



Pergamon

Child Abuse & Neglect 30 (2006) 205–212

Child Abuse
& Neglect

Child abuse in religiously-affiliated institutions: Long-term impact on men's mental health

David A. Wolfe^{a,*}, Karen J. Francis^b, Anna-Lee Straatman^b

^a *Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ont., Canada*

^b *Department of Psychology, University of Western Ontario, London, Ont., Canada*

Received 11 November 2004; received in revised form 19 July 2005; accepted 12 August 2005

Abstract

Objective: To describe the long-term impact of physical and sexual abuse of boys by someone in a trusting, non-familial relationship. This clinical study reports on the psychological functioning of men ($N = 76$) with substantiated claims against a residential religiously-affiliated institution for multiple and severe incidents of sexual, physical, and/or emotional abuse during childhood. The abuse was perpetrated by several adults in positions of authority and trust at the institution.

Methods: Each participant received a clinical interview and was administered psychological tests and a structured interview for DSM-IV diagnoses. The same clinician completed all of the assessments.

Results: DSM-IV criteria were met for current PTSD (42%), alcohol (21%), and mood-related disorders (25%). Over one-third of the sample suffered chronic sexual problems, and over one half had a history of criminal behavior.

Conclusions: The clinical findings provide direction for assessing victims of historical abuse, and underscore the importance of awareness, prevention, and treatment needs for those who have been abused in institutional settings. Conclusions are limited due to participants' involvement in civil action, unknown pre-existing conditions, and the lack of a suitable comparison group.

© 2006 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

Keywords: Child abuse; Religious institutions; Sexual abuse

* Corresponding author address: CAMH Centre for Prevention Science, 100 Collip Circle, Suite 100, London, Ont., Canada N6G 4X8.

Men and women who were abused during childhood have a high incidence of current and lifetime PTSD, especially if they experienced chronic or severe maltreatment (Boney-McCoy & Finkelhor, 1996; Widom, 1999). Male victims of physical and sexual abuse report an inability to seek and maintain gainful employment, to trust others, to develop intimate relationships, and to regulate their anger and behavior (Romano & DeLuca, 2001). They also have higher lifetime rates of anxiety, alcohol abuse/dependence, and antisocial behavior than non-abused men (MacMillan & Munn, 2001), which often results in multiple psychiatric diagnoses. Similar to the impact of abuse by a family member, the long-term effects of child abuse in *non-familial* settings have been linked to the nature of the relationship with the abuser, the significance of the setting, and the nature and severity of the abuse (Wolfe, Jaffe, Jetté, & Poisson, 2003). Moreover, persons abused by individuals in a position of trust may manifest not only mental health problems, but also a number of affiliated losses and disruptions that exacerbate mental health symptoms, such as loss of faith and trust (Lawson, Drebing, Berg, Vincelle, & Penk, 1998).

Over the last two decades the victimization of children in non-familial settings has received increased public and professional attention in terms of the prevalence and impact of such events (Nunno, 1997). Although prevalence estimates are unknown, records based on one segment of this population reflect the enormity of the issue: children made more than 11,000 allegations of sexual abuse by over 4000 priests between 1950 and 2002 (U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2004). Because of their unique dynamics and the large numbers of victims and abusers often involved, cases of abuse by non-familial persons constitute a significant challenge to the legal system and treatment providers (Gallagher, 2000). The present study is unique in that it provides psychological test results and diagnostic outcomes of a large sample of men who were severely abused as children by their male caregivers in a religiously-affiliated institution. We sought to determine the extent to which these men suffered from PTSD, mood, and substance use disorders, as well as associated adjustment problems.

Method

Participants

Participants were 76 men laying claims against the assets of a religiously affiliated institution in relation to acts of physical and sexual abuse perpetrated against them by their surrogate caregivers. A class action lawsuit was announced nationwide from 1997 to 1999 through newspaper and similar media, and men had to come forward to be considered for the claims process. Men had been placed as children in the care of the institution by child welfare authorities due to their parents' inability to care for them, often due to illness or death of a parent, poverty, or alcoholism. The acts of abuse occurred between the early 1960s and the late 1980s, but were not investigated until the 1990s. These acts were validated as part of a civil action, and most were prolonged and severe. Over two-thirds of the men were victims of severe and chronic physical and/or sexual abuse, which included one or more of the following acts: oral sex, anal sex, digital penetration, beatings, major blows with a fist or object, being hit with an object, and thrown against stationary objects. These acts were sometimes accompanied by threats or other life-threatening circumstances. Abusive acts in the remaining one-third of the sample included sexual touching/fondling, masturbation, slapping, pushing, or hitting. Because almost all of the men were victims of both physical and sexual abuse no attempt was made to divide the sample in terms of abuse experiences. Men ranged in age from 23 to 54 years ($M = 39.17$) at the time of the assessment. Almost one third (31.6%) had

متن کامل مقاله

دریافت فوری ←

ISIArticles

مرجع مقالات تخصصی ایران

- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه تمام متن مقالات انگلیسی
- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه ترجمه شده مقالات
- ✓ پذیرش سفارش ترجمه تخصصی
- ✓ امکان جستجو در آرشیو جامعی از صدها موضوع و هزاران مقاله
- ✓ امکان دانلود رایگان ۲ صفحه اول هر مقاله
- ✓ امکان پرداخت اینترنتی با کلیه کارت های عضو شتاب
- ✓ دانلود فوری مقاله پس از پرداخت آنلاین
- ✓ پشتیبانی کامل خرید با بهره مندی از سیستم هوشمند رهگیری سفارشات