

# Editorial

[Sexual Offender Treatment, Volume 1 (2006), Issue 1]

With this issue, we introduce *Sexual Offender Treatment*, the official journal of the International Association for the Treatment of Sexual Offenders (IATSO). This new journal augments existing publications by focusing attention, first and foremost, on the treatment of sexual offenders. Our new journal is part of the development and maturation of IATSO, which commits itself to advocating for humane, dignified, compassionate, ethical and effective treatment of sex offenders, to furthering the knowledge about the nature of sexual offenders and sexual offenses and the improvement of treatment methods. IATSO supports the development and improvement of effective sexual offender treatment and commits itself to scientifically evaluating therapeutic methods. These principles guide the editorial decisions and content of *Sexual Offender Treatment* (statutes and by-laws of IATSO, see also [www.iatso.org](http://www.iatso.org)).

IATSO strongly believes that professional treatment and management of sexual offenders leads to a decrease in further victimization. Although there is some controversy about the empirical results so far, many studies support this point of view. Even those empirical studies which do not report a decrease in reconviction, or rearrest, rates of treated sexual offenders compared with those without treatment state that those offenders who achieved treatment goals reoffended at a lower rate than those who did not achieve such goals. These results are encouraging and promising, but are limited in their utility. In general, the published literature on treatment effectiveness has used research designs with poor internal validity and has been based, predominately, in the United States and Canada. We encourage increased attention, especially outside North America, on rigorous studies that explore the effects, not only of treatment as a singular factor, but explorations of the various components of what is currently included in comprehensive sexual offender treatment. The editors of *Sexual Offender Treatment*, encourage a reformulating of the question from does sex offender treatment work? to what types of treatments work for what types of offenders under what conditions?

The World Report on Violence and Health of the World Health Organisation (WHO) in its Resolution WHA49.25 at the Forty-ninth World Health Assembly declared that preventing violence is a public health priority. The report indicated that violence is a leading worldwide public health problem. Sexual violence is one aspect of general violence.

This journal is one way that IATSO is attempting to contribute to the reduction in the occurrence of sexual violence throughout the world. The goal of *Sexual Offender Treatment* is to help us to better understand how the international community is responding to sexual violence. This response differs across countries, and is influenced by medical, psychological and sociological and especially political conditions. Fear, which triggers repression of sexual urges on the individual level and leads to unproven, often iatrogenic, legal responses on the societal level, creates a hostile environment which perpetuates, rather than alleviating, the factors that contribute to sexual violence and undermine potentially effective treatment interventions.

The launching of *Sexual Offender Treatment* is a major step forward for IATSO. We are proud of this first issue, which presents papers from the Eighth International Conference which was held in Athens, Greece in September 2004. We hope that you find this issue informative and look forward to future issues, which we hope will attract contributions from the international community of

scientists and clinicians interested in the treatment of sexual offenders.

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