



Supporting Professionals to
Prevent Sexual Abuse

Welcome to

NOTA NEWS

NO. 92

SPRING 2023



Welcome to Issue 92 of NOTA News

- ANNA GLINSKI

Welcome to issue 92 of NOTA News, arriving just a few weeks before our Annual Conference in Cardiff and hopefully whetting your appetite for the array of key note presentation and workshops we have in stall for you.

Sadly, this issue brings news of the death of Janie Watson, a founding member of the NOTA Scotland Branch and a member of the Scottish Executive Committee from 1992 – 2018. Stewart Stobie, friend and colleague of Janie reminds us of her contributions to NOTA and the wider field.

This edition introduces the first of a series of articles we will be running over the coming year, written by Dave, a man who was convicted of sexual offences and who currently attends the Corbett Centre, an

Supporting Professionals to Prevent Sexual Abuse

Stay informed by visiting the NOTA website: www.nota.co.uk. For regular updates, News, Policies and Good Practices, NOTA Training Committee and Branch Events together with information on Publications and Resources

Full article continues on page 2 →

Welcome to Issue 92 of NOTA News

- ANNA GLINSKI



organisation you can read more about on pages 27-28. This article, and the ones that will follow, aim to explore the lived experiences of those who have offended (and who intend never to do so again) and help us, as professionals working in the field, gain valuable insights to inform our efforts towards prevention of offending and re-offending. Alongside this article, we hear about Lynsey Fenwick's research exploring experiences of the criminal justice system, of men under investigation and convicted of Child Sexual Exploitation Material offences; and, Pete Brown and colleagues' research on service users' desistance narratives post-treatment.

We also have a series of 4 articles by Emma Longfellow and colleagues at the National High Security Learning Disability Service and practitioners at SWAAY, focussing on neuro-diversity and sexual offending, exploring different angles on their work with those who have sexually offended. Other articles focussing on adult offending include research into stalking, by Nicolas Longpre and colleagues; research on serial rape by Margot Avella; trauma-focussed therapy in prisons by Lisa Wright and Mark Walton; and the importance of self care and reflective practice in undertaking this work, by Sunil Lad.

In relation to young people, we hear about Janelle Rabe and Lynne Cairns'

creative and fascinating workshop at the NOTA Scotland Conference, re-imagining harmful sexual behaviour in the context of constructions of childhood and policy developments in the field. Spencer Bailey goes on to explore professional responses to harmful sexual behaviour towards siblings, before David Russell describes the deeply unsettling phenomena of the 'Incel' movement, calling for it to be considered within public protection agendas.

The sheer breadth of work undertaken by the Lucy Faithfull Foundation and Stop It Now! is highlighted here too – from an overview of 30 years of perpetration prevention by Stop It Now!, to a summary of the next Faithfull paper which focusses on the indirect harm of online child sexual abuse, to an update on their work with young people to prevent harmful sexual behaviour.

In addition to branch and other updates, we conclude with an interview with esteemed psychologist and researcher, Dr Franca Cortini. I look forward very much to seeing as many of you as possible in Cardiff in May.

ANNA GLINSKI
Editor



NICHOLAS LONGPRÉ



EWA STEFANSKA



MARIA TACHMETZIDI PAPOUTSI

When the Myth of Apollo and Daphne becomes Reality: The relationship between stalking and sexual violence

-NICHOLAS LONGPRÉ, EWA STEFANSKA AND MARIA TACHMETZIDI PAPOUTSI

Our symposium at the NOTA Conference in May was divided into three talks, presented respectively by Dr Nicholas Longpré, Maria Tachmetzidi Papoutsis, MSc, and Dr Ewa Stefanska. These all focussed on the relationship between stalking and sexual violence with the aim of studying how they interact with each other, and how this interaction increases the risk of severe violence or deadly outcomes. This will allow empirical knowledge to focus on evidence-based prevention targets, to improve best practice and to potentially develop effective policies.

Stalking: Definition and Prevalence

Stalking can be defined as a pattern of fixated, repeated and unwanted behaviours, ranging from following, to contacting, to homicide, that cause a person to be afraid for his/her safety (White et al., 2020). It is the persistence and the level of intrusion that makes the behaviour criminal (Stefanska et al., 2021). It is estimated that between 8 and 15% of the population will be a victim of stalking at some point in their life, and that among those who have been a victim, up to 45% of women and 30% of men report they have been stalked by their ex-partner (Office for National Statistics, 2016). Furthermore, when we are looking at official data, stalking appears to be a gender-based offence, with the majority of stalkers being men, and a majority of victims being women. The pandemic has exacerbated the occurrence of gender-based violence, with women and girls being disproportionately impacted, which in turn has stretched available resources.

The Measurement and Risk Assessment of Individuals who have been Convicted of Stalking

While individuals who have been convicted of stalking are considered as different from individuals who have not been convicted, empirical evidence points toward the dimensional nature of stalking. In this talk, findings from a recent study by Longpré et al. (2022), who conducted taxometric analyses on a sample of 1032 participants, was presented. Analysis has revealed the dimensional nature of stalking, providing empirical support to the idea that stalking behaviours exist on a continuum. It also strengthened the validity of previous findings in nonclinical populations and their applications all along the continuum of severity.

Understanding stalking from a dimensional perspective provides support to study stalking in nonclinical populations, and scales that measure stalking should provide discrimination along the entire continuum rather than focusing on arbitrary thresholds (i.e., stalkers vs non-stalkers). With the dimensional nature of stalking empirically supported,

we need to move forward in the improvement of our understanding of the risk of violence and future-related offences, which should help to guide effective treatment strategies. There is currently a lack of treatment effectiveness studies (British Psychology Society, 2021), and identifying the level of risk thresholds should help to improve the development of effective prevention and treatment of stalking.

The Relationship between Stalking, Sexual Harassment, Sexual Coercion, and Dark Traits

Research has suggested a link between stalking and sexual violence, where those who perpetrate these offences have been found to share cognitions and personality traits. However, there is a lack of research on how these forms of violence are linked. In the second talk, findings from a recent study by Tachmetzidi Papoutsis and Longpré (2022), exploring the relationship between stalking, sexual harassment, sexual coercion and the Dark Tetrad (Machiavellianism, subclinical narcissism, subclinical psychopathy and everyday sadism), was presented. Analyses were conducted on a sample of 319 participants from the general population. While no significant differences were found between men and women in stalking perpetration, which is consistent with previous self-reported studies, men reported more sexually harassing and sexually coercive behaviours than women. Analyses revealed that psychopathy, sadism, narcissism and harassment mediated the relationship between the perpetration of stalking and coercive behaviours, and increases the risk of being coercive.

These results contribute towards the development of effective prevention strategies and the identification of risk factors that can explain the escalation of sexual violence. The high prevalence of lower manifestations of stalking and sexual violence in the general population raise awareness of the dimensional nature of these phenomena and guides prevention targets to stop the escalation by intervening on empirically based risk factors. The understanding of underlying psychological processes should guide the development of better strategies for prevention and intervention. In this regard, understanding the relationship between stalking, sexual violence and dark traits could increase efficiency in interventions; as such, adverse personality traits and cognitions, as well as sexual violence may be prioritised in intervention strategies in order to reduce the risk of future stalking behaviour.

The Relationship between Stalking and Sexual Homicide

Risk factors for intimate partner homicide (IPH) suggest that if the person who displays controlling

behaviours towards the victim, is especially sexually jealous, is stalking the victim and has perpetrated forced sex, the potential for the dangerousness of the situation increases. As such these indicators should be treated as warning signs of severe sexual violence. In the third talk, a sample of 350 men who have been convicted of sexual homicide (SH) against pubescent female victims (14 years old and over), including 71 men convicted of IPH, was analysed. Five clinical cases were presented, linking research to clinical concerns and practices.

Analyses revealed that 18% of IPH showed elements of stalking. However, because of the absence of witness statements, and due to the nature of the crime, the prevalence is possibly underestimated. Clinical cases revealed that when confronted with a case of SH/ IPH, the focus is usually on the sexual elements of these crimes, and the impact of stalking tends to be underestimated or simply ignored. This study emphasized the role that stalking can play in the escalation to severe sexual violence. Increasing awareness on this dangerous relationship could contribute towards the development of effective prevention strategies for femicide as well as treatment targets.

Conclusion

Our upcoming research projects are moving towards focussing on the population of those who engage in stalking behaviour, including those in prisons. We aim to replicate and extend current findings in order to study stalking and sexual violence in the context of intimate partner violence. The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), in partnership with Police forces, has identified sexual violence, domestic abuse, stalking and harassment as highly concerning and have stressed the need for new research and evidence-based approaches to tackle these forms of violence. We are proposing to study these forms of violence through a holistic approach that will focus both on empirical analytical strategies and evidence-based prevention and treatment propositions.

DR NICHOLAS LONGPRÉ

**Senior Lecturer & Programme Leader (MSc)
School of Law, Criminology & Policing, Edge Hill
University**

DR EWA STEFANSKA

**Senior Lecturer & Forensic Psychologist
Department of Psychology, University of
Greenwich**

MARIA TACHMETZIDI PAPOUTSI

**MSc Forensic Psychology
School of Psychology, University of
Roehampton**