

## Child Molesters' Perceptions of Their Abusive Behavior in a Greek Prison

**Authors :** Polychronis Voultos, Theodora Pandelidou, Alexandra K. Tsaroucha

**Abstract :** Aim: To explore child molesters' perceptions of their sexually offensive behavior in Greece. To our knowledge, there is a relative research gap on this topic. Method: A prospective qualitative study using in-depth interviews with eight child molesters who were convicted and imprisoned in a Greek prison. The research was conducted in May 2022. Results: Child molesters' cognitive distortions including justifications, rationalizations and minimizations emerged from our data analysis (content analysis). Importantly, child molesters adopted a particularly daring 'role reversal'. Participants reported themselves as being 'victims'. They said that the children (namely, their victims) were the ones who made the first move and got them in the mood for having sex with the children. Furthermore, we discuss our results in the context of the existing international academic literature on the area of this research. Conclusions: Child molesters' different cognitive distortions emerged from our data analysis, with 'role reversal' being prevalent.

**Keywords :** child molesters, sex offenders, cognitive distortions, Greece

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