

CHAPTER 13

Antisocial Trajectories of Sexual Aggressors of Women

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► Introduction

Only recently have criminologists started paying closer attention to the study of sex offenders. This follows from a long-standing tradition in criminology that avoids the singling out of specific offense types for theoretical consideration. From a criminological perspective, sexual aggression against women is considered to be another manifestation of a chronic antisocial tendency that shares the same underlying causes as other serious and violent offending. However, decades of clinical research with sex aggressors of women has demonstrated that as a group, these individuals are characterized by substantial heterogeneity across various domains including: their offense characteristics and clinical features (e.g., 15, 16, 21), modus operandi (e.g., 3, 20), and even risk of recidivism (e.g., 13, 18, 46). Therefore a critical question that needs to be addressed by criminologists is whether or not

their antisocial development is an exception to the otherwise extensive heterogeneity that characterizes these offenders' backgrounds and offenses. From a developmental criminology approach, this chapter reviews the theoretical rationale and empirical evidence for how the development of antisocial behavior over the life-course is related to different aspects of sexual and criminal activity in adult sexual aggressors of women.

► The Developmental Criminology Approach

Developmental criminology is concerned with patterns of stability and change in antisocial behavior over time and the risk factors associated with these behavioral patterns (27). More specifically, central to this approach is explaining processes such as: (1) onset of

antisocial behavior; (2) persistence of antisocial behavior; and, (3) desistance from antisocial behavior. First, the timing of onset of delinquency and antisocial behavior has been a central focus of developmental models. Early onset (i.e., childhood onset) of antisocial behavior is related to the persistence of serious and violent offending over the life course (e.g., 39, 43). Second, another important focus of the developmental approach is to understand different sequences in antisocial behavior over time, or, patterns in different types of delinquent behaviors (27). For example, not all early-onset offenders engage in a stable pattern of serious and violent offending into old age (i.e., persistence); some have intermittent offending patterns depending on events in their lives. Finally, desistance refers to the process by which the frequency of antisocial behaviors slows down and the variety of antisocial behaviors is reduced over the life-course (30). One way to conceptualize and visualize these processes is by examining trajectories of antisocial or offending behaviors. Such trajectories help to identify systematic changes of the different onset, persistence and desistance processes (27). Furthermore, developmental approaches emphasize different risk factors to explain offending according to different antisocial trajectories (e.g., 39, 42, 43).

One of the most well-known developmental models of antisocial behavior is Moffitt's (40) dual taxonomy that differentiates between early-onset (i.e., life-course persistent) and adolescent-onset (i.e., adolescent-limited) offenders. Early-onset offenders (between approximately 5% and 10% of males in the general population) are characterized by the initiation of antisocial behavior in childhood, and its persistence, diversification, and escalation to more serious forms of antisocial behavior with age. The risk factors for this antisocial trajectory involve neuropsychological (e.g., verbal, attention) and psychosocial (e.g., poor parenting) deficits, and, environmental adversities (e.g., low socioeconomic status) (e.g., 10, 26, 39, 45, 50). In effect, the early and successive

interactions between risk factors across these domains cascade into subsequent developmental periods, resulting in a state of cumulative disadvantage that contributes to the persistence of antisocial behavior and offending for these individuals (10, 39). Furthermore, offenders characterized by an early-onset antisocial trajectory are disproportionately responsible for incidents of serious and violent offending throughout youth and in adulthood (e.g., 41).

Adolescent-onset offenders (approximately 45% of males in the general population), on the other hand, are characterized by the onset of antisocial behavior in adolescence and its desistance by early adulthood. The risk factors operating for this antisocial trajectory are more contextual in nature and reflect the gap between biological maturity and the adoption of adult roles and behaviors (26, 39). For example, the role of peer influence and peer delinquency are more central causes of offending behavior of individuals on the adolescent-onset trajectory. The offending of individuals on an adolescent-onset trajectory is typically group-oriented and less serious in nature, although it can at times reflect the variety and frequency of offending characterized by the early-onset trajectory. The key feature that distinguishes the adolescent-onset trajectory in terms of developmental course is that it is typically followed by the termination of antisocial behavior in young adulthood, a time when the gap between adult status and the means to achieve related prosocial goals narrows. In other words, most individuals characterized by this antisocial trajectory typically desist from antisocial behavior when they reach adulthood. However, while prospective longitudinal studies have demonstrated that desistance is the norm for these adolescent-onset offenders, they have also shown that some may persist, especially in cases where the effects of their adolescent delinquency had long-lasting negative implications on their prosocial readjustment (e.g., a criminal record, drug addiction) leading to maladaptive outcomes in adulthood (e.g., substance abuse, financial problems) (41).

► The Developmental Approach and Sexual Aggressors of Women

From a developmental perspective, a key question pertaining to sex offenders is how different life stages, beginning in childhood, impact the onset and persistence of sexually aggressive behavior. In this regard, when sexual aggression has been incorporated into developmental models of antisocial behavior, it is considered to be a behavioral manifestation of individuals who are chronically antisocial. For example, Elliott (12) in the National Youth Study showed that sexual assault was almost always preceded by nonsexual assault in the criminal histories of offenders. In the classic Philadelphia birth cohort, Tracy, Wolfgang, and Figlio (52) showed that approximately 5% of offenders were responsible for 80% of total arrests for rape up to age 18. In the Dunedin birth cohort in New Zealand, early-onset offenders (i.e., those with a childhood onset of antisocial behavior that escalates, diversifies, and persists across developmental periods into adulthood) were responsible for nearly two-thirds of convictions for sex offenses against women up to age 26 (41). Indeed, several empirical studies have supported the notion that rape, in particular, is a manifestation of early-onset chronic antisociality (4, 8, 9, 34).

However, despite the link between early-onset antisociality and sex offending, there is also evidence that sex offending is associated with a range of different antisocial/offending trajectories. For example, Seto and Barbaree (47) and Lalumière et al. (23), introduced the evolutionary psychological concept of mating effort to theoretically explain how different antisocial trajectories might lead to sexual aggression. Mating effort refers to the behavioral strategies employed to acquire sexual opportunities and maintain sexual relationships (51). Building on Moffitt's (39) developmental framework, they hypothesized that for early-onset antisocial males, the accumulation of early risk factors would make

these individuals unlikely to succeed in finding desirable partners later in life. For example, the accumulation of individual (e.g. neuropsychological deficits) and environmental (e.g., abusive family contexts) risk factors and their adverse consequences on outcomes in adulthood, such as prosocial stable employment, wealth, and status, would restrict the success of some of these individuals to acquire sexual encounters and maintain stable relationships. Subsequently, compared to individuals with a higher "mate value" (e.g., employment, wealth, and status), early-onset antisocial males would be in a state of competitive disadvantage, and therefore, find themselves more likely to use coercive and aggressive tactics to acquire sexual relations.

At the same time, Lalumière et al. (23) hypothesized that for some individuals characterized by an early-onset antisocial trajectory (i.e., a pattern of early-onset, persistent, and versatile offending), sexual aggression represents a different subset of causal factors. In effect, rather than an inability to procure prosocial sexual opportunities as a result of the accumulation of early deficits, some individuals purposely employ tactics such as deceit, manipulation, grandiosity, coercion and aggression to initiate sexual opportunities and increase the frequency of their sexual experiences. Lalumière et al. (23) therefore hypothesized that these are individuals characterized by psychopathy, and that their sexual aggression represents the manifestation of an alternative strategy to acquire multiple sexual partners, rather than competitive disadvantage.

Seto and Barbaree (47) and Lalumière et al. (23) also hypothesized that sexual aggression is a possible outcome for individuals characterized by an adolescent-onset antisocial trajectory. This has been referred to as the "young male syndrome" whereby sexual aggression occurs in the context of adolescent competition for reproductively relevant goals such as status, resources, and mates (54). The prevalence of "date-rape" in the adolescent and young adulthood years could be explained by the male desire to adopt adult sexual roles in the face of social maturational barriers to do so (e.g., lack

of money, job, status, etc.). Furthermore, as the intensity of competition is eventually replaced with positive future prospects such as employment, wealth, and status, the likelihood of employing coercive and aggressive tactics would decline for most adolescent-onset antisocial males. Studies with male college-undergraduate students (i.e., unlikely to include early-onset antisocial males) have produced evidence that sexually coercive college males tended to exhibit higher levels of delinquency in youth than their noncoercive counterparts (e.g., 36). In addition, other evidence also suggests that some adolescent-onset offenders are at risk of violence against women in the intimate partner context later in life (32, 55).

► Developmental Models of Sexual Aggression Against Women

In order to explore how different antisocial trajectories might be related to the development of sexual aggression, in a series of studies, Cale and colleagues examined patterns in the antisocial development in youth of adult sexual aggressors of women (8, 6, 7). These studies were based on a sample of over 200 predominantly white incarcerated adult sex offenders in a Canadian maximum security institution who committed a sexual offense against an adult female. Based on offender self-reported data, they investigated patterns of behavioral problems (e.g., frequent lying, being rebellious, problems controlling one's temper, running away or being truant, and risky behaviors that endanger others or oneself), nonviolent delinquency (e.g., minor and major theft, robbery, breaking and entering, drug trafficking, fire setting, and property destruction), and violent delinquency (e.g., homicide, threats and intimidation, armed robbery, use of a weapon, nonsexual assault, and sexual assault) across two developmental periods, childhood (0–12 years old) and adolescence (13–17 years old), among these men. Similar to the theoretical

models explained previously, they proposed there are multiple antisocial trajectories that lead to sexual aggression in adulthood. Two main antisocial trajectories identified by Cale et al. (8) were based on the timing of onset of antisocial behavior in youth of adult sexual aggressors of women. The first was the *early-onset antisocial trajectory* (i.e., the childhood onset of behavioral problems and delinquency; approximately 55% of incarcerated adult sexual aggressors of women) (see **Table 13.1**), and was further broken down into three distinct subtrajectories. The second was the *late-onset antisocial trajectory* (i.e., adolescent onset of behavioral problems and delinquency; approximately 45% of incarcerated adult sexual aggressors of women) (see **Table 13.2**) and consisted of two subtrajectories.

The early-onset antisocial subtrajectories are presented in Table 13.1. The first, the *stable-low trajectory*, involved behavioral problems in childhood that persisted into adolescence. In other words, this reflected a pattern of stable, low-level behavioral problems in youth. The second, the *escalation subtrajectory*, was characterized by behavioral problems and/or minor delinquency in childhood, and serious and violent delinquency in adolescence. Therefore, this pattern of antisocial behavior in youth was characterized by a pattern of escalation to more serious delinquency in adolescence. The third, the *stable-high subtrajectory*, was characterized by serious and violent delinquency in childhood and serious and violent delinquency in adolescence, therefore, reflecting a stable and high pattern of antisocial behavior in youth.

The two late-onset antisocial subtrajectories are presented in Table 13.2. The first, the *non-delinquent subtrajectory*, was characterized by no evidence of behavioral problems or delinquency in childhood, with very minor behavioral problems in adolescence. The second, the *initiation subtrajectory*, also was not characterized by any evidence of behavioral problems or delinquency in childhood, but evidence of serious delinquency in adolescence.

Importantly, from a developmental perspective, these trajectories are not uncommon

TABLE 13.1 Characteristics of the Early-Onset Antisocial Trajectory of Adult Sexual Aggressors of Women

	Subtrajectory	Childhood Behavior	Adolescent Behavior	Sexual Development	Criminal Activity in Adulthood
Early-onset trajectory of adult sexual aggressors of women	Stable-low trajectory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Behavioral problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Behavioral problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early-onset sexual behavior in adolescence* High number of female sexual partners* High frequency of sexual contact/episodes* High sex drive* Frequent sexual fantasizing* High self-perception of sexual competence Presence of stable relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low-level versatile offending Early-30s onset sex offending
	Escalation trajectory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Behavioral problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nonviolent delinquency Violent delinquency 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High-level versatile and violent offending Mid-to-late-20s onset sex offending Violent/sexual recidivism
	Aggravation trajectory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Behavioral problems Nonviolent delinquency Violent delinquency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Behavioral problems Nonviolent delinquency Violent delinquency 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High-level versatile and violent offending Mid-to-late-20s onset sex offending

* compared to the late-onset antisocial trajectory

TABLE 13.2 Characteristics of the Late-Onset Antisocial Trajectory of Adult Sexual Aggressors of Women (*Continued*)

	Subtrajectory	Childhood Behavior	Adolescent Behavior	Sexual Development	Criminal Activity in Adulthood
Late-onset trajectory of adult sexual aggressors of women	Nondelinquent trajectory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No evidence of behavioral problems or delinquency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Behavioral problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Later-onset sexual behavior in adolescence* Lower number of female sexual partners* Lower frequency of sexual contact/episodes* Lower sex drive* Less frequent sexual fantasizing* High self-perception of sexual competence Presence of stable relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sporadic/intermittent typically nonviolent offending Mid-30s onset sex offending
	Initiation trajectory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No evidence of behavioral problems or delinquency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Behavioral problems Nonviolent delinquency Some violent delinquency 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sporadic/intermittent typically nonviolent offending Early-30s onset sex offending

* compared to the early-onset antisocial trajectory

phenomenon. In fact these diverse patterns have been described in the criminological scientific literature describing the heterogeneity of general delinquent/offending trajectories in adolescence and adulthood (2, 29 39, 44). Thus, these findings suggest that sexual offending in adulthood may be associated with a range of antisocial trajectories, including, but not limited to, the prototypical early-onset antisocial trajectory. This idea is discussed in depth next.

► The Early-Onset Antisocial Trajectory of Adult Sexual Aggressors of Women

In the study by Cale et al. (8), in the childhood period, adult sexual aggressors of women characterized by an early-onset antisocial trajectory were, at a minimum, characterized by behavioral problems, and others exhibited more severe forms of nonviolent and violent delinquency. While some (i.e., *escalation* and *stable-high subtrajectories*) were characterized by the prototypic unfolding of behavioral problems in childhood leading to serious and violent delinquency in adolescence, others were characterized by different patterns in the unfolding of antisocial behavior within an early-onset antisocial trajectory. For example, some (i.e., the *stable-low subtrajectory*) did not escalate to more serious forms of delinquency into adolescence. Additionally, not all of those who engaged in serious and violent behavior as children exhibited a stable pattern of high-level antisocial behavior over time. In effect, while different patterns characterized the developmental course of delinquency into adolescence, the one common theme of an early-onset antisocial trajectory of adult sexual aggressors of women was that behavioral problems and delinquency emerged in the childhood period.

These developmental patterns of behavioral problems that begin early in life have been conceptualized in various ways; Moffitt (39) coined

the term the “life-course persistent syndrome,” Loeber and Farrington (28) “serious and violent juvenile offenders,” Loeber & Farrington, (29) “child delinquents,” among others. Importantly, the evidence uncovered in the studies of Cale and colleagues in terms of the behavioral similarities within the early-onset antisocial trajectory was in line with these conceptualizations of the development of serious and violent offending that emerges from early involvement in a variety of antisocial behaviors. The developmental backgrounds of these sexual aggressors of women (i.e., childhood and adolescent behavior problems and delinquency) suggest the continuity of a wide range of antisocial and delinquent behaviors, with varying degrees of severity.

At the same time, this is not to suggest that all early-onset or conduct-disordered serious and violent youth will escalate to sexual aggression in adulthood, but rather, that there is a subtrajectory (or possibly different subtrajectories) of this offender type that do. Currently, however, the proportion of juvenile delinquents that do escalate to sexual aggression in adulthood remains unclear because sexual aggression in adulthood has not typically been examined using a prospective longitudinal, developmental framework. In a recent study of serious and violent incarcerated young offenders, McCuish, Lussier, and Corrado (38) observed that only around 5% had sexual offenses in young adulthood up to age 23.

The Early-Onset Antisocial Trajectory and Sexual Development

Adult sexual aggressors of women who are characterized by an early-onset antisocial trajectory can also be distinguished by an early-onset, and high frequency of noncriminal sexual behaviors. Cale and Lussier (6) observed that these early-onset antisocial individuals initiated sexual intercourse and contacts earlier than those characterized by a late-onset antisocial trajectory, invested more time in pursuing sexual partners and/or engaging in sexually related

activities, such as viewing pornography, and were characterized by frequent sexual fantasizing in adolescence. By adulthood, these individuals continued to invest substantially more time in pursuing sexual activities (e.g., frequenting strip clubs, watching pornography) and sexual fantasizing, and, also reported far more sexual partners. In other words, by adulthood, sexual aggressors of women characterized by an early-onset antisocial trajectory exhibited a high sex drive, accompanied by higher mating effort in comparison to their late-onset counterparts. Importantly, this sexual behavioral pattern suggests that these individuals were not motivated to commit an act of sexual aggression due to an enduring inability to access consensual partners, or underlying difficulties procuring sexual conquests (47). To the contrary, they were sexually promiscuous and displayed a tendency to pursue a wide variety of sexual partners and encounters (5). This was further reinforced by the fact that the sexual criminal activity of these men in adulthood represented a minority of their overall criminal repertoire, and was by no means their primary means of achieving sexual encounters.

Therefore, this suggests that some adult sexual aggressors of women characterized by an early-onset antisocial trajectory do not necessarily exhibit low social and sexual competence. Furthermore, this also suggests that their sexual crimes are not necessarily motivated by long-lasting difficulties finding a sexual partner, but rather a combination of a high sexual drive and a desire for partner diversity/sexual promiscuity (5, 22, 24). In effect, these are individuals who are quick to take advantage of sexual opportunities when they arise. Furthermore, such opportunities may look quite different in the lives of males who are seriously antisocial compared to those who are not. For example, involvement in antisocial lifestyles in adulthood might contribute to situations characterized by unique opportunities to take advantage of sexual encounters. Some examples might include situations such as the repayment of drug debts with sex, or the commission of a rape against a vulnerable woman during a break

and entry when the initial motive of the crime was not sexual (34).

The Early-Onset Antisocial Trajectory and Adult Criminal Careers

In adulthood, the criminal careers of those characterized by an early-onset antisocial trajectory can best be described overall as chronic, diversified, and violent. These individuals were also more likely to commit violent rather than sexual crimes. By early adulthood, those characterized by an early-onset antisocial trajectory already had extensive contacts with the criminal justice system, typically characterized first by nonviolent crimes, followed by violent crimes, and eventually sexual crimes (8). These men had extensive contacts with the criminal justice system before the commission of their first sexual crime, and committed a wide range of offenses, only some of which were sexual (1, 48, 49). Therefore, their overall criminal activity in adulthood reflected the continuity of a long-lasting pattern of antisocial behavior beginning in childhood that persisted and diversified as these individuals aged (14, 19, 34, 35).

Additionally, Cale and Lussier (7) observed that the antisocial background and extensive adult criminal careers of sexual aggressors of women characterized by an early-onset antisocial trajectory also placed them at a higher risk of violent and sexual reoffending. More specifically, an early-onset antisocial trajectory was associated with an increased likelihood of violent and sexual crimes reoffending in adulthood. Furthermore, this was particularly the case for individuals characterized by an *escalation subtrajectory* whose antisocial development reflected a pattern of escalation from minor/moderate antisocial behavior in childhood to serious and violent antisocial behavior in adolescence. In effect, this escalation pattern continued well into adulthood for men characterized by this particular antisocial subtrajectory.

Overview of the Early-Onset Antisocial Trajectory of Adult Sexual Aggressors of Women

Table 13.1 provides an overview of the characteristics of the early-onset antisocial trajectory of adult sexual aggressors of women. Overall, this trajectory is best characterized by the continuity of antisocial behavioral manifestations over the life-course in four key ways. First, and foremost, this continuity in antisocial behavior is demonstrated across the adolescence-adulthood transition; delinquency and antisocial behavior in youth is related to criminal activity in adulthood. Second, antisocial behavior spills over into the sexual lives of these men, sometimes resulting in sexual offenses, demonstrating the continuity of antisocial behavior across different life domains. Third, there is continuity across types of criminal activity given that sexual criminal activity in adulthood is embedded in a pattern of early-onset, high frequency, and versatile offending, of which sexual crimes represent a small component. Finally, this trajectory is characterized by prospective continuity; it is associated with a higher likelihood of violent and sexual recidivism in adulthood compared to those characterized by a late-onset antisocial trajectory.

Importantly, the continuity of antisocial behavior over the life-course remains a contentious point of debate in the scientific literature (11, 25). Criminal careers are characterized by much intermittency in offending over the life-course—even among serious and violent offenders. The research discussed previously further highlights the importance of this debate in the narrower field of research on sexual violence, and more specifically, in terms of antisocial trajectories of adult sexual aggressors of women. In effect, for the early-onset antisocial trajectory, the key issue is to determine whether an underlying trait or propensity is at work for these offenders that is stable and persistent, and, whether it governs their human development (i.e., lifestyles), social

adaptation (i.e., criminal activities and violence), and sexual behaviors. Lussier et al. (34) argued that for sexual aggressors of women in general, continuity in criminal careers reflected low self-control. Others have hypothesized that different processes may be at work, for example, either neuropsychological deficits (e.g., 4) or psychopathy (e.g., 23). Therefore, three important questions related to the continuity of antisocial behavior in the backgrounds of sexual aggressors of women include whether there are links between: (1) low self-control and an early-onset antisocial trajectory; (2) neuropsychological deficits and an early-onset antisocial trajectory; and, (3) psychopathy and an early-onset antisocial trajectory.

► The Late-Onset Trajectory of Adult Sexual Aggressors of Women

In childhood, adult sexual aggressors of women characterized by a late-onset antisocial trajectory displayed rather limited evidence of any enduring behavioral problems and delinquency (8, see Table 2). Furthermore, the absence of childhood behavioral problems and any delinquency also extended into adolescence for some of these individuals, who at that point displayed minor behavioral problems such as difficulties with authority, recklessness, and acting out behaviors. Others, however, became involved in serious nonviolent delinquency (e.g., theft, property crime, vandalism), and some, albeit few, engaged in violent delinquency as well. Prospective longitudinal studies based on the general population of males have indicated that just under half of male youth participate in these types of delinquent behaviors (e.g., 26, 39). This pattern of adolescent/late-onset delinquent behavior has typically been explained in terms of reflecting the gap between biological maturity

and adolescent status, representing the inability to acquire status and resources and participate in adult-oriented activities (39). In this regard, delinquent peer associations and contextual risk factors such as tenuous bonding with adult authority figures have been hypothesized as some of the key risk factors associated with this pattern of delinquent behavior. Furthermore, these late-onset antisocial individuals have also been hypothesized to mimic the behaviors of individuals characterized by an early-onset antisocial trajectory in other ways including noncriminal adult-oriented activities, such as engaging in sexual behaviors (39).

The Late-Onset Trajectory and Sexual Development

In terms of noncriminal sexual behaviors, Cale and Lussier (6) observed that adult sexual aggressors of women characterized by a late-onset antisocial trajectory demonstrated parallel patterns, in some respects, to those characterized by an early-onset trajectory. While individuals characterized by a late-onset trajectory exhibited significantly lower levels of sexual drive and mating effort than those characterized by an early-onset trajectory, these differences were less pronounced for aspects of their mating effort. For example, the initiation of their sexual encounters in adolescence (i.e., 15 years old on average) followed that of the early-onset trajectory by approximately one year (i.e., 14 years old on average) (6). In addition, their self-perceptions of sexual competence and overall number of stable relationships did not differ from their early-onset counterparts. Therefore, in terms of their sexual behavioral patterns, those on a late-onset trajectory tended to follow, and parallel, sexual behavioral patterns of those on an early-onset trajectory. This suggests that like their offending in adolescence, the process of mimicking the behaviors of their early-onset counterparts was also at work in the context of their sexual behavior. Indeed, this expression of sexuality in adolescence coincides with the hypothesis that these individuals sought to

adopt adult roles to preemptively resolve the gap between their biological maturity and social status (39, 40, 45).

The Late-Onset Antisocial Trajectory and Adult Criminal Careers

In terms of the continuity between adolescent and adulthood offending, by young adulthood when biological and social maturity coincide, desistance is typically the norm for adolescent-onset type offenders (39). At the same time, adolescent-onset antisocial involvement for some individuals has also been observed to result in the continuity of antisocial behavior when the consequences of their delinquency spill over into adulthood. In the studies by Cale and colleagues, a high proportion of the adult sexual aggressors of women were characterized by a late-onset antisocial trajectory (i.e., approximately 45%). While this seems surprising considering these were all federally incarcerated sex offenders, important patterns were uncovered that might shed some insight into these findings. First, those characterized by a late-onset antisocial trajectory experienced a substantial lull between their adolescent delinquency and adult criminal careers; they typically initiated their adulthood criminal activity well into their mid-20s. Therefore, their antisocial behavior did not continue directly from adolescence to adulthood. Second, a parallel pattern emerged to their early-onset counterparts, albeit to a far lesser extent, regarding the onset of types of offending in adulthood. Specifically, nonviolent offending preceded violent offending, which was followed by their sexual offending. In spite of this general pattern, the volume of their offending was substantially less than their early-onset counterparts, and their adulthood criminal careers can be succinctly described as intermittent.

One explanation for these patterns maintains that these individuals might have continued their involvement in antisocial behavior beyond adolescence if they became ensnared in

an antisocial lifestyle (i.e., incarceration, school dropout, drug and alcohol abuse and addiction, etc.; 41). However, the break in the continuity of their antisocial behavior between adolescence and adulthood, its intermittent nature in adulthood, and their involvement in sex offending, require further explanation. Seto and Barbaree (47) and Lalumière et al. (23) hypothesized that individuals characterized by a late-onset trajectory might use coercive tactics to obtain sexual encounters given episodic difficulties in finding a sexual partner. While this hypothesis was based on the period of adolescence, it may also provide some insight into the adulthood period given the findings discussed previously. Therefore, an alternative set of risk factors for offending, and sexual aggression specifically, might explain the respective criminal career patterns of those on a late-onset antisocial trajectory. Here, it is possible that offending might be better explained by contextual and circumstantial influences, rather than an underlying propensity for antisocial behavior. For example, periods of intense negative moods, drug and/or alcohol use, and/or interpersonal conflicts such as separation or divorce might become powerful disinhibitors for these individuals, leading to nonviolent, violent, and in some cases, sexual offenses (17).

Importantly, answers to these questions may also provide critical insight into the assessment of the risk of reoffending for sexual aggressors of women. Not surprisingly, given their limited and intermittent involvement in adulthood offending, Cale and Lussier (7) observed that those characterized by a late-onset antisocial trajectory were significantly less likely to reoffend violently or sexually in adulthood compared to their early-onset counterparts. In addition, they were more likely to remain in the community for longer periods of time without reoffending. In other words, these offenders fared substantially better after their prison release than those characterized by an early-onset antisocial trajectory. This suggests that in spite of the occasional nature of their criminal offending in adulthood this group apparently coped better

with community reentry and reintegration. Importantly, however, given their intermittent criminal activity, it stands to reason that current risk assessment methods of sexual reoffending are not well suited to accurately capture the risk that characterizes this specific subgroup of individuals. A key reason for this is because risk assessment instruments are applied in a more or less similar manner across all types of sex offender. Furthermore, many risk assessment instruments emphasize *static risk factors* (i.e., historical risk factors that cannot be changed), such as the number of prior convictions, rather than developmentally informed risk factors (e.g., antisocial trajectories) and dynamic risk factors (i.e., circumstantial risk factors that can be targeted by treatment) such as alcohol and drug abuse. One possibility is that unique static and dynamic risk factors for sex offending may differ according to different antisocial trajectories of adult sex offenders.

Overview of the Late-Onset Antisocial Trajectory of Adult Sexual Aggressors of Women

Table 13.2 provides an overview of the characteristics of the late-onset antisocial trajectory of adult sexual aggressors of women. Individuals characterized by a late-onset antisocial trajectory do not display a strong pattern of continuity in antisocial behavior suggesting that the causes of their sex offending may be different compared to their early-onset counterparts. The implications of this are even more pronounced considering nearly half of the federally convicted adult sexual aggressors of women were characterized by a late-onset antisocial trajectory in the studies conducted by Cale and colleagues. Given the current state of the developmental literature on sexual aggression, these individuals pose substantial theoretical challenges to current developmental conceptualizations of sexual aggressors of women. The research discussed in this chapter suggests that the basis for the distinctiveness of a late-onset antisocial trajectory

is substantially different from that of an early-onset antisocial trajectory when it comes to adult sexual aggressors of women. Importantly, therefore, the question as to whether a unique theoretical explanation of sex offenders following a late-onset antisocial trajectory is required deserves important attention.

► Conclusion

This chapter highlighted important complexities in the antisocial development of adult sexual aggressors of women. These complexities were conceptualized as antisocial trajectories and can be summarized as follows. First, there are multiple antisocial trajectories that characterize adult sexual aggressors of women. There is substantial evidence for the hypothesis that an early-onset antisocial trajectory beginning in childhood, that persists, escalates, and diversifies through adolescence and up to adulthood characterizes some sexual aggressors of women. On the other hand, there is also evidence for the hypothesis that many sexual aggressors of women do not follow this trajectory of antisocial development. For some, their antisocial behavior starts later and they have minimal criminal involvement, contrary to many developmental conceptualizations of adult sexual aggressors of women. Second, there are dynamic patterns of antisocial development in the backgrounds of adult sexual aggressors of women. Some of these men are characterized by a pattern of stable serious and persistent antisocial behavior and others by antisocial behavior that gets more serious over time. Yet, others are characterized by intermittent and sporadic antisocial behavior and offending over the course of their lives. Third, these patterns are related to the nature and extent of criminal activity in adulthood, including recidivism. At least for some sexual aggressors of women, there is marked continuity in both their nonsexual and sexual offending over the life-course. Again, for many others there is not. Finally, different patterns in antisocial development are associated with noncriminal

sexual behavior of these men in adolescence and adulthood. For some of these men, their sexual lifestyles reflect a pattern of antisocial sexuality that involves the use of antisocial behaviors (e.g., lying, deception, coercion, and aggression) to acquire sexual opportunities (31, 37, 53).

In effect, there are multiple pathways to sexual aggression in adulthood potentially characterized by different underlying causal factors. It is most important to remember that sexual offenses are, first and foremost, crimes in which the underlying common characteristic is the absence of consent on the part of the victim, rather than some enduring form of sexual deviance. Beyond this, the nature of sexual crimes and the specific acts that are committed in this context varies dramatically. Some sex offenses involve sexual deviance such as highly planned predatory behaviors and sexualized violence involving sadism and humiliation, for example. For many if not most others, the sexual behaviors committed in offenses are far less remarkable. Rather, it is the use of coercion and aggression to achieve these sexual encounters that makes them crimes; these sex offenses reflect the manifestation of a general antisocial tendency. This antisocial tendency reflects a broader pattern of violating the rights of others that spills over into the sexual domain of some men's lives. From this perspective, it is possible to conceive of numerous different contexts in which sexual aggression may emerge in the lives of men on different antisocial trajectories, such as in the context of interpersonal relationships, or in the courtship/dating process in the face of rejection or blocked opportunities. Importantly, understanding the developmental course of antisocial behavior and how it is related to different sex offenses is crucial to inform effective prevention and intervention programs and risk assessment tools (33).

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