

International Association for the Treatment of Sexual Offenders (IATSO) 15th conference

Poster proposition

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Poster Title:

An Item Response Theory analysis of the *Cognitions of Internet Sexual Offending* (C-ISO) scale

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Abstract (199 words) :

The role of offense-supportive cognitions in online sexual offenders is still unclear and this is partly due to the lack of appropriate measures available to assess this construct. It has been suggested that while online and contact sexual offenders share similar cognitive contents, other cognitions remains specific to Internet offenders (Paquette & Cortoni, 2015). To help investigate the relationship between cognitions and online sexual offending, the *Cognitions of Internet Sexual Offending* (C-ISO) scale was developed. This study examines the psychometric properties of the C-ISO scale using Classical Test Theory and Item Response Theory analyses. A total of 241 sexual (45 online-only, 49 contact-only, 73 mixed) and non-sexual (74) offenders had completed the C-ISO scale. Discriminant validity indicated that the questionnaire distinguishes Internet sexual offenders from offline sexual and non-sexual offenders. Results from a Graded Response Model (Samejima, 1969) analysis showed that items included in the scale reached the cut-off level of discrimination. In addition, the items of the scale have been found distributed along a continuum of difficulty, indicating that some items reflect more or less problematic cognitions. Implications for the assessment and treatment of online sexual offenders will be discussed, along with limitations and suggestions for future research.