ABSTRACT

BACKGROUND: Sexual violence is associated with enormous emotional pain and suffering to the victims and their families, as well as huge economic loses to the victims, their families and the state. Prevalence of, and factors associated with, sexual offending in Kenyashould be determined with the view to reducing incidence to the minimum level possible.

OBJECTIVES: (a) To determine the prevalence of psychiatric morbidity among convicted male sex offenders (MSOs) aged 18 years and above, and (b) Establish factors associated with male sexual offending in Kenya. DESIGN: Cross-sectional descriptive survey.

METHOD: Those who voluntarily came forward and gave written informed consent were individually interviewed using a socio-demographic and sexual questionnaire designed by the researcher, Structured Clinical Interview for the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual IV (SCID) and International Personality Disorder Examination (IPDE) instruments.

SETTING: Seventy-six (76) convicted MSOs aged between 18 and 73 years, at Kamiti M.S.P. were interviewed using the questionnaires mentioned above. Data collected was analyzed using SPSS version 11.5 computer software.

RESULTS: Twenty-seven (27) out of 76 (35.5%) had a DSM-IV Axis I disorder while 26 (34.2%) had a DSM-IV Axis II disorder.

Majority of those who met criteria for DSM-IV Axis I diagnosis had life-time dependence or abuse of substances (71.1%), particularly alcohol and cannabis. Other Axis I diagnoses were anxiety disorders (15.8%) and mood disorders (13.1%).

DSM-IV Axis II disorders were Antisocial PD (26.9%), Impulsive PD (19.2%), PD NOS (23.1%) and other PDs (Histrionic PD, Schizoid PD, OC PD, Paranoid PD and Borderline PD) (30.1%).

Further, 19.7% met criteria for both DSM-IV Axis I and II diagnoses (co-morbidity) and 65.8% had no psychiatric morbidity.

Exposure to erotica was significantly associated with both Axes I and II (p = 0.02 and p= 0.0003 respectively) and preoccupation with thoughts about sex was associated with Axis II disorders (p= 0.01).

Of the 76 subjects, 47 (61.8%) were convicted of defilement and attempted defilement, 23 (30.3%) were convicted of rape and attempted rape, while 6 (7.9%) were convicted of various other sex offences.

CONCLUSIONS:

1. Most convicted male sex offenders at Kamiti Max. Security did not have any psychiatric morbidity.
2. Substance use disorders were the most commonly occurring DSM-IV Axis I disorders (71.1%).
3. There was a significant statistical association between Axes I and II disorders and exposure to sexually explicit materials but there was no such an association with other socio-demographic factors. Further Axis II disorders were significantly associated with preoccupation with thoughts about sex too.

4. Children aged below 14 years were the most targeted group by the perpetrators convicted of sex offenses.

5. Awareness campaigns to enlighten the public of the fact that children are the commonest victims and research to determine the most effective ways of rehabilitating and treating sexual offenders could reduce the sexual offending in this country.

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