

Early childhood experiences of men sexually abused as children

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A study which reported information obtained from male child molesters and from the male victims of child abuse has recently been completed. When the results of this study were released, they attracted considerable media attention. Unfortunately the media reports were often inaccurate. The page 1 headline on the South Australian edition of the Australian (Powell, 6/1/95), for example said 'One in two molesters cites abuse by Catholics'. This is incorrect. Furthermore, the media reports tended to unduly focus on issues to do with abuse by religious authorities and they failed to provide detail about other aspects of the study. In order to correct misinformation spread by the media, we present a short description of the study.

The sexual abuse of boys has received considerably less attention than the sexual abuse of girls. This is understandable since most prevalence surveys show that girls are sexually abused more frequently than are boys. Goldman and Goldman's (1988) Australian study for example, showed that girls were sexually abused four times more frequently than boys. Overseas research tends to produce similar patterns, for example in the UK, Baker and Duncan (1985) found that 3 females were abused for every 2 males, and in the United States, Finkelhor (1984) found a sexual abuse rate of 15% for females and 6% for males. The exact percentages are not reliable because of methodological problems and differences between studies, but the impression gained from the literature is certainly that sexual abuse is a more frequent problem for girls than it is for boys.

The sexual abuse of boys is likely to have been under-reported. Attributes of masculinity are partially responsible for this under reporting. Hunter (1990) found for example, that males often have a definition of abuse which does not include what happened to them, even when independent observers would have no

hesitation in recognising the sexual events as abuse. Rush (1980) found that many abused males regarded their abuse as 'inconsequential or positive' or they dismissed abusive incidents with 'amused indifference'. When males are part of highly sexualised environments they may regard sexual activity as 'normal' or 'ordinary' rather than abusive. They are unlikely to see themselves as victims if they enjoyed any aspects of the sexual contact, or the relationship around the acts, or if they accepted inducements used in a seduction process (Hunter, 1990; Briggs, Hawkins & Williams, 1994).

The tendency of males to deny or trivialise their own sexual abuse could be seen positively. It may be that such an attitude reduces the incidence of long term negative consequences so often seen by clinicians in women. Before accepting the masculine response as adaptive, an alternative view should be considered. Most sexual abuse is perpetrated by males and there is some evidence that the experience of abuse is associated with the replication of that abuse (eg, Dimock 1988).

The discounting of their own experience may thus facilitate further abuse. While the sexual abuse of boys is under-researched and while boys themselves fail to acknowledge or recognise particular sexual acts as abuse, an insidious component of the problem of the abuse of children may prosper.

In 1992, a pilot study involving 30 self selected men in prison produced rather startling results. All of these men, who were in prison for sexual offences against

children, had themselves been sexually abused as children. This finding, together with our knowledge that not all men who are abused as children become child abusers themselves, prompted a larger study. We wished to learn more about the factors which differentiate men who perpetuate the cycle of abuse from those who do not.

Method

Two hundred men were interviewed, eighty four of whom were convicted male child molesters in prison in South Australia, New South Wales and Western Australia. The others had responded to media publicity asking for men who had been sexually abused as children to come forward. After rejecting 21 cases of men from the second group who admitted to abusing others while they had been adolescents, we were left with 95 men who, to the best of our knowledge, were non-offenders

Findings

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

There were various differences between the prisoners and the non-offenders on demographic and family variables. The prisoner group experienced relatively greater social disruption and handicap. Prisoners were more likely to have come from large, unstable, mobile families. They left school at an earlier age and completed tertiary education less frequently. Both groups experienced a high level of unemployment, but prisoners were less likely to have held professional

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jobs. Prisoners were more likely to have had children. They more often had fathers whose occupation was rated as unskilled and mothers who were either not employed outside the home or had an unskilled job. Prisoners received less physical affection (hugging and cuddling) than non-offenders. They came from larger families and moved house more often. Prisoners received more than the non-offenders and were more likely to have received verbal abuse.

No differences were found between the prisoners and the non-offender group on age, religious affiliation, ethnic origin, or self-esteem. There were no group differences in the frequency of health problems and they were no more physically deprived (food, clothing, shelter). Fathers were no more absent or non functioning. Prisoners did not describe their families as different from other families any more frequently nor did they rate their childhoods as 'happy' less frequently. There were no group differences in which family members had administered the discipline nor in judgements about whether the discipline received had been appropriate. Major traumas were no more frequent. There was no difference in the frequency of discussion of sex in the family. There were no differences in the experience of loss through death nor in the involvement in sporting groups and clubs.

Sexual abuse

Table 1 provides frequency data for each group by age and type of perpetrator. It shows that the vast majority of prisoners (93%) had been sexually abused as children.

Table 1: Frequency of sexual abuse by age, perpetrator and group

	Prisoners	Non-offenders	$p(\chi^2)$
Age 0-5			
Sex with older children	28%	28%	ns
Sex with adults	17%	42%	.001
Age 6-10			
Sex with older children	54%	54%	ns
Sex with adults	44%	80%	.00000
Age 11-15			
Sex with older children	59%	59%	ns
Sex with adults	59%	77%	.02
Sex abuse at any age with either older children or adults	93%	100%	

Abuse by older children (before the age of 6)

Offenders against men in the prisoner group were equally likely to be female or male. Abuse by females involved older sisters (one third), and older sisters' friends (two thirds). Abuse by males involved older brothers, older brothers' friends and older boys in boarding institutions. Genital fondling was the most frequent form of sexual activity (three quarters), followed by anal and oral sex (a little more than one third each) and exhibitionism (one quarter). Offenders against men in the non offender group were most commonly brothers and cousins and neighbours.

Abuse by adults (before the age of 6)

Two thirds of the victims in this age group were abused by men. These men were most commonly fathers and grandfathers, although doctors at children's homes, neighbours and services for children (eg, hairdressers) were occasionally mentioned. Sixty per cent of the abuse of children aged less than six involved anal and oral rape. When it involved close relatives, it continued for several years on a frequent basis. Children in this age group were not likely to be abused by multiple adults: that came later when their social circle expanded.

One third of the offences were committed by females (usually mothers and grandmothers who fondled the boys genitals) and, contrary to common myths, they acted alone and were not under the influence or in the company of a male offender.

Abuse by older children (between age 6-10)

About one third of boys (35%) were abused by females and about two thirds (64%) by males. The prisoners who were abused by males were multiply abused by multiple offenders on different occasions over prolonged periods of time. Boys in residential situations were abused by large numbers of boys, with and without the control and instruction of their house masters. This abuse constituted anal and oral rape,

genital fondling, masturbation and sadistic practices.

Abuse by adults (between age 6-10)

About two thirds (71%) of abused boys were abused by males only. Of the remainder, half were abused by adult females and males. The other half were abused by females only. Fifteen per cent of the non-offenders were abused by females only, including mothers, cousins school teachers, nannies, baby sitters and siblings' girlfriends. Again the majority of offences in the non-offender group were committed by men. Most boys in this group were subjected to multiple abuse by multiple offenders. Twenty-one per cent were abused by fathers and 9% by stepfathers, ie, 30% were abused by father figures. Religious figures were responsible for about one third (36%) of the sexual abuse involving this age group. Other perpetrators included other relatives, housemasters, teachers, strangers and neighbours.

Abuse by older children (between age 11-15)

Most of the abuse was continuing from an early age. Abuse typically consisted of oral and/or anal sex. Offenders were most commonly acquaintances, followed by older cousins, older brothers and brothers' friends.

Abuse by adults (between age 11-15)

Three quarters of the abused prisoners were abused by male offenders and one quarter by women offenders. Half of the boys abused by women had sexual intercourse with their mothers. In the case of prisoners abused by males, religious figures were prominent (33% of reports involved housemasters in Christian Brothers schools and 17% were Roman Catholic priests). Neighbours and strangers were the next most common sources, followed by uncles and uncles' mates, foster fathers and members of a paedophile ring including police and lawyers.

Strangers committed one-off offences which typically involved genital touching. This squashes the myth that strangers are more violent than trusted adults. The most brutal and sadistic offenders were the Brothers in religious orders, priests, a foster father and men in paedophile rings.

A small minority of offences in the non-offender group were committed by women (12.5%). Two thirds of these women were mothers and one third were family friends. Of the non-offenders abused by

adult males, religious figures were again prominent (29% of men claimed to have been abused by Roman Catholic priests, 10% by Christian Brothers, 10% by church youth leaders, 10% by Ministers of Religion of other denominations). Other offences were committed by GPs during medical examinations, boarding school housemasters, scout masters, acquaintances, strangers, fathers and fathers' friends, school teachers and members of paedophile groups.

At this age, boys were less likely to be abused by family members than by men encountered in the social setting.

DETAILS OF THE SEXUAL ABUSE EXPERIENCED BY RESPONDENTS

Incest: There was a 34% overall incidence of incest in the respondents. Prisoners were no more likely than non-offenders to have experienced incest.

Abuse by a neighbour: Prisoners (73%) were more likely than non-offenders (57%) to have experienced sexual abuse from a neighbour ($\chi^2=4.4$, $df=1$, $p=.04$).

Abuse by a male: The overall rate of abuse by a male was 85%. There were no differences between prisoners and non-offenders on this variable.

Abuse by a female: Prisoners were significantly more likely (50%) than non-offenders (23%) to have been sexually abused by a female ($\chi^2=13.3$, $df=1$, $p=.0003$).

Abuse by strangers: The overall rate of abuse by strangers was 13%. There were no differences between prisoners and non-offenders on this variable.

Other relations: The overall abuse rate by other family relations was 19%. There were no differences between prisoners and non-offenders on this variable.

Priest: The overall reported rate of sexual abuse by a priest was 15%. There were no differences between prisoners and non-offenders on this variable.

Anal sex: The overall reported rate of anal sexual abuse was 52%. There were no differences between prisoners and non-offenders on this variable.

Oral sex: The overall reported rate of oral sexual abuse was 57%. There were no differences between prisoners and non-offenders on this variable.

Intercourse: Prisoners reported a 38% incidence of sexual abuse including heterosexual intercourse. This was a significantly greater frequency than the rate of 8% reported by non-offenders ($\chi^2=22.2$, $df=1$, $p=.00000$).

Liked the sex: Prisoners (69%) reported liking the sexual abuse they experienced more frequently than did the non-offenders (17%) ($\chi^2=45.5$, $df=2$, $p=.00000$).

Thought the abuse was normal: Prisoners (88%) were more likely than non-offenders (69%) to have initially thought that the sexual abuse they experienced was normal ($\chi^2=7.1$, $df=1$, $p=.03$).

Number of offenders: Prisoners experienced abuse from a significantly greater number of offenders (mean=14.2, $sd=38.3$) than did the non-offenders (mean=2.2, $sd=8.1$) (Mann-Whitney=2107, $p=.0000$).

Effects of the childhood abuse

Most victims accepted the abuse as 'normal', 'enjoyable' or 'inconsequential'

Prisoners were significantly more likely to have liked some or all of the sexual abuse experienced in childhood. Boys also thought that the abuse was 'normal' when it was introduced before the age of eight. The enjoyment was explained by the prisoners in the following ways:

'It started out as hide and seek and that was exciting'.

'These were affectionate times - enjoyable experiences'.

'My body liked it and my conscience only began to bother me when I was a lot older and eventually realised that it was wrong'.

'I didn't like it to start with but with peer pressure I joined in and it just became normal'.

'He made me feel good about myself. He played with me, talked to me and listened to me. He hugged and cuddled me and told me he loved me...things that dad never did. I thought he was wonderful'.

'I was sexually curious. I could ask him questions I'd never dare ask my dad. He gave me the answers. He taught me about sex'.

'It started when he took me into his bed when I woke up crying from nightmares and, from then on, I associated it with comfort'.

'It was the only affectionate touching I'd ever received'.

'I felt privileged ...it was like membership of a secret club'.

'I felt flattered. After all the priest was God's representative'.

'I felt good about it because it was the only thing I ever did that pleased my dad.'

'I liked it at first. It was only when the threats started that I realised there was something wrong'.

'I liked it to start with but then it got more violent and I wanted to opt out and found I couldn't'.

'He made me feel very special and said he loved me. No one else did'.

'We took it in turns being his favourite boy, it felt good because it meant that you wouldn't get beaten for a few days'.

The men accepted the abuse as 'normal' because they were 'too young to understand what was happening'. Most enjoyed being the recipients of genital fondling and oral sex from known and trusted adolescents and adults. They only began to worry when the sex became violent, threats were used or the boys were expected to reciprocate oral sex or engage in anal sex.

A 24 year old paedophile serving a ten year sentence reported that he enjoyed his first sexual experience so much that

'I started hunting for my own victims after the first experience at the age of 5. I've been hunting ever since'.

The men abused in institutional settings regarded the sexual component as one comparatively unimportant aspect of a totally damaging environment which exposed boys to constant emotional abuse, sadism, violent and senseless punishments and a continuous process of dehumanisation.

The overall impression given by prisoners who were not involved in sex offender programs was that the sexual abuse had little or no impact on their lives and was comparatively unimportant. Most of the men had 'never thought about it', least of all considered the possibility that it might have influenced their lives. Because abuse was regarded as 'normal', they failed to see any connection between their past experiences, current predicaments and sexual preferences. Many bore no ill will to the paedophiles who abused them except those acting as care givers in services supposedly for the education and welfare of children in the care and protection of the state. Their lack of resentment was due to the fact that they remembered the positive aspects of relationships. Lacking the authority of house fathers or teachers, paedophiles outside institutions had to use seduction techniques which would attract boys. As a consequence, victims remembered treats, the affirmations of love, the good times, the fact that paedophiles listened to them and gave them the attention and approval that their parents did not. It was only when these victims joined sex offender programs and

began to question the nature of 'love' that they realised that they had been used.

Early sexualisation resulted in an obsession with sex

Prisoners were more likely than non-offenders to have become promiscuous and sexually obsessed in childhood. They said:

- 'I became hooked on sex...I never stopped thinking about it'
- 'I couldn't get enough of it'
- 'I never said 'No' to anyone'
- 'I went looking for it'
- 'I was into sex with anyone, anywhere, at any time'.

Even though boys in boarding schools and boys' homes hated the sexual abuse inflicted on them by housemasters and older boys, they spent their spare time masturbating and giving oral sex to each other. The men explained this in several ways, the most common of which were:

- 'My emotions were sexualised. I was looking for love'.
- 'It was learned behaviour that became habitual'.
- 'It was a form of comfort...the only gentle touching we got'.

Abused boys gained status by introducing sexual practices and new homosexual knowledge to their curious male peers. Physical development during puberty brought a strong demand for victims to demonstrate their pubic hair and new found skills to audiences of juvenile admirers. The boost to their ego was short lived however, because boys who had not been abused became 'bored with the 'homosexual stuff' in adolescence and moved on to heterosexual experimentation. The victims were then abandoned by their peers, publicly ridiculed and given the 'poofter' tag. At this point, they found that the only boys who did not reject them were the younger ones. The now isolated teenage victims focussed their interest on prepubescent boys who remained sexually curious. This marked the beginning of paedophilia.

At around the age of twelve, the boys in some boarding schools and children's homes were ascribed the power of 'big boys'. They joined the housemasters in humiliating and brutalising younger boys and felt little conscience about this because this was a rite of passage; they had served their apprenticeship as victims and it was now their right to use younger children for sex and inflict pain on them.

Negative reactions and confusion came much later

All categories of negative reactions were more common in the non-offenders than in the prisoners. This again shows a much higher level of acceptance of sexual abuse in the prisoner group. Negative reactions included:

- feelings of entrapment,
- feelings of shame, embarrassment, isolation and of being 'dirty',
- psychological problems (manifested in depression, low self esteem, self deprecation, night fears, nightmares, flashbacks, bed wetting, eating problems, mental and physical ill health, inability to concentrate, a history of failure in school and tertiary education (for example, by failing to turn up for exams), long periods of unemployment, inability to say 'No' and make decisions and setting themselves up for failure),
- Problems with adult sexual relationships,
- Feelings of guilt and self recrimination,
- Feelings of anger and frustration,
- A sense of helplessness,
- Self destructive tendencies.

The only men whose life histories showed no long term damaging effects on their sexual and social relationships were those who:

- experienced 'one-off' sexual offences of a comparatively minor nature;
- were abused by strangers rather than people they knew and trusted;
- found the behaviour repugnant;
- were shocked at the time and managed to get away;
- recognised that the offender was wholly to blame for what happened;
- felt in control of the situation and suffered no feelings of guilt or self recrimination.

Juvenile perpetrators

For most offenders, the pattern of sexual abuse involved the continuation of abusive practices begun in adolescence. Slightly more than half of the prisoners reported abusing girls who were typically their sisters and sisters' friends. The remaining offenders abused boys, often in large numbers. About one third of the juvenile offenders were involved in sex with younger boys in children's homes and residential homes. Some offences occurred while offenders were in the control of a paedophile ring.

The reporting of abuse

None of the men complained about their victimisation in its early stages. Those abused before the age of eight lacked the knowledge to realise that what was happening was wrong. When older boys complained, they waited at least a year before they found the courage to talk about it and, even then, the reason for reporting was usually that the abuse had become violent. Some boys reached adolescence before they realised that the abuse should not have happened. Others failed to recognise, even in adulthood, that what happened to them constituted a criminal offence which should have been reported. Only 14% of all subjects reported abuse, nearly three quarters of whom were in the non-offender group. Of the twenty-eight people who received reports of child sexual abuse, only one acted responsibly and reported the abuse to police.

Attitudes to child rearing

Given that the vast majority of prisoners and many of the non-offenders had unhappy childhoods, we asked both groups about their views on child rearing. Most prisoners were dissatisfied with their own upbringing but had no ideas on how to improve their own parenting methods. The suggestions of incest offenders in particular mirrored the parenting styles that they hated in childhood. And yet they were all adamant that they wanted to be better parents than their own dysfunctional or absent fathers and they wanted their children to have a more enjoyable childhood of their own. When asked how this might be achieved, they suggested, 'Be there when they need me...give them more attention.' It did not occur to these men that their very presence in prison (for incestuously assaulting their own children) ensured that they could not 'be there' and attend to their children's needs, or that by sexually abusing them, they had disregarded their children's needs. They were unaware that they had perpetuated the destructive cycle and that their own children were likely to view them in the same negative way as the men viewed their own parents.

Probably by virtue of their higher levels of education, the non-offenders were more sensitive to children's needs and more aware of the awesome responsibility of parenting. Having lacked affectionate fathers, they were conscious of the need for affection, attention and approval and were much less likely than prisoners to say that they would repeat the parenting methods of their past.

Men in sex offender programs were more aware of the problems but had no solutions:

'It's a huge job. My own childhood still haunts me.'

'Bringing them up as I was brought up clearly doesn't work but I don't know any other methods.'

'Don't send them to boarding school.'

Paedophiles were more aware of children's emotional needs because, as they pointed out, they fill the gaps left by affectionless families. What became very clear was the need for parent education for prisoners who had committed incest. Prisoners who were parents consistently said that they wanted a better childhood for their children than they had experienced and it is likely that they would be responsive to courses relating to children's needs and positive parenting techniques. Re-education is particularly important because most of the men were being supported by their wives and expected to return to their families. In most cases, when wives had abandoned them, they had already created new relationships with women who had children.

Discussion

SEXUAL HISTORIES

It might be thought that being sexually abused as a child, or being abused at an early or particular age, might predict the likelihood of perpetuating abuse across generations. However, at every one of the age categories (0-5, 6-10, 11-15), the non-offender group reported a greater frequency of sexual abuse than did the prisoners. Thus neither sexual abuse at particular ages, nor the frequency of abuse, do not of themselves necessarily lead to an increased likelihood of perpetuating abuse across generations. It must be remembered that the process by which the non-offender men were selected meant that they were, by definition, a group of men who had been troubled by their early experiences of sexual abuse. For this reason the high frequency of sexual abuse at each age group should not be surprising. Nevertheless, sexual history frequency data is not sufficient to help us understand the reasons for continued abuse in the prisoner population.

DETAILS OF THE SEXUAL ABUSE

In both groups sexual abuse by strangers was relatively unusual. The perpetrator was usually male and the abuse most often involved oral and anal sex. About one third of the abuse involved incest.

Some aspects of the type of abuse experienced add to the emerging picture of difference between the prisoners and the non-offenders. Half of the prisoners had experienced sexual abuse from an adult female compared with a quarter of non-offenders, and the prisoners were much more likely to have had intercourse with an adult woman. About two-thirds of the prisoners liked the sexual experiences they had had, whereas less than one-fifth of the non-offenders liked their sexual experiences. More of the prisoners (nearly 90%) thought that the sexual abuse was 'normal'. The prisoners were also abused by a significantly larger number of people than were the non-offenders.

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Given the context that sexual abusers often regarded their own sexual abuse as normal, even enjoyable, it would be surprising, perhaps, if the prisoners had not replicated the abuse. The prisoners are, in a sense, simply the product of their experiences, and the commission of sexual abuse on children is an accepted part of their world.

EFFECTS OF ABUSE

The relatively low levels of negative consequences attributed to their sexual abuse by the prisoners is remarkable. The perspective of the prisoners changed after they were exposed to therapy, but prior to therapy it was as if they accepted their history as normal. They certainly seemed to have little conscious realisation or acceptance of attitudes commonly held in the community of abhorrence of sexual abuse and beliefs that sexual abuse has profoundly damaging consequences.

The prisoners suffered from low self esteem, often failed in the education system, often experienced chronic unemployment and ill health, failed to create and maintain healthy social and sexual relationships with adults, and adopted anti-social behaviours while replicating the abuse and the 'grooming' process learned from their abusers in childhood.

However the prisoners themselves did not attribute their problems to their sexual abuse.

A NEED FOR RE-EDUCATION AND RE-SOCIALISATION OF OFFENDERS

None of the South Australian prisoners interviewed for either the pilot project or the present research project had been involved in any re-education or re-socialisation program. Some expected that they would have access to the Sexual Offender Treatment program after their release. South Australians who had served several prison sentences disclosed that they had never been offered access to a program which might challenge their ideas, deal with matters surrounding their own childhood victimisation, or learn how to increase non-deviant sexual arousal, care giving and relationship skills. By comparison, all of the subjects who had served or were serving sentences in New South Wales and Western Australia were involved in sexual offender re-education programs.

Prisoners did not use their own sexual abuse to excuse their offences; to the contrary, they were the subjects least likely to realise that their childhood sexual experiences constituted abuse or were harmful. Most prisoners had been conditioned to accept homosexual abuse as a 'normal' if not enjoyable experience. Child molesters in South Australian prisons had served up to six previous sentences for sexual offences against children. With no access to an offenders' program, many expected to re-offend soon after release. Men who discounted the effects of abuse on their own lives, also discounted the damage they did to other children; they rationalised that boys liked and wanted what they did to them and that little girls were 'seductive'. Without counselling, they saw no connection between their own childhood experiences and their disastrous lives.

Adult survivors of long term abuse were disadvantaged by the damage to their sexual development which made it difficult for them to engage in satisfying relationships with men or women. Affection starved boys who were taught to sexualise their emotions, and those with self destructive tendencies offered themselves to male strangers for sex. Some non-offenders in a sexual void asserted that they could readily identify sexualised boys and it was only their understanding of the harmful affects of their own abuse and pangs of conscience that enabled them to escape temptation when they encountered such boys.

Child sexual abuse is clearly a learned behaviour and, when accompanied by violence and degradation or the betrayal of trust, it damages the capacity to love and be loved and the capacity to trust. It can also adversely affect the development of conscience so that victims can abuse the next generation with few qualms. Clearly, without sex offender programs which address the damage caused by childhood abuse, the conditioning experienced by offenders makes it highly likely that they will re-offend.

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JUVENILE PERPETRATORS

It was apparent that the transition from being abused to becoming an abuser typically occurred during adolescence. Twenty-one men who had originally defined themselves as non-offenders were found to have in fact offended while they were juveniles. They had often offended under the direction of adults or in a social context (institution) where such abuse was routine. That these men were apparently able to stop offending as they matured offers some encouragement for intervention programs. Resources have long been allocated to the treatment of convicted adult offenders, and more recently, emphasis has been placed on child protection prevention programs. It may be that, in future, increased attention should be given to early intervention programs designed to reduce the likelihood that those adolescents who have already been abused will repeat the pattern.

ATTITUDES ABOUT CHILD RAISING

The prisoners had experienced unhappy childhoods, wanted something better for their own children but in ignorance of how to be better parents, they demonstrated a parenting style which was similar to their own upbringing. The non-offenders were more aware of the responsibilities of parenting and more determined to avoid the mistakes their own parents had made.

METHODOLOGICAL NOTE

Since this is not an experimental study, definite causal links cannot be drawn. The comparison group of men was different from the prisoners in several ways other than their apparent ability to break the child sexual abuse cycle. They were men who were particularly troubled by their own sexual abuse. They were less likely to have children. They had typically been subjected to more frequent and more serious forms of sexual abuse than had the prisoners. This methodological limitation does not detract from the informative profile of sex offenders. The comparison between these men and the non-offenders goes some way towards understanding the perpetuation of sexual abuse.

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