Ponencia

PEDOPHILIA AND SEXUAL OFFENDING AGAINST CHILDREN: HOW TO PREVENT CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE AND THE USE OF CHILD ABUSIVE IMAGES?

Pedofilia y agresores sexuales de personas menores de edad: ¿cómo prevenir el abuso sexual infantil y el uso de imágenes de abuso sexual infantil?

Dr. Klaus M. Beier,
Institute of Sexology and Sexual Medicine, Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin, Germany.

Abstract

Pedophilia – a sexual preference for the body scheme of prepubescent children – is defined as a disorder within the International Classification of Diseases (ICD) of the World Health Organization as well as within the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) of the American Psychiatric Association. Contrary to popular belief, not all sex offenders who target children are pedophiles, and not all pedophiles commit sexual offences. But quite obviously pedophilia is an emotionally charged and controversial topic, which might be an explanation for putting it out of focus within the Health Care System. Mental health and criminal justice professionals are mostly and worldwide not well trained in terms of assessment methods and intervention techniques available to develop and implement effective policies and practices. This is an obstacle for prevention, i.e. proactive strategies to protect children from child sexual abuse and sexual exploitation by online offenses, such as the consumption or distribution of child abusive images (so-called child pornography), which emphasizes the internationally relevant dimension of the issue. The presentation will address key concerns and questions in dealing with this clinical population and offer insights into a primary prevention approach developed in Germany.

Research Area and Accomplishments

Prof. Beier is head of the Institute of Sexology and Sexual Medicine at the Charité (University Clinic of Berlin) and specialized in sexual medicine. He is dedicated to research and training in sexology,
organizing official post graduate courses for physicians and psychologists in this field. His main focus in research is forensic sexology, for a long time in particular follow-up studies of previously expert-evaluated sex offenders.

His current research focuses on the prevention of child sexual abuse. The goal is to encourage self-identified undetected pedophiles and hebephiles to seek professional help in order to avoid committing child sexual abuse or so-called child pornography offences. For this purpose, in 2005, he initiated the “Prevention Project Dunkelfeld” (at the beginning exclusively funded by the VolkswagenStiftung) which is now extended to 10 additional locations all over Germany (www.dont-offend.org). This project has been awarded several national prices. With government support, Prof. Beier is currently expanding the prevention approach in Berlin to juveniles aged between 12 and 18, who display sexually deviant behavior towards and/or phantasies about the body image of children (www.just-dreaming-of-them.org).

Professor Beier is in charge of the Outpatient Clinic of the Institute which offers assessment and treatment for the full range of sexual disorders and gender dysphoria. He is a member of the International Academy of Sex Research, president of the German Society for Sexual Medicine, Sex Therapy and Sexology, founder of the German scientific journal “Sexuologie” and reviewer of several international journals. His last English book publication was “Sexual Medicine in Clinical Practice” (together with K. Loewit, Springer: New York 2013)

Contact
Klaus M. Beier, MD, PhD
Professor, Director
Institute of Sexology and Sexual Medicine
Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin
Luisenstraße 57, 10117 Berlin, Germany / EU
e-mail: klaus.beier@charite.de
websites: www.sexualmedizin.charite.de;
www.dont-offend.org; www.just-dreaming-of-them.org
phone: (0049) 30 450 529 301
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