

CHAMP Training Research and Practice Update

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Clinical Question

How do you approach parents and/or sexually abused children about the possible road ahead?



Recorded offending among child sexual abuse victims: A 30-year follow-up

de Jong & Dennison

Child Abuse & Neglect

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Background

- Multiple risk factors including child maltreatment → later offending
- Young people who were maltreated more likely to offend **in adolescence** if maltreatment occurred in adolescence or persisted into adolescence
- Maltreatment in adolescence increased the odds of arrest, offending, and illicit drug use in **young adulthood**
- Contradictory findings on timing of CSA and later offending
 - Ogloff et al. (2012): CSA after age 12 → increased later offending
 - Widom & Ames (1994): no effect of age



Background

- Retrospective studies: rates of CSA among sex offenders up to 75% higher than in general population
- Prospective studies are needed, including victims regardless of whether they became offenders
- Ogloff et al. (2012): Prospective study of CSA cases reported to police
 - CSA victims 5 x more likely to commit any offense than controls
 - Especially sexual and violent offenses
 - Risk for females > males



Background

- Siegel & Williams (2003)
 - 206 female CSA victims brought to an ED 20 years earlier
 - compared to controls - same sex, race, age, SES
 - CSA → more arrests, specifically for violent and drug offenses
- Widom & Ames (1994)
 - Substantiated abuse, arrest records of victims at 26
 - CSA → more arrests, property and drug offenses
 - CSA ~ PA ~ Neglect
- Leach, Stewart & Smallbone (2016)
 - Prospective birth sample of males
 - CSA only: not related to sexual or violent offenses
 - Poly-victimization → sexual and violent offenses



Background

- Perhaps the relationship between CSA and offending is a spurious one?
- Growing up in disadvantaged families or neighborhoods may explain both victimization and offending
- The adverse effect of poor parenting could increase after the abuse
- CSA could weaken bond between victims and parents
 - Particularly if abuse occurred within the family or the family knew the offender
 - Parental anger towards the victim, disbelief of the allegations, dissolution of marriage and family stress can all threaten family relationships in the wake of CSA



Background

- CSA by a parent vs. other perpetrator → increased offending. No support
- CSA after age 12 → increased offending. Mixed results
- Abuse characteristics that do **not** seem to increase offending:
 - Sexual penetration
 - Number of perpetrators
 - Frequency of the abuse



Study Questions

1. Are victims of CSA at greater risk of offending than a population-based comparison group?
2. Are victims of CSA at greater risk of offending than same-sex sibs?
3. Do the risks vary by gender or type of offending



Method

- 943 CSA victims in Holland
 - < 18
 - “hands on abuse”
 - Perpetrator found guilty by a judge
- 1439 sibs
- 645 controls, matched on age and sex
- Data on abuse: nature of CSA, relationship to perpetrator, age
- Offending: criminal convictions database, during 33-year period



Table 1. Sample characteristics - Males

Characteristic	Victims (n = 252)	Siblings (n = 716)	Controls (n = 237)
Age (mean)	43	45	43.5
Offending general	66%	58%	44%
violence	31%	20%	6%
sexual	6%	5%	1%
property	40%	30%	13%
traffic	51%	43%	33%
weapons	8%	5%	2%
drugs	8%	7%	3%



Table 2. Sample characteristics - Females

Characteristic	Victims (n = 691)	Siblings (n = 408)	Controls (n = 631)
Age (mean)	44.5	44.4	44.3
Offending general	33%	24%	16%
violence	6%	3%	2%
sexual	0.1%	0%	0.2%
property	16%	9%	4%
traffic	17%	12%	10%
weapons	0.6%	1%	0.2%
drugs	4%	2%	0.5%



Table 3. Increased risk for victims' offending compared to controls

	Males Victims (N = 252) vs controls (N = 237) AOR (p)	Females Victims (N = 691) vs controls (N = 408) AOR (p)
General offending	2.57 (<.001)	2.46 (<.001)
violence	6.60 (<.001)	3.84 (.001)
sex	7.19 (.010)	0.26 (.447)
property	4.47 (<.001)	4.16 (<.001)
traffic	2.13 (<.001)	1.93 (.001)
weapons	5.05 (.004)	2.44 (.426)
drugs	2.96 (.015)	7.65 (.006)

Males: multiple perpetrators → less risk of offending

Females: being older, more severe penetration → higher risk

Most abuse characteristics (relationship to offender, occurrence of violence) did **NOT** → increased risk

Sibs were similarly at increased risk of offending compared to controls



Table 4. Increased risk for victims' offending in comparison with sibs

	Males Victims (N = 124) vs sibs (N = 124) AOR (p)	Females Victims (N = 289) vs sibs (N = 289) AOR (p)
General offending	1.34 (.264)	1.43 (.055)
violence	1.48 (.171)	3.64 (.003)
sex	0.89 (.824)	N/A
property	1.27 (.358)	1.55 (.096)
traffic	1.49 (.121)	1.69 (.028)
weapons	1.26 (.637)	2.01 (.570)
drugs	1.21 (.665)	3.41 (.065)

When incest victims were excluded: similar findings



Main Findings

- For both genders - CSA increased the risk for violent offenses and drugs offenses, and sexual offenses only for males
- Very few abuse characteristics predicted later offending
- Not only victims, but also sibs were at increased risk for offending
- Male victims at similar risk to their sibs
- Female victims at higher risk than sibs
 - For violent, property, traffic and drug offenses



Discussion

- Both victims and sibs at higher risk of offending than the general population suggests family or neighborhood factors
- Female victims at higher risk than their sisters ... suggests an effect of CSA beyond family and neighborhood
- Possibly, CSA reduces female victims' ability to trust others → weak social bonds → offending
- CSA may → cognitive deficits may → crime



Discussion

- Neighborhood and family risk factors, such as poor parental supervision, which may be associated with CSA, may override the effects of the abuse
- Factors explaining the offending could also be a consequence of CSA rather than other shared risks
- The exposure of sibs to a victim's trauma or parental conflict arising from the abuse may have increased offending risks for male CSA victims and sibs
- Family and environmental factors alone don't explain the effect of CSA on female offending
- The findings did **not** support the abused-abuser hypothesis



Implications

- Support should not be limited to the victim; consider services for the whole family
- Overemphasis on the abused-abuser hypothesis is unwarranted and unhelpful

How do you approach parents and/or sexually abused children about the possible road ahead?

