A Meta-analysis of Recidivism Rates Among Individuals Who Commit Child Sexual Exploitation Material (CSEM) Offending

Serra Baskurt, Kelly M. Babchishin, & Michael C. Seto

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Safer Society

Sexually Harmful Behaviours Research Lab

The Le Royal
Mental Health - Care & Research
Santé mentale - Soins et recherche

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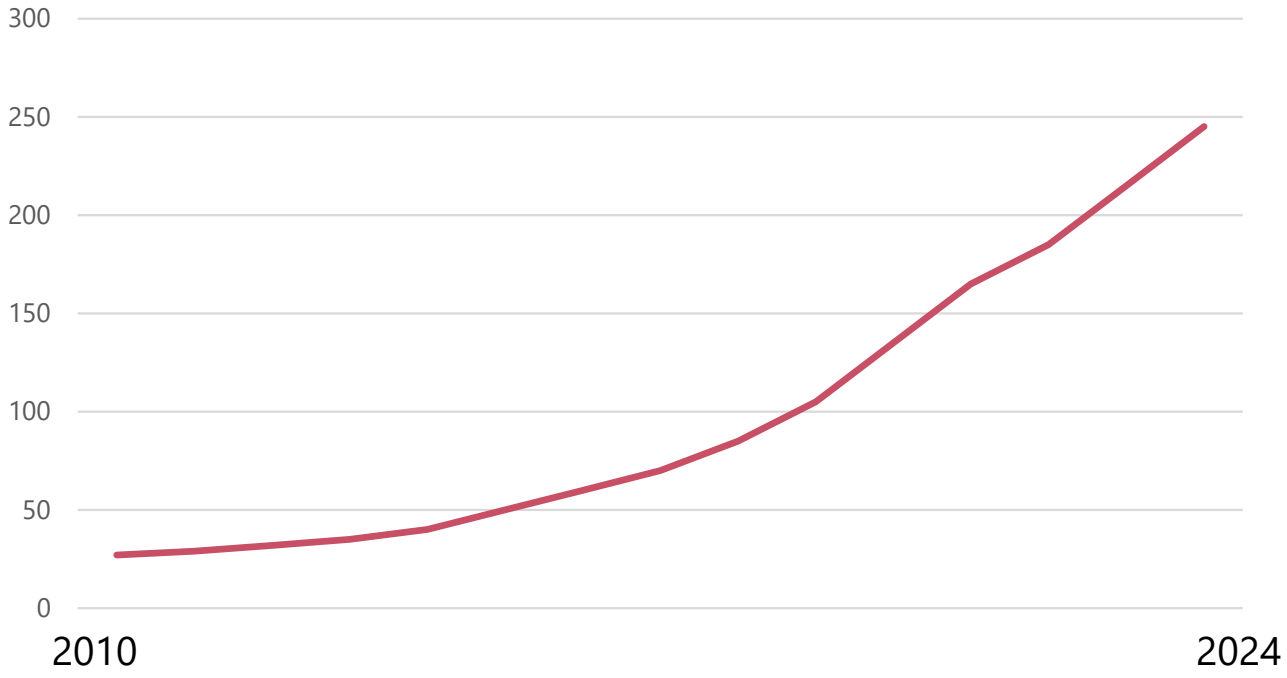
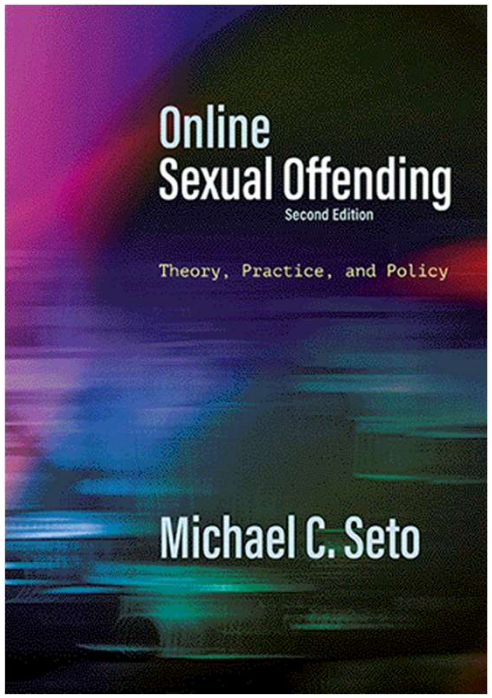
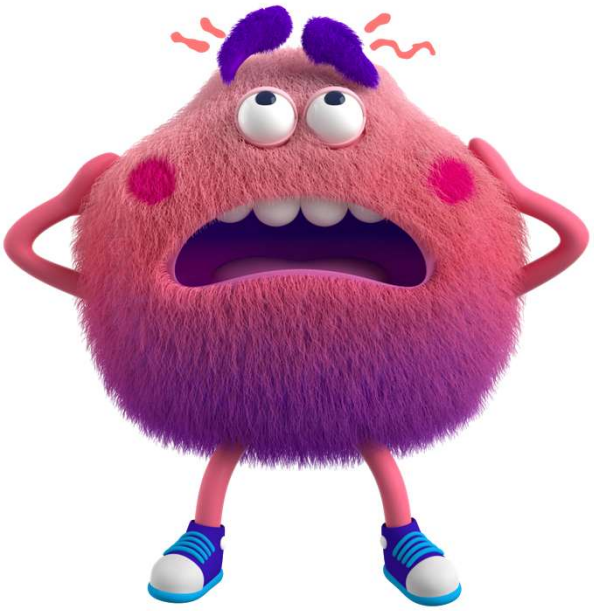
People Keep Publishing Relevant Work







Feeling overwhelmed?

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Purpose

Aggression and Violent Behavior 85 (2025) 102080

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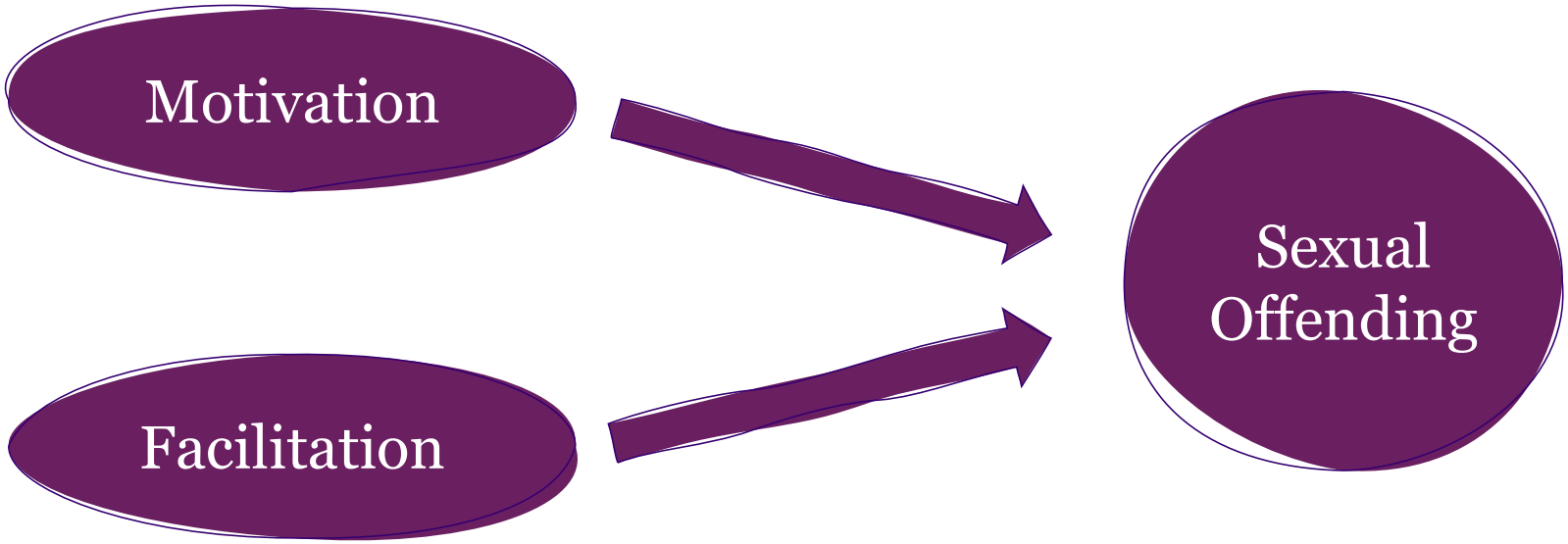
Summarizing recidivism rates of individuals committed CSEM offences

Examining moderators

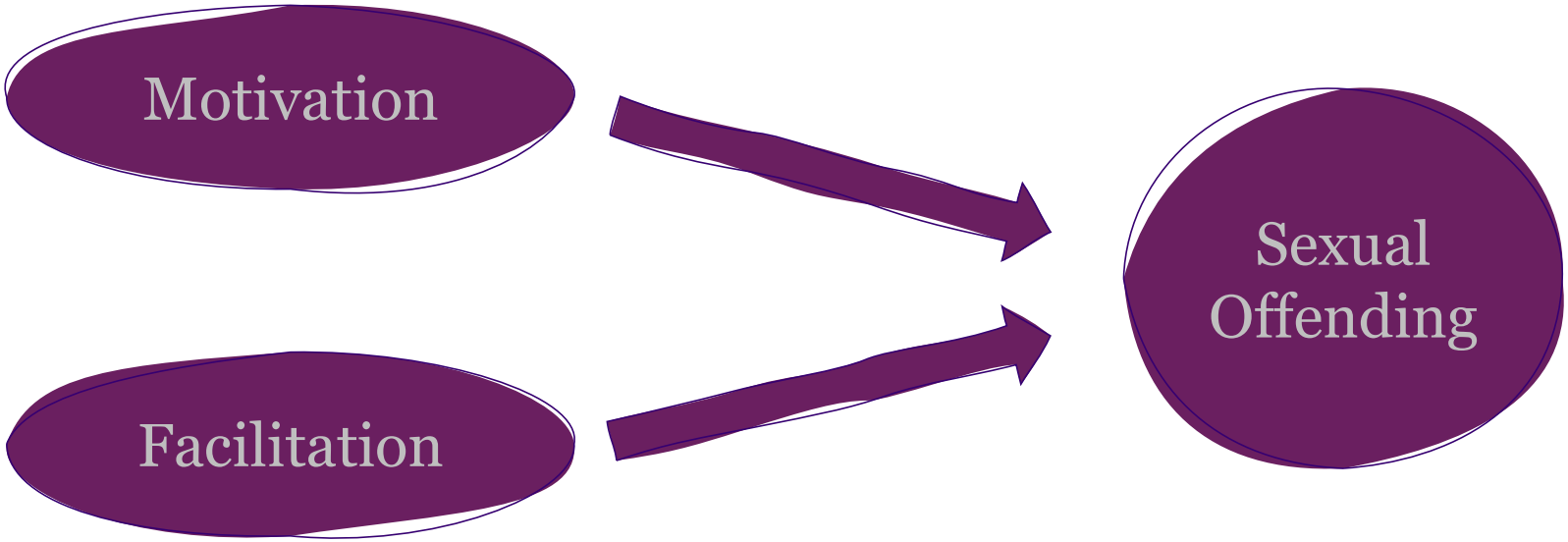
Quick Theory 101



Seto (2018). Motivation-Facilitation Model of Sexual Offending

CSEM-EXCLUSIVE

- ✓ Sexual interest in children
- ✓ Problems in sexual domains

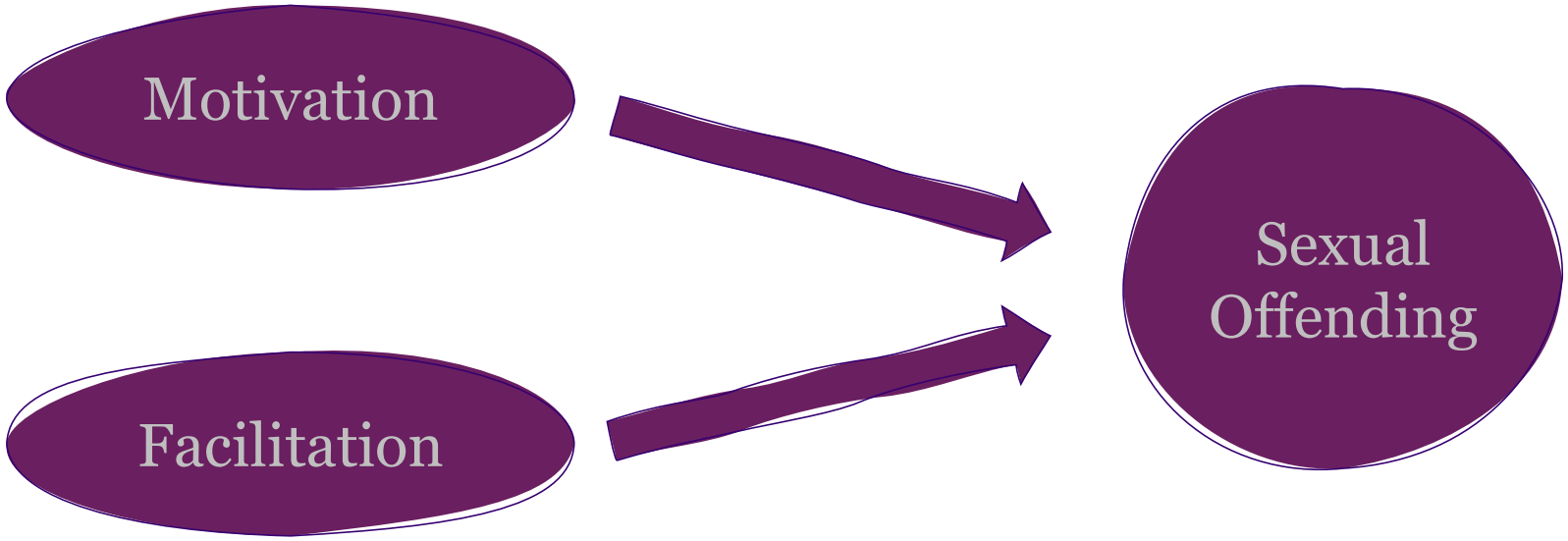


- ✗ Antisocial tendencies
- ✗ Attitudes tolerant of crime
- ✗ Access to children

Source: Babchishin et al., 2015, 2018

MIXED

- ✓ Sexual interest in children
- ✓ Problems in sexual domains



- ✓ Antisocial tendencies
- ✓ Attitudes tolerant of crime
- ✓ Access to children

Source: Babchishin et al., 2015, 2018

Recidivism Rates of men with CSEM offences

Past meta (Seto et al., 2011):

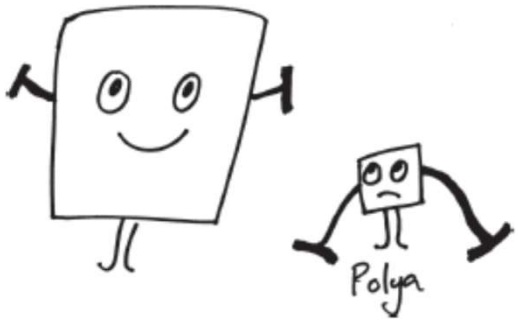
- Short follow-up
- Did not separate mixed from exclusively CSEM offending individuals

Time for an update

What is a meta-analysis?

- A statistical technique for combining individual effects reported in studies addressing the same research question

- Output:
  - Produces a summary effect
  - Measures the variability between the individual studies



Why Should We Conduct Meta-Analyses?

- Objective test for consistency in findings
- Provides a more objective review compared to the narrative review
- More statistical power than a study
- Can look at moderator variables
- Useful tool to influence future research as well as inform policy
- Follows iterative approach to knowledge building

Today's talk

- Summarize:
  - What we did
  - What we found
  - General implications
  - Answer questions

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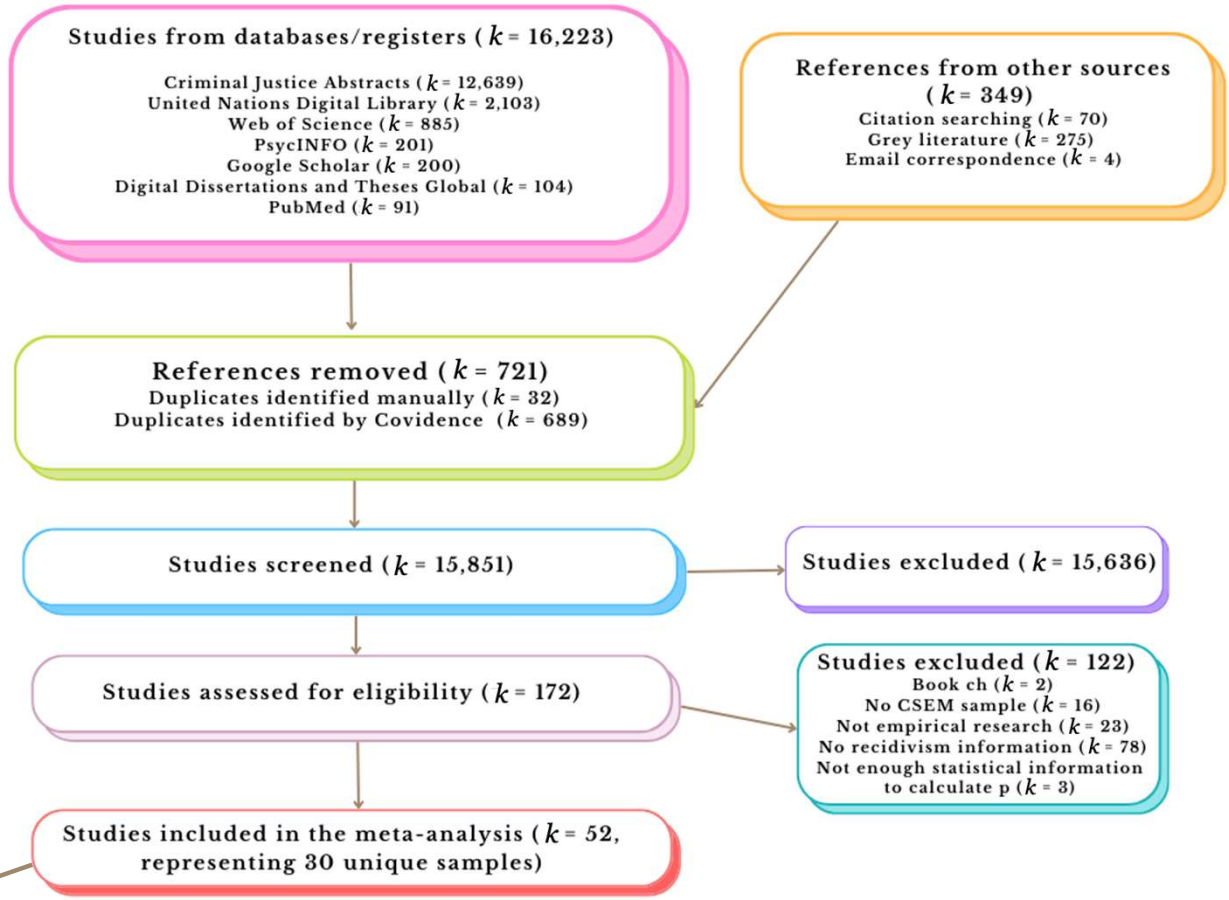
Study Flow Chart



Any CSEM N = 19,112
CSEM-E N = 8,272
Mixed N = 6,267

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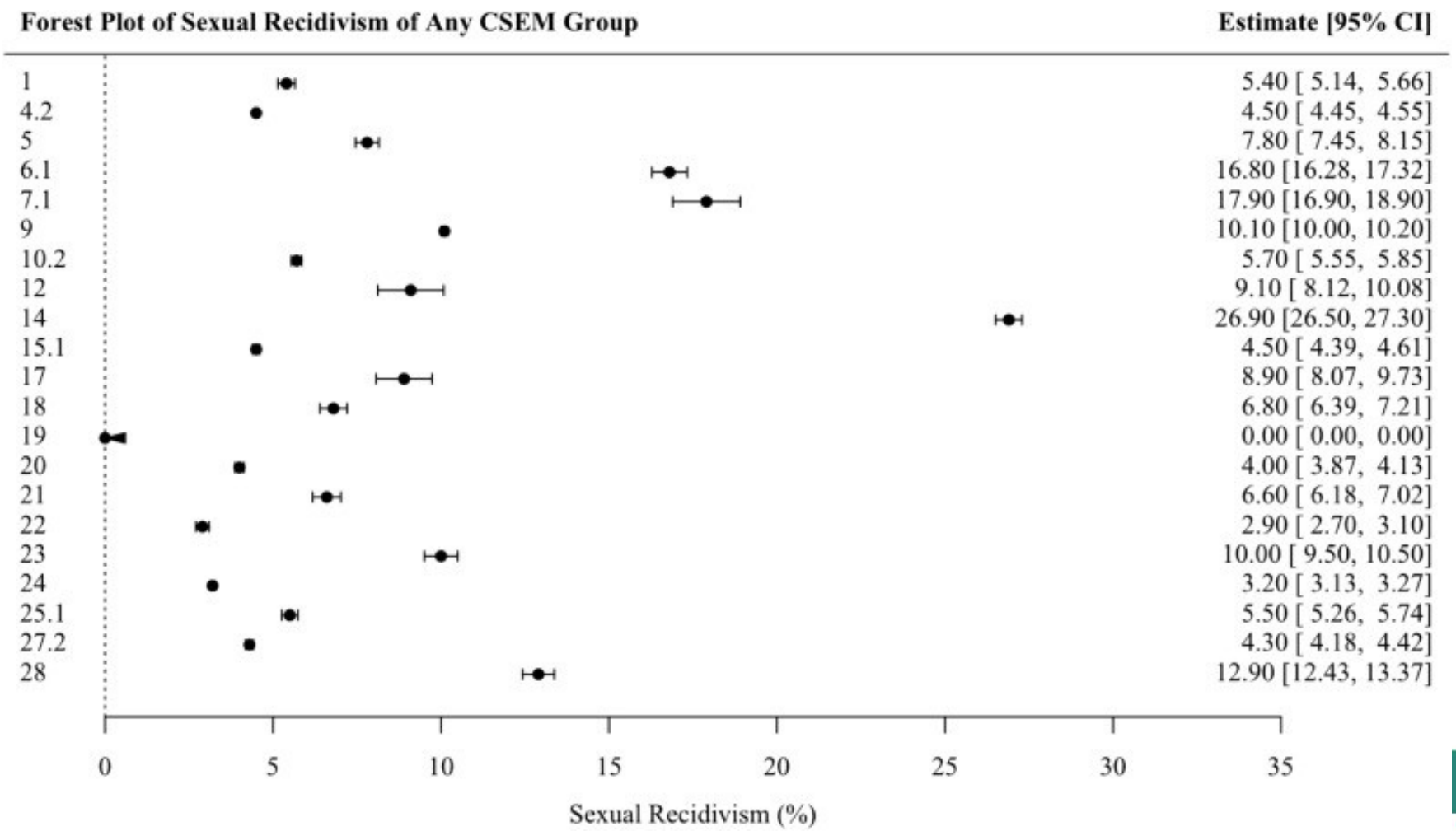

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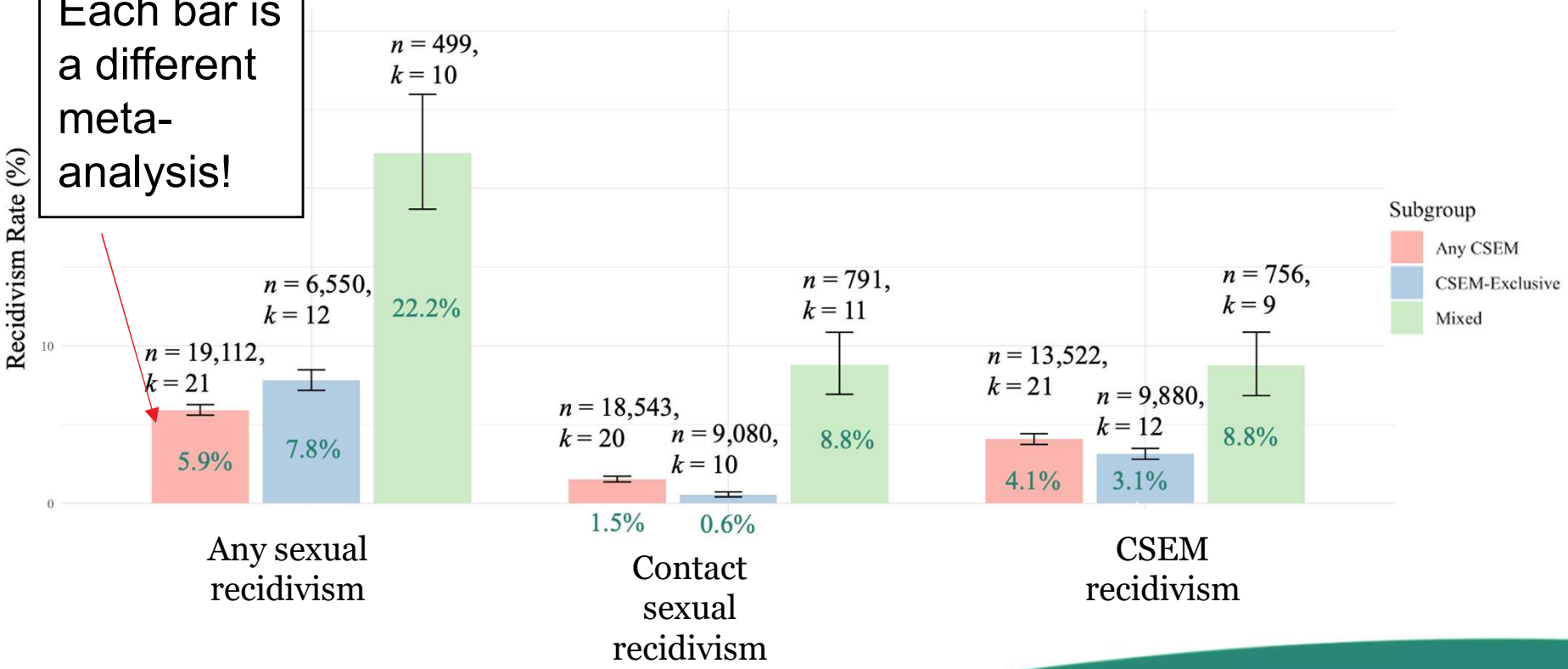
Official (i.e., criminal record) Recidivism Rates (fixed effect meta-analyses)

Each bar is a different meta-analysis!



Baskurt et al. (2025). Percentages reflect fixed-effect meta-analysis, average follow-up 4.8 years

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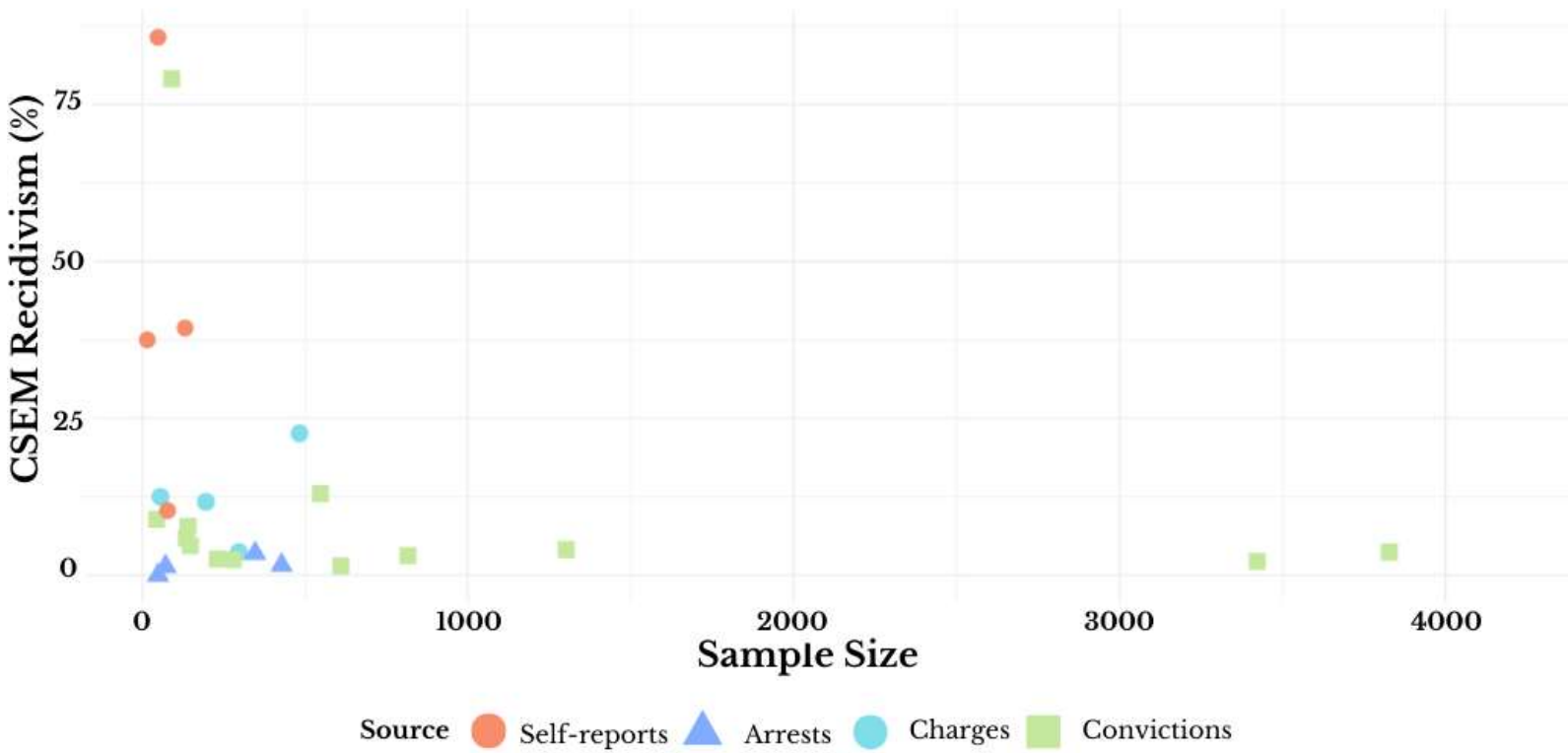
CSEM Recidivism by Source

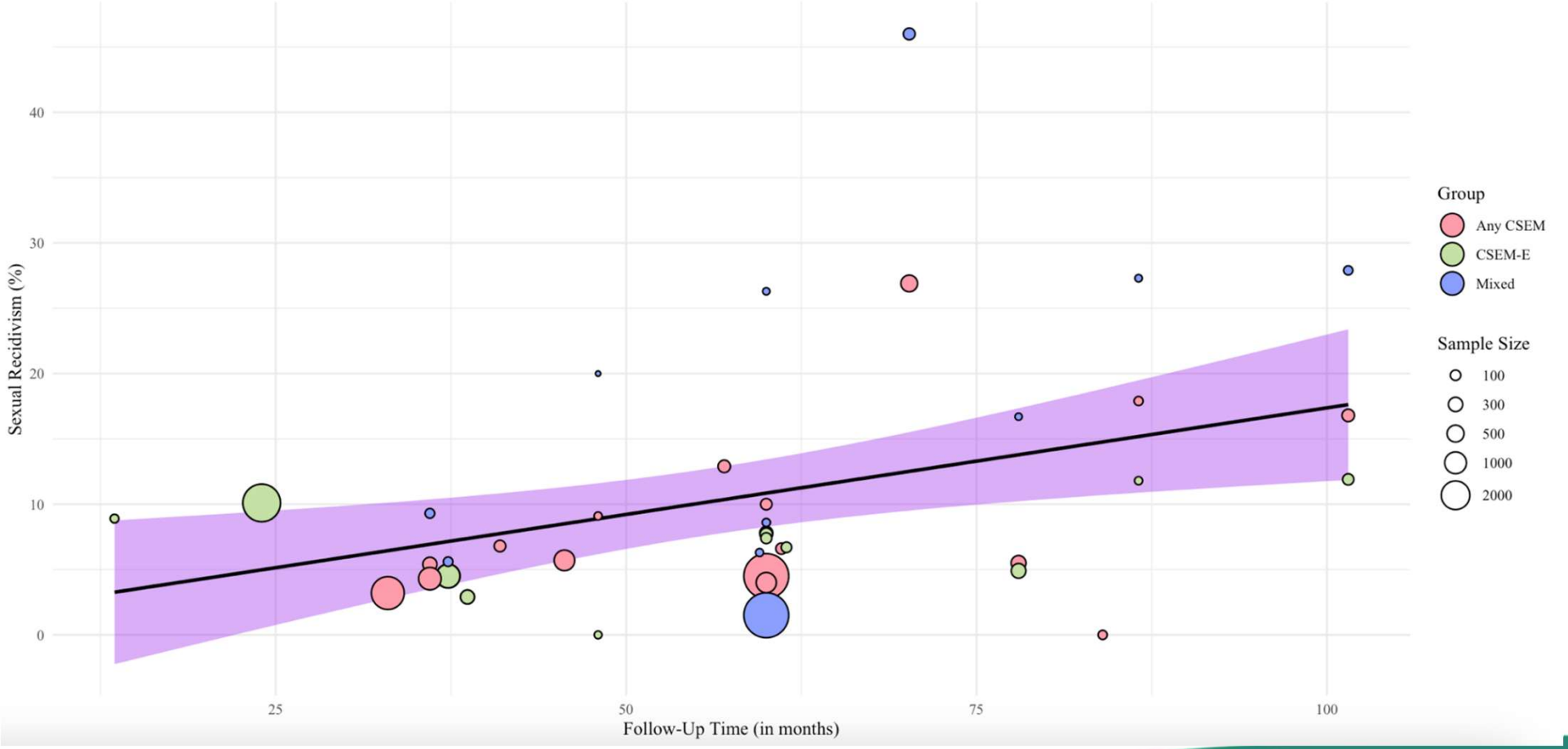


Self-report = 38.3%
$N(k)$ = 275 (4)

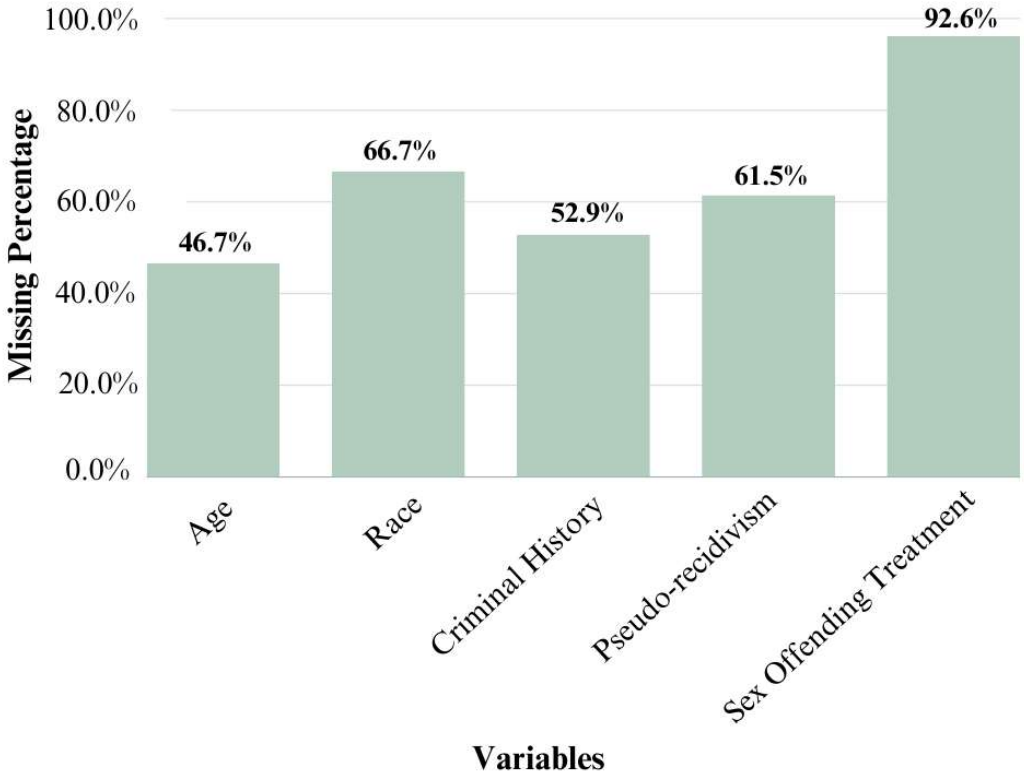
Self-report studies

- Are recidivism rates really ‘that high’?
  - Unique treatment samples
    - No routine sample with this information
  - Likely an overestimate

Meta-Regression of Sexual Recidivism on Follow-up Time



Key Elements Missing in Recidivism Studies



Discussion

Groups

Moderators

Reporting

STROBE

Strengthening the reporting of observational studies in epidemiology

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Take home message

- Cohort/routine samples: about 2/3 are CSEM-exclusive (about 1/3 mixed)
- After an average 5 years of following, individuals with contact + CSEM offenses are more likely to sexually offend than CSEM exclusive offenses
- CSEM-exclusive: most will not reoffend with a contact sexual offense (0.6%) and instead with another CSEM offense (3.1%)
- Self-report rates are higher than official rates, but the self-report samples are unique (e.g., treatment samples)

Thank you!

Questions?