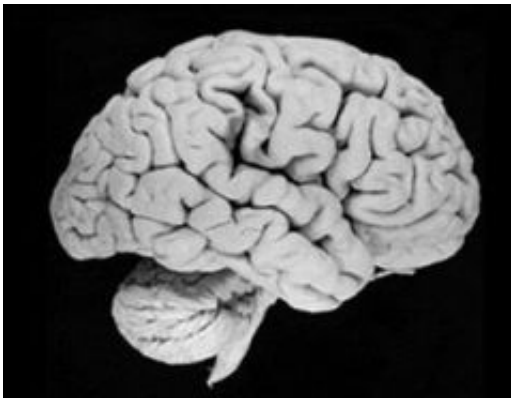


MRIs link pedophilia to problems in brain development

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Modern human brain. Credit: Univ. of Wisconsin-Madison Brain Collection.

Pedophilia might be the result of faulty connections in the brain, according to new research released by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH). The study used MRIs and a sophisticated computer analysis technique to compare a group of pedophiles with a group of non-sexual criminals. The pedophiles had significantly less of a substance called “white matter” which is responsible for wiring the different parts of the brain together.

The study, published in the *Journal of Psychiatry Research*, challenges the commonly held belief that pedophilia is brought on by childhood trauma or abuse. This finding is the strongest evidence yet that pedophilia is instead the result of a problem in brain development.

Previous research from this team has strongly hinted that the key to understanding pedophilia might be in how the brain develops. Pedophiles have lower IQs, are three times more likely to be left-handed, and even tend to be physically shorter than non-pedophiles.

“There is nothing in this research that says pedophiles shouldn’t be held criminally responsible for their actions,” said Dr. James Cantor, CAMH Psychologist and lead scientist of the study, “Not being able to choose your sexual interests doesn’t mean you can’t choose what you do.”

This discovery suggests that much more research attention should be paid to how the brain governs sexual interests. Such information could potentially yield strategies for preventing the development of pedophilia.

A total of 127 men participated in the study; approximately equal numbers of pedophiles and non-sexual offenders.

The Kurt Freund Laboratory at CAMH was established in 1968 and remains one of the world’s foremost centres for the research and diagnosis of pedophilia and other sexual disorders.

Source: Centre for Addiction and Mental Health

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