are one of the study's most compelling elements. They reveal lives characterized by secrecy and constraint, but also by resilience, introspection, and a desire for connection. Importantly, the authors present these stories without sensationalism, allowing the complexity of each individual's experience to emerge. This approach challenges simplistic or reductive representations and encourages a more nuanced understanding of a highly sensitive topic.

Fernandes and Farrants (2026) situate their findings within broader theoretical frameworks, drawing in part on Queer Theory and stigma research. Through this lens, they argue that the marginalization of

law-abiding MAPs is reinforced by the absence of affirming narratives and the dominance of pathologizing discourses. While this theoretical framing offers valuable insights into how identities are socially constructed and regulated, and seems fitting for marginalized sexual minorities such as MAPs, it may not resonate equally with all audiences, especially readers more familiar with clinical frameworks.

Additionally, while the integration of CNA with a life course perspective adds depth to the analysis, at times the discussion appears overly theoretical. The focus on abstract frameworks can occasionally overshadow the empirical data, making it feel as though the authors are imposing interpretation rather than allowing themes to emerge organically. Although the life course dimension is intended to situate individual narratives within broader temporal contexts, much of the analysis remains centered on individual meaning-making rather than offering a more expansive, structural perspective. The authors also never explore the role that MAP communities play in helping participants shape their identities, incorrectly suggesting that in the absence of favorable “master narratives,” MAPs are forced to build an identity all by themselves.

Another area where the article could have been strengthened is in its exploration of identity beyond sexual attraction. While there is some

acknowledgment that participants possess multifaceted identities, this aspect is not developed in depth. A more comprehensive examination of factors such as occupation, relationships, hobbies, or cultural background could have provided a fuller picture of participants as individuals, potentially counteracting the risk of reinforcing singular, “deviant-focused” narratives. Even more importantly, there is no exploration of the romantic side of the attraction. In this sense, the emphasis on sexual identity (particularly when framed through queer theory) may inadvertently reproduce the very marginalization the authors seek to challenge. Similarly, the uncritical use of the expression “non-offending MAPs” by the authors is surprising, as it implies a permanent identity based on one’s past behavior, which may further increase stigmatization.

Despite these limitations, the article makes an important contribution by foregrounding the voices of a largely invisible population. Its use of qualitative research methods allows for a level of depth and complexity that would be difficult to achieve through quantitative approaches. Ultimately, what distinguishes this research is its commitment to complexity. It challenges dominant assumptions and opens space for more nuanced conversations, even if it does not fully resolve the theoretical and practical questions it raises.

References

Langdridge, D. (2007) *Phenomenological psychology: Theory, research, and method*, Pearson Prentice Hall.

Pedersen, M. R. (2017) *The politics of being a pedophile: An anthropological exploration of political engagements and narratives among minor attracted people*, Master's thesis, University of Aarhus.

Garant, E., and Proulx, J. (2026)

"The Role of Coping Strategies, Impulsivity and Hypersexuality on the Fear of Offending Among Minor Attracted Persons (MAPs)"

Sexual Abuse, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/10790632261415814>

Garant and Proulx (2026) examined factors influencing fear of offending among a sample of 299 male minor-attracted people (MAPs) recruited online. Across two complementary studies, the authors investigated the roles of coping strategies, impulsivity, and patterns of sexual fantasy in shaping this fear. Importantly, the authors position fear of offending as a meaningful psychological experience rather than an indicator of risk. In doing so, the article contributes to a growing body of research focused on the internal experiences and well-being of MAPs.

The primary aim of Study 1 was to examine whether different coping strategies and impulsivity predicted self-reported fear of offending. Eleven different coping strategies were explored from the Immediate Responses to Vulnerability Scale (IRVS), including: (1) Waiting for the fear to pass, (2) TV/ video games/Books, (3) Casino/Online gambling, (4) Drug/Alcohol consumption, (5) Talking to someone, (6) Sports/ Social activities, (7) Work, (8) Masturbation scenarios involving children, (9) watching adult porn, (10) Sex with a prostitute or visits to erotic bars, and (11) Sex with an adult. Impulsivity – as measured by the Barratt Impulsivity Scale – was also entered as a predictor into the

regression model. Finally, fear of offending was operationalized as a dichotomous yes/no outcome.

Results indicated that greater reliance on avoidant coping strategies was associated with increased fear, and impulsivity emerged as a significant predictor of offending fear. While the authors note that their analyses successfully identified coping strategies associated with increased fear, the study was not designed to detect strategies linked to reduced fear in this sample. Nonetheless, their findings are broadly consistent with literature suggesting that avoidant coping strategies may provide short-term relief but are less effective in addressing underlying distress, whereas more active coping strategies tend to support longer-term psychological adjustment (Britt et al., 2016; Dijkstra & Homan, 2016; Koeske et al., 1993; Marcks & Woods, 2007; Stephenson & DeLongis, 2020).

In Study 2, the authors used latent class analysis on the intensity ratings from the Joyal Sexual Fantasy Questionnaire to identify three empirically derived subgroups of MAPs: a child-oriented fantasy group, a female-oriented fantasy group, and a male-oriented and hypersexual fantasy group. Group membership was meaningfully linked to both fear of offending and coping strategies. The male-oriented and

hypersexual group reported the highest levels of fear and the greatest reliance on avoidant coping. The authors describe this group as caught in a “vicious cycle” in which sexual concerns lead them to use sexuality as a coping mechanism, which in turn increases fear. While this interpretation is descriptively plausible, it is not directly supported by the cross-sectional design, and without longitudinal data, conclusions about temporal ordering or causality remain speculative.

A notable finding across both studies is that neither impulsivity, fantasy patterns, nor fear of offending significantly predicted self-reported history of sexual behavior involving children. This supports the authors’ central argument that fear of offending reflects psychological distress and concerns about self-regulation rather than serving as a proxy for risk. Accordingly, the authors suggest that clinical approaches should move beyond focusing on sexual/romantic attraction to minors in isolation and instead emphasize the development of adaptive coping strategies, management of impulsivity, and a broader understanding of individuals’ sexual experiences.

The article has several important strengths. The use of established psychological measures and a combination of variable-centered and person-centered analytic approaches allows for a nuanced examination of individual differences within the sample. The focus on fear of offending as a subjective experience is particularly valuable, as it

shifts attention toward the internal lives and well-being of MAPs rather than treating them primarily through a risk-based lens. In this respect, the article aligns well with efforts to better understand MAPs as a diverse population with varying experiences and coping strategies. Additionally, the authors appear careful to distinguish between attraction to minors and behavior, avoiding a conflation that can increase stigma.

At the same time, several limitations warrant consideration. The decision to operationalize fear of offending as a dichotomous variable constrains interpretability, as it reduces what is likely a complex and multidimensional experience to a simple yes/no outcome. Fear of offending may vary in intensity, frequency, and functional impact; collapsing these dimensions likely obscures meaningful variation in how individuals experience and manage this concern. The use of a self-selected, online sample also limits generalizability, as participants who choose to engage in this type of research may differ in important ways from those who do not.

Caution is also warranted when interpreting the absence of significant associations with self-reported behavior involving children. The relatively low base rate of such reports in the sample limits statistical power, particularly for models with multiple predictors, and therefore constrains the strength of inferences that can be drawn. As such, these findings

are best understood as providing limited information about the presence or absence of such relationships rather than strong evidence in either direction. Importantly, this limitation does not detract from the authors' central contribution of framing fear of offending as a form of psychological distress and self-regulatory concern rather than an indicator of risk.

Overall, Garant and Proulx (2026) make a valuable contribution by illuminating the psychological

experiences of MAPs and highlighting promising directions for support, particularly the cultivation of adaptive coping strategies, management of impulsivity, and a contextual understanding of sexual experiences. Future research would benefit from longitudinal designs, more refined measurement of fear and distress, more diverse samples, and intervention studies examining whether strengthening adaptive coping reduces distress and improves well-being.

References

- Levitan, J. A., Martijn, F. M., Santaguida, M., & Seto, M. C. (2024). Minor-attracted men's lived experiences of romantic attraction. *Journal of Sex & Marital Therapy*, 50(7), 811–824. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0092623X.2024.2385909>
- Prentky, R. A., Burgess, A. W., Rokous, F., Lee, A., Hartman, C., Ressler, R., & Douglas, J. (1989). The presumptive role of fantasy in serial sexual homicide. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 146(7), 887–891. <https://doi.org/10.1176/ajp.146.7.887>
- Seto, M. C. (2019). The Motivation-Facilitation Model of Sexual Offending. *Sexual Abuse*, 31(1), 3–24. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1079063217720919>
- Sorokowski, P., Sorokowska, A., Karwowski, M., Groyecka, A., Aavik, T., Akello, G., Alm, C., Amjad, N., Anjum, A., Asao, K., Atama, C. S., Duyar, D. A., Ayebare, R., Batres, C., Bendixen, M., Bensafia, A., Bizumic, B., Boussena, M., Butovskaya, M., ... Croy, I. (2021). Universality of the triangular theory of love: Adaptation and psychometric properties of the triangular love scale in 25 countries. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 58(1), 106–115. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224499.2020.1787318>
- Williams, K. M., Cooper, B. S., Howell, T. M., Yuille, J. C., & Paulhus, D. L. (2009). Inferring sexually deviant behavior from corresponding fantasies: The role of personality and pornography consumption. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 36(2), 198–222. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0093854808327277>

Lievesley, R., & Harper, C. A. (2026)
**"Understanding the use of child-related sexual fantasy and fictional sexual materials
by people who are attracted to children"**

Psychology & Sexuality, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/19419899.2026.2619511>

Lievesley and Harper conducted what they describe as the first large-scale surveys on how individuals attracted to children engage with fictional sexual materials (FSM), including drawn artwork, AI-generated images and videos, deepfakes, sex dolls, chatbots, and stories depicting fictional children. The authors situate this work within an active sociolegal context where jurisdictions are increasingly criminalizing forms of FSM on the assumption of behavioral escalation risk, with the UK criminalizing realistic 'pseudo-photographs' as indecent images and the US legal status of AI-generated content remaining unclear. Drawing on two community-based samples recruited from English-language online forums, Study 1 (N = 265) documents prevalence of FSM types, and Study 2 (N = 733) tests three competing arguments about FSM and risk: that FSM use is associated with increased, decreased, or no change in self-reported willingness to commit sexual offenses against children.

Study 1 found masturbating to fantasies about children common (50% almost daily), while masturbating to FSM depicting children was less frequent (half reporting less-than-weekly use). Masturbating to sexual thoughts, fantasies and adult pornography was generally low among participants, partly reflecting that 79% of the sample reported

exclusive attraction to minors. Exclusivity of attraction to children was also associated with the type of sexual activities reported (e.g., experiencing sexual thoughts involving children or adults, masturbating to sexual fantasies involving children or adults, or using fictional sexual material depicting children or adults). These differences were particularly evident among participants who were not exclusively attracted to children, as they differed in their sexual activities depicting adults. Qualitative analyses of an open-ended question about other forms of sexual expression yielded five themes: artistic materials depicting children (n = 18), offending behavior (n = 12), role-playing (n = 11), talking to others (n = 4), and animal-related fantasies (n = 3).

Study 2 tested whether FSM use is associated with willingness to engage in child-related sexual offending under conditions where detection was either possible or impossible, alongside vignette-based moral attitudes, rumination, and impulsivity. Correlations between child-related FSM use and willingness were small but statistically significant. However, most multivariate findings supported a null association, particularly under possible-detection conditions. Permissive attitudes toward adult-child sexual relationships were the

strongest and most consistent predictor of greater willingness, while sexual satisfaction emerged as a protective factor, especially under no-detection conditions. Rumination, impulsivity, exclusivity, and child-related fantasies showed weak or inconsistent results, often emerging only under specific detection conditions. The authors conclude that their data are most consistent with a 'risk-neutral' position on FSM (p. 22).

The present study has a number of strengths, such as addressing a topic that has, to date, been largely underexplored, is becoming increasingly politicized, and for which there is limited empirical and quantitative research available to inform socio-legal decision-making. The introduction provides a thorough overview of sexual frustration as a treatment need among people attracted to children, and the descriptive prevalence data offer a substantial empirical base for subsequent research.

However, the central analytic contribution rests on a series of methodological choices that limit the strength of these claims. FSM use is operationalized as 'the highest score on the sexual outlets use measure' (p. 15), collapsing ten distinct subtypes into a single predictor. A participant using one form daily would score identically to one using all ten, despite the latter indicating the sexual preoccupation the authors themselves identify as a dynamic risk factor.

¹ This approach could potentially produce inconsistent results the authors do not directly

address. In zero-order Pearson correlations, the same max-score FSM predictor was significantly associated with all four willingness outcomes. When FSM use was further broken into ten conceptually meaningful clusters, sexually explicit AI-generated photorealistic materials were associated with willingness to engage in offenses involving illegal sexual images of minors under no-detection conditions. These small but consistent positive associations were not found in the Bayesian models when the collapsed predictor is entered alongside eight partially overlapping predictors, several of which (notably moral attitudes, $r = .26$ with FSM use) share substantial variance with FSM engagement itself. Per Seto et al. (2023), such effects warrant scrutiny rather than statistical attenuation.

These choices also contradict the parent literature the authors themselves cite. The authors acknowledge that 'pornography [is] only associated with sexual aggression among those with other predisposing factors' (p. 4), citing Ferguson and Hartley (2009, 2022) and Malamuth (2018). Decades of research across pornography-and-aggression literature² and violent video games and aggression literature³ have reached the same conclusion: media consumption frequency alone reveals little about behavioral outcomes. What matters is how use interacts with predisposing psychological characteristics such as Hostile Masculinity and Impersonal Sex (Malamuth's confluence model), or

¹ Kuhle et al. (2017); Seto et al. (2023)

² Fergusson & Hartley (2022); Malamuth et al. (1995)

³ Fergusson et al. (2008)

with trait aggression and family violence exposure (Ferguson's catalyst model). The present study, however, is designed around frequency of FSM use as its central explanatory variable. Notably, the authors themselves acknowledge that 'the frequency of child-related fantasy and FSM engagement may be less important than the function of such engagement' (p. 22), yet their function-related variables do not bear out this insight: sexual fantasizing is framed as 'rehearsal of sexual offending sexual scripts', reproducing a fantasy-as-crime-rehearsal logic that the broader sexuality literature has long questioned, demonstrating that fantasies do not necessarily reflect behavioral intent⁴. Further, sexual satisfaction is a single-item subjective rating; impulsivity and rumination, despite being heavily discussed constructs in the sexual offending literature, receive cursory treatment in both presentation and interpretation; and the strong correlation between moral attitudes and willingness to offend is largely tautological, as these scales measure the same underlying construct twice. The authors also invoke Seto's (2019) Motivation-Facilitation Model, which incorporates trait and state facilitation factors (antisocial personality, hostile masculinity, negative affect) as mechanisms through which sexual motivations translate into offending—yet none of these moderators are operationalized in the models.

The predictor-outcome design is also asymmetric. Child- and adult-related FSM use and fantasizing are entered as predictors, but willingness to offend is measured only against child targets. Given that about 50% of those who sexually offend against children do not meet diagnostic criteria for pedophilia⁵, a parallel adult-willingness outcome paired with antisocial trait measures would have tested whether identified correlates reflect target-specific risk or general antisocial dispositions⁶.

The willingness-to-offend measure itself raises construct-validity concerns. Its four items are unvalidated, single-item, and uncited (the only major construct in the paper without reference to existing measurement work) despite Malamuth's behaviorally validated scales being cited elsewhere. The hypothetical detection conditions also raise ecological-validity concerns: rational choice theory holds that offending decisions are shaped by perceived likelihood of detection, so a forced-choice item asking willingness under explicit certainty of detection has no real-world analog⁷.

The participant pool and recruitment also warrant scrutiny. The authors decline to disclose which forums participants were recruited from, citing anonymity. Reporting recruitment sources is standard practice in MAP research; the SoSciSurvey platform already provides participant-level anonymity—making it difficult to assess sample

⁴ Williams et al. (2009)

⁵ Seto (2008)

⁶ Hanson & Morton-Bourgon (2005)

⁷ Cornish & Clarke (1986)

representativeness or detect overlap with prior studies drawing from the same online communities⁸. Further, only 48 of 265 participants (~18%) responded to the open-ended question from which the five emergent themes were drawn. Without contextualization of this low response rate, foregrounding themes such as offending behavior risks reinforcing the 'offender myth' rather than representing the broader sample.

The broader question is whether this paper serves MAP mental health or further stigmatizes it. By framing sexual fantasy and FSM use almost exclusively through a risk-of-offending lens, and operationalizing risk through constructs only loosely tied to the psychological mechanisms aggression and sexual offending are typically linked to, the authors reproduce a thought-crime logic (i.e., fantasy equals action) historically used against this population. The most clinically meaningful finding, that sexual satisfaction predicted reduced willingness to offend, receives comparatively little discussion, despite suggesting that supporting MAPs in maintaining a sexual life may itself be protective. A study that more fully considers this finding alongside issues related to stigma, coping, and well-being could further contribute to the socio-legal debate raised by the authors, whereas a framework focused primarily on risk assessment may inadvertently maintain some of the offending assumptions the authors seek to challenge.

⁸ Roche et al. (2026)

References

- Cornish, D. B., & Clarke, R. V. (Eds.). (1986). *The reasoning criminal: Rational choice perspectives on offending*. Springer-Verlag.
- Ferguson, C. J., & Hartley, R. D. (2022). Pornography and sexual aggression: Can meta-analysis find a link? *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 23(1), 278–287. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1524838020942754>
- Ferguson, C. J., Rueda, S. M., Cruz, A. M., Ferguson, D. E., Fritz, S., & Smith, S. M. (2008). Violent video games and aggression: Causal relationship or byproduct of family violence and intrinsic violence motivation? *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 35(3), 311–332. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0093854807311719>
- Hanson, R. K., & Morton-Bourgon, K. E. (2005). The characteristics of persistent sexual offenders: A meta-analysis of recidivism studies. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 73(6), 1154–1163. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-006X.73.6.1154>
- Kuhle, L. F., Schlinzig, E., Kaiser, G., Amelung, T., Konrad, A., Röhle, R., & Beier, K. M. (2017). The association of sexual preference and dynamic risk factors with undetected child pornography offending. *Journal of Sexual Aggression*, 23(1), 3–18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13552600.2016.1201157>
- Malamuth, N. M., Linz, D., Heavey, C. L., Barnes, G., & Acker, M. (1995). Using the confluence model of sexual aggression to predict men's conflict with women: A 10-year follow-up study. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 69(2), 353–369. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.69.2.353>
- Roche, K., Pagacz, J., Lalumière, M., L., & Seto, M. C. (2026). Recruitment Issues in Research with People Who are Attracted to Children: A Systematic Review. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 63(1), 45–57. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00224499.2025.2484197>
- Seto, M. C. (2008). *Pedophilia and sexual offending against children: Theory, assessment, and intervention*. American Psychological Association. <https://doi.org/10.1037/11639-000>
- Seto, M. C., Augustyn, C., Roche, K. M., & Hilkes, G. (2023). Empirically-based dynamic risk and protective factors for sexual offending. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 106, 102355. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2023.102355>
- Williams, K. M., Cooper, B. S., Howell, T. M., Yuille, J. C., & Paulhus, D. L. (2009). Inferring sexually deviant behavior from corresponding fantasies: The role of personality and pornography consumption. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 36(2), 198–222. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0093854808327277>

Chronos, A. & Jahnke, S. (2026)

“Distinguishing Pedohebephebophilic Actors and Non-Actors: A Meta-Analysis”

Sexual Abuse 38 (2), DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/10790632251389171>

Chronos and Jahnke (2026) conducted a meta-analysis aimed at synthesizing research on factors that may differentiate minor-attracted people (MAPs) who have committed sexual crimes involving children or adolescents from those who have not. Following eligibility and screening procedures, 36 studies were included in the meta-analysis. The included studies varied in setting and sample characteristics. The “distinguishing factors” explored in this meta-analysis were drawn from Seto’s Motivation-Facilitation Model⁹, which includes motivating, facilitating, situational, and other factors. By systematically reviewing and synthesizing this literature, the authors aimed to inform future research and clinical practice involving MAPs.

A strength of the article from a forensic perspective is the authors’ commitment to transparency and open science. The study was preregistered, and the study codes and data were made publicly available on the Open Science Framework (OSF). These practices strengthen the credibility of the review by allowing readers to evaluate the authors’ analytic decisions and scrutinize the evidence base. In a research area where interpretation can carry substantial ethical and

clinical implications, this level of transparency is especially valuable.

However, while the article makes a useful contribution to sexual abuse prevention, several aspects of its terminology, conceptual framing, and overall paradigm are problematic. Throughout the article, the authors use the terms pedohebephebophilic (PHE) to refer to individuals with a romantic and/or sexual attraction to children or adolescents, and pedohebephilic (PH) to refer to individuals with romantic and/or sexual attraction to prepubescent children. Both terms fall under the broader umbrella of MAP. However, there is notable ambiguity in the authors’ contrast of “actors” vs. “non-actors”. Although the authors broadly define “actors” as individuals who have committed sex crimes against children, this leaves the term open to interpretation. It is unclear whether “PHE/PH actors” refers to individuals who have committed contact sex crimes, individuals who have possessed sexual images of children or adolescents, individuals involved in solicitation-based offenses, individuals arrested through online police sting operations, or some combination of these groups. Although the authors’ summary of child sexual abuse (CSA) appears to include both contact and non-contact sex crimes, these distinctions are important because different offense types may involve different

⁹ Seto, M. C. (2008); Seto, M. C. (2017)

behavioral patterns, legal contexts, and clinical implications. Collapsing these categories into a single “actor” group therefore risks obscuring heterogeneity in both offending behavior and justice-system involvement. In addition, these terms do not align with person-first language, which although difficult to apply consistently in a meta-analysis, is recommended by the American Psychological Association¹⁰.

The authors’ use of Seto’s Motivation-Facilitation Model to identify distinguishing factors raises an important conceptual concern. The model was developed as an etiological framework for explaining the commission of sex crimes. Applying this model to MAPs as a broader population risks implying, even indirectly, that attraction to minors is in its very essence a risk factor for committing a sex crime. Although the authors attempt to reduce this stigmatizing connotation by using the term “distinguishing factors” rather than “risk factors,” the framework may unintentionally reinforce the misconception that MAPs are inherently linked to offending.

Across subgroup analyses, 22 studies contributed to the identification of 54 potential “distinguishing factors”. Of these, 16 were sufficient primary studies that allowed for random-effects meta-analyses. Among these studies, 8 showed significant average effects associated with “acting,” with the largest effects for “male sex,” “prior therapy,” “older age,”

and “adverse childhood sexual experiences” (all g s $> .38$). Small, but significant effects were also found for factors such as, “having their own children,” “being preferentially attracted to children,” “cognitive distortions,” and “non-heterosexual orientation” (all g s $> .20$). These findings require cautious interpretation, particularly where labels may carry stigmatizing implications. For example, the finding concerning “non-heterosexual orientation” should be contextualized carefully to avoid implying that sexual minority status is itself meaningfully related to offending behavior.

For the remaining 34 factors, due to effect sizes being based on fewer than 5 studies and analyzed using fixed-effects meta-analysis, the authors state that the findings should be interpreted with caution. Nevertheless, they reported significant results for several factors, including “intelligence,” “stigma,” “nonsexual adverse childhood experiences,” “lack of control of sexual impulses,” “head injuries after the age of 13,” and “a history of falling in love with children.” The authors argue that these findings have implications for prevention-centered (rather than client-centered) theory and treatment by identifying factors that may warrant future research and could inform intervention planning.

The authors make a clear effort to contextualize their findings to reduce stigmatizing interpretations. For example, they found that “actors” were significantly more likely to have engaged in therapy, but they note that caution is needed because the therapeutic

¹⁰ American Psychological Association (2019)

history variables did not clarify if the therapy was voluntary or mandated. This is an important distinction because mandated therapy may reflect legal system involvement rather than a clinically meaningful difference between groups. However, the article would benefit from greater clarity regarding how these factors were conceptualized across the included studies. For example, it is not always clear whether “stigma” refers to external stigma, internalized stigma, or both.

The discussion of clinical implications is an area that requires particular critique. There appears to be an implicit connection to the Risk-Need-Responsivity model of offender rehabilitation¹¹ particularly in the suggestion that interventions should be tailored to an individual’s risk level and targeted to the identified “distinguishing factors.” However, this low-to-high risk framing may imply that MAPs necessarily fall on a continuum of offending risk, which risks reinforcing the assumption that attraction to minors is inherently linked to offending. While these approaches may be relevant for some individuals, they should not be generalized to all MAPs. Clinical recommendations should distinguish more clearly between forensic rehabilitation, prevention-focused intervention, support for distress, and broader mental health care. Not all MAPs require interventions or treatments. For this reason, the problem is not simply that the clinical implications require cautious interpretation; rather, the recommendations risk

importing forensic assumptions into voluntary mental health care in ways that may undermine client autonomy, informed consent, therapeutic trust, and MAPs’ willingness to seek support.

The fundamental problem with the study is its paradigm: MAPs in voluntary therapy are conceptualized primarily as people presumed to be at risk of committing sex crimes involving children or adolescents, rather than as people whose mental health and well-being merit support in their own right. To be fair, its focus on criminogenic factors to the exclusion of wellness is not out of place in a study published in *Sexual Abuse*. But the authors imply that their findings apply to all voluntary therapy for MAPs; i.e., that mainstream therapists who would otherwise focus on their clients’ needs instead attempt to assess MAP clients’ risk levels and decide how much to eschew client-centered goals and therapeutic approaches for forensic ones. The authors do this even while admitting that the latter approaches “are likely to hurt the therapeutic alliance,” disappointingly showing concern only in the case of clients that the therapist judges as “low risk.” Furthermore, there is no mention of client input into such decisions by the therapist, raising issues of client autonomy and informed consent. This is especially problematic since the apparent risk factors include characteristics that define MAPs; namely sexual attraction and romantic feelings for minors, potentially labeling most MAPs as “high risk.”

¹¹ Andrews, D. A., Bonta, J., & Hoge, R. D. (1990).

The authors also recommend that “If offending appears likely or inevitable, clinicians need to consider whether they have a legal right or obligation to report their client to the police and/or child protection services.” It is not clear how clinicians are expected to determine whether “offending appears likely.” If this decision is based on the characteristics identified in the study, this could encourage reporting when it is not legally required – a scenario that would have devastating consequences for the client’s life. Fear of being reported is commonly cited as a reason for MAPs’ reluctance or even refusal to voluntarily seek mental health services when needed.

The problem is compounded by some of the authors’ suggested forensic techniques, such as addressing what are often called “cognitive distortions” and attempting to use medications and “behavioral approaches that decrease sexual arousal to children.” The former is conceptually and therapeutically problematic as described in a previous review, and the latter is repurposed from treatments used decades ago to attempt to “cure” LGBT people. They are now widely recognized as unethical and abusive in that context due to their potentially severe effects on mental health (e.g., depression, hopelessness, and suicidality), and are widely seen by LGBT people and MAPs alike as humiliating and degrading. Notably, there have been no studies of their safety when applied to MAPs. They are problematic enough when used within the criminal-legal system, and would be even more so if imposed on clients in

voluntary therapy, particularly when the therapist and client both lack an understanding of MAP sexuality, making informed consent difficult.

All in all, the authors’ clinical recommendations could be expected to reinforce biased attitudes among clinicians and increase MAP clients’ fear, shame, and sense of stigma. Implementing these recommendations could lead MAP clients to avoid or terminate therapy and leave with a general negative view of the mental health profession. The authors’ recommendations are particularly disappointing and surprising in light of their previous excellent work related to MAP mental health and stigmatization.

Overall, while Chronos and Jahnke (2026) demonstrate methodological transparency through preregistration, open data, and a cautious discussion of some findings, the article’s contribution is primarily to sexual abuse prevention research rather than to the holistic understanding of MAPs or the promotion of their mental health. From a B4U-ACT perspective, this distinction is crucial. The study does not meaningfully advance understanding of MAPs as people with varied support needs, identities, relationships, and mental health concerns. Instead, its etiological framing of sexual offending and focus on “distinguishing factors” risk positioning MAPs primarily through a lens of potential risk, even when no offense history is present. As a result, the article may reinforce stigma, contribute to professional bias, discourage MAPs

from accessing mental health support, and undermine therapeutic autonomy and trust. Future research should use clinical and ethical frameworks that distinguish MAPs' support needs from forensic

rehabilitation unless offense history or risk is directly relevant.

References

American Psychological Association. (2019). APA Style: General Principles for Reducing Bias.

<https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/bias-free-language/general-principles>

Andrews, D. A., Bonta, J., & Hoge, R. D. (1990). Classification for effective rehabilitation: Rediscovering psychology. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 17(1), 19–52. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0093854890017001004>

Seto, M. C. (2008). Pedophilia and sexual offending against children: Theory, assessment, and intervention. American Psychological Association. <https://doi.org/10.1037/11639-000>

Seto, M. C. (2017). The puzzle of male chronophiliacs. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 46(1), 3–22. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-016-0799-y>

Amelung, T., Lehmann, R.J.B., Schmidt, A.F. et al. (2026)
"Opening the Discussion on the Costs of Pedophilic Disorder as a Mental Health Concern"

Archives of Sexual Behavior, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-025-03406-w>

Amelung et al.'s (2026) article makes the case that cost-of-illness (COI) frameworks should be applied to pedophilic disorder in the same way they have been applied to other mental health conditions. They argue that this has not been done because pedophilic disorder has been treated as a criminological issue rather than a public health concern, in part due to the structural stigma surrounding it.

The authors are explicit from the start that the classification of pedophilic disorder as a mental disorder is contested, and they provisionally accept that classification to enable COI analysis. They then summarize the standard COI categories (direct, indirect, and intangible) and apply them to two populations: individuals with pedophilic disorder who have engaged in offense-related behaviors (PD-O) and those who have not (PD-NO). For PD-O, they pull from existing literature on child sexual abuse and incarceration costs, while noting that most cases never enter official statistics. For PD-NO, they argue that comparable data essentially does not exist, connecting this gap to structural stigma, limited specialized services, and barriers to research and help-seeking.

The article also draws on Meyer's (2003) minority stress framework to explain elevated comorbidities

in PD-NO, treating the mental health burden as a consequence of stigma rather than inherent features of the diagnosis itself. Its evidence base on help-seeking among PD-NO relies heavily on findings from the Berlin Dunkelfeld project, where co-author Beier is a principal. The article concludes with a call for COI research as a foundation for improved public health responses, which the authors argue would benefit both minor-attracted persons (MAPs) and potential victims.

The article's most significant contribution is the actual reframing. By arguing that pedophilic disorder warrants the same systematic public health analysis as other conditions of comparable prevalence (such as schizophrenia), the authors challenge the norms of treating it primarily through a criminal justice lens. This reframing positions the mental health needs of MAPs on their own terms, rather than only as a means of preventing sexual harm. The PD-O / PD-NO distinction is maintained throughout the article, and the authors acknowledge that not everyone who engages in sexual activity with children meets diagnostic criteria for pedophilic disorder, as some experience predominant attraction to pubescents ("hebephilia," which DSM-5 does not classify as a disorder), and others have no diagnosable attraction to minors at all. By restricting

their analysis to pedophilic disorder, the authors keep costs associated with sexual harm analytically separate from the cost associated with the diagnosis, which other research often fails to do.

However, the decision to provisionally accept the validity of “pedophilic disorder” as a diagnosable category raises some significant challenges. The authors acknowledge that the disorder classification was embraced for the purposes of COI analysis, but overlook the long-term implications of categorizing specific manifestations of the attraction to minors as “disorders” for the purposes of providing this population with comprehensive mental health resources and support. This also creates a degree of circularity: cost-of-illness analysis assumes pedophilic disorder is a coherent diagnostic category, yet as the authors claim “translating individual burden into economic terms, COI analyses can inform the debate on classification,” implying that uncovering the economic costs related to minor-attracted people helps determine whether or not the attractions themselves are “disordered” (p. 2).

A similar analysis – measuring the costs of leaving the needs of minor-attracted people ignored in the public health sphere – could still be performed while acknowledging that the attraction alone is not indicative of any cognitive disorder or pathology. Social anxiety, negative messaging, internalized stigma, suicidal ideation, and barriers to forming intimate relationships are still real challenges MAPs

face regardless of whether their specific patterns of attraction fall under the label of “illness.” The centering of “pedophilic disorder” also leaves hebephiles and ephebophiles out entirely. By allowing that the attraction to pubescent and adolescent minors is “normal,” it excludes them from the conversation on mental health and destigmatization efforts for MAPs, even when they face the same challenges as people attracted to prepubescent children (typically labeled as “pedophiles”).

While the COI framework can be useful for directing resources to a neglected population, as the authors note, it also narrows the range of possible responses by tying support to a diagnostic label rather than to the broader social and mental health needs of MAPs.

Furthermore, the line between pedophilia (the attraction) and pedophilic disorder (the diagnosed condition that requires distress or behavior) blurs in several places. For example, Table 1 lists “2.6% of men report pedophilic sexual fantasies” as a prevalence estimate for pedophilic disorder, when fantasy alone does not meet diagnostic criteria. Similarly, the conclusion refers to “societal costs associated with pedophilia-related child sexual abuse and child sexual exploitation and abuse material,” despite mentioning that according to Seto (2018), only roughly half of people convicted of sexual activity with children or adolescents meet criteria for pedophilic disorder. This slippage between

attraction, disorder, and behavior undermines distinctions the rest of the article works to maintain.

The authors' discussion of intangible costs for PD–NO raises a related concern. Several of the examples used (e.g. abandoned careers in child-related professions, giving up having children, self-chosen isolation to avoid public exposure to children) do not sit cleanly within a COI framework. Some of these examples reflect harm imposed by stigma, while others are coping strategies that individuals adapt for their own well-being. Treating these as uniform costs may pathologize protective or reasonable adaptive behavior. The community fear cost listed under PD–O has a similar issue. Public fear is not reserved only for people who have committed sexual offenses: it attaches to anyone perceived as a MAP, which is a cost of stigma, not of the attraction.

A point the article raises but does not explore further is that this framing also makes stigma reduction itself a cost-saving intervention. If much of the comorbidity burden in PD–NO is a downstream effect of stigma, then research, education, and policy

efforts aimed at reducing stigma mitigate costs upstream in a way that direct clinical intervention cannot.

Regarding terminology, the authors use "pedophile" in places where "minor-attracted person" would be clearer and have less negative connotation. Their usage aligns with DSM-adjacent clinical terminology, which is reasonable for the article, but acknowledging variation in how the term is used would help minimize misunderstanding and stigma.

In conclusion, this article opens a conversation that is overdue. It brings a serious analytic framing to a topic that's been institutionally tiptoed around for decades, and it maintains important distinctions within the population. The critiques raised in this review are aimed at strengthening the authors' contribution rather than rejecting it. If public health work on minor-attracted people can center the mental health and well-being of affected individuals, rather than only on the prevention of harm to others, it could meaningfully change the way this condition is researched, funded, and treated.

References

- Meyer, I. H. (2003). Prejudice, social stress, and mental health in lesbian, gay, and bisexual populations: Conceptual issues and research evidence. *Psychological Bulletin*, 129(5), 674–697.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.129.5.674>
- Seto, M. C. (2018). *Pedophilia and sexual offending against children: Theory, assessment, and intervention* (2nd ed.). American Psychological Association. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0000107-000>

Meet the New Generation

In this section, we present a young scholar from the MAP-research community, typically a PhD student who is on B4U-ACT's email group for researchers. This is a way for B4U-ACT to honor individuals who demonstrate an authentic concern for the respect, dignity, mental health, and well-being of MAPs.

Maylee Sexton
Peking University (China)
Law and Society track



Maylee Sexton received her B.A. in Social Science with a concentration in Psychology (cum laude) from New York University Shanghai, with minors in Chinese and the Humanities. She is an incoming Yenching Scholar at Peking University in the Law and Society track, where she will examine how Chinese cultural and legal frameworks shape the construction of child sexual abuse (CSA) and patterns of disclosure. She currently serves as a reviewer for B4U-ACT's Quarterly Review and as a research assistant on a variety of Michael Seto's projects, with their current work examining romantic versus sexual attraction in child-attracted people.

Maylee entered this field with the question: why do people offend, and why have decades of policies like U.S. registration requirements been ineffective in preventing harm before it occurs? Her undergraduate research uncovered what she calls the "progressive paradox": the finding that the more support self-identified progressives explicitly reported for resources for child-attracted people (CAP), the stronger their implicit negative bias against that group tended to be, revealing sexual deviations as the one domain where progressives seemingly abandon their restorative values. Encountering Aya Gruber's work on sex exceptionalism gave her a framework for that finding, and she later contributed as a research assistant to Gruber's book on the criminalization of sexual behavior; sex exceptionalism now anchors her thinking and her forthcoming conference talk. She also developed a finalist round Fulbright project with the Prevention Project Dunkelfeld at the Charité; one of the first programs in the world to offer resources to CAPs.

As a justice-impacted researcher, Maylee finds that stigma silences in two directions: falling on those who are attracted to children, and on survivors whose experiences do not fit into the broader cultural imagination surrounding CSA in the US. Her work insists on dismantling moral panics, on primary prevention over responding to harm after it occurs, and on dignity as the foundation of both.

Maylee is deeply grateful to Richard Kramer for welcoming her into the B4U-ACT community, one of the rare spaces where she has felt fully heard, and to Allen Bishop for his mentorship through the B4QR.

B4U-ACT Resources

B4U-ACT is a 501(c)3 organization established to publicly promote professional services and resources for self-identified individuals who are sexually attracted to children and desire such assistance, and to educate mental health providers regarding approaches needed in understanding and responding to such individuals.

Our organization assists researchers from around the world, especially PhD students (<https://www.b4uact.org/research/research-collaboration/>). If you would like us to collaborate with you or your team on a project, and if you share our research ethos (<https://www.b4uact.org/about-us/statements-and-policies/research-ethos/>), contact us at science@b4uact.org. You can also email us if you would like to join our researcher email group.

We provide several additional services to support therapists, researchers, students, MAPs, and their family members:

- Workshops for professionals, researchers, and minor-attracted individuals (<https://www.b4uact.org/get-involved/attend-a-workshop/>)
- Advocacy/education (<https://www.b4uact.org/know-the-facts/>)
- Advice for MAPs seeking mental health services, including referral to approved professionals (<https://www.b4uact.org/attracted-to-minors/professional-support/>)
- Guidelines for therapists (<https://www.b4uact.org/psychotherapy-for-the-map/>)
- Online discussion group for professionals, researchers, and minor-attracted individuals (<https://www.b4uact.org/dialog-on-therapy/>)
- Peer support groups for MAPs (<https://www.b4uact.org/attracted-to-minors/peer-support/>) and their families (<https://www.b4uact.org/attracted-to-minors/support-for-family-friends/>)