ONLINE SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN IN THE PHILIPPINES

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ONLINE SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN (OSEC)

OSEC is an emerging form of exploitation and child sexual abuse that happens in information and technology medium. It involves the production, possession, and distribution of child sexual abuse materials and the gradual grooming of target victims purposely for livestreaming of sexual abuse or exploitation.
The rapidly increasing proliferation of Online Sexual Exploitation of Children (OSEC) has made the Philippines the global epicenter of live stream sexual abuse (UNICEF, 2016).
ONLINE SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN (OSEC)

Data from NCMEC’s CyberTipline reports showed that the estimated number of IP addresses used for internet-based child sexual exploitation in the Philippines sharply rose, from around 23,333 in 2014 to 81,723 in 2017, or a 250% increase.

ONLINE SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN (OSEC)

- The median age was only **11 years old**, with the youngest less than one year old.
- **41%** of victims’ abuse was facilitated by biological parents and **42%** by other relatives or at least **83%** by people related to child victims.
- Customers tended to be from Western countries, although many had traveled to or lived in the Philippines at some point in time.

OSEC AMIDST COVID
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“There is an increase of 264% in the reports of online sexual exploitation on children. This covers 279,166 cases for the period of March 1 to May 24, 2020 compared to the 76,561 reported cases during the same period last year, 2019.” -Department of Justice – Office of Cybercrime
RESEARCH AND RESPONSE TO ONLINE SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN (OSEC) AMIDST COVID-19 IN THE PHILIPPINES
Actual prevalence of OSEC remains to be unknown

There is perpetuity of abuse in OSEC and physical records of sexual exploitation are in the internet

The driving factors among families specially at the time of COVID pandemic need to be established

OSEC is a distinct form of sexual exploitation, its impact to the mental health of survivors still needs to be uncovered

Therapeutic interventions tailored fit to the unique victimization experience of OSEC survivors
ONLINE SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN (OSEC) AMIDST COVID-19 IN THE PHILIPPINES

The study will investigate the following:

1. Mental health profile of OSEC survivors rescued during the pandemic in the domains of trauma, internalizing, and externalizing symptoms
2. Efficacy of various modalities of therapeutic interventions in the reductions of trauma symptoms and problem behaviors
3. Lived experiences of the care-providers in residential facilities handling the OSEC survivors during the lockdown
4. Family dynamics and driving factors among families who engaged in OSEC during the pandemic
METHODOLOGY

• **Design:** Mixed method design
• **Research Instruments:** Assessment using psychological tests, In-dept interviews
• **Participants:** 70 OSEC survivors, 10 social workers, 10 non-perpetrating family members
• **Statistical Treatment:** Descriptive statistics, analysis of variance, thematic Analysis
RESEARCH CHALLENGES

- Tedious ethical clearance process
- Access to survivors is limited due to travel and health restrictions
- Risk of re-traumatization during data gathering (testing, interviews)
- Survivors are protective of their families which may limit the information they are able to share
- Dealing with grooming effects
- High level of clinical disturbances among survivors
ETHICAL AND THERAPEUTIC MITIGATION

- Linking the research to case management for survivors and their families
- Health protocols in place during data gathering
- Virtual data collection
- Comprehensive orientation about the research project to management of child caring agencies, survivors, and families
- Intensive training for the research team on Trauma informed care, ethical guidelines, crisis intervention, assessment protocols
- Adhering to trauma informed care and ethical practice during the entire research process
- Working with clinicians (psychologist, psychiatrists)
CHANGING THE LANDSCAPE OF ONLINE SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN

Improved understanding of OSEC

Evidence-based clinical care for OSEC Survivors

Data driven programs and child protection laws
THANK YOU 😊