



## SOCIAL RESPONSE TO AGE-GAP SEX INVOLVING MINORS: EMPIRICAL, HISTORICAL, CROSS-CULTURAL, AND CROSS-SPECIES CONSIDERATIONS

*Social response to age-gap sex involving minors has become increasingly severe. In the US, non-coercive acts that might have been punished with probation 30 years ago often lead to decades in prison today. Punishment also increasingly includes civil commitment up to life, as well as scarlet-letter-like public registries and onerous residence restrictions for released offenders. Advocates and the general public approve, believing that age-gap sex with minors is uniquely injurious, pathological, and criminal. Critics argue that public opinion and policy have been shaped by moral panic, consisting of unfounded assumptions and invalid science being uncritically promoted by ideology, media sensationalism, and political pandering. This talk critically examines the basic assumptions and does so using a multi-perspective approach (empirical, historical, cross-cultural, cross-species) to overcome the biases inherent in traditional clinical-forensic reports. Non-clinical empirical reviews of age-gap sex involving minors show claims of intense, pervasive injuriousness to be highly exaggerated. Historical and cross-cultural reviews show that adult-adolescent sexual relations have been common and frequently socially integrated in other times and places, indicating that present-day Western conceptualizations are socially constructed to reflect current social and economic arrangements rather than expressions of a priori truths. Analogous relations in primates are commonplace, non-pathological, and not infrequently functional, contradicting implicit assumptions of a biologically-based “trauma response” in humans. It is concluded that, though age-gap sex involving minors is a significant mismatch for contemporary culture—and this talk therefore does not endorse it—attitudes and social policy concerning it have been driven by an upward-spiraling moral panic, which itself is immoral in its excessive adverse consequences for individuals and society.*

**Keywords:** age-gap sex with minors, moral panic, historical, cross-cultural, cross-species

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In the United States and Great Britain in particular, but also increasingly in other Western nations, mobilizing against and punishing sex offences involving minors has changed from an occasional, unsystematic effort some 40 years ago to a consuming obsession today. To many, this change is welcome, based on the belief that age-gap sex with minors is uniquely injurious, pathological, and criminal. By this thinking, harsh measures are often seen as justified. In the U.S. (on this issue, the trendsetter for the rest of the world), adults involved in *non-coercive* sexual episodes with minors, who might have been punished only with probation in the 1970s, or even not punished at all, today often receive extremely lengthy prison sentences. Recently, a Texas man was sentenced to 4060 years in prison for non-coercive, ongoing sexual relations with teenage girls, and a Texas woman was sentenced to 23 years even though her 16-year-old male partner enthusiastically participated. Adults involved merely in para-sexual behaviors (those involving no actual sexual contact, or even no actual victim) are similarly subject to harsh treatment. An Arizona man received a 200 year sentence for possessing 20 pornographic images of boys, while a Virginia man got 20 years for downloading cartoons depicting sex between men and girls. Increasingly, sex offenders who complete lengthy prison terms are subject to civil commitment that can last for life, and those who do return to society often face permanent shaming via public registries on the internet, exposing them to attacks, threats, harassment, property damage, and loss of housing and employment. More and more they also face onerous zoning restrictions that exile them from communities and force them, for example, to reside in trailers outside of town or under bridges. Restrictions are so extreme in San Francisco and Los Angeles that registered sex offenders can no longer move there (Heller, 2011; Hubbard, 2011; *The Economist*, 2009a, 2009b; Zilney & Zilney, 2009).

To critics, this harsh response and hyper-attention to the issue reflects a moral panic built on unfounded assumptions, dubious ideology, invalid science, media sensationalism, and political pandering (e.g., Hubbard, 2011; Jenkins, 1998; Nathan & Snedeker, 1995). They contend that the response is becoming more and more disproportionate to sober appraisal of harm actually done, and thus more and more inhumane and draconian. Additionally, they complain, the overreaction is spilling over to non-sexual relations between the generations, poisoning them through the unwarranted suspicions it fosters and weakening them by forcing participants to be artificially distant from one another, much to the disadvantage of youths (e.g., Furedi & Bristow, 2008; Russell, 2009a, 2009b).

Alejandro Salvador has discussed, as he put it, the “horrors” of the “well of punishment” directed at homosexuals in Franco Spain from 1939 to 1975 (Salvador, 2009). There, fascist ideology dictated that homosexuals were an extreme social danger, whose eradication was a top priority. Salvador discussed the “obsession” in those years to find pathological roots of homosexuality and to cure it, an obsession that led to a “pseudo-science,” as medical “experts” responded obligingly to the demands of the ideology to verify sickness and discover cure. The punishment system, in accordance with the “Law of Social Danger,” centered on prison (including concentration camps), vigilance, and exile for convicted homosexuals. Salvador’s description of the response to homosexuals in Franco Spain meshes

remarkably well with the themes I just described regarding the response to sex offenses in contemporary America with its obsession, extreme social danger, prison, vigilance, and exile. This is certainly not to argue that homosexuality and modern sex offenses are equivalent, but to point out key parallels in state response and expert opinion when driven by ideological anxieties. At the very least, the parallels point to the operation of moral panic, which suggests the need to reexamine basic assumptions regarding sex offenses involving minors to redress this problem.

In this talk, I critically examine some key assumptions, including that age-gap sex involving minors is, *by nature*, pathological, coercive, and harmful, regardless of age or gender of the minor or circumstance of the episode.<sup>1</sup> I conduct this examination not only in accordance with the demands of valid science but also with the stated goals of this conference, which are to add complexity to sexual topics and to incorporate multi-disciplinary considerations to counter black-and-white thinking and provincial views. My examination will therefore be multi-perspective, involving empirical, historical, anthropological, and zoological data. At a time when ideology holds so much sway in this domain, a broader approach promises to be far more scientifically informative than the current narrow reliance on clinical and forensic reports.

#### AN EXAMINATION OF BASIC ASSUMPTIONS: EMPIRICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Severe punishments and onerous restrictions might be appropriate if sex with minors is as intrinsically harmful as advocates, therapists, the media, and politicians often assert. Let us examine the basic assumptions scientifically.

Child sexual abuse (CSA) was constructed as a critical issue beginning in the mid-1970s. By the early-1990s, hundreds of clinical and forensic studies claimed that CSA causes all sorts of severe psychological maladies. A dozen or so review studies summarized these findings, concluding that CSA causes intense harm pervasively among both boy and girl victims. Beginning in the later 1990s, several co-researchers and I critically examined these claims. We argued that clinical and forensic samples are anomalous and cannot be used as indicators for what happens in the general population.<sup>2</sup> So, we examined nationally representative samples, which are far more generalizable, and we analyzed them statistically (i.e.,

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<sup>1</sup> As Jenkins (1998) noted, this view of harm emerged virtually overnight in the U.S. in the later 1970s, not from systematic scientific research, but from an ideology reflecting moral panic. He argued that whatever objective truth obtains on the claims of harm, the claims-making itself was pseudo-scientific, being an ideologically driven rush to judgment.

<sup>2</sup> This is a standard criticism of clinical and forensic research in many categories of human behavior. For example, in homosexuality, it was correctly argued that homosexual patients under therapy or homosexual prisoners, by definition, have problems, while homosexuals outside therapy or prisons may well not. This was the argument of psychologist Evelyn Hooker (1957), who published a groundbreaking study that showed for the first time that homosexuals not under therapy or in prison were not beset with psychological problems.

meta-analytically) for precision (Rind & Tromovitch, 1997). What we found can be explained as follows. If, by various common definitions, 2 persons out of 100 *without* a CSA history fall in the clinically significant range on symptoms of psychopathology, then only 3 out of 100 with CSA do. This is a very small difference and dramatically contradicts the expected 70 or 80 out of 100 that comes from standard therapeutic discourse and media hype (Rind & Tromovitch, 2007).

In our most comprehensive meta-analysis, we examined 5 dozen college samples, with results identical to the national samples (Rind, Tromovitch, & Bauserman, 1998). The more extensive college data permitted causal analyses to suggest that very little of the increase from 2 to 3 out of 100 could be attributed to CSA. The increase instead was associated mostly with poorer family and peer environments in the CSA samples. The results also showed wide differences in reactions to CSA by boys versus girls: two-thirds of boys responded positively or neutrally, whereas two-thirds of girls responded negatively. In short, the meta-analyses strongly contradicted the standard picture of CSA by using more representative samples and more precise methods of analysis. As a footnote, many advocacy groups were furious at our meta-analysis of college studies, eventually prompting the U.S. Congress to condemn it in 1999. But a decade hence, despite intense scrutiny, our results stand solid (see Rind, Tromovitch, & Bauserman, 2001; Rind, 2006).

To be sure, many people have had negative CSA encounters and been disturbed by them, and these are the ones who tend to come to the attention of clinicians. What is important to note, however, is that many others, in response to episodes that fall under the standard definition of CSA,<sup>3</sup> have not been bothered by their experiences at all, and some have even remembered and reacted positively to them. This information is available in numerous non-clinical, non-forensic studies, but is almost always ignored, denied, or censored in the media and by professionals. In my published reviews of these studies, I have found that sizable majorities of heterosexual teenage boys sexually involved with older females and of gay or bisexual teenage boys with older males viewed these relations positively at the time and in retrospect, and saw themselves as willing, consenting participants. Additionally, they did not feel disadvantaged with respect to power, but quite the opposite: these youths often felt power in these relations that they never experienced in non-sexual relations with adults. Additionally, research has shown that heterosexual teenage boys involved in pederastic relations with men that occurred within the context of friendship and in some way promoted the youth's development also have tended to respond positively (Rind, 2001, 2003). Other types of age-gap sexual relations tend to be more negative, but still have a diverse mix of reactions from negative to positive. On the whole, this research shows that the socio-legal con-

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<sup>3</sup>The "standard" definition of CSA, the one most typically used or understood in the US, is any sexual experience between a minor under age 18 and anyone 5 or more years older, whether the younger person is coerced or willing, and whether the episode is contact (e.g., genital touching, oral sex) or non-contact (e.g., an invitation to sex). Thus, by this standard definition, an enthusiastic 15-year-old male getting oral sex from a 23-year-old woman has been sexually abused.

struct of “informed consent” does *not* adequately relate to how minors react, and instead, what crucially matters is their perception of whether they were willing and whether they had absorbed the moral negatives that mainstream society holds about the behavior.<sup>4</sup>

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF BASIC ASSUMPTIONS:  
HISTORICAL, CROSS-CULTURAL, AND CROSS-SPECIES CONSIDERATIONS

How did beliefs about harm become so extreme? In brief, in the U.S. before 1980 many researchers thought the behavior was immoral but the harm, in the absence of aggravating circumstances, was minimal, if not absent (Finkelhor, 1979). However, this benign view was supplanted by sexual victimology, an advocacy movement that worked hard to denounce adult-minor sex at a time when virtually all other formerly taboo forms of sex were becoming tolerated as a consequence of the sexual revolution. Victimologists saw all age-gap sex involving minors as equivalent to men raping women or having incestuous relations with their daughters; that is, they saw a stark scenario of exploitation of the weak by the powerful, with enormous trauma and psychological damage for the victim. But this extrapolation was overly deductive and anecdotal, rather than scientific. Additionally, it was heavily ideological, serving as a means for certain feminists to campaign that male sexuality and power must be tightly controlled because they are so dangerous (Angelides, 2004, 2005). This framing of age-gap sex as the ultimate abuse led to various panics in the 1980s, claims of satanic-ritual-sexual abuse in over 100 daycare centers and claims of recovered memory in thousands of psychotherapeutic patients (Jenkins, 1998; Nathan & Snedeker, 1995). These sensationalistic cases stamped the belief firmly in the psyche of our culture, spreading from the U.S. to overseas, that adult-minor sex is uniquely destructive. They also set off a wave of spiraling aggressive interventions. Despite the fact that reports of ritual-sexual abuse in day care and recovered memories in therapy have since been rejected by mainstream researchers as iatrogenically caused at best or as outright frauds at worst, their effects remain

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<sup>4</sup>Constantine (1981) showed that reaction depends on perception of willingness and whether the minor had absorbed the moral negatives about the sex. If the minor both saw himself or herself as willing and had not absorbed the moral negatives, then he or she would likely respond positively; otherwise, negatively or neutral. Rind et al. (2001) in footnote 7 showed how non-clinical research since Constantine has confirmed his conclusion. “Informed consent” is a legal construct that varies widely across nations, from 12 to 18, and in the U.S. is at the high end (16 to 18). In the psychological literature, it has been assumed without any empirical evidence that informed consent relates directly to how persons react to sex. The unexamined assumption is that people under the U.S. age of consent of 16 or 18, by nature, will react negatively to age-gap sex, but those age 18 and above will react well. This is a serious conflation of moral and legal constructs with a scientific construct. Rather than informed consent, the scientific construct of “simple consent” (whether the minor was willing in the minor’s own perception) is the one that has predictive validity with respect to reactions (Rind et al., 2001).

solid in terms of most people continuing to believe that age-gap sex involving minors is a unique destroyer of mental health.

Historical and cross-cultural research shows that socially integrated sexual relations between adolescents and older persons throughout history and across culture have been rather commonplace. Until modernity, girls often were married between ages 12 and 15, often to significantly older males (Bullough, 1990, 2004; Frayser, 1985; Okami & Goldberg, 1992). In numerous cultures, pederastic relations between men and adolescent boys were institutionalized as a means of developing and educating the youths (Crapo, 1995; Ford & Beach, 1951; Greenberg, 1988; Herdt, 1991). In various other societies, women were expected to sexually initiate young adolescent boys (e.g., Diamond, 1990; Marshall, 1971; Oliver, 1974; Suggs, 1966). It follows that the notion of sex between adults and adolescents under age 18 as intrinsically abnormal and criminal is a modern view socially constructed from contemporary values rather than deduced from natural history.

The historical and cross-cultural record thus shows that our impulse to characterize all age-gap sexual relations involving minors, especially adolescent minors, as the ultimate evil is not an expression of some innate *a priori* truth, but one shaped by contemporary culture. In all human societies until modernity, adolescents were considered young adults rather than older children. They were viewed as individuals to be integrated into adult society and to actually contribute to it. In modern society as never before, adolescents have been removed as contributors to the family economy and to the wider social group. They are treated instead as beings without substantive capabilities, who must be segregated amongst themselves and catered to sacrificially as if they were still young children. This view, of course, reflects current social and economic structures, in which adolescents are unwelcome competitors for adults in the work force on the one hand and in need of extensive education on the other so that they can later function in a highly technologized economy (Greenberg, 1988). What the historical and cross-cultural perspectives show is that claims that adolescents are *necessarily* harmed by sexual interactions with adults are rationalizations for contemporary social and economic structures rather than valid scientific conclusions.

To examine this issue further, a cross-species perspective can be useful (Ford & Beach, 1951). If age-gap sex involving non-adults is, *by nature*, as disturbing as most contemporary authorities believe it is, then should we not see evidence for this disturbance elsewhere in nature, for example, in our close primate relatives?<sup>5</sup> By analogy, if the behavior involved a human adult physically attacking a child, we would

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<sup>5</sup>Humans are not apes or monkeys, but they are closely evolutionarily related and are likely to share many hard-wired traits that are of fundamental import. Our society currently conceptualizes age-gap sex with minors as being of fundamental import in a negative sense—the unarticulated assumption is that its occurrence taps a hard-wired trauma response embedded deeply in our biological nature. Because of this underlying assumption of deep biological rootedness, looking at the analogous behavior in primates can be quite informative in assessing whether age-gap sex with minors is intrinsically unnatural and cruel or instead is simply currently socially constructed to be so.



expect the event to be detrimental for the child in all cases, and we would be surprised if an identical response did not occur among younger animals similarly attacked by older animals. This expectation derives from the implicit notion that the aversive response is deeply rooted in biology and genetics, which humans share with other animals. Thus, given that many professionals consider CSA to be *more* aversive and damaging than physical attacks, it follows that we should easily find evidence for traumatic response in other animals, especially in primates.

Age-gap sex in primates is commonplace but shows none of the evidence of the trauma that many think is so intrinsic to these contacts in humans. Bonobos and chimpanzees are our closest animal relatives. Juvenile males in these two species are highly sexual, much more than juvenile females, whose sexual nature generally emerges only with maturity. They behave sexually with other juveniles and with adults of both sexes, but prefer mature females, with whom they often attempt to initiate sex. In most cases, they show sexual arousal, with erections. The mature females are quite tolerant of the young males and usually allow them to attempt copulation (Hashimoto, 1997; Kollar, Beckwith, & Edgerton, 1968).<sup>6</sup> When juvenile male chimps are rebuffed by mature females, they often whimper and throw tantrums. Some researchers even speculate that male chimps in early puberty actually need copulative practice with older females or else their adult copulating behavior will be inept (de Waal, 1998; Goodall, 1986; Kollar et al., 1968).

In bonobos, when a female reaches adolescence, she transfers into a new group, where she pairs up with one adult female in particular, who acts as her “mentor.” This relationship, which is sexually based and lasts about a year, helps the adolescent female integrate into the new group and eventually be accepted by all the other females (Idani, 1991).

Age-gap homosexual relations among males are quite common in apes and Old World monkeys. Pederasty in gorillas, for example, is pervasive. In this species, while one male dominates a group of females in a harem, the remaining males form all-male groups for many years at a time, in which courtship and copulation occur on a daily basis between adult and adolescent males (Bagemihl, 1999). Several researchers directly observing this behavior have concluded that it serves to maintain group cohesiveness (Harcourt, 1979; Yamagiwa, 1987). In rhesus macaques, sexual relations between mature and immature males are frequent. They often occur despite the presence of receptive females. Young males tend to welcome these contacts and may even compete for older males’ attentions. The relations can be highly affectionate and appear to be functional for the immature males’ development of sexual and gregarious behaviors (Carpenter, 1942; Hamilton, 1914; Kempf, 1917). Similarly affectionate age-gap male homosexual relations have been observed in various other species, such as orangutans, Hanuman langurs, and stump-tail macaques (Chevalier-Skolnikoff, 1976; Jay, 1965; Rijksen, 1978). Among Tibetan

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<sup>6</sup>When male bonobos reach adolescence, adult males interfere with their attempts to copulate with females, but adolescent male chimps continue to be welcomed by adult females.

macaques, oral-genital contact between adult and juvenile males occurs on a regular basis. Sometimes the younger partner jumps onto the adult's face to initiate it; other times the adult begins the contact by turning a juvenile upside down. Both younger and older participants generally seem excited. These behaviors are never aggressive and appear to reduce tension between them (Ogawa, 1995). Similar age-gap relations occur daily and universally in Mona monkeys; the sexual interactions are almost never aggressive and appear to help the younger males integrate into the male group and to maintain group cohesion (Glenn, Ramsier, & Benson, 2006). These conclusions of benefit rather than harm are those of the primary field researchers of these species, not mine.

When it comes to human age-gap sexual relations, the stereotype is that they are, by nature, aggressive encounters, where the older person imposes his will on an unwilling younger partner, who is traumatized and psychologically ruined. It is striking, then, that we find just the opposite in the primate data, where researchers document that eagerness and even initiative on the part of the younger animal are commonplace, and they repeatedly describe positive developmental and social functions that these relations appear to serve—just as historians and anthropologists also have also done regarding human age-gap sex involving minors in other times and cultures. In short, the animal data show that there is no continuity from primates to humans in the widely assumed “trauma” response, and as such suggest that this response in human minors, when it occurs, is socially mediated via contemporary social constructions rather than being biologically essential.

#### CONCLUDING REMARKS

Age-gap sex with minors is grossly incongruent with modern social and economic structures, and therefore the multi-perspective review just presented does not suggest that we endorse this behavior. However, the review does show a significant disconnect between sweeping assumptions of intrinsic pathology and pervasive devastation on the one hand and the much less alarmist, and sometimes even benign, findings of scientific analysis on the other.<sup>7</sup> This huge disconnect

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<sup>7</sup> It is important to add that the scientific findings indicate that different categories of minors tend to react differently to age-gap sex with older persons. Females and younger children tend to react more negatively than males and teenagers. However, minors in all categories can and do react across the full range from negative to positive. The animal data show sharp sex differences, where immature males are much more sexually interested and assertive than immature females. For boys and girls, the observation has repeatedly been made that, for boys, early age-gap sex tends to be more of an initiation while for girls it is more of a violation. The validity of this observation is bolstered by the cross-species data. Importantly, dominant assertions that age-gap sex is pervasively and uniquely psychologically destructive for minors are untrue for all categories, but especially untrue for male teenagers. The multi-perspective data show that harm is not intrinsic, but dependent on situational factors, including cultural definitions of what constitutes good or moral sex versus bad or immoral sex.



points to the operation of moral panic in the overstated claims-making and in the corresponding spiraling draconian response that has evolved over the past three decades.<sup>8</sup> Social policy should follow from sober appraisal, not hyperbole and demonization. Witch hunts seen time and again across history show that moral panic is immoral and demonization is demonic.

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<sup>8</sup>See Appendix 1 for a closer look on the extremes occurring in response to sex offences in the US, the trendsetter for the West.

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APPENDIX 1  
Routinization of Extreme Measures in the US

In this appendix, trends in the U.S. in terms of how it is responding to sex offences involving older persons with minors are illustrated. Here, “older persons” includes not only adults, but also minors who are older, or even the same age, as the other minors with whom they are sexually involved. The point of this appendix is to establish the spiraling harshness of this response. Given that the U.S. is the world’s leader and trendsetter on dealing with sex offences, understanding these trends is important for researchers in other countries.

The U.S. has been the trendsetter for response to sex offenses involving minors since the 1970s. *The Economist* (2009a, 2009b) and Hubbard (2011) described the trends, some of which are recapped here. Many forms of non-coercive sexual contacts, which might have brought probation or even no punishment at all in the 1970s, today are often punished as severely as murder. A middle-aged Texas man was recently sentenced to 4060 years in prison for sex with teenage girls over a two year period. One young Florida man, barely out of adolescence himself, was sentenced to two life sentences and ordered to be castrated for oral sex he performed at age 20 on a preadolescent boy. A young Kansan man has spent the last 10 years in detention under civil commitment, with no prospects for release, for oral sex he performed at age 21 with a 14-year-old boy. A Texas woman was sentenced to 23 years in prison for oral sex she performed on an eager 16-year-old youth. These cases, along with many others in the U.S. also not involving any overt force, are now bringing the kind of punishment that used to be reserved for violent homicide.

Sentencing for para-sexual offences is also often severe. In California in 2003, a man was sentenced to life in prison for sucking the toes of preadolescent boys—he never touched their genitals. In Arizona in 2007 an award-winning teacher was sentenced to 200 years in prison for possessing 20 pornographic images depicting boys—it was his first offence. In 2004 in Virginia a man was sentenced to 20 years in prison for downloading 20 Japanese anime cartoons depicting sex between men and girls. In Pennsylvania, a graduate student faced 10 years in prison simply for clicking on a web page set up by the FBI, whose phony hyperlink suggested it depicted sex involving minors.

Aside from draconian prison sentences, the sex offender system has evolved in the U.S. to be extremely invasive and dehumanizing. Registries are a staple of this system, and zoning restrictions, such as not being allowed to reside within 1000 feet of a school, are spreading across the US. Zoning restrictions are so extensive in many regions that sex offenders have almost no place where they can reside. For example, they are completely exiled from Los Angeles and San Francisco. In Miami, the only place where they can reside is under a noisy bridge—a whole community of sex offenders is compelled to stay there at night. In Georgia, men have been sentenced to mandatory life in prison for failing to register their residence, failures that were forced on them by impossible-to-meet zoning restrictions. Registries in the U.S. are public, which creates not only permanent shaming, but exposes sex offenders to vigilante physical attacks and murder—at least 6 have been killed—as

well as threats, harassment, property damage, loss of job, housing, and friends. Studies have shown that sizable proportions of registrants have suffered one or more of these dire events. For example, a 24-year-old man was murdered because he was a sex offender—his crime was consensual sex at 20 with his girlfriend just two weeks shy of her 16<sup>th</sup> birthday. A Michigan teenage boy who had consensual sex with a 14-year-old girl committed suicide after being placed on a registry despite the sentencing judge's efforts to keep the boy's name off the list.

Even minors who have non-coercive sex with younger minors are often subjected to severe measures—many tens of thousands have been caught up in the U.S. sex offender system. Child “sexual assault” charges involving “victims” between 13 and 15 frequently involve *consensual* sex with other teenagers rather than adults—sometimes same-aged teens are arrested for “sexual assault” of each other. Boys as young as 10 have been compelled to put on penile plethysmographs and have been subjected to ammonia aversion therapy, a treatment long ago abandoned as unethical and dangerous in the case of homosexuals. Other “therapies” that young teens are currently being subjected to include being forced to recite daily: “I am a pedophile and am not fit to live in human society.... I can never be trusted ... everything I say is a lie.... I can never be cured.” Moreover, some of the leading sex offender therapists recommend that parents should pry into the sexual fantasies of their 11-year-old sons, and, if these are “deviant,” should have their sons subjected to lie detectors, penile plethysmographs, and aversion therapy. Finally, despite objections from numerous professional organizations, statutes compel states to put juveniles on *public* sex offender registries, inviting—and producing—grave harm to them such as ostracism, harassment, violence, and the later inability to complete their education, find housing, and hold jobs (Heller, 2011).