

Running Head: IMPACT OF CHILD SEX ABUSE

Psychological Distress among Adult Women in New Zealand:
The Impact of Childhood Sexual Abuse

Nikolaos Kazantzis, Ross A. Flett, Nigel R. Long, Carol MacDonald, Michelle Millar,
Bronwyn Clark, & Howard Edwards

Massey University, New Zealand

Nikolaos Kazantzis, Ross Flett, Nigel Long, Carol MacDonald, Michelle Millar, Bronwyn Clark, School of Psychology; Howard Edwards Institute for Information and Mathematical Sciences. A version of this paper was presented at the 12th Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association. This research was supported by a grant from the New Zealand Accident Rehabilitation and Insurance Corporation (ACC).

Correspondence and reprint requests should be addressed to Nikolaos Kazantzis, School of Psychology, Massey University, Private Bag 102904, NSMC, Auckland, New Zealand, Phone (+64) (0) 9 4140800, Fax (+64) 94140831. E-mail may be sent to N.Kazantzis@massey.ac.nz.

Running Head: IMPACT OF CHILD SEX ABUSE

Psychological Distress among Adult Women in New Zealand:
The Impact of Childhood Sexual Abuse

Submitted 15/08/2008: *Child Abuse and Neglect*

Abstract (200 words)

Objective: The aim of the present study was to examine the long-term impact of child sex abuse on psychological distress in a New Zealand community sample of women.

Method: A sample of 961 adult women was selected by means of a modified, three-stage, stratified method, based on an area probability sample. Respondents were interviewed in person by trained interviewers with one-hour structured interviews conducted in the respondent's home.

Results: Child sex abuse was reported by 13% of women in the present sample. Women were more vulnerable to psychological distress in adulthood if they had been victims of child sex abuse and were younger in age, less satisfied with their standard of living, and resident in urban areas. Moreover, the impact of child sex abuse predicted long-term psychological distress, even when other factors were statistically controlled.

Conclusion: The findings support research conducted in the United States demonstrating the long-term effects of child sex abuse on psychological functioning, and that the impact may be worse for urban-residing individuals. The current data support the dissemination of therapies for the treatment of child sex abuse in adulthood to the New Zealand context, but research regarding efficacy of those treatments is required.

Practice Implications: These data have several important implications for practice. Mental health professionals are reminded that child sex abuse is a common occurrence and has many sequelae in adulthood. Adults with abuse history may particularly benefit from support and therapeutic interventions from multidisciplinary teams that target general levels of psychological distress, as well as appropriate living standards and locations.

While the long-term impact of sexual abuse occurring in childhood has received substantial research attention in recent years (Briere & Runtz, 1993; Browne & Finkelhor, 1986; Fleming, Mullen, Sibthorpe, & Bammer, 1999; Kendall-Tackett, Williams, & Finkelhor, 1993; Kristensen & Lau, 2007), there has been comparatively little research on the impact of family violence and abuse outside the United States (Gershuny & Thayer, 1999; Tyler, 2002). Examination of the impact of child sexual abuse in other countries is important for designing suitable prevention programs, as well as for the dissemination of treatment manuals for use in other countries.

The trauma of child sex abuse has demonstrated long-term sequelae including, but not limited to, anxiety, depression, drug abuse, eating disorders, suicidal ideation, and attempted suicide (Browne, Keating, & O'Connor, 1998; Bulik, Prescott, & Kendler, 2001; Hernandez, 1995; Hukkanen, Sourander, Bergroth, & Piha, 1997; Kuperman, Black, & Burns, 1988; Loeb, 1997; Martin, Bergen, Richardson, Roeger, & Allison, 2004; Silverman, Reinherz, & Giaconia, 1996; Spataro, Mullen, Burgess, Wells, & Moss, 2004; Wannan & Fombonne, 1998; Witchel, 1991). However, there is some evidence to suggest that symptomatology and self-blame may be mediated by social support and socioeconomic status (Elliott & Carnes, 2001; Hazzard, Celano, Gould, & Lawry, 1995; Hyman, Gold, & Cott, 2003; Katerndahl, Burge, & Kellogg, 2005). Additionally, there is evidence to suggest that victims of child sex abuse may later demonstrate symptoms associated with diagnoses of borderline personality disorder, major depression, panic disorder, and posttraumatic stress disorder (Luntz & Widom, 1994; McLean & Gallop, 2003; Owens & Chard, 2003), as well as being associated with the perpetration of child sex abuse in adulthood (i.e., male victims in Christopher, Lutz-Zois, & Reinhardt, 2007). However, the majority of studies examining

the impact of child sexual abuse have primarily done so within community samples in the United States (e.g., Molnar, Buka, & Kessler, 2001).

One community survey of trauma by Stein, Walker, Hazen, and Forde (1997) examined the impact of sex abuse in a Canadian sample, but like many previous studies of trauma, did not distinguish between sexual abuse occurring in adulthood from that occurring in childhood (see also Breslau, Davis, Andreski, & Peterson, 1991; Norris, 1992; Ullman & Siegel, 1996; Zlotnick et al., 2006). Unfortunately, other studies of trauma impact outside the United States have been limited to specific populations where child sexual abuse has not featured as one of the events investigated. These studies have been primarily limited to samples of refugees (Gerritson et al., 2006; Hasanovic, Sinanovic, & Pavlovic, 2005; Marusic, Kozaric-Kovacic, Folnegovic-Smalc, & Ljubin, 1995; Roodenrijs, Scherpenzeel, & de Jong, 1998; Servan-Schreiber, Lin, & Birmaher, 1998) and war veterans (Beal, 1995; Cunningham & Cunningham, 1997; Grayson, Dobson, & Marshall, 1998; Skodol, Schwartz, Dohrenwend, & Levav, 1996; Sungur, Surmeli, & Ozcubukcuoglu, 1995). The relatively little amount of local data on the impact of trauma separate from war-related events (e.g., Long, Chamberlain, & Vincent, 1992; MacDonald, Chamberlain, & Long, 1997; MacDonald, Chamberlain, Long, & Flett, in press) certainly makes New Zealand no exception.

Some studies have sought to examine the incidence and impact of child sex abuse and have reported incidence rates similar to those obtained in the community (e.g., Fanslow, Robinson, Crengle, & Perese, 2007; Finkelhor, Hotaling, Lewis, & Smith, 1990; Frothingham, Barnett, Hobbs, & Wynne, 1993; Leserman, 2005). Understanding the circumstances in which child sex abuse occurs (Bulik et al., 2001; Fischer & McDonald, 1998), and opinions of child sex abuse and its perpetrators have been investigated (Back &

Lips, 1998; Duncan & Williams, 1998; Elbogen, Patry, & Scalora, 2003; Fischer, 1992; Maynard & Wideman, 1997; Mellott, Wagner, & Broussard, 1997; Rash & Winton, 2007; Smith, Fromuth, & Morris, 1997). Comparative incidence rates of child sex abuse have been obtained in Northern Ireland (Kennedy & Manwell, 1992) and Spain (Lopez, Hernandez, & Carpintero, 1995), but at least one report suggests that there may be substantial differences in incidence rates between countries (i.e., rates vary from 7% to 36% for women, and 3% to 29% for men, see Finkelhor, 1994, and Sjoegren, 1995). It seems important then, that further research on the incidence and impact of child sex abuse is conducted in community samples outside the United States. The aim of the present study was to examine the long-term impact of child sex abuse in a New Zealand community sample.

Geographic location appears to function as a moderating variable of the long-term impact of child sex abuse. Evidence suggests those living in urban environments draw an increased risk of HIV transmission and drug abuse (Cappelleri, Eckenrode, & Powers, 1993; Di Scipio, 1994; Phillips & Straussner, 1997; Wingood & DiClemente, 1997, 1998), but psychiatric morbidity among women in urban and rural New Zealand noted that a number of additional risk factors, including childhood experience of sexual abuse, were causally related to long-term pathology (i.e., Romans-Clarkson, Walton, Herbison, & Mullen, 1990). Interestingly, the Romans-Clarkson et al. study did not obtain differences in psychological distress between urban and rural geographical subgroups. Therefore, one key feature of the present study was to specifically examine differences between urban and rural residing individuals in long-term sequelae of child sex abuse.

On the basis of prior research demonstrating that young women are at an increased risk of sex abuse and related traumatic events (Breslau, Davis, Peterson, Schultz, 1997; Fanslow et. al. 2007; Norris, 1992), the present study investigated the impact of childhood

sexual abuse in a community sample of New Zealand women. It was expected that age, satisfaction with socioeconomic status (i.e., satisfaction with standard of living, and adequacy of income) and location of residence (i.e., urban and rural residence) would contribute significantly to the prediction of psychological distress following child sex abuse.

Method

Sample

Participants eligible for the study were 961 women adults aged 18 and older residing in the 14 census enumeration districts in the North and South Islands of New Zealand. The sampling procedure has been described in detail elsewhere (Flett, Millar, Long, & MacDonald, 1998). Briefly, a sample of 1500 adults was selected by means of a modified, three-stage, stratified method, based on an area probability sample. Sample sites were randomly selected on the basis of geographic region. One adult from each household was selected for inclusion and the overall response rate was 58%. This response rate was consistent with a previous survey of child sex abuse in the Australian community using similar methodology (i.e., 58% in Najman et al. 2007). The 961 women respondents were subsequently selected for analysis in the present report. Respondents were interviewed in person by trained interviewers with one-hour structured interviews conducted in the respondent's home. An informed consent procedure was adopted for the study and the entire study received approval from Massey University's Human Ethics Committee. (A complete copy of the interview questions and administration procedure available upon request from the corresponding author.) Demographic characteristics of the child sexual assault victims and non-victims are presented in Table 1.

Measures

Child Sex Abuse. A modified version of The Traumatic Stress Schedule (TTS; Norris, 1990, 1992) was used to collect incidence of child sex abuse. The item examining sex abuse was modified to distinguish between child and adult sexual assault. The resultant item assessed incidence of child sex assaults with the question “*During your childhood, did anyone ever make you have sex by using force or threatening to harm you? This involves all unwanted sexual activity.*”

Psychological Distress. The Mental Health Inventory (MHI; Veit & Ware, 1983) was used to assess psychological distress. The MHI measures 24 conditions over the past month to evaluate psychological distress. The scale has a 7-point response format from 1 (*all of the time, always, extremely*) to 7 (*none of the time, never, not at all*) and assesses a discrete factor with high internal consistency one-year stability (Veit & Ware, 1983). In the present study, item-total correlations for psychological distress ranged from 0.32 to 0.76 and the standardized item alpha was 0.93.

Stressful Life Events. Respondents were asked to indicate whether or not they had experienced each of 20 life events during the 12 months preceding the survey. The life events scale was developed specifically for the present study to reflect domains of life stress shown to be significant in previous life events research (Brugha, Bebbington, Tennant, & Hurry, 1986; Singh, Lewing, Raphael, Johnson, & Walton 1986). The scale covered personal and family health, death, parenthood, personal and family legal problems, as well as changes in household composition, marital status, employment, residence, and finances.

Physical Health. Respondents were asked to complete a modified version of the Pennebaker Inventory of Limbic Languidness (PILL; Pennebaker, 1982). The PILL is a measure of current physical symptoms that has strong criterion-related validity with health-related work absences and more physician and health care center visits. Despite this,

previous studies have demonstrated that a number of list items on the full 54-item version of the PILL are highly correlated and do not contribute independently to the physical symptom total (MacDonald, Chamberlain, & Long, 1996). Highly correlated items were combined to form the 28-item version for use in the present study. For example, the original items “*acne and pimples on face*” and “*acne and pimples other than face*” were combined as a single item “*acne or pimples*”. In this way, respondents were asked to indicate the experience of 28 physical symptoms and complaints over the past month, using a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*extremely*).

Chronic symptoms were also assessed. Respondents were asked whether they had experienced any of a list of 17 chronic medical problems for six months or more using a modified version of the Checklist of Serious Medical Conditions (Belloc, Breslow, & Hochstim, 1971). For example, respondents were asked, “*Please answer ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to indicate if a doctor, nurse, or other health care worker has told you whether you have asthma*”. Additional questions were asked about several chronic medical conditions (e.g., diabetes, epilepsy, high blood pressure or hypertension, arthritis or rheumatism, heart trouble, cancer) using the same question format.

Results

Prevalence of Child Sex Abuse

Of the 961 respondents, 127 (13%) women reported having been sexually abused during childhood. After a log (10) transformation of the physical symptoms and psychological distress variables, group differences were tested using the analysis of variance procedure (ANOVA) for continuous data and chi-square for categorical variables. The data indicated no significant differences of level of education, access to working telephone at home and social contact. Significant differences were found for age, marital status, adequacy

of income, satisfaction with standard of living, and location of residence (i.e., urban or rural). Further significant differences were found in physical symptomatology, number of stressful life events, and psychological distress between the women who identified themselves as victims and those who reported no sex abuse in childhood (see Table 1).

Incident Characteristics

Family members were most likely to have committed sex abuse, with uncles (8%), other relatives (20%) identified as perpetrators. However, the most common response was to not identify the perpetrator of the abuse (i.e., 'unspecified' identified by 45% of the present sample). Three quarters (76%) of the victims reported that the indexed abuse incident was one in a series by the same assailant. Some victims (16%) indicated that they had received physical injuries, and 41% reported fearing that they would die as a result of the abuse. Despite these findings, only 33% of cases were reported to mental health or medical professionals.

Impact of Child Sex Abuse

The relationship between child sexual abuse and psychological distress was examined via a hierarchical multiple regression analysis. Relevant demographic, health, and contextual variables were entered on steps 1 and 2 of the analysis as control variables. The binary-coded child sexual abuse variable was then entered on the final step of the analysis. These results are summarized in Table 2. The standardized beta coefficients for each variable within the blocks are reported. Total variance explained by each step of the equation (R^2 and Adjusted R^2) is reported along with the added variance explained by each block of variables while controlling for previous blocks (ΔR^2). R was significantly different from zero at the end of each step.

At step one, the predictor variables accounted for 33% of the variability in psychological distress, $F(9, 891) = 51.0, p < .001$. Higher levels of psychological distress were associated with child sex abuse victims who were of a younger age, showed lower satisfaction with their standard of living, resided in urban settings, and demonstrated more symptoms of physical illness. At step two, with the addition of the stressful life events variable the total amount of explained variance in psychological distress was 34%, $F(11, 889) = 43.7, p < .001$. The experience of stressful life events accounted for 1% of unique variance in psychological distress when controlling for variables entered at step one, and this change in R^2 was significant, $F(2, 889) = 7.5, p < .001$. At step three, with the introduction of the child sexual abuse variable, 35% of the variance in psychological distress could be accounted for by the variables in the equation $F(12, 888) = 41.5, p < .001$. The trauma of child sex abuse accounted for 1% of unique variance in psychological distress when controlling for demographic and contextual variables entered at steps one and two, and this change in R^2 was significant, $F(1, 888) = 11.4, p < .001$. Satisfaction with standard of living, physical health, and location of residence were consistent predictors of psychological distress. In addition, child sexual abuse remained a significant predictor of psychological distress occurring in adulthood when all other predictor variables were statistically controlled.

Discussion

The present findings clearly demonstrate that adult victims of childhood sexual abuse experience long-term difficulties in psychological functioning, thereby supporting conclusions drawn in reviews in this area (e.g., Gershuny & Thayer, 1999; Molnar et al., 2001; Spataro et al., 2004; Wolfe & Birt, 1995). Of the 961 women in the present sample, 13% had experience of sex abuse occurring in childhood. Various factors predicted

psychological distress, that is, victims were significantly more likely to be younger, less satisfied with their standard of living, more likely to live in urban areas, and have physical health symptoms.

A previous study (Mullen, Romans-Clarkson, Walton, & Herbison, 1988) reported that 13% of New Zealand women had experience of child sex abuse, a rate highly consistent with that obtained in the present study. Surveys of North American community samples of sex abuse also obtained incidence rates comparable to those found in the present study (Bernat, Ronfeldt, Calhoun, & Arias, 1998; Molnar et al., 2001). However, Najman et al. (2007) conducted a similar study among Australian adults and reported that 21% of women had experienced sexual molestation before age 16. Conversely, other studies have reported lower rates of experience in the population (Breslau et al., 1998; Hepp et al., 2006; Vrana & Lauterbach, 1994).

It remains possible, however, that the differences in study response rates hide important methodological and sample differences. For example, The Christchurch Health and Development Study (Fergusson et al. 1996) reported a prevalence rate of 17% among women assessed at 18 years, an age much lower than the average age of women in the present sample (44 years). Similarly, a study of child sex abuse among community residing New Zealand women ($N = 2855$) resident in two regions, Auckland and Waikato, reported a prevalence rate of 24%. Fanslow et al. (2007) broadly defined child sex abuse as “*Before the age of 15, do you remember if anyone in your family ever touched you sexually, or made you do something sexual that you didn’t want to do?*” and did not refer to ‘force’ and ‘threat’ or mention the word ‘child’. It should also be noted that women classified as “non-victims” in the present study may have experienced other trauma as children or adults. Similarly, those reporting sex abuse during childhood may have experienced additional trauma at some point

in their lives. Therefore, readers are advised to focus on the consistent predictors of psychological distress in adulthood for those who experienced child sex abuse, and interpret overall rates of prevalence with caution.

In sharp contrast to a previous study of the long-term impact of child sex abuse in a New Zealand community sample (Romans-Clarkson et al., 1990), the location of residence was a factor that consistently predicted increased psychological distress. This inconsistency may be partially attributable to the fact that the Romans-Clarkson et al. sample was drawn from Dunedin, a city in the South Island of New Zealand that is relatively untroubled by crime and has well developed health and welfare services. The urban-residing individuals in the present study may be more representative of the population given that they were drawn from the major urban centers across the whole of New Zealand, and demonstrated systematic differences to their rural counterparts as in previous studies (Di Scipio, 1994; Wingood & DiClemente, 1997, 1998).

With regards to socioeconomic status of victims of child sex abuse in this sample, less satisfaction with standard of living consistently predicted long-term psychological distress. This finding is consistent with studies demonstrating various predisposing factors for long-term psychological sequelae of child sex abuse in United States samples (e.g., Briere & Runtz, 1993; Katerndahl et al., 2005; Kendall-Tackett et al., 1993). With regards to age and physical health, younger age and more recent symptoms of physical illness predicted long-term psychological distress for women sexually abused in childhood. The same trend towards more severe impact among younger women has been observed in a number of prior community surveys (e.g., Breslau et al., 1991, 1998; Kelley, Whitley, Sipe, & Yorker, 2000; Lee & Young, 2001; Norris, 1992).

Clinical Implications

Our findings regarding the long-term impact of child sex abuse are consistent with similar studies (e.g., Molnar et al., 2001; Najman, et al., 2007). In particular, research identifying specific psychological sequelae has found child sex abuse to be related to the development of various disorders, including but not limited to, borderline personality disorder, major depression, panic disorder, and posttraumatic stress disorder (McLean & Gallop, 2003; Weiss, Longhurst, & Mazure, 1999; Stein et al., 1996). It is also common for victims of child sex abuse to present with comorbid diagnoses, an issue which is rarely addressed in the psychological literature (Owens & Chard, 2003). In fact, there is frequent comorbidity in the anxiety disorders (Kroenke, Spitzer, Williams, Monahan, & Lowe, 2007; O'Toole, Marshall, Schureck, & Dobson, 1998), with clear overlap in the criteria for panic disorder, generalized anxiety disorder, and posttraumatic stress disorder (Lee & Young, 2001).

As there is such a high degree of symptom overlap in anxiety disorders, it is possible that clinicians are underdiagnosing PTSD in the absence of a comprehensive clinical interview covering traumatic event experience. A study conducted by Cusack, Grubaugh, Knapp, & Frueh (2006) assessed the rate of missed PTSD diagnoses amongst a clinical sample, finding that 30% of the sample met DSM-IV criteria for PTSD, whilst such a diagnosis was recorded in only 3% of the clinical files. Furthermore, a history of trauma was noted in 28% of files, compared to a finding of 87%. Given that the present data indicates that child sex abuse is a significant predictor of psychological distress in adulthood, identifying such a trauma is particularly important. Moreover, the consistency in the long-term impact of abuse between the present study and previous studies supports the dissemination of empirically supported treatment approaches to the New Zealand context.

A number of studies have demonstrated the efficacy of therapies for treatment of long-term impacts of child sex abuse (Anderson, LaPorte, Brandt, & Crawford, 1997; De Luca, Boyes, Grayston, & Romano, 1995; Kreidler, 2005; Pardeck & Markward, 1995; Salter, 1995; Wolfsdorf & Zlotnick, 2001). However, these treatment approaches emphasize, and in some cases rely heavily, on bibliotherapy assignments (i.e., reading information about symptoms and treatment between sessions). Certainly, the use of bibliotherapy in cognitive and behavioral therapies has sufficient empirical support (see reviews by Kazantzis, 2000; Kazantzis, Deane, & Ronan, 2000). However, a survey of New Zealand practicing psychologists by Kazantzis and Deane (1999) showed that practitioners perceived bibliotherapy and other homework assignments to be less important in the treatment of sex abuse. That is, only an average of 32% of practitioners rated use of these interventions to be of “great importance” in the treatment of sex abuse, compared to the 82% and 69% who considered these interventions to be of “great importance” in the treatment of anxiety and depression, respectively. It seems important then, that further research is also designed to evaluate the effectiveness of therapy programs for women who have experienced sexual abuse across culturally diverse samples in different countries. It is only with such validation, that treatment manuals can be disseminated with a degree of assurance (Addis, 1997).

Limitations of the Present Study

A number of limitations have been raised above. A further limitation is that measurement of the impact of child sex abuse is restricted to psychological distress. It is not possible to determine whether respondents who reported high severity in psychological distress would have met the criteria for formal diagnosis of an anxiety or other disorder. Consequently, it is not possible to make direct comparisons with studies utilizing other

measures of the impact of child sex abuse. Unfortunately, diversity in measures of trauma impact is common among published studies (Luo, 1998).

As with most prior surveys of trauma in the community, the present study was also limited by the use of self-report measures. While clinician or independent assessment is preferable in the assessment of trauma impact, support for the self-report method was provided in a recent study that failed to find association between self-reports of traumatic events and social desirability in reporting child sex abuse (Meston, Heiman, Trapnell, & Carlin, 1999).

Despite these limitations, the present study examined a heterogeneous sample drawn from 14 geographically distinct areas across both New Zealand islands. The sample was 51% urban-residing and 48% rural-residing, with younger, middle-aged, and older adults represented. The present study demonstrated that victims of child sex abuse exhibit more severe symptoms of psychological distress. Taken together, these findings support the prior research that has demonstrated that even those women with posttraumatic symptomatology (or partial posttraumatic stress disorder diagnosis) exhibit abuse-related psychological problems (i.e., Breslau et al., 1997). Future research that incorporates a multi-method multi-trait assessment battery of mental health to assess the impact of child sex abuse and replicate these findings is warranted. The data can, at the very least, be considered instructive about the long-term impact of child sex abuse in New Zealand.

References

- Addis, M. E. (1997). Evaluating the treatment manual as a means of disseminating empirically validated psychotherapies. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice, 4*, 1-11.
- Anderson, K. P., LaPorte, D. J., Brandt, H., & Crawford, S. (1997). Sexual abuse and bulimia: Response to inpatient treatment and preliminary outcome. *Journal of Psychiatric Research, 31*, 621-633.
- Back, S., & Lips, H. M. (1998). Child sexual abuse: Victim age, victim gender and observer gender as factors contributing to attributions of responsibility. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 22*, 1239-1252.
- Beal, A. L. (1995). Post-traumatic stress disorder in prisoners of war and combat veterans of the Dieppe Raid: A 50-year follow-up. *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry, 40*, 177-184.
- Belloc, N. B., Breslow, L., & Hochstim, J. R. (1971). Measurement of physical health in a general population survey. *American Journal of Epidemiology, 93*, 328-336.
- Bernat, J. A., Ronfeldt, H. M., Calhoun, K. S., & Arias, I. (1998). Prevalence of traumatic events and peritraumatic predictors of posttraumatic stress symptoms in a nonclinical sample of college students. *Journal of Traumatic Stress, 4*, 645-664.
- Bramblett, J. R. Jr., & Darling, C. A. (1997). Sexual contacts: Experiences, thoughts, and fantasies of adult male survivors of child sexual abuse. *Journal of Sex & Marital Therapy, 23*, 305-316.
- Breslau, N., Davis, G., Andreski, P., & Peterson, E. (1991). Traumatic events and posttraumatic stress disorder in an urban population of young adults. *Archives of General Psychiatry, 48*, 216-22.

- Breslau, N., Davis, G. C., Peterson, E. L., & Schultz, L. (1997). Psychiatric sequelae of posttraumatic stress disorder in women. *Archives of General Psychiatry, 54*, 81-87.
- Breslau, N., Kessler, R. C., Chilcoat, H. D., Schultz, L. R., Davis, G. C., & Andreski, P. (1998). Trauma and posttraumatic stress disorder in the community: The 1996 Detroit Area Survey of Trauma. *Archives of General Psychiatry, 55*, 626-632.
- Briere, J., & Runtz, M. (1993). Childhood sexual abuse: Long-term sequelae and implications for psychological assessment. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 8*, 312-330.
- Browne, A., & Finkelhor, D. (1986). Impact of child sex abuse: A review of the research. *Psychological Bulletin, 99*, 66-77.
- Browne, R., Keating, S., & O'Connor, J. (1998). Sexual abuse in childhood and subsequent illicit drug abuse in adolescence and early adulthood. *Irish Journal of Psychological Medicine, 15*, 123-126.
- Brugha, T., Bebbington, P., Tennant, C., & Hurry, J. (1986). The list of threatening experiences: A subset of 12 life event categories with considerable long-term contextual threat. *Psychological Medicine, 15*, 189-194.
- Bulik, C. M., Prescott, C. A., & Kendler, K. S. (2001). Features of childhood sexual abuse and the development of psychiatric and substance use disorders. *British Journal of Psychiatry, 179*, 444-449.
- Cappelleri, J. C., Eckenrode, J., & Powers, J. L. (1993). The epidemiology of child abuse: Findings from the Second National Incidence and Prevalence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect. *American Journal of Public Health, 83*, 1622-1624.
- Christopher, K., Lutz-Zois, C. J., & Reinhardt, A. R. (2007). Female sexual offenders: Personality pathology as a mediator of the relationship between childhood sexual

- abuse history and sexual abuse perpetration against others. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 31, 871-883.
- Cunningham, M., & Cunningham, J. D. (1997). Patterns of symptomatology and patterns of torture. *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, 31, 555-565.
- Cusack, K. J., Grubaugh, A. L., Knapp, R. G., & Frueh, B. C. (2006). Unrecognized trauma and PTSD among public mental health consumers with chronic and severe mental illness. *Community Mental Health Journal*, 42, 487-500.
- De Luca, R. V., Boyes, D. A., Grayston, A. D., & Romano, E. (1995). Sexual abuse: Effects of group therapy on pre-adolescent girls. *Child Abuse Review*, 4, 263-277.
- Di Scipio, W. J. (1994). Sex, drugs and AIDS: Issues for hospitalized emotionally disturbed youth. *Psychiatric Quarterly*, 65, 149-155.
- Duncan, L. E., & Williams, L. M. (1998). Gender role socialization and male-on-male vs. female-on-male child sexual abuse. *Sex Roles*, 39, 765-785.
- Elbogen, E. B., Patry, M., & Scalora, M. J. (2003). The impact of community notification laws on sex offender treatment attitudes. *International Journal of Law and Psychiatry*, 26, 207-219.
- Elliott, A. N., & Carnes, C. N. (2001). Reactions of nonoffending parents to the sexual abuse of their child: A review of the literature. *Child Maltreatment*, 6, 314-331.
- Fanslow, J. L., Robinson, E. M., Crengle, S., & Perese, L. (2007). Prevalence of child sexual abuse reported by a cross-sectional sample of New Zealand women. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 31, 935-945.
- Fergusson, D. M., Lynskey, M. T., & Horwood, L. J. (1996). Childhood sexual abuse and psychiatric disorders in young adulthood: Part I: The prevalence of sexual abuse and

- the factors associated with sexual abuse. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 35, 1355-1364.
- Fleming, J., Mullen, P. E., Sibthorpe, B., & Bammer, G. (1999). The long-term impact of childhood sexual abuse in Australian women. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 23, 145-159.
- Finkelhor, D. (1994). The international epidemiology of child sexual abuse. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 18, 409-417.
- Finkelhor, D., Hotaling, G., Lewis, I. A., & Smith, C. (1990). Sexual abuse in a national survey of adult men and women: Prevalence, characteristics, and risk factors. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 14, 19-28.
- Fischer, D. G., & McDonald, W. L. (1998). Characteristics of intrafamilial and extrafamilial child sexual abuse. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 22, 915-929.
- Fischer, G. J. (1992). Gender differences in college student sexual abuse victims and their offenders. *Annals of Sex Research*, 5, 215-226.
- Flett R. A., Millar., M. A., Long, N. R., & MacDonald, C. (1998). *Community survey of trauma*. Technical Report to the Accident Rehabilitation and Compensation Insurance Corporation, New Zealand.
- Frothingham, T. E., Barnett, R. A. M., Hobbs, C. J., & Wynne, J. M. (1993). Child sexual abuse in Leeds before and after Cleveland. *Child Abuse Review*, 2, 23-34.
- Gerritsen, A. A. M., Bramsen, I., Deville, W., vanWilligen, L. H. M., Hovens, J. E., & vanDerPloeg, H. M. (2006). Physical and mental health of Afghan, Iranian and Somali asylum seekers and refugees living in the Netherlands. *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology*, 41, 18-26.

- Gershuny, B. S., & Thayer, J. F. (1999). Relations among psychological trauma, dissociative phenomena, and trauma-related distress: A review and integration. *Clinical Psychology Review, 19*, 631-657.
- Grayson, D., Dobson, M., & Marshall, R. (1998). Current combat-related disorders in the absence of PTSD among Australian Vietnam veterans. *Social Psychiatry, 33*, 186-192.
- Hasanovic, M., Sinanovic, O., & Pavlovic, S. (2005). Acculturation and psychological problems of adolescents from Bosnia and Herzegovina during exile and repatriation. *Croatian Medical Journal, 46*, 105-115.
- Hazzard, A., Celano, M., Gould, J., & Lawry, S. (1995). Predicting symptomatology and self-blame among child sex abuse victims. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 19*, 707-714.
- Hepp, U., Gamma, A., Milos, G., Eich, D., Ajdacic-Gross, V., Rossler, W. (2006). Prevalence of exposure to potentially traumatic events and PTSD: The Zurich cohort study. *European Archives of Psychiatry and Clinical Neuroscience, 256*, 151-158.
- Hernandez, J. (1995). The concurrence of eating disorders with histories of child abuse among adolescents. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 4*, 73-85.
- Hill, J. (2003). Childhood trauma and depression. *Current Opinion in Psychiatry, 16*, 3-6.
- Hukkanen, R., Sourander, A., Bergroth, L., & Piha, J. (1997). Behavior problems and sexual abuse in residential care in children's homes. *Nordic Journal of Psychiatry, 51*, 251-258.
- Hyman, S. M., Gold, S. N., & Cott, M. A. (2003). Forms of social support that moderate PTSD in childhood sexual abuse survivors. *Journal of Family Violence, 18*, 295-300.

- Katerndahl, D., Burge, S., & Kellogg, N. (2005). Predictors of development of adult psychopathology in female victims of childhood sexual abuse. *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease, 193*, 258-264.
- Kazantzis, N. (2000). Power to detect homework effects in psychotherapy outcome research. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 68*, 166-170.
- Kazantzis, N., & Deane, F. P. (1999). Psychologist's use of homework assignments in clinical practice. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice, 30*, 581-585.
- Kazantzis, N., Deane, F. P., & Ronan, K. R. (2000). Homework assignments in cognitive and behavioral therapy: A meta-analysis. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice, 7*, 189-202.
- Kelley, S. J., Whitley, D., Sipe, T. A., & Yorker, B. C. (2000). Psychological distress in grandmother kinship care providers: The role of resources, social support, and physical health. *Child Abuse and Neglect, 24*, 311-321.
- Kendall-Tackett, K. A., Williams, L. M., & Finkelhor, D. (1993). Impact of sexual abuse on children: A review and synthesis of recent empirical studies. *Psychological Bulletin, 113*, 164-180.
- Kennedy, M. T., & Manwell, M. K. C. (1992). The pattern of child sexual abuse in Northern Ireland. *Child Abuse Review, 1*, 89-101.
- Kreidler, M. (2005). Group therapy for survivors of childhood sexual abuse who have chronic mental illness. *Archives of Psychiatric Nursing, 19*, 176-183.
- Kristensen, E., & Lau, M. (2007). Women with a history of childhood sexual abuse: Long-term social and psychiatric aspects. *Nordic Journal of Psychiatry, 61*, 115-120.

- Kroenke, K., Spitzer, R. L., Williams, J. B. W., Monahan, P. O., & Lowe, B. (2007). Anxiety disorders in primary care: prevalence, impairment, comorbidity, and detection. *Annals of Internal Medicine*, *146*, 317-325.
- Kuperman, S., Black, D. W., & Burns, T. L. (1988). Excess suicide among formerly hospitalized child psychiatry patients. *Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*, *49*, 88-93.
- Lee, D., & Young, K. (2001). Post-traumatic stress disorder: Diagnostic issues and epidemiology in adult survivors of traumatic events. *International Review of Psychiatry*, *13*, 150-158.
- Leserman, J. (2005). Sexual abuse history: Prevalence, health effects, mediators and psychological treatment. *Psychosomatic Medicine*, *67*, 906-915.
- Loeb, F. Jr. (1997). Conversion hysteria stemming from child abuse. *Journal of Clinical Psychoanalysis*, *6*, 79-93.
- Long, N., Chamberlain, K., & Vincent, C. (1992). The health and mental health of New Zealand Vietnam war veterans with posttraumatic stress disorder. *New Zealand Medical Journal*, *195*, 417-419.
- Lopez, F., Hernandez, A., & Carpintero, E. (1995). Child sexual abuse: Concepts, prevalence and effect. *Infancia y Aprendizaje*, *71*, 77-98.
- Luntz, B. K., & Widom, C. S. (1994). Antisocial personality disorder in abused and neglected children grown up. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, *151*, 670-674.
- Luo, T. Y. (1998). Sexual abuse trauma among Chinese survivors. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *22*, 1013-1026.
- MacDonald, C., Chamberlain, K., & Long, N. (1996). PTSD and its effects in Vietnam veterans: The New Zealand experience. *New Zealand Journal of Psychology*, *24*, 63-68.

- MacDonald, C., Chamberlain, K., & Long, N. (1997). Race, combat, and PTSD in a community sample of New Zealand Vietnam war veterans. *Journal of Traumatic Stress, 10*, 117-124.
- MacDonald, C., Chamberlain, K., Long, N., & Flett, R. (in press). PTSD and interpersonal functioning in Vietnam War veterans: A mediational model. *Journal of Traumatic Stress*.
- Martin, G., Bergen, H. A., Richardson, A. S., Roeger, L., & Allison, S. (2004). Sexual abuse and suicidality: Gender differences in a large community sample of adolescents. *Child Abuse and Neglect, 28*, 491-503.
- Marusic, A., Kozaric-Kovacic, D., Folnegovic-Smalc, V., & Ljubin, T. (1995). Use of two PTSD scales in assessing posttraumatic stress disorder in refugees and displaced persons from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia. *Psychologische Beitrage, 37*, 209-214.
- Maynard, C., & Wideman, M. (1997). Undergraduate students' perceptions of child sexual abuse: Effects of age, sex and gender-role attitudes. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 21*, 833-844.
- McLean, L. M., & Gallop, R. (2003). Implications of childhood sexual abuse for adult borderline personality disorder and complex posttraumatic stress disorder. *American Journal of Psychiatry, 160*, 369-371.
- Mellott, R. N., Wagner, W. G., & Broussard, S. D. (1997). India vs. United States undergraduates' attitudes concerning child sexual abuse: The impact of survivor sex, survivor age, survivor response, respondent sex, and country of origin. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 21*, 305-318.

- Meston, C. M., Heiman, J. R., Trapnell, P. D., & Carlin, A. S. (1999). Ethnicity, desirable responding, and self-reports of abuse: A comparison of European- and Asian-Ancestry undergraduates. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 67*, 139-144.
- Molnar, B. E., Buka, S. L., & Kessler, R. C. (2001). Child sexual abuse and subsequent psychopathology: Results from the national comorbidity study. *American Journal of Public Health, 91*, 753-760.
- Mullen, P. E., Romans-Clarkson, S. E., Walton, V. A., & Herbison, P. (1988). Impact of sexual and physical abuse on women's mental health. *Lancet, 1*, 841-845.
- Najman, J. M., Nguyen, M. L. T., & Boyle, F. M. (2007). Sexual abuse in childhood and physical and mental health in adulthood: an Australian population study. *Archives of Sexual Behaviour, 36*, 666-675.
- Norris, F. H. (1990). Screening for traumatic stress: A scale for use in the general population. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 20*, 408-418.
- Norris, F. H. (1992). Epidemiology of Trauma: Frequency and impact of different potentially traumatic events on different demographic groups. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 60*, 409-418.
- O'Toole, B. I., Marshall, R. P., Schureck, R. J., & Dobson, M. (1998). Posttraumatic stress disorder and comorbidity in Australian Vietnam veterans: risk factors, chronicity and combat. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry, 32*, 32-42.
- Owens, G. P., & Chard, K. M. (2003). Comorbidity and psychiatric diagnoses among women reporting child sexual abuse. *Child Abuse and Neglect, 28*, 1075-1082.
- Pennebaker, J. W. (1982). *The psychology of physical symptoms*. New York: Springer-Verlag.

- Pardeck, J. T., & Markward, M. J. (1995). Bibliotherapy: Using books to help children deal with problems. *Early Child Development & Care, 106*, 75-90.
- Phillips, N. K., & Straussner, S. L. A. (Eds.) (1997). *Children in the urban environment: Linking social policy and clinical practice*. Springfield, IL: Charles C Thomas.
- Rash, E., & Winton, M. A. (2007). Advanced practice nurse attitudes toward sex offender patients. *Journal of the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners, 19*, 328-331.
- Romans-Clarkson, S. E., Walton, V. A., Herbison, P., & Mullen, P. (1990). Psychiatric morbidity among women in urban and rural New Zealand: Psycho-social correlates. *British Journal of Psychiatry, 156*, 84-91.
- Roodenrijs, T. C., Scherpenzeel, R. P., & de Jong, J. T. V. M. (1998). Traumatic experiences and psychopathology among Somalian refugees in the Netherlands. *Tijdschrift voor Psychiatrie, 40*, 132-142.
- Salter, A. C. (1995). *Transforming trauma: A guide to understanding and treating adult survivors of child sexual abuse*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Servan-Schreiber, D., Lin, B. L., & Birmaher, B. (1998). Prevalence of posttraumatic stress disorder and major depressive disorder in Tibetan refugee children. *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, 37*, 874-879.
- Silverman, A. B., Reinherz, H. Z., & Giaconia, R. M. (1996). The long-term sequelae of child and adolescent abuse: A longitudinal community study. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 20*, 709-723.
- Singh, B., Lewing, T., Raphael, B., Johnson, P., & Walton, J. (1986). Minor psychiatric morbidity in a casualty population: Identification, attempted intervention and six-month follow-up. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry, 21*, 231-240.

- Sjoegren, L. H. (1995). Child sexual abuse: The common idea of high prevalence and some consequences of such a misconception. *Nordisk Sexologi, 13*, 170-181.
- Skodol, A. E., Schwartz, S., Dohrenwend, B. P., & Levav, I. (1996). PTSD symptoms and comorbid mental disorders in Israeli war veterans. *British Journal of Psychiatry, 169*, 717-725.
- Smith, H. D., Fromuth, M. E., Morris, C. C. (1997). Effects of gender on perceptions of child sexual abuse. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse, 6*, 51-63.
- Stein, M. B., Walker, J. R., Hazen, A. L., & Forde, D. R. (1997). Full and partial posttraumatic stress disorder: Findings from a community survey. *American Journal of Psychiatry, 154*, 1114-1119.
- Soderberg, S., Kullgren, G., & Renberg, E. S. (2004). Childhood sexual abuse predicts poor outcome seven years after parasuicide. *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology, 39*, 916-920.
- Spataro, J., Mullen, P. E., Burgess, P. M., Wells, D. L., & Moss, S. A. (2004). Impact of child sexual abuse on mental health: Prospective study in males and females. *British Journal of Psychiatry, 184*, 416-421.
- Stein, M. B., Walker, J. R., Anderson, G., Hazen, A. L., Ross, C. A., Eldridge, G., et al. (1996). Childhood physical and sexual abuse in patients with anxiety disorders and in a community sample. *American Journal of Psychiatry, 153*, 275-277.
- Sungur, M., Surmeli, B. A., & Ozcubukcuoglu, A. (1995). Common features of PTSD cases amongst a group of military staff referred from the southeast region of Turkey. *Journal of Cognitive Psychotherapy, 9*, 279-286.
- Tyler, K. A. (2002). Social and emotional outcomes of childhood sexual abuse: A review of recent research. *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 7*, 567-589.

- Ullman, S. E., & Siegel, J. M. (1996). Traumatic events and physical health in a community sample. *Journal of Traumatic Stress, 9*, 703-720.
- Veit, C. T., & Ware, J. E. (1983). The structure of psychological distress and well-being in general populations. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 51*, 730-742.
- Vrana, S., & Lauterbach, D. (1994). Prevalence of traumatic events and post-traumatic psychological symptoms in a non-clinical sample of college students. *Journal of Traumatic Stress, 7*, 289-302.
- Wannan, G., & Fombonne, E. (1998). Gender differences in rates and correlates of suicidal behaviour amongst child psychiatric outpatients. *Journal of Adolescence, 21*, 371-381.
- Weiss, E. L., Longhurst, J. G., & Mazure, C. M. (1999). Childhood sexual abuse as a risk factor for depression in women: psychosocial and neurobiological correlates. *American Journal of Psychiatry, 156*, 816-828.
- Wingood, G. M., & DiClemente, R. J. (1997). Child sexual abuse, HIV sexual risk, and gender relations of African-American women. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine, 13*, 380-384.
- Wingood, G. M., & DiClemente, R. J. (1998). Partner influences and gender-related factors associated with noncondom use among young adult African American women. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 26*, 29-51.
- Witchel, R. I. (1991). College-student survivors of incest and other child sexual abuse. *New Directions for Student Services, 54*, 63-76.
- Wolfe, V. V., & Birt, J. (1995). The psychological sequelae of child sexual abuse. *Advances in Child Clinical Psychology, 17*, 233-263

Wolfsdorf, B. A., & Zlotnick, C. (2001). Affect management in group therapy for women with posttraumatic stress disorder and histories of childhood sexual abuse. *Journal of Clinical Psychology, 57*, 169-181.

Zlotnick, C., Johnson, J., Kohn, R., Vicente, B., Rioseco, P., & Saldivia, S. (2006). Epidemiology of trauma, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and co-morbid disorders in Chile. *Psychological Medicine, 36*, 1523-1533.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Sample

Characteristic	Total		Victims		Non-Victims		
	<i>N</i> = 961 (100%)		<i>n</i> = 127 (13%)		<i>n</i> = 830 (86%)		
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	
Age [<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)]	43.84	16.31	35.67	11.39	46.00	16.59	^c
Marital Status							
Married	567	59	64	50	503	61	^a
Not Married	390	41	63	50	327	39	
School Qualifications							
No School Qualification	403	42	65	51	338	41	
1 or more School Certificate Passes	213	22	22	17	191	23	
1 or more Sixth Form Certificate or UE Passes	111	12	16	13	95	11	
University Bursary or Scholarship	9	1.0	3	2	6	1	
Trade or Professional Certificate or Diploma	132	14	15	12	117	14	
University Undergraduate Degree or Diploma	42	4	2	2	40	5	
University Postgraduate Qualification	13	1	2	2	11	1	
Adequacy of Income [<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)]	2.43	0.85	2.13	0.90	2.48	0.83	
Satisfaction with Standard of Living [<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)]	3.08	0.74	2.74	0.81	3.13	0.72	^c
Working Telephone							
Yes	827	86	107	84	720	87	
No	130	14	20	16	110	13	
Social Contact							
Yes	872	91	118	93	754	91	
No	84	9	8	6	76	9	
Location of Residence							
Urban	493	51	79	62	414	50	^b
Rural	464	48	48	38	416	50	
Physical Symptoms [<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)]	1.58	0.10	1.63	0.11	1.58	0.09	^c
Psychological Distress [<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)]	1.73	0.18	1.85	0.16	1.71	0.18	^c
Stressful Life Events [<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)]	2.85	2.12	4.01	2.23	2.67	2.04	^c

Note: Continuous data represent means and standard deviations. Missing values were not included in analyses.

Data with superscript represent statistically significant differences using Chi square tests (^a*p* < .05, ^b*p* < .01, ^c*p* < .001).

Table 2

Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Psychological Distress in Victims of Child Sex Abuse

Variable	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Age	-.24***	-.20***	-.18***
Marital Status	.02	.02	.01
School Qualifications	-.04	-.04	-.04
Adequacy of Income	-.06	-.05	-.04
Satisfaction with Standard of Living	-.16***	-.16***	-.14***
Working Telephone	.01	.00	.01
Recent Social Contact	.02	.01	.01
Urban / Rural	-.08**	-.08**	-.07**
Physical Symptoms	.45***	.43***	.42***
Chronic Health Symptoms	-.01	-.01	-.01
Stressful Life Events	--	.11***	.10***
Child Sex Abuse	--	--	.10***
Total R	.58***	.59***	.60***
R^2	.34	.35	.36
Adjusted R^2	.33	.34	.35
ΔR^2	.34***	.01***	.01***

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.