Adolescent Development

48.212: Dr. Jeffrey Leitzel
Ch. 11: Sexuality

Child Sexual Abuse

- What is it?
- How do we define?

Impact of CSA

1. CSA causes harm
2. Harm is pervasive among the population with a CSA history
3. Harm is likely to be intense
4. CSA is an equivalent experience for males and females
1998 Meta-analysis


Examined the empirical status of our “common sense” ideas about the effects

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CSA terminology

- describes virtually all sexual interactions with significantly older persons
- peers any time coercion is involved
- problems with validity of the CSA construct
  - very different incidents receive same label

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Previous literature reviews

- qualitative reviews
  - entirely narrative
  - susceptible to reviewers subjective interpretations
- meta analyses
  - substantial proportion of clinical samples
  - most have not evaluated or adequately control for other trauma, family environment
Rind et al. College samples

- large, nonclinical samples
- useful for addressing general population questions
- studies tend to provide data on moderator variables
- Detailed inclusion criteria resulted in:
  - 59 usable studies, 70 samples
  - N = 35,703, 13,704 males; 21,999 females
  - 54 samples-data on psychological correlates
  - N = 15,824; 3,254 males; 12,570 females

Coding

- Psychological correlates
- Moderator variables
- Definition of CSA in study
- Reaction data – both retrospective and current
- Self-reported effects
- Family environment measures

Prevalence

- Overall
  - Males 14% (3-37%)
  - Females 27% (8-71%)
- Force or threat
  - males 23% females 41%
- Relation with adjustment, r = .09
- 17 of 18 symptom – CSA correlations statistically significant – all small
Correlations with Psychological Symptoms

- Obsessive-compulsive symptoms
- Paranoia
- Somatization
- Suicidal ideation and behavior
- Self-esteem
- Sexual adjustment
- Social adjustment
- Psychological symptoms
- Locus of control
- Hostility
- Dissociation
- Eating disorders
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Alcohol problems
- Alcoholism

![Correlation chart](chart.png)

**Moderators examined**
- Duration
- Force
- Frequency
- Incest
- Penetration

Only force & incest were significant

**Reactions to CSA**
- Recalled immediate – females more pervasively negative 72% vs. 33% of males
- Current reflections similar, 59% of females negative vs. 26% of males
- Lasting effects on sexual functioning for 8-15%
- General effects more rare
Retrospectively recalled immediate reactions to CSA

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Negative</th>
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Female: n=1421  Male: n=606

Conclusions

- Males and females appear to be affected differently
- Lasting negative effects not especially prevalent
- Negative effects are generally temporary

Family environment and CSA

- Aggregate correlation between family environmental factors and psychological symptoms was .29,
- Accounted for 9 x variability in psychological symptoms that CSA history did
- Statistical control statistically significant CSA – symptom relations from 41% to 17%.
Correlations between six areas and CSA

Correlations with Family Environment

- Traditionism
- Support or bonding
- Family structure
- Conflict or pathology
- Adaptability
- Abuse & neglect

Comparing CSA and Family Environment correlations

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<th>Obsessive compulsive symptomatology</th>
<th>Paranoia</th>
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CSA as a focus of scientific study
- Most studies use a legal-moral definition
- What does abuse imply in scientific terms?
- Conflation of sexual morals and science not a new phenomenon
  - Masturbation
  - DSM-I "disorders"

CSA as a societal issue
- Wrongfulness ≠ harmfulness
- Lack of harmfulness ≠ lack of wrongfulness
- Moral codes not necessarily based on harmfulness or health
- Legal codes often the same