

The Sexually Abused Child: Female and Male Victims Compared

by P.C. Hiller and C.R. Goddard

INTRODUCTION

In the last fifteen years a great deal of material has been published on child sexual abuse. All violence within the home retains a significant element of secrecy, but child sexual abuse has remained a shadowy secret longer than other forms of intra-familial assault. The battle to draw attention to physical abuse of children within the family was hard fought but controversy over child sexual abuse retains its intensity.

There are disagreements over the scale of the problem (Glaser and Frosh, 1988; Search, 1988) and the research findings concerning the effects of child sexual abuse vary 'wildly' (O'Hagan, 1989:53). Some myths about the problem however, have been successfully challenged. The stranger is no longer seen as the main danger and it is recognised that most perpetrators are members of the victim's immediate or extended family or known to the victim (Goddard, 1988).

The debate over the theoretical approaches to the causation of child sexual abuse remains particularly strong. As O'Hagan (1989) succinctly describes, there are two major perspectives on causation. The family therapist or family dysfunction model suggests that child sexual abuse plays a crucial role in perpetuating some form of 'equilibrium' in the family, with each family member having some interest in the abuse continuing (O'Hagan, 1989:26). The feminist perspective, on the other hand, sees the concept of power as pivotal in child sexual abuse, with male sexuality used as an instrument of control over women (O'Hagan, 1989:23).

Whilst it is generally accepted that the perpetrators of child sexual abuse overwhelmingly are male, and the victims female, suggestions have been made that the whole picture has yet to be seen. It is proposed that cases of homosexual incest, in particular, are less frequently reported (Pierce and Pierce, 1985).

Much of the research (and much of the debate) that is commonly quoted has taken place overseas, primarily in the United States and Britain. In addition, a great deal of the research has been retrospective (e.g., Pierce and Pierce, 1985; Dube and Hebert, 1988).

Peter Hiller is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Anthropology and Sociology and Chris Goddard is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Social Work, Monash University, Clayton 3168.

The plea for further research in Australia has, with few exceptions, met with little response. This paper, which examines the differences between female and male victims of child sexual abuse, presents some of the data in a major, prospective research project being undertaken in the Department of Social Work at Monash University.

"... the involvement of dependent, developmentally immature children and adolescents in sexual activities that they do not fully comprehend, are unable to give informed consent to, or that violate the social taboos of family roles."

(Schechter and Roberge, 1976)

THE STUDY

BACKGROUND

The family Violence Research Program in the Department of Social Work, Monash University comprises a number of projects involving several agencies. The program is concerned with socio-demographic data on victims of violence and their families as well as the institutional responses to abuse (see, for example, Goddard, 1988; Goddard and Hiller, 1989)

THE SAMPLE

This study was carried out on all cases of child sexual abuse presenting at the Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne between 1 January, and 30 October, 1987, a total of 104 cases.

DEFINING CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Child sexual abuse is defined as:

"... the involvement of dependent, developmentally immature children and adolescents in sexual activities that they do not fully comprehend, are unable to give informed consent to, or that violate the social taboos of family roles."

As MacLeod and Saraga (1988) have pointed out, this definition is usually attributed to Kempe and Kempe (1978:60) but in fact first

appears in Schechter and Roberge (1976:129).

METHODOLOGY

Questionnaires covering many aspects of child abuse were filled out by social workers in the Child Protection Unit. Questionnaires were completed as assessment of each case considered to be one of child sexual abuse was concluded.

A CAUTIONARY NOTE

Although the study includes all cases of child sexual abuse presented to the Child Protection Team during a given period of time, the sample is clearly purposive, and accidental, and no generalisations can be made concerning the wider population of child sexual abuse. Furthermore, there are a number of 'missing observations' on some variables. Child sexual abuse is a particularly sensitive problem and the co-operation of families in assessment may not be forthcoming. Some families fear that prosecution or removal of a family member will follow, and some are hostile to staff and refuse to provide information. In some cases children were removed before assessment was complete. These difficulties must not be underestimated, and appear insurmountable where a total sample is assessed.

RESULTS

THE GENDER AND AGE OF VICTIMS

The victims were predominately female (82 percent); 18 per cent were male. The mean age of all victims at the age of onset¹ of abuse was 6.4 years, with girls being slightly younger than boys. The average age of the male victims was 7.2 years (modal age: 6 years). The average age of female victims was 6.2 years while the modal age was 3 years; nearly one half of female victims were aged five years or less, compared with only one quarter of males.

TYPE OF REFERRAL

Victims were referred to the Unit for a variety of reasons in addition to straightforward accusations or disclosures of sexual abuse (see Table 1).

While, on the whole, there were no large differences when considering the gender of victims, it will be observed that behavioural

indicators (for example, 'acting out') were more common as a basis for referral amongst males, whereas psychosomatic and physical symptoms where sexual abuse was a differential diagnosis were more characteristic of the females.

TYPE OF ABUSE

Among the 53 cases on which information was available, 30 types or combinations thereof were observed. Table 2 displays these in disaggregated form according to the gender of victims.

TABLE 1
TYPES OF REFERRAL
BY GENDER OF VICTIM

| TYPE OF REFERRAL | SEX OF VICTIM | | | | Total | |
|--|---------------|--------|------------|----------|-------|-----|
| | Male No. | Male % | Female No. | Female % | No. | % |
| Sexual abuse | 12 | 63 | 56 | 66 | 68 | 65 |
| Neglect | 1 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| Physical abuse | 2 | 11 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 6 |
| Attempted suicide | 1 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| Behavioural indicators | 3 | 16 | 8 | 9 | 11 | 11 |
| Psychosomatic symptoms | | | 10 | 12 | 10 | 10 |
| Sexually transmitted disease | 1 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| Sibling abused | 1 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| Sexual abuse as differential diagnosis | | | 7 | 8 | 7 | 7 |
| Other | | | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Total | 19 | 100 | 85 | 100 | 104 | 100 |

Note: Actual column totals are greater than those displayed as more than one reason for referral was involved in a number of cases.

It can be seen in Table 2 that anal intercourse and masturbation were more common amongst male victims, while digital penetration and penetration with an object were used exclusively against female victims. Sexual kissing and fondling was much more common as a form of abuse against female victims.

If the presence of penetration as part of the abuse can be taken as one indicator of the seriousness of abuse, no substantial difference between males and females in the sample were observed: 60 percent of males, compared with 55 percent of females, were so abused.

Abuse of a non-sexual kind was additionally found in 14 instances (including eight cases of bruising and three of neglect). The three males concerned constituted 16 percent of all boys in the sample, while 13 percent of females also suffered further forms of abuse.

TABLE 2
TYPES OF SEXUAL ABUSE
BY GENDER OF VICTIM

| TYPE OF ABUSE | SEX OF VICTIM | | | | Total | |
|---|---------------|--------|------------|----------|-------|-----|
| | Male No. | Male % | Female No. | Female % | No. | % |
| Vaginal intercourse | | | 7 | 17 | 7 | 13 |
| Anal intercourse | 4 | 36 | 2 | 5 | 6 | 11 |
| Fellatio | 2 | 18 | 5 | 12 | 7 | 13 |
| Cunnilingus | 1 | 9 | 4 | 10 | 5 | 9 |
| Digital penetration | | | 8 | 19 | 8 | 15 |
| Penetration with an object | | | 4 | 10 | 4 | 8 |
| Simulated or attempted intercourse | | | 2 | 5 | 2 | 4 |
| Masturbation | 5 | 45 | 10 | 24 | 15 | 28 |
| Touching | | | 7 | 17 | 7 | 13 |
| Sexualised kissing, hugging or fondling | 1 | 9 | 17 | 40 | 18 | 34 |
| Other | 3 | 27 | 4 | 10 | 7 | 13 |
| Total | 11 | 100 | 42 | 100 | 53 | 100 |

Note: Actual column totals are greater than those displayed as more than one type of abuse was involved in many cases.

RELATIONSHIP TO OFFENDER

The relationships between offenders and their victims is shown in Table 3, broken down according to the latter's gender.

TABLE 3
RELATIONSHIP OF PERPETRATOR
TO VICTIM BY SEX OF VICTIM

| RELATIONSHIP OF PERPETRATOR TO VICTIM | SEX OF VICTIM | | | | Total | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|--------|------------|----------|-------|-----|
| | Male No. | Male % | Female No. | Female % | No. | % |
| FATHERS | | | | | | |
| Father | 3 | 21 | 25 | 38 | 28 | 35 |
| Mother | 2 | 14 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Stepfather | 1 | 7 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 5 |
| Mothers defacto | 1 | 7 | 6 | 9 | 7 | 9 |
| Grandparents | 1 | 7 | 9 | 14 | 10 | 13 |
| Other relative | 2 | 14 | 7 | 11 | 9 | 11 |
| NON-RELATIVES | | | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| Stranger | 1 | 7 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 4 |
| Family friend | 2 | 14 | 7 | 11 | 9 | 11 |
| Neighbour | 1 | 7 | 4 | 6 | 5 | 6 |
| Lodger | 2 | 14 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Formal caregiver | | | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Babysitter | | | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Other | | | 3 | 5 | 3 | 4 |
| Total | 14 | 100 | 65 | 100 | 79 | 100 |

Note: Actual column totals are greater than those displayed as more than one offender was involved in a number of cases.

Natural fathers were the most commonly observed perpetrators and were found

disproportionately among female victims. Interestingly, grandparents were involved in ten instances and other relatives and 'family friends' in nine each. Although the very small numbers involved necessitate extreme caution in interpretation, it appears that males were over-represented among cases where mothers and lodgers were the offenders. Only a very small minority of offenders were complete strangers to their victims.

Overall, as Table 4 shows, more than one half of the children were abused by blood relatives (two thirds, if relatives 'reconstituted' through remarriage or defacto arrangements are included).

TABLE 4
RELATEDNESS OF PERPETRATOR
BY SEX OF VICTIM

| RELATIONSHIP OF PERPETRATOR TO VICTIM | SEX OF VICTIM | | | | Total | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|--------|------------|----------|-------|-----|
| | Male No. | Male % | Female No. | Female % | No. | % |
| Blood relations | 7 | 50 | 36 | 55 | 43 | 54 |
| Reconstituted family | 1 | 7 | 9 | 14 | 10 | 13 |
| Unrelated | 6 | 43 | 20 | 31 | 26 | 33 |
| Total | 14 | 100 | 65 | 100 | 79 | 100 |

X²: N.S.

FURTHER ASPECTS OF SEXUAL ABUSE

In contrast with girls in the sample, boys were both more commonly believed to have previously suffered abuse (Table 5; more than one half compared with one third) and to have siblings whose abuse was either suspected or confirmed (Table 6; 87 percent of cases on which there was information compared with 44 percent). In addition, in more than one half of the known cases of sexual assault on males (8 cases) compared with one third of those on females (20 percent), other children (including those outside the family) were also believed to have been sexually abused.

Girls, on the other hand, were somewhat over-represented among cases involving more than one incident of abuse and where victimisation had continued for more than twelve months (Tables 7 and 8).

TABLE 5
HISTORY OF ABUSE BY SEX OF VICTIM

| HISTORY OF ABUSE | SEX OF VICTIM | | | | Total | |
|-----------------------|---------------|--------|------------|----------|-------|-----|
| | Male No. | Male % | Female No. | Female % | No. | % |
| Not previously abused | 6 | 46 | 48 | 67 | 54 | 64 |
| Previously abused | 7 | 54 | 24 | 33 | 31 | 36 |
| Total | 13 | 100 | 72 | 100 | 85 | 100 |

X²: N.S.

TABLE 6
ABUSE OF SIBLINGS BY SEX OF VICTIM

| | SEX OF VICTIM | | | | Total | |
|----------------------------|---------------|-----|--------|-----|-------|-----|
| | Male | | Female | | | |
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| ABUSE OF SIBLINGS | | | | | | |
| Suspected and/or confirmed | 13 | 87 | 27 | 44 | 40 | 52 |
| Not suspected | | | 12 | 19 | 12 | 16 |
| Not known | 2 | 13 | 23 | 37 | 25 | 32 |
| Total | 15 | 100 | 62 | 100 | 77 | 100 |

X²: N.S.

TABLE 7
NUMBER OF INCIDENTS OF ABUSE BY SEX IN VICTORIA

| | SEX OF VICTIM | | | | Total | |
|------------------------------|---------------|-----|--------|-----|-------|-----|
| | Male | | Female | | | |
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| NUMBER OF INCIDENTS OF ABUSE | | | | | | |
| One incident | 3 | 75 | 4 | 27 | 7 | 37 |
| More than one incident | 1 | 25 | 11 | 73 | 12 | 63 |
| Total | 4 | 100 | 15 | 100 | 19 | 100 |

TABLE 8
DURATION OF ABUSE BY SEX OF VICTIM

| | SEX OF VICTIM | | | | Total | |
|--------------------|---------------|-----|--------|-----|-------|-----|
| | Male | | Female | | | |
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| DURATION OF ABUSE | | | | | | |
| Up to one year | 6 | 75 | 14 | 54 | 20 | 59 |
| More than one year | 2 | 25 | 12 | 46 | 14 | 41 |
| Total | 8 | 100 | 26 | 100 | 34 | 100 |

X²: N.S.

STRESS FACTORS

Table 9 summarizes data on the 'risk' or 'stress' factors assessed by social workers to be present in the victims' families. Two qualifications about the data must be borne in mind: first, they constitute aspects of the child's home environment rather than 'risk factors' in the technical sense (see Leventhal, 1982, and Seagull, 1987); and, second, because information was not uniformly available from all sample members, base numbers for the calculation of percentages vary considerably.

Interestingly, of the known cases, the most widely reported stress factor was that of the abuse of victims' parents in their own childhoods (over two thirds of cases, with males somewhat over-represented). Isolation

from extended kin, financial and psychological problems were identified in around two fifths of instances (with male slightly over-represented in the last of these). Around one third of victims came from families with single mothers, domestic violence, alcohol problems or which were isolated from professional assistance, with no notable sex differences. Other stress factors were identified less commonly, and no other sex differences between victims were observed.

TABLE 9
STRESS FACTORS IN VICTIMS' FAMILIES BY SEX OF VICTIM

| | SEX OF VICTIM | | | | Total | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|-----|--------|-----|-------|-----|
| | Male | | Female | | | |
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| STRESS FACTORS IN VICTIM'S FAMILIES | | | | | | |
| Single mother | 6 | 32 | 32 | 38 | 38 | 37 |
| Total | 19 | 100 | 85 | 100 | 104 | 100 |
| Single father | 3 | 16 | 10 | 12 | 13 | 13 |
| Total | 19 | 100 | 85 | 100 | 104 | 100 |
| Family isolated from extended kin | 7 | 50 | 28 | 41 | 35 | 42 |
| Total | 14 | 100 | 69 | 100 | 83 | 100 |
| Family isolated from professionals | 7 | 41 | 22 | 33 | 29 | 35 |
| Total | 17 | 100 | 66 | 100 | 83 | 100 |
| Housing problems | 4 | 25 | 19 | 29 | 23 | 28 |
| Total | 16 | 100 | 65 | 100 | 81 | 100 |
| Financial problems | 5 | 38 | 21 | 41 | 26 | 41 |
| Total | 13 | 100 | 51 | 100 | 64 | 100 |
| Parents abused in childhood | 8 | 80 | 35 | 67 | 43 | 69 |
| Total | 10 | 100 | 52 | 100 | 62 | 100 |
| Domestic violence in family | 4 | 31 | 21 | 38 | 25 | 37 |
| Total | 13 | 100 | 55 | 100 | 68 | 100 |
| Drug problems in family | 1 | 11 | 3 | 8 | 4 | 8 |
| Total | 9 | 100 | 39 | 100 | 48 | 100 |
| Alcohol problems in family | 3 | 33 | 10 | 30 | 13 | 31 |
| Total | 9 | 100 | 33 | 100 | 42 | 100 |
| Psychological problems in family | 4 | 50 | 17 | 37 | 21 | 39 |
| Total | 8 | 100 | 46 | 100 | 54 | 100 |

DISCUSSION

Although there are no statistically significant differences in the ages of boys and girls

it is worth noting that the youth of the victims in this study is really quite startling. There has been, as one would expect, a tendency for the age of the victims in studies to lower as knowledge of child sexual abuse has increased but the extremely young age of many of these victims has major implications for all aspects of service delivery (Goddard, 1988).

The victims in this study were young, with almost 65 percent eight years old or less, and 49 percent aged less than seven years. More than one third were under five years of age. The victims were younger than found in most other studies (e.g. Burgess and Holmstrom, 1974; Mohr, 1981; Dolan, 1984; Kercher and McShane, 1984; Lyon and Kouloumpos-Lenares, 1987). Goldman and Goldman (1988), for example, declare that the years from eight until eleven are the 'dangerous years'.

Almost 82 percent of the victims were female and 18 percent were male. This is a higher ratio of female to male victims than some recent studies (e.g. Mian et al., 1986). Other studies, however, have reported similar figures to those in this research (e.g. Dolan, 1984; Kercher and McShane, 1984; Lyon and Kouloumpos-Lenares, 1987).

Finkelhor (1984) suggests that the ratio of female to male victims is affected by the setting of the research. He proposes that hospitals and child protection agencies see fewer male victims than the police, the difference explained by variations in the types of population each agency serves, with child protection agencies, for example, seeing more intrafamilial child sexual abuse. Hospitals, according to Finkelhor, whilst not limited to intrafamilial cases, probably exhibit bias in their populations towards seeing children who require a medical examination. Female victims are more likely to attend medical facilities such as hospitals in order for evidence to be taken, for pregnancy tests or for repair to damage after penetration (Finkelhor, 1984:158). (An additional cautionary note is also required when comparing figures from other countries because agencies work differently and have different roles and functions). Conerly believes that sexual abuse of boys is under-reported because of lack of awareness on the part of professionals and because of a 'cultural bias' that suggests sexual activity cannot harm boys (1986: 47).

A particular problem in child sexual abuse, and in establishing the incidence and prevalence of the problem, is that much of it may escape detection. Many cases are undoubtedly missed, or not assessed (with child sexual abuse used as a differential diagnosis) because cases present in so many different ways. This problem is exacerbated by the young age of the victims.

Hunter and her colleagues (1985) call cases that initially present as behavioural or other problems 'masked presentations' of child sexual abuse. This study, which

examines the problem in a more refined breakdown of presenting features than Hunter et al.'s report, suggest that behavioural problems (e.g. sexualised behaviour) might be a more common presentation amongst male victims whereas psychosomatic symptomatology (e.g. headaches, stomach pains etc.) might be more common amongst females.

It must be stressed that the numbers are small, and that further study is required, but it might be suggested that the male victims of sexual abuse are already externalising their trauma whilst the female victims are internalising their pain. There are certainly possible links here with the discussion of the long-term effects of sexual victimization with women perhaps being subject to further victimization and men going on to be abusers (e.g. Miller et al., 1978; Herman and Hirschman, 1981; Petrovich and Templer, 1984). More detailed and longer-term studies are required before such links can be suggested with confidence.

Where the form of sexual abuse was known, most activities revealed in this study involved those described by Russell as serious or very serious. Few cases entailed activities exclusively within the least serious category which, according to Russell, involves kissing and touching (1984:187-188).

This study found no marked differences between males and female victims in terms of their relationship to the offenders. The relationship of the offender to the victim is said to be one of the mediating factors in examining the effects of child sexual abuse: the closer the relationship, it is suggested, the greater the trauma (Lusk and Waterman, 1986:111). If this is true, then the child sexual abuse in this study can be judged as serious by this measure as well. Most of the victims were abused by perpetrators related to them, with natural fathers overwhelmingly the most common offenders.

This finding is consistent with Porter (1984) although in her figures, 40 percent were natural fathers, 30 percent stepfathers, and 25 percent other family members; in her study, as in ours, only a few neighbours and strangers were involved. In Mian et al.'s 1986 research, biological fathers comprised 37.5 percent of the abusers. Evidence conflicts, however: Russell (1984) found that stepfathers were more commonly the perpetrators, and Finkelhor (1984) found that having a stepfather was the factor most strongly correlated to child sexual abuse, although it was not only the stepfathers who were responsible for the abuse.

Female victims appear to be subject to more long-term abuse. Most researchers have found that father-daughter incest is likely to be more prolonged than other forms of sexual abuse. The majority of accounts published by victims suggest that abuse continues for years. As Nelson (1987) notes, father-daughter incest is likely to be

long-lasting, rather than a one-off incident, because of the father's authority and the child dependence; Nelson also suggests that incestuous or intrafamilial abuse will last as long as it is allowed to (1987:19-20).

The stress factor that once again stands out in this study is the abuse of victims' parents in their own childhoods. Whilst the 'cycle of violence' in physical abuse has been widely reported and explained from the early works on child abuse (see, for example, Kempe and Kempe, 1978) the similar 'cycle of abuse' in child sexual abuse, although widely reported, has been less easily explained (see, for example, Faller, 1989) because it appears that high rates of abuse are found both in the perpetrators and in the mothers of the victims. This is an area that requires further, more detailed research and will be the subject of a future article.

CONCLUSION

The limitations of this research have been referred to above. Nonetheless, it has positive aspects: the data were collected prospectively, rather than retrospectively, the data were gathered by social workers as they assessed cases and close communication was maintained with the researchers - this, we believe, means that the data are accurate; and, finally, the study is Australian, and there are few Australian studies.

None of the factors outlined in this study will, by themselves, lead us to a full understanding of what generates child sexual abuse as the problem undoubtedly has many causes. However, it is hoped that this research will alert workers to some of the more significant issues. As Glaser and Frosh point out, research into child sexual abuse is problematic because 'secrecy, shame and guilt' are integral elements of the abuse (1988:63). Powerful emotions also surround the events afterwards. 'Anger, fascination, revulsion and fear' (Goddard, 1988:63) are emotions common amongst the workers and families as well as in society at large. Research, both into the dimensions of the problem (Glaser and Frosh, 1988) and into how agencies respond (O'Hagan, 1989), will assist in ensuring that responses to this emotional subject are as rational as possible.

REFERENCES

Burgess, A.W. and Holmstrom, L.L. (1978) "Accessory to Sex: Pressure, Sex, and Secrecy" in Burgess, A.W., Groth, A.N., Holmstrom, L.L. and Sgroi, S.M. (Eds) *Sexual Assault of Children and Adolescents* Lexington, Massachusetts: Lexington Books, D.C. Heath and Company, pp85-98.

Conerly, S. (1986) "Assessment of Suspected Child Abuse" in MacFarlane, K., Waterman, J., Conerly, S., Damon, L., Durfee, M., and Long, S. (Eds) *Sexual Abuse of Young Children: Evaluation and Treatment* London: Cassell, pp 30-51.

Dolan, K.J. (1984) "Evaluation of Outcomes for Reported Cases of Child Sexual Abuse in Texas" *Victimology* 9 (3-4):383-397.

Dube, R. and Hebert, M. (1988) "Sexual Abuse of Children under 12 Years of Age: A Review of 511 Cases" *Child Abuse and Neglect* 12 (3):321-330.

Faller, K.C. (1989) "Why Sexual Abuse? An Exploration of the Intergenerational Hypothesis" *Child Abuse and Neglect* 13 (4):543-548.

Finkelhor, D. (1984) *Child Sexual Abuse: New Theory and Research* New York: The Free Press.

Glaser, D. and Frosh, S. (1988) *Child Sexual Abuse* Houndmills, Basingstoke: Macmillan Education Ltd.

Goddard, C.R. (1988) "A Child Sexual Abuse Tracking Project: A Hospital based Study for the Law Reform Commission of Victoria" in Law Reform Commission of Victoria *Sexual Offences Against Children: Research Reports* Melbourne: Government Printer, pp 61-185

Goddard, C.R. and Hiller, P.C. (1989) "Tracking Child Sexual Abuse" *Legal Service Bulletin* 14 (1):25-28.

Herman, J.L. and Hirschman, L. (1981) *Father-Daughter Incest* Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Kempe, R.S. and Kempe, C.H. (1978) *Child Abuse* London: Fontana/Open Books.

Kercher, G. and McShane, M. (1984) "Characterizing Child Sexual Abuse on the Basis of a Multi-Agency Sample" *Victimology* 9 (3-4):362-382.

Leventhal, J.M. (1982) "Research Strategies and Methodologic Standards in Studies of Risk Factors for Child Abuse" *Child Abuse and Neglect* 6 (2):113-123.

Lusk, R. and Waterman, J. (1986) "Effects of Sexual Abuse on Children" in MacFarlane, K., Waterman, J., Conerly, S., Damon, L., Durfee, M. and Long, S. (Eds) *Sexual Abuse of Young Children: Evaluation and Treatment* London: Cassell, pp 101-118.

Lyon, E. and Kouloumpos-Lenares, K. (1987) "Clinician and State Children's Services Worker Collaboration in Treating Child Sexual Abuse" *Child Welfare* 66 (6):517-527, November-December.

Macleod, M. and Saraga, E. (1988) "Challenging the Orthodoxy: Towards a Feminist Theory and Practice" *Feminist Review* 28:16-55, Spring.

Mian, W., Wehrspann, W., Klasner-Diamond, M., Labaron, D. and Winder, C. (1986) "Review of 125 Children Six Years of Age and Under Who Were Sexually Abused" *Child Abuse and Neglect* 10 (2):223-229.

Miller, J., Moeller, D., Kaufman, A., Divasto, P., Pathak, D., and Christy, J. (1978) "Recidivism Among Sex Assault Victims" *American Journal of Psychiatry* 135:1103-1104.

Mohr, J.W. (1981) "Age Structures in Paedophilia" in Cook, M. and Howells, K. (Eds) *Adult Sexual Interest in Children* London: Academic Press, pp 42-54.

Nelson, S. (1987) *Incest: Fact and Myth* Edinburgh: Stramullian Co-operative Limited.

O'Hagan, K. (1987) *Working with Child Sexual Abuse: A Post-Cleveland Guide to Effective Principles and Practice* Milton Keynes and Philadelphia: Open University Press.

Petrovich, M. and Templer, D.I. (1984) "Heterosexual Molestation of Children Who Later Became Rapists" *Psychological Reports* 54 (3):810, June.

Pierce, R. and Pierce, L.M. (1985) "The Sexually Abused Child: A Comparison of Male and Female Victims" *Child Abuse and Neglect* 9 (2):191-199.

Porter, R. (Ed) (1984) *Child Sexual Abuse Within the Family* London: Tavistock Publications.

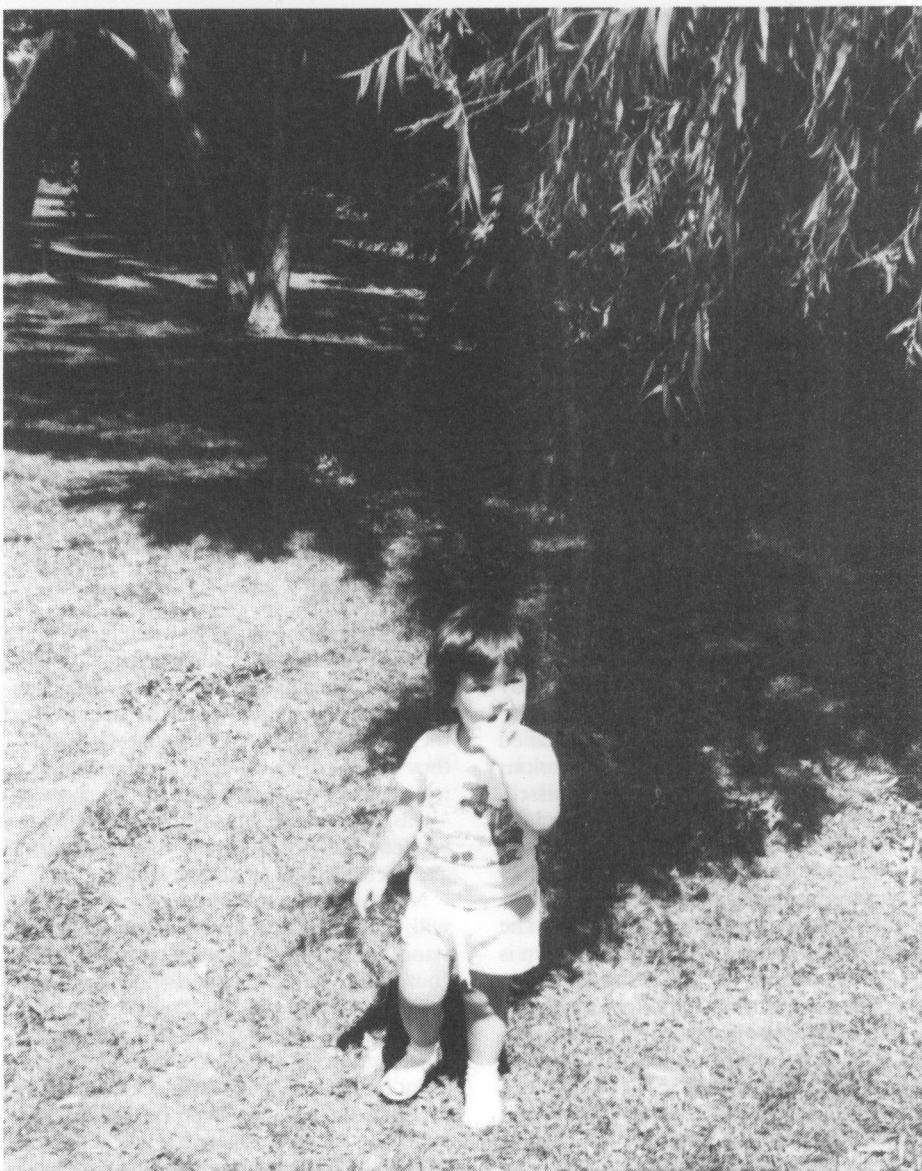
Russell, D.E.H. (1984) *Sexual Exploitation: Rape, Child Sexual Abuse, and Workplace Harassment* Beverly Hills: Sage.

Russell, D.E.H. (1986) *The Secret Trauma: Incest in the Lives of Girls and Women* New York: Bane Books.

Schechter, M.D. and Roberge, L. (1976) "Sexual exploitation" in Helfer, R.E. and Kempe, C.H. (Eds) *Child Abuse and Neglect: The Family and the Community* Cambridge, Massachusetts: Ballinger Publishing Co pp 127-142.

Seagull, E.A.W. (1987) "Social Support and Child Maltreatment; A Review of the Evidence" *Child Abuse and Neglect* 11:41-52.

Search, G. (1988) *The Last Taboo: Sexual Abuse of Children* London: Penguin Books.



AUSTRALIAN CHILD PROTECTION CONFERENCE REPORT 1990

By Ross Patterson

The Australian Child Protection Conference held at Macquarie University, in Sydney, from the 17th to the 20th of April 1990 was attended by over 500 participants and overall was a resounding success. As a member of the organising committee and a practitioner in the field of child protection for quite a substantial period of time, such a success was personally satisfying. In an area that is thwart with difficulties, frustrations and hindrances a successful outcome deserves further exploration. A number of strategies as well as the wealth of information presented lead to the conference being a success. Much of this was in the initial organising.

Particular themes were identified for this conference that encouraged the breadth of presentations. The themes, identified were: Child Protection, Responsibility and Response **Ability, Causes, Choices, Consequences.**

The structure of the conference allowed exploration of these themes through keynote addresses, small group discussion, paper and workshop presentation special interest group activities and video presentations.

A unique feature of the conference was the decision made by the organising committee to make this conference truly Australian and not invite any overseas specialists. Whilst initial response to this stand from some quarters was scepticism, the level of skill displayed by the majority of presenters supported the stance by the committee.

The keynote addresses were well attended throughout the three days and covered areas as broad as the rights of the child, public versus private funding of child protection services, the future of child protection services and an exploration of the strategies used in prevention. Each State was invited to provide speakers for the keynote addresses. Special Interest groups were held for the police, medical practitioners and child protection week organisers and again participants were from across Australia.

The participant's contributions made their impact through both paper and workshop presentations. It was decided to offer the opportunity for participants to conduct workshops (of up to 3 hours in length) particularly focused on practice issues. Papers presented often focused on research, policy or programme description. The net effect was a comprehensive coverage of current issues.

The current issues explored through workshop and paper presentation covered areas such as: children as witnesses, medical assessment of children, the interface of law and welfare in child protection cases, domestic violence, services and the shrinking welfare dollar, community based long-term treatment programmes, working with adult sex offenders, prevention programmes and the long-term effects of abuse on children.

The standard of the majority of presentations was very high and the choice provided for participants, in each session, quite extensive. The feedback from participants generally was quite favourable and this seemed to be related to the sense of purpose and commitment evident in presentations. Refocusing and 'where to from here' seemed to be the underlying tenets of the conference.

There was a quite audible expressed hope that there be another Australian Conference on child protection held in the not too distant future.

Copies of the conference proceedings are being produced. Conference participants will be notified when they are available.

Orders may be placed with the Executive Officer, N.S.W. Child Protection Council, P.O. Box 228, Parramatta 2124.