Virtual characters as sexual stimuli to evaluate child molesters: Preliminary results

For child molesters, deviant sexual interest is one of the main factor associated with sexual recidivism, and is traditionally evaluated with auditory scenarios (AS) and penile plethysmography. Two studies are presented, both using virtual characters (VC) depicting male and female, of different ages (5, 11, 15 and 25 years old), and a neutral avatar. In a first study, a control group (n=135) evaluated the perceived age and realism of the VC. According to a linear regression, the perceive age is constant with what was expected (p<.000), and the newest set of VC was perceived as more realistic (p<.000). In a second study, correlations between sexual responses of child molesters (n=13) to the child and adult VC, and sexual responses to corresponding AS, were examined. Results suggest that the penile responses obtained with VC are linked to the penile responses obtained with AS. Correlations were stronger between the female children virtual characters and auditory scenarios involving female children.

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