Dr. Mark Palermo

I would like to express my appreciation and gratitude for the meaningful and helpful remarks. The original comments are marked in blue.

As for the comments:

Reviewer No. 1 the design, methods and analyses are not appropriate for the conclusions. and interpretations offered by the authors. The research questions are not answered by the analyses, the results are incomplete and unsophisticated, such that important covariates, and more complex models are needed to adequately answer the questions posed. Given the nature of the data, I wasn’t sure that the assumptions for certain analyses were met, and specific test language was confused (e.g. no correlation was found in a two-way ANOVA?). For example, no environmental factors are analyzed, the title suggests that personal support reduces secondary trauma, and other causal claims are made, without attention to alternatives or confounds (e.g. experience, gender), despite the fact that the authors acknowledge these as known factors related to STS among therapists working in this area, and even go on to interpret their data from a gendered perspective without any gender analyses. The abstract indicates that the findings shed light on the effectiveness of the care provided, when there is simply nothing in the paper to support this claim. There were also a number of demographic and professional variables collected, but not included even descriptively, or to evaluate group differences. The procedure section also lacks important details, such as processes to protect integrity of data collected virtually, the

order of administration, time to complete and missing data, the consent and debrief process, compensation for participants and the statistical software used

Answer: I accept the reviewer’s comments about the need to a better, clear and accurate presentation of the title, the abstract, research question and assumptions, and the methodological and analyses parts of the paper. Following these comment I have made comprehensive corrections and changes on these parts, and added procedure and data analysis section. However I would like to point out and clarify two issues:

* The scope of therapist dealing with juvenile and sex offenders in Israel are relatively limited And accordingly the sample in the current research – specifically the number of unmarried therapist. Therefore I describe the demographic and work related variable (e.g. seniority) in the sample description but more complex analyses which examine the mutual influence of the independent variable could not be done.
* The research was approved by the Research Division of the Ministry of Welfare and Social Security in Israel. the Ministry of Welfare and Social Security operate or supervise the services treatment of juvenile and adult sex offenders. The approval was under condition of guaranteed confidentiality on the data collection. Participant from the various services did not get any compensation and sign an informed consent form.

Reviewer No. 2

1. Introduction - This paper address an important and neglected issue, that of the role of social support in moderating the level of secondary victimization among therapists for sex offenders.

Answer: I thank the reviewer for the positive view of my paper.

1. Literature Review - This part of the paper is excellent. The literature review is exhaustive and relevant. In addition, it is well-structured and highlights the importance of the study. The authors may consider including a recent paper on a topic closely related to their own study: Raymond, M., Proulx, J., Ruest, G., & Brouillette-Alarie, S. (2023). Sexual Recidivism During Treatment: Impact on Therapists. Sexual Abuse, 10790632231153636.

Answer: I thank the reviewer for the positive view of this part. I accept the reviewer suggestion to include the recent paper on the Impact of Sexual Recidivism During Treatment on Therapists. Sexual Abuse in the introduction and in the Literature Review

1. Aim of the study and research question - ANCOVA (controlling for age, gender, and years of experience) rather than an ANOVA may have been a better method to analyze the data. Of course, the small number of unmarried and male therapists may preclude such analysis.

Answer: I accept the reviewer’s comment that using ANCOVA to better analyze of the data, but as noted – in light the small sample and specifically the small number of unmarried therapist more complex analyses which examine the mutual influence of the independent variable could not be done.

Methods - A data analysis section must be added, which must include a part that addresses the issue of the covariates.

Answer: I accept the reviewer’s comment and added data analysis section

5. The results are of great interest but there is some weakness in their presentation.

-P.10 – Last paragraph – Line 1: “Frequency of STS” must be replaced by “Level of STS” since the data are continuous and subjected to a T-test.

Answer: “Frequency of STS” replaced by “Level of STS” as should be.

- P.11 – The social support section is not developed enough. Several results are missing in the text or in table 2. In addition, table 2 is not clear and is incomplete; all correlation results must be presented.

Answer: thank you for the reviewer’s comment. In light of the wise note the tables has been united and corrected.

-P12 – The family status, support and STS sections are not clear. The authors reported ANOVA (a test for difference between means), but discuss correlations. Furthermore, figure 1 is not clear. What are the labels for the abscissa and ordinate axes. A table would be a better way to present these results.

Answer: I accept the reviewer’s comment and clarified the reported analysis in according to the research hypothesis.

1. Discussion - Excellent. The authors have a clear view of the difficulties faced by therapists working with sex offenders.

Answer: I thank the reviewer for the positive impression from the Discussion.