

30/92-3

A comparison of the early childhood and family experiences of incarcerated, convicted male child molesters and men who were sexually abused in childhood and have no convictions for sexual offences against children.

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This is a project supported by a grant from the Criminology Research Council. The views expressed are the responsibility of the authors and are not necessarily those of the Council.

The authors wish to thank the Criminology Research Council, the management and staff of the Department of Correctional Services, South Australia and its counterparts in New South Wales and Western Australia and the men who agreed to participate in this research.

July, 1994

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ABSTRACT

Eighty four incarcerated child molesters and ninety five non offender comparison subjects were interviewed to examine and compare their childhood and family experiences, including childhood sexual experiences and adult relationships. The convicted child molesters were inmates in South Australian, New South Wales and Western Australian Correctional Centres.

Men who were sexually abused in childhood but did not reproduce this abuse across generations differed from prisoners convicted of sexual abuse in a number of ways. The prisoners were more socially disadvantaged as children and had received more verbal and physical abuse. Most denied that they had been sexually abused; the information relating to their victimisation came from detailed questions relating to their sexual experiences in childhood. The prisoners were men who were more accepting of their abuse in the sense of not understanding or accepting that it was aberrant behaviour but rather thinking that it was a commonplace, inevitable and consequently a normal part of childhood. This style of thinking was perpetuated by a highly sexualised peer environment and meant that they had no compunction about replicating the behaviour with younger children. Liking some aspect of the initial abuse also differentiated prisoners from the non offenders. This factor, coupled with the fact that prisoners were abused by a larger number of people than were non offenders further contributed to the world view or perspective described by prisoners which included a ready acceptance of sexual abuse as a 'normal' aspect of life.

The context in which the abuse occurred was particularly important. While it was true that virtually all of the prisoners had been abused as children, non offenders had actually experienced a greater frequency of abuse. Where the context included an acceptance of the abuse as 'normal', 'enjoyable' or 'inconsequential' the chances of replication were enhanced. Where the context

resulted in negative reactions, including feelings of shame, guilt and anger the victim was less likely to replicate the abuse.

Consistent with the observation that prisoners tended to be accepting of child abuse as within the domain of ordinary experience, is their failure to attribute commonly experienced problems in living, including poor social skills, psychological problems and suicidal intent, to their own abuse. Similarly prisoners did not use the fact of their own abuse as an excuse for their own offences; to the contrary, without a re-education program they saw no connection between their past and their present predicament. The world view of prisoners was also distorted to the extent that they too readily interpreted children's behaviour as seductive. A lack of conscience, which does not seem to be attributable just to the experience of sexual abuse but more to the more general psychological deprivation suffered by the prisoners, also facilitated continued sexual abuse.

The pattern of abuse involved an initial experience of abuse as a child, the development of early abuse of others during late childhood and adolescence and continuation into habitual offending as an adult. Paedophiles were already abusing other boys by the time they reached the age of ten.

The sexual abuse of boys is clearly under-recognised and under-reported. Very few of the prisoners had reported their abuse which again fits with their perspective of the inevitability or ordinariness of their plight. Although non offenders did report abusive behaviour on a small number of occasions, this was generally ineffective since no action was taken against the perpetrators.

Ninety three per cent of the child molesters had been sexually abused in childhood. The only prisoner subjects who had not been abused were those convicted of offences against adolescent girls slightly below the age of consent. All paedophiles and incest offenders had been abused in childhood. Furthermore, the gender of their abuser related to the gender of their victims; men who were abused by men went on to abuse boys, men who were abused by women abused girls and men

who were abused by both sexes abused both boys and girls. Abuse by a female was more common in the prisoner group. Paedophiles replicated the abuse techniques that they had experienced as children.

The sexual abuse of young boys in the present population most frequently involved oral and anal sex and was inflicted by males known to the victim.

Prisoners were more likely than non offenders to have liked aspects of the abuse (usually genital stimulation and receiving oral sex) and they were more likely to have accepted abuse as a normal way of life. Under the age of 8, none of the boys recognised that abuse was wrong and should be reported. Dislike crept in when boys were expected to reciprocate with oral sex or engage in anal sex. Many were involved in what they perceived to be caring and affectionate relationships with paedophiles and when these were the only demonstrably affectionate relationships in their lives, they tolerated the pain of anal sex for the sake of the relationship.

It is possible to see what constitutes sexual abuse to an outsider being construed positively by some so-called victims, especially where the sexual acts occur in a context which includes affection and attention. This factor seems important to remember when trying to understand the replication of abuse across generations.

Prisoners who lacked access to a sex offender program were often unaware that their sexual experiences constituted abuse. They were the victims least likely to complain or harbour ill feelings towards their abusers.

The men who were least damaged by abuse were those abused by strangers in 'one-off' offences which they recognised as wrong and from which they escaped. They recognised that the perpetrator was wholly at fault. They did not believe that they had been selected for any particular reason other

than availability and, as a consequence, they felt in control and were not troubled by guilt or shame.

Sex offenders identified a number of specific deficiencies in our society's approach to sexuality which facilitate and perpetuate child sexual. Repressive attitudes about sex mean that parent to child education about sex has been virtually non-existent or seriously lacking in its quality. This allows ready exploitation of children's natural curiosity by sex offenders. Child protection programs have also been reticent to be frank about sexual specifics and offenders perceived this to reduce their efficacy. Victims of abuse confirmed that current child protection programs are inappropriate for the protection of boys because they rely on children relating sexual abuse to 'unsafe feelings' or 'uncomfortable touching' and do not address the commonly used seduction methods which involve stimulating boys sexual curiosity with sex talk and pornography. Offenders in some states of Australia have simply been incarcerated without any attempt to provide re-education or therapy. Ignorance about ways to become effective parents has also resulted in people simply reproducing aspects of their own upbringing including problematic practices.

This study has provided information about which factors contribute to the creation of the next generation of child molester. These findings constitute a body of information to be considered by agents of change, including government policy makers, criminologists, educationalists, health and welfare providers, those involved in sex education and child protection services, psychologists and social workers and therapists working with juvenile offenders.

INTRODUCTION

'Not only does considerable overlap exist between populations of victims and offenders as demonstrated by the substantial proportions of violators having also been victims but considerable evidence exists that the experience of being victimised increases the propensity for offending and that populations of victims and offenders have homogeneous characteristics....Clearly any theory that assumes no overlap exists between populations of victims and offenders or that they are distinct types of persons distorts the empirical research'. (Reiss, 1981).

RESEARCH RELATING TO THE SEXUAL ABUSE OF BOYS

The problem of child sexual abuse was brought to public notice by the women's movement in the United States in the late 1970's and in Australia in the early 1980's. Interest increased when, in 1984, Victorian Police published statistics showing that only six per cent of reports of child sexual abuse in that state involved strangers and the vast majority involved male offenders who were known and trusted by their victims.

When other state authorities also produced reports, they revealed that in Australia as a whole, there were substantially more female than male victims. This encouraged the belief that either the problem is far greater for girls than for boys or that the abuse of girls is more damaging.

International research involving interviews with adults appeared to confirm that females were twice to four times more likely than males to be sexually abused in childhood. Badgley et al (1984) found that only 13% of Canadian men claimed to have been abused in childhood compared with 34% of

women. Studies in Los Angeles (Burnam, 1885), Georgia (Seidner and Calhoun, 1984) and West Virginia (Schultz and Jones, 1983), all found that twice as many women as men claimed to have been victimised.

Finkelhor (1979) and (1984) refers to ratios of 19% Female: 9% Male and 15% Female: 6% Male respectively. In two studies involving Minnesota high school students and one study involving adults, Hedin (1984) found ratios of 16% Female: 4% Male, 17% Female: 7% Male and 38% Female: 13% Male respectively. Kohn (1987), suggested that 25% to 35% of all American female children and 10% to 16% of all male children had been abused

The National Times published the results of a national poll of 2627 randomly selected adults, 22% of whom confirmed that they had been sexually abused (27% Female and 16% Male) while John Briere at UCLA concluded that 'a third of women and perhaps half as many men have been sexually victimised as children' (Kohn, 1987)

In the United Kingdom, Baker and Duncan (1985) found a 10% rate of sexual abuse with a ratio of six girls to four boys while Watkins and Bentovim (1992) published a 'best guess' of between two and five per cent of the male population. Their maximum estimation was six times lower than that suggested by Finkelhor (1986).

A Gallup Poll conducted by the Canadian Government (1988) revealed that one third of male respondents had been sexually abused while Mount and Fetterman (1989) found that 54% of deaf boys were abused and boys were at greater risk than girls.

Finally, Goldman and Goldman's (1988) Australian study of 991 tertiary students showed that female tertiary students reported that they had been sexually abused in childhood four times more frequently than males.

These prevalence surveys are clearly unreliable; first, because they involve widely different definitions of sexual abuse and second because subjects are often university students who represent an elitist group rather than a cross section of society. Given that child sexual abuse adversely affects self esteem, concentration and mental health, surveys would obviously be more reliable if they were undertaken before the secondary school student drop-out. Third, child sexual abuse is a highly sensitive subject and subjects' responses depend on the way in which questions are worded and asked. For example, when child sexual abuse was referred to as 'unwanted sexual touching' by an adult, the gender gap widened (Murphy and Frank, 1985) and when subjects were questioned about 'sexual experiences', the gap closed (Lewis, 1985 : 27% Female:16% Male).

Despite their weaknesses, survey findings have been widely accepted and quoted, often without question. The assumption that child sexual abuse is a problem affecting girls has led researchers and publishers to concentrate on issues relating to female victims. Counselling facilities have been provided by females for females. The knowledge gained has been utilised in the design of child protection programs intended for both male and female children. Although there is now a vast supply of research literature relating to sexual offences, comparatively little is known about the abuse of males.

WHY MALE SEXUAL ABUSE VICTIMS ARE NOT IDENTIFIED

Hunter (1990) is one of a small number of recent writers who suggests that the sexual abuse of boys is grossly under-reported and under-recognised. He points to the fact that, even when therapists ask adult clients about 'sexual abuse', those who were victimised seldom report it. This is not because of distrust or dishonesty but the fact that males tend to have a definition of abuse 'which does not include what happened to them'. In Canada, Dube and Hebert (1988) showed that

despite high levels of violence and emotional damage, two thirds of 511 male victims denied that their experiences constituted abuse, blamed themselves for what happened and suffered enormous damage to self esteem.

Hunter found that if a woman was the offender or if the perpetrator was an older youth or a sibling, if they liked any part of the activity or, alternatively, if they did not say 'No', adult survivors referred to the sexual experience as a 'game', fun or 'normal' behaviour. This protects the offender and the victim is likely to blame himself.

Cook and Howell (1981) suggest that boys are highly vulnerable to sexual abuse and are less likely to report it than girls because they live in a more highly sexualised environment. Gender differences were also noted by Langfeldt (cited in Cook and Howell, 1981) in studies relating to the sexual development of children. Boys started talking about their genitals at around three years and were often masturbating at age 3-7 years. Male genitals are less private than girls' and boys handle them many times a day. The visibility of male erections enables other boys to see evidence of sexual arousal and this facilitates the introduction of peer group sex. At the age of six, boys have a much wider sexual vocabulary than girls and know much more about their own sexuality than our culture permits them to exhibit. Their advantage in sexual language is reflected in their 'dirty jokes' and verbal exchanges which they are eager to share with others. These factors, coupled with a high level of sexual curiosity, increase their vulnerability to abuse and decrease the likelihood that they will identify it as such either at the time or in later life.

Other societal factors which increase the likelihood of secrecy include: male sex role conditioning, homophobia, the lack of societal encouragement to report and seek treatment and fears of stigmatisation. Finkelhor (1984) found that males were unable to talk about their abuse because of the sense of shame. They accepted responsibility for what happened even though a third of the offences occurred before the age of six. As adults, males were unable to accept that they were too

young to make informed decisions about participation. The homosexual aspects of abuse were particularly damaging to their self esteem.

Dube and Hebert (1988) concluded that researchers have been asking the wrong questions: male victims do not recognise sexual abuse as abuse because sexual experience *per se* is acceptable to the male culture.

THE AETIOLOGY OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

The work of Finkelhor (1986) and Abel et al (1991) are major contributions to the literature on sex offenders providing information about their behaviour and the nature of offences. Abel and colleagues provided insights into the size of the problem when they reported that 411 paraphiliacs had attempted 238,711 previously undisclosed sex crimes and succeeded in committing 238,711 of them involving 138,137 victims. More than half of the men confessed to multiple sexual deviations and offences. Forty-two per cent reported experiencing inappropriate sexual arousal by the age of fifteen.

Many writers report that child molesters are reluctant to admit their offences and that child sexual abuse is the 'most frequently denied crime' worldwide. The level of denial was well demonstrated by Bentovim (1991) who found that only 15% of 558 convicted incest offenders admitted having committed any offences when they joined a London based treatment program. Within a year, the same men had recalled a total of 291,737 offences, averaging 522 crimes per person.

Finkelhor (1986) noted that, 'So far, the research has shown no single factor can begin to explain fully all sexual abuse' and he called for a 'multi-factorial explanation' of the behaviours.

A mere handful of writers have noted (and even then only fleetingly) that 'a proportion of offenders were themselves sexually abused as children' (Fawcett, Morrison and Stevenson, 1986). There are substantial variations in the correlations presented; for example, Freeman-Longo (1986) reported a 30% correlation, Browne (1993) referred to a 50% finding while a 1992 Manitoba study of fourteen year old sex offenders found that 90% were child victims in families with histories of intergenerational abuse of all kinds (CCJA Bulletin, September 15, 1992, p23).

Wolfe (1984) reported that all the child sex offenders involved in a treatment project had experienced abuse of some kind in families where 'adults can do what they like to children and get away with it'. Hartog (1951) found a 92% correlation between severe child abuse of all kinds and the commission of sex offences.

Groth and Burgess (1978) and several other researchers have found that adult perpetrators frequently abuse children of the same age as they were when traumatised by sexual abuse in childhood. Others have noted a tendency for former victims to abuse children when they reach the same age as their own abuser.

Fattah (1992), quoting Athen (1989) emphasised that 'People are what they are as a result of the social experiences that they have undergone in their lives'. A professor of criminology, she claimed that

'criminological theories, with very few exceptions, have completely ignored the role these experiences play in the causation of delinquent and criminal behaviour'. Athens was deemed to be the marked exception. She distinguished between 'trivial' and 'significant' experiences, defining trivial as those which have only a momentary, short term impact while 'significant' experiences leave a permanent mark upon people's attitudes, responses and behaviours 'regardless of their wishes'.

Fattah showed that revenge, desensitisation, imitation and identification with the offender were all learned mechanisms that explained the transition of the victim into a victimiser. She said that 'the searches for the causes of crime have been largely unproductive, even futile, because of the obsession with predisposing factors... and failure to recognise that the profiles of the typical offender and typical victim are identical, that the victim and offender populations are not distinct and mutually exclusive but are homogeneous populations that overlap to a large extent'.

Kohn (1987) noted an intergenerational pattern of sexual abuse and the fact that 'Boys who are abused are far more likely to turn into offenders, molesting the next generation of children; girls are more likely to produce children who are abused'.

Langelier (cited in Kohn, 1987) and others have noted the tendency for boys who have been abused to become obsessed with sexual matters, 'reaching for others' genitals' or 'making demands for sexual stimulation', increasing the risk of re victimisation. Briere (1984) and others confirm that the prognosis for recovery is particularly poor when children are abused by more than one person.

Finkelhor (1984) quoted ten researchers who had found that sexually abused children had repeated the abuse 'in some fashion' in later life, but he stressed the need for caution in assuming that victims become offenders; all do not. He pointed to the fact that most research relating to sex offenders had been conducted in prisons which contain only a small minority of offenders who are 'the most compulsive, repetitive, blatant and extreme in their offending'.

JUVENILE OFFENDERS

It is generally recognised that sexual offences by juvenile offenders are grossly under-recognised and under-reported by victims and state statistics. In a study by Groth, Longo and McFadin

(1982), adult rapists admitted committing offences as early as nine years of age and child molesters admitted offending at eight years of age.

Longo and Groth (1982) reported that 35% of incarcerated subjects progressed gradually from inappropriate adolescent sexual behaviour to inappropriate adult sexual behaviour which led to conviction and imprisonment. Abel et al (1983) found that half of their 411 subjects had experienced inappropriate sexual arousal in adolescence or before the age of thirteen.

Researchers suggest that a substantial percentage of serious adult offending behaviour has its origins in childhood and adolescence.

THE PILOT STUDY

With the cooperation of the Department for Correctional Services and the manager and social worker at the Northfield Prison Complex, Adelaide, a pilot study was undertaken in 1992 involving 30 self selected prisoners who had been found 'guilty of crimes against persons rather than property'. This project showed a 100% correlation between the commission of sexual offences against children and sexual victimisation in childhood. All of the interviewed men had experienced multiple abuse (sexual, physical and psychological) and the sexual abuse involved more than one offender. All of the men were from low socio economic homes which lacked a good male model: fathers were either absent or not functioning in the parent role.

Although we were not permitted (by the University ethics committee) to include questions relating to the prisoners' offences (because of the possibility that they might incriminate themselves), subjects volunteered the information that, either they were not guilty of the sexual offences against children which led to their imprisonment or they were the victims of sexually promiscuous and

seductive or vicious, lying children. This matched Le Fontaine's finding that offenders are 'reluctant to take responsibility for their actions'. Simultaneously, they all admitted their previous offences (even though they had pleaded not guilty in court), the fact that they were sexually attracted to children and had difficulties relating to adults of either gender.

The finding that all of the prisoners had themselves been sexually abused as children was provocative. We knew that not all men who are abused go on to abuse young children themselves and we wished to learn more about the factors which differentiate men who perpetuate the cycle from men who do not. In addition, we wanted to investigate a larger sample of prisoners to determine whether the apparent relationship between child sexual abuse crimes and a history of being sexually abused held true. To these ends, a further larger scale comparative study was planned.

METHOD

RESEARCH DESIGN

In 1993, the research project was extended from the earlier pilot study. Major aims were to increase the sample size of prisoners to increase confidence in the generality of the findings and to add a comparison group of men who had been sexually abused in childhood but were not offenders. Clearly, not all men who are abused in childhood become offenders. It was hoped that the inclusion of a comparison group might provide insights into the factors which determine which child victim becomes an adult offender and which does not.

The basic research design was thus a straightforward comparison between two groups. It does not constitute an experimental design. Such a design would require a comparison between two groups known to be homogenous prior to the administration of some independent variable. Such a neat design allows implications of causation to be drawn. In the present study we expected a lack of homogeneity between groups, accepted the limitations on our ability to imply causation from any particular pattern of results, but nevertheless regarded the comparison as worthwhile for the insights it might provide.

The intention was to extend the research project to include not less than fifty interviews with convicted child sexual offenders and a comparison group of fifty men who had been sexually abused but had not become child molesters.

THE OFFENDERS

Access to the convicted child sexual offenders was to be arranged through the prison system. The population of offenders was extended from the Northfield prison alone to include Yatala, Port Augusta, Port Lincoln and Murray Bridge (Mobilong) prisons in South Australia, the Cooma prison (in New South Wales) and the Fremantle prison (in Western Australia). This extension was necessary because of staff changes at Northfield and the fear that we were unlikely to obtain fifty interviews from that source.

A second factor in the decision to broaden the prisons used was the realisation that the comparison group consisted predominantly of well educated, articulate and concerned professional men while the South Australian prisoners tended to be comparatively uneducated and inarticulate with a proportion classified as intellectually disabled. We wished to obtain a more widespread representation of the prisoner population.

We accepted an offer to go to Cooma Jail, New South Wales where the majority of prisoners fell into the sex offender category and there was a much wider spread of socio-economic and educational backgrounds. Almost half of the Cooma prison population volunteered to participate in the research. The interviewers noted a marked difference between the responses and attitudes of these men and those in the South Australian prisons:

There was more eye to eye contact with the interviewers

The vast majority of men admitted and accepted responsibility for their offences

All of the respondents were involved in an assessment and re-education

program and had access to a social worker and psychologist who were held in very high regard

Unlike the South Australian participants, they ran no risk that participation in the project might identify them as 'rock spiders' resulting in violence from other prisoners. As a consequence, they were much more open and honest about their histories and their problems.

Because of the sensitivity of the subject, the personality of the research interviewer is crucial to the honesty of the responses. At Cooma Jail almost half of the prison population volunteered to be interviewed but most offers came after we had been on the premises for several days and had 'passed the test'. Prisoners gave us information which they claimed they had 'never told anyone before'. They said that they would not have disclosed these matters had the interviewers been either male or young females (and sexually threatening). Browne (1993), whose British research showed that only half of an incarcerated population of sex offenders had been sexually abused in childhood, admitted that he had used young interviewers and had been obliged to leave the interviewing team because prisoners felt uncomfortable with him. Clearly, these factors can have a serious impact on research findings and seriously affect decisions relating to the provision and nature of therapeutic programs for child sex offenders.

The decision to expand the number of prisons used resulted in a switch from a potential under-supply of subjects, to an abundance. We finally conducted interviews with 84 prisoners.

THE NON OFFENDERS

Access to a comparison sample was more problematic. This group had to consist of men who were prepared to admit that they had been abused as children and who also affirmed that they had not perpetuated the abuse cycle. We recognised that we were dependent on the honesty of participants who were not necessarily reliable.

We accepted the offer of assistance from the coordinator of a male survivor's support group with the back-up of a second group in Sydney. Membership of these groups was said to be dependent on the declaration of the individual that he had not abused children. The coordinator claimed that there were 140 active members in the South Australian support group.

The following changes became necessary to the original plan. After many months of effort, it became apparent that adequate access to male survivors through support groups was unlikely to eventuate. The coordinator of the South Australian group agreed to allow the researchers to meet members at one of their monthly meetings to explain the research project but on each occasion, the meeting was 'cancelled' at short notice.

The coordinator offered to conduct the interviews with his clients using the interview schedule. He conducted two such interviews and reported not only that the process was too time-consuming but clients were not prepared to talk to him about their childhood and family experiences. Some men were reported to have agreed to complete the questionnaires and return them by post. These were not returned and it became necessary to find other means of attracting subjects who fell into the control group category.

The South Australian Men's Resource Centre provided considerable support and the necessary publicity for which the researchers are extremely grateful. Student counsellors in tertiary institutions were also of assistance and the media provided opportunities for publicity which yielded some results. An offer of assistance was accepted from a support group in Western Australia. Some men declined face to face interviews but agreed to be interviewed by telephone. All but one of the married men disclosed that they had not told anyone about their childhood abuse and they feared that disclosure to their partners would result in distrust in relation to contact with children.

Prior to any data analysis, it became obvious that research in this area is complicated by the non homogeneity of prison populations, by the presence or absence of treatment programs, by the characteristics of the interviewer and by the reliance on the honesty of respondents. In addition we

were aware that the two populations under investigation were very likely to be different in more ways than just their responses to sexual abuse experienced as a child.

Our concerns about the reliance on honesty were soon found to be well based. Interviews with the 'non offenders' resulted in admissions from a significant proportion that they had in fact committed sexual abuse acts against children while they themselves were juveniles. Since the men still maintained that these acts had not continued into adulthood, they still classified themselves as 'non offenders'. Nevertheless, for the purposes of data analysis, these 21 men were rejected from the non offender group.

The change of recruiting strategy paid dividends in the sense that we soon had far more men available for interview than our original design allowed for. We took the decision to make use of this opportunity. Following the exclusion of 21 non offenders who had in fact offended as juveniles, we were left with 95 men who to the best of our knowledge were genuine 'non offenders'.

Data were finally collected from 200 cases consisting of 84 prisoners, 95 non offenders and 21 men who had been rejected from the non offender group.

RESULTS

QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE DATA

The data consist of responses to objective, forced choice questionnaire items (Appendix 1). These quantitative data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS for Windows). The questionnaire also included open-ended questions which were analysed in a qualitative fashion. Attempts have been made to represent the tone of these responses with selective quotations. Simply frequency counts have also allowed some quantitative descriptions to be made of the responses to open ended questions.

DEMOGRAPHICS, EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT

Age

The average (mean) age was 38.9 (sd=11.6). There was no difference between the mean ages of the prisoners and the non offenders.

Religion

Catholics (21%) and Protestants (14%) were the most frequently nominated religions. Other denominations, thirty in all, accounted for a further 19%. Forty one per cent reported no religious affiliation. Prisoners were no more likely belong to a particular religious group or to lack a religious affiliation than were non offenders.

Ethnicity

Thirty ethnic origins were represented. Seventy per cent of the respondents described themselves as Australian, 7% as British and the remaining range of ethnic groups were typically represented by 1 or 2 people. There were no differences in ethnicity frequencies between the prisoners and the non offenders.

Schooling

The prisoners left school at a significantly earlier age than the non offenders (Mann Whitney=2356.5, $p=.0005$). The mean school leaving ages were 14.8 and 16.0 years respectively. Significantly fewer prisoners (6%) than non offenders (31%) completed tertiary education ($X^2=21.7$, $df=7$, $p=.003$).

Employment

Prisoners were significantly more likely to have had unskilled jobs (44%) than the non offenders (13%) who were more likely to have professional jobs (33% versus 6%) ($X^2=34.5$, $df=4$, $p=.00000$). While about two thirds of the respondents (69%) had experienced unemployment, there were no differences between prisoners and non offenders on this variable.

FAMILY AND PARENTING VARIABLES

Children

The prisoners were significantly more likely to have children (66%) than were the non offenders (41%) ($X^2=11.2$, $df=1$, $p=.008$).

Child rearing intentions

A little more than two thirds of the respondents (69%) reported that they would not bring up their children in the same way that they had been brought up. There were no differences between prisoners and non offenders on this variable.

Family type

Almost two thirds of the respondents (62%) came from two-parent families but in a third of these the father was absent or non-functioning. There were no differences between prisoners and non offenders on this variable.

Family size

Prisoners were significantly more likely to come from relatively large families (four or more children) than were the non offenders ($X^2=5.4$, $df=1$, $p=.02$). Forty one per cent of prisoners came from larger families compared with 24% of non offenders.

Number of homes

The prisoner group had lived in significantly more homes before age 17 than the non offenders (Mann Whitney=1972.5 $p=.005$). The average number of homes was 6.2 for the prisoners and 3.2 for the non offenders.

Major health problems in childhood

There was no difference between prisoners and non offenders in the frequency of major health problems or accidents during childhood with an average of 56% of respondents reporting these problems.

Perception of family

Less than half of the respondents (41%) regarded their family as different from other families as a child. There were no differences between prisoners and non offenders on this variable.

Happy childhood

Twenty two per cent of the respondents described their childhoods as 'happy'. There were no differences between prisoners and non offenders on this variable.

Father's occupation

Prisoners were significantly more likely (70%) to have fathers whose occupation was rated as unskilled than were non offenders (40%) ($X^2=8.8$, $df=1$, $p=.05$).

Mother's occupation

Prisoners were significantly more likely to have mothers who were either not employed outside the home or had an unskilled job (58%) than were non offenders (23%) ($X^2=8.9$, $df=1$, $p=.003$).

Source of discipline

In about a third of the respondents families (34%), discipline was administered by the father, another third by the mother (34%) and in the remaining third (32%) both parents shared the disciplining equally. There were no differences between prisoners and non offenders.

Severe beatings

Prisoners (34%) were significantly more likely than non offenders (19%) to have received severe beatings as children ($X^2=5.9$, $df=1$, $p=.01$). Both prisoners and non offenders were significantly less likely to have been physically abused if they came from a two parent family than from families with either one parent or with two parents but the father absent or not functioning ($X^2=13.6$, $df=2$, $p=.001$).

Perceptions of discipline received

A little more than half of respondents (53%) rated their discipline received as a child as inappropriate. While prisoners had more frequently received severe beatings as children, they were nevertheless no more likely than non offenders to judge their discipline as children as inappropriate.

Affection received

Prisoners (49%) were significantly more likely than non offenders (14%) to report never being hugged or cuddled ($X^2=21.5$, $df=1$, $p=.00000$).

Physical needs met

A large majority of prisoners and non offenders alike (83%) said that they were physically well looked after during childhood. There were no differences between prisoners and non offenders on this variable.

Major childhood traumas

About three quarters of respondents (78%) reported experiencing major traumas during their childhood, but there were no differences between prisoners and non offenders on this variable.

Perceived deprivation

About three quarters of respondents (76%) reported having been deprived of things during their childhood, but there were no differences between prisoners and non offenders on this variable.

Discussion of sex

Almost three quarters of respondents (73%) reported that their had been no discussion of sex between their parents and themselves during their childhood. A further 17% reported that a very small amount of such discussion had occurred. There were no differences between prisoners and non offenders on this variable.

Verbal abuse

The prisoner group were significantly more likely to have experienced verbal abuse during their childhood (71%) than the non offenders (56%) ($X^2=4.3$, $df=1$, $p=.04$). Both prisoners and non offenders were significantly less likely to have been verbally abused if they came from a two parent family than from families with either one parent or with two parents but the father absent or not functioning ($X^2=13.6$, $df=2$, $p=.001$).

Significant losses

Both prisoners and non offenders reported similar frequencies of significant losses such as deaths during childhood (56%).

Involvement in clubs

The prisoners and non offenders were equally involved in clubs and sporting groups as children (49% involved).

SEXUAL ABUSE

Much of the following data are reported as percentage figures. Where all respondents are included, these percentage figures are likely to be meaningful and reliable. In the case of some sub-analyses (e.g., only a proportion of males were prisoners who were abused at a given age and only a proportion of these had been abused by women and a certain percentage of these abuse cases involved intercourse), percentage figures are based on small numbers. In these instances, the figures provide only a very general indication of relative frequency and should not be taken to imply any real precision. In some instances the figures sum to more than one hundred percent indicating that subjects appeared in more than one category.

Abuse by older children (before the age of 6)

About one quarter of respondents (28%) reported that older children (4 years older or more) had done sexual things to them before age six. There were no differences between prisoners and non offenders on this variable.

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 (40%), older brothers' friends (40%) and older boys in boarding institutions (20%). Genital fondling was the most frequent form of sexual activity (three quarters), followed by anal and oral rape (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 (about 40% each category) and neighbours (14%). All of the boys were subjected to oral sex and, in addition, 40% of the boys were raped anally. All of the offences occurred on a regular basis over several years. One quarter of the offences started in infancy (victims can recall confusing breast feeding with oral sex).

Abuse by adults (before the age of 6)

Significantly more of the non offenders (42%) than prisoners (17%) reported that adults used them for sex before they reached the age of six ($X^2=10.1$, $df=1$, $p=.001$).

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 (e.g., hairdressers) were occasionally mentioned. Twenty per cent of offences occurred at age 3 or less, 10% at age 4 and 70% at age 5. The researchers asked the adult survivors how they could remember sexual abuse which began in infancy. Responses included reference to vivid nightmares

about the abuse. In the nightmares, the men saw themselves in cots and bassinets and recalled the fear associated with the removal of their nappies. Some scepticism concerning the reliability of these reports is inevitable.

Anal and oral rape was committed by step fathers, general practitioners, cousins and grandfathers. 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.

It is important to note that one third of the offences were committed by females and, contrary to common myths, they acted alone and were not under the influence or in the company of a male offender. Sixty per cent of the female abusers were their grandmothers and 20% were their mothers, both of whom fondled and manipulated their genitals from infancy to 4 years of age. Twenty per cent were fondled by female neighbours.

About two thirds of the non offenders were abused by their mothers from infancy until they reached the age of six. In two cases, the abuse continued until they were aged 19 and 20 respectively.

Abuse by older children (between age 6-10)

About a half of the respondents (54%) reported sexual experiences with older children between the age of six and ten. There were no differences between prisoners and non offenders on this variable.

The pattern of the majority of offences being committed by men continued. About one third of boys (35%) were abused by females and about two thirds (64%) by males. The female offenders were equally split between older sisters and acquaintances. The offences committed by females were:

oral sex	50%
exhibitionism	16%
genital fondling	33%
sexual intercourse (from age 10)	16%

In one case, an older sister made her little brother remove her tampons.

All 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. One boy was raped by a group of 16-18 year old army cadets as the 'normal initiation process'. Activities included:

masturbation	45%
anal rape	63%
oral rape	27%
genital fondling	27%

One of the boys was raped regularly by older boys for the amusement of men who belonged to a paedophile ring organised by police officers. Eighteen per cent were abused by older brothers and step brothers, 9% were victimised by uncles and the remainder by acquaintances.

Abuse by adults (between age 6-10)

Slightly less than half of the prisoners (44%) reported sexual experiences with adults between age six and ten. This frequency was significantly less than the 80% incidence reported by the non offenders ($X^2= 23.6$ df=1, $p=.00000$).

About two thirds (71%) of boys were abused by males only. Of the remainder half were abused by adult females (sexual intercourse) and males. The other half were abused by females only. The females were sisters in law, mothers and teachers.

In the prisoner group, the majority of offences were committed by men. Seventy per cent of the boys were repeatedly anally raped over several years (20% of these by priests and church leaders, 20% by strangers, 40% by family members, 10% by fathers' homosexual partners, 10% by paedophiles in a paedophile ring- each averaging 40 different clients per week). Twenty per cent were abused by neighbours; 70% multiply abused by multiple perpetrators; 70% oral and anal rape; 100% masturbation; 50% genital fondling; 50% sadistic, violent sex.

The frequency of sex with adults was significantly greater in the non offender group (80%). Fifteen per cent of the non offenders were abused by females only. These females included mothers, cousins, school teachers, nannies, baby sitters and siblings' girlfriends. The offences were:

anal penetration	83%
oral sex	83%
masturbation	83%
sexual intercourse with adult females (from age 10)	(34%)

These offences were repeated over several years.

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. Abuse by

stepfathers involved anal and oral rape, masturbation ...'everything'. Fathers were likely to demand oral sex (57%) and 29% of father-son incest involved anal rape. One father also made his son watch him perform sex with an inflated doll while threatening to do it to his younger sisters. 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,

Their offences were:

Anal and oral rape and masturbation	40%
Oral rape and masturbation	40%
Pornography and masturbation	20%

Boys abused by strangers were of special interest because they were abused by so many strangers that they lost count. This usually happened in public toilets on the way home from school e.g., at the railway stations. They were aware of the risks when they went into the toilet. Stranger abuse involved non violent masturbation. It is also interesting that one boy was abused by no less than three different neighbours on separate occasions. This suggests that their early sexualisation was recognised.

Abuse by older children (between age 11-15)

More than half of the respondents (59%) reported having had sexual experiences with older children between ages 11 and 15. There were no differences between prisoners and non offenders on this variable.

Most of the abuse was continuing from an early age. Abuse typically consisted of oral and/or anal sex. Offenders were most commonly acquaintances (40%) followed by older cousins, brothers friends and older brothers (about 20% each category).

Abuse by adults (between age 11-15)

Significantly more of the non-offenders (77%) than prisoners (59%) reported that adults did sexual things to them between the ages of eleven and fifteen ($X^2=5.7$ df=1, $p=.02$).

Three quarters of the 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, 25% were fondled by and fondled their sisters and 25% their female neighbours.

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 (17% each), followed by uncles and uncles' mates, foster fathers and members of a paedophile ring including police and lawyers (8% each group).

Offences included:

oral sex	42%
anal rape	33%
sadistic sex	33%
masturbation	66%
genital fondling only	25%

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.

The incidence in the non offender group of sex abuse by adults against boys aged 11 to 15 was 77%. A small minority of these offences were committed by women (12.5%). Two thirds of these women were mothers (genital fondling) and one third were family friends (oral sex and sexual intercourse).

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- other denominations). In addition, 10% were abused by boarding school housemasters and 10% by Scout masters. Other offences were committed by GPs during medical examinations, acquaintances, strangers, fathers and fathers friends, school teachers and members of paedophile groups.

It is important to note that, at this age, boys were less likely to be abused by family members than by men encountered in the social setting. About one quarter of the boys (28%) had more than one offender on many different occasions.

Slightly less than half of respondents (44%) had sexual experiences with younger children before they were aged sixteen. There were no group differences on this variable.

Abuse at Age 16 And Over

Significantly more prisoners (86%) than non offenders (68%) reported having non abusive sexual intercourse during this time period in their lives ($X^2=4.8$, $df=1$, $p=.03$). Almost half of the

respondents (47%) reported that they had been involved in homosexual sex after age sixteen. There were no differences between prisoners and non offenders in this incidence rate. Only two people reported experimenting sexually at this time of their lives, not having experimented sexually at an earlier age.

Table 1. Frequency of sexual abuse by age, type and group.

	Prisoners	Non offenders	<i>p</i> (X^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
Age 16+			
Intercourse	86%	68%	.03
Homosexual sex	47%	47%	ns
Sex abuse at any age with either older children or adults	93%	100%	

POST INTERVIEW RATINGS

Adult relationships

The non offender group was significantly more likely to have referred to an inability to create relationships with adults (74%) than was the prisoner group (55%) ($X^2=6.7$, $df=1$, $p=.009$).

Low self esteem

About two thirds of the respondents (65%) showed evidence of low self-esteem and there were no differences between prisoners and non offenders on this variable.

Articulate ratings

The non-offender group was more frequently rated as articulate by the interviewer (86%) than was the prisoner group (70%) ($X^2=10.0$, $df=3$, $p=.02$).

PRISONERS ONLY

During the administration of the formal questionnaire, a good deal of additional information was volunteered by the eighty four prisoners. Since the information was volunteered incidentally, rather than elicited by direct questioning, not all prisoners provided information on each issue. Consequently this section is less formal and more anecdotal than is desirable. The information provided has nonetheless been included rather than discarded. Care must be taken not to over-generalise from the following results.

51 prisoners reported that therapy was provided.

46 prisoners reported that they believed that therapy was helpful.

7 prisoners reported receiving no support (from anyone) while in jail.

8 prisoners reported that their own children had been placed in care

31 prisoners spontaneously showed remorse for the offences they had committed.

17 prisoners revealed that they had been treated violently by other prisoners in jail.

23 prisoners revealed that they would be unlikely to be able to control their ways when released from jail.

DETAILS OF THE SEXUAL ABUSE EXPERIENCED BY RESPONDENTS

Incest

There was a 34% overall incidence of incest in the respondents but 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 ($X^2=4.4$, $df=1$, $p=.04$).

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 ($X^2=13.3$, $df=1$, $p=.0003$).

Abuse by strangers

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

Other relations

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

Anal sex

The overall reported rate of anal sexual abuse was 52% and there were no differences between prisoners and non offenders on this variable.

Oral sex

The overall reported rate of oral sexual abuse was 57% and 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% and 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 ($X^2=22.2$, $df=1$, $p=.00000$).

Liked the sex

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

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 ($X^2=7.1$, $df=1$, $p=.03$).

Number of offenders

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

SUMMARY OF STATISTICAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PRISONERS AND NON OFFENDERS

Table 2. Variables differentiating prisoners from non offenders
(statistically significant differences)

Prisoners left school at an earlier age
Prisoners had a lower tertiary study rate
Prisoners were more likely to have unskilled jobs
Prisoners were more likely to have children
Prisoners were more likely to come from relatively large families
Prisoners had lived in more homes before age 17
Prisoners were more likely to have fathers whose occupation was rated as unskilled
Prisoners were more likely to have mothers who were either not employed outside the home or had an unskilled job
Prisoners were more likely to have received severe beatings as children
Prisoners were more likely to report never being hugged or cuddled.
Prisoners were more likely to have experienced verbal abuse during their childhood.
Prisoners were more likely to have experienced sexual abuse from a neighbour.
Prisoners were more likely to have been sexually abused by a female.
Prisoners were more likely to have experienced sexual abuse including intercourse.
Prisoners were more likely to have reported liking the sexual abuse they experienced.
Prisoners were more likely to have initially thought that the sexual abuse they experienced was normal.
Prisoners experienced abuse from a significantly greater number of offenders.

EFFECTS OF THE CHILDHOOD ABUSE

The subjects were asked two questions relating to their own victimisation in childhood:

‘How did this affect you at the time?’, and ‘How did it affect you later?’. Analysis of the findings shows the following effects:

Most victims accepted the abuse as ‘normal’, ‘enjoyable’ or ‘inconsequential’

Quantitative data showed that 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'.

More prisoners than non offenders were abused by their mothers, older sisters or grandmothers and the sexual activity took the form of genital stimulation. In all but two cases, the practices stopped when the boys were about six years old. In the two exceptions, the abuse persisted until adulthood, causing severe psychological, sexual and social problems.

Non offenders also 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.

Once they had been introduced to sexual activity as an expression of affection, most victims became 'addicted' to it. Children who were separated from their parents or came from affectionless homes were the ones most likely to enjoy genital fondling.

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’.

Men in both groups were introduced to sex when they entered boarding schools and children’s homes. They disliked this initially because it was pervasive and intrusive. House masters and housefathers ‘did it’ to all of the boys, encouraged older boys to ‘do it’ to younger boys (often in the master’s presence and on his orders) and the younger boys replicated the abuse with each other. This happened several times a day: in showers, dormitories, bathrooms, behind the housemaster’s desk, in the classroom, in his office, his bedroom, behind bushes, in sports changing rooms, store rooms, piggeries and even in classrooms and libraries. Boys were carried from their beds late at night to provide sex for the masters in their bedrooms or offices. Although the boys hated it, because it was the only ‘loving’ attention that they received, they suffered pangs of jealousy when others were selected. Bed-wetters were abused most frequently; house masters fondled their genitals on the pretext of investigating whether their beds were dry. The boys were publicly, sadistically and sexually humiliated when they wet their beds (as many young boys did). As adults, victims worried that they ‘may have wet the bed to get attention because even that kind of attention was better than none’.

All of 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 attention and approval and 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.

Most of the prisoners only defined sexual assault as abuse if it involved rape and violence which were resisted (and resistance was rare). Some men who declared that they were not abused had, in fact, had several abusive experiences but because they were compliant or enjoyed some part of it, they did not categorise it as such.

Negative reactions and confusion came much later

Only 18% of prisoners and 31% of the non offenders registered shock, disgust or confusion as the effects of abuse. These negative feelings began when behaviour presented as evidence of affection was accompanied by threats, fear and the expectation that terrible things would happen if victims 'told'.

Children became confused when they began to suspect that what was happening was wrong.

'Why would a grown up do rude things with kids when adults tell us off for being rude?....If this is what everybody does when they love each other, why does it have to be a secret?'.
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Children also became more anxious when they learned of the taboo relating to homosexuality. They began to worry about their own sexuality when they realised that the sexual activity wasn't happening to other boys. They asked themselves,

'Why did he choose me?'

'Do I look homosexual?'

'Do I look like a girl?'

'Am I homosexual?'

The conclusions they reached were that they were obviously different to other boys and that their homosexual appearance or mannerisms must be highly visible given that they were recognised as homosexuals. None of the men had considered the possibility that they might have been chosen because they were children, that all children are powerless and they just happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Anal sex was introduced to boys when either the perpetrator had absolute power over the victim or the victim relied on the perpetrator to meet his emotional needs. Anal sex caused excruciating pain, physical injury and confusion. No victim reported it and none sought medical help for injuries. There were several reasons for this. First, the boys were confused because a seemingly affectionate relationship had usually been created over preceding weeks or months. They then asked themselves,

'Why would he hurt me when he says he loves me?...He says that this feels great but I feel as if my body is about to burst open and he's going to kill me. So what's wrong with me? Why aren't I enjoying it?... He says it will get better with practice...that I'm too anxious... so I suppose it's my own fault that I don't like it. I'll just have to put up with it and keep on trying until it gets better'.

Injuries were concealed because the boys feared that doctors would identify the cause and they would get into trouble. Invariably boys who protested that they were bleeding and in pain received

no sympathy but were reminded that they were to blame...they came looking for sex...they 'asked for it' and were dirty minded, bad kids.

All of the boys, in both groups, hated anal sex and some of the offenders said that they were proud of the fact that they had never used it on their own victims. They tolerated it as children when they believed that they had no choice or that the perpetrator was the only person in the world who really loved them.

Non offenders who were sexually abused by their mothers and sisters hated the women's bodies and found sex disgusting and dirty. They could not tell anyone about how they felt because in the male culture, sex with women was promoted as the ultimate educational experience.

Father-son incest was also confusing because the perpetrators were often homo-phobic men who denigrated homosexuals and presented themselves as macho.

The greatest confusion of all however related to abuse by men in religious orders who subjected boys to appalling acts of sexual and physical violence and degradation in the name of God.

Non offenders identified many more negative effects than offenders. As adults, they continue to suffer from low self esteem, night fears, nightmares, flashbacks, physical and psychological ill health, chronic unemployment, depression, feelings of inadequacy and a tendency for self destruction.

It is likely that the non offenders were more conscious of the ill effects of abuse because a large number had undertaken counselling for problems in adult sexual relationships, low self esteem, depression and self destructive tendencies. These men were also better educated and more articulate

than members of the prison population, especially in South Australia where several subjects had been abused while residents in special schools for children with intellectual disabilities.

Early sexualisation resulted in an obsession with sex, promiscuity and the risk of multiple abuse by multiple perpetrators

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 ‘poofteer’ 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.

Early sexualisation often resulted in 'effeminate' characteristics which were recognised by other paedophiles. As a consequence, most victims who lived in sexualised environments were multiply abused by multiple perpetrators.

When they had been taught that sex was love, some lonely teenagers went to men's toilets looking for adult partners.

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. In some of the schools where there were farms, the adults and the boys were involved in bestiality.

All of the victims in these residential settings, both prisoners and non offenders, admitted that they were abusing younger children by the time they were ten years of age (note: the non offenders who made such admissions were deleted from the non offender group for the purpose of statistical analyses). They had no contact with women or girls and often had no information about heterosexual sex until after they left the institution which, in some cases was at the age of 18 or 19. Some were shocked when they learned about heterosexual sex; they thought that it sounded 'disgusting'.

Youths who were sexually abused by women either felt privileged or repulsed depending on their relationship with the perpetrator. Men who were abused by neighbours or baby sitters did not regard themselves as abuse victims. When they were abused by their mothers, the sexual component was considered to be only a minor part of a relationship which involved total domination.

A large number of detrimental effects were noted when boys were obsessed with sex. They could not concentrate on anything else and their work and marks deteriorated in school. They became 'loners', the intelligent ones hiding their problems behind books, giving an outward appearance of self sufficiency.

Many of the men in both groups confessed that they were still 'obsessed with sex' and found themselves attracted to boys, especially those in the 10-12 year age group who introduced sex talk and were readily identifiable as sexually experienced and those boys who looked sad and lonely and reminded them of themselves at that age. The difference between prisoners and non offenders however, was that the latter remembered the damaging effects of abuse on their own lives and offenders outside programs rarely viewed sex with boys as damaging.

Feelings of entrapment

Offenders were more likely than non offenders to refer to being trapped by their abusers; the reality was, of course, that most of them could not escape. As we have seen, boys who attempted to stop abuse by reporting authority figures were largely unsuccessful and were punished for their efforts. From time to time, boys who had no supportive families tried to escape from boarding schools and Boys' Homes. They were always returned to the institutions even when they revealed why they ran away. Documentation produced by an offender shows that a social worker employed by state authorities (Western Australia) recorded a foster parent's complaint that he and his brother were

being sexually abused by Christian Brothers and that his brother replicated the abuse in the foster family. The authorities did not investigate the complaint.

Very different forms of entrapment were used by paedophiles outside institutional settings. Two men reported that their father replacement figures bought them new bicycles and expensive gifts for their naive, trusting mothers. A Salvation Army Officer provided a new kitchen for an impoverished widow. The boys hated the frequent abuse but loved the inducements and realised that they could not stop one without losing the other. In adulthood, they suffered enormous guilt and shame when they realised that they had, for example, traded years of revolting sex in exchange for ownership of a new bicycle.

The boys in brothels were trapped by threats that they would be killed if they told anyone. Given that two of the victims claimed that brothel organisers were police officers and their clients were judges, lawyers, magistrates, politicians and TV personalities, they had no expectation that they would be protected by the justice system.

Feelings of shame, embarrassment, isolation and of being 'dirty'

Half (50%) of non offenders registered feelings of shame, embarrassment, being different and being dirty compared with only 12% of prisoners. This again confirms that there was a much higher level of acceptance of sexual abuse in the prisoner group.

Psychological problems

All of the non offenders other than those abused by strangers in one-off, non violent events, suffered long term psychological problems which were manifested in 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.

About one fifth of prisoners (22%) said that they had felt depressed at some time but this usually related to marriage failure or the trauma following their arrest.

Abuse often resulted in substantial behavioural changes in childhood which were misinterpreted by the adults. A non offender said,

'I'd just received the news that I was adopted. I started nicking off to be by myself but I always went back. One day, a van pulled up as I was walking home and it was the man who was painting our house. He said that my mother had asked him to look for me so I got in the van. He pushed me in the back and raped me. He said I must not tell anyone because, being adopted, I would be sent back to an orphanage for being a bad boy. And I believed him!

I stopped all eye to eye contact with my family in case they guessed what had happened. I avoided my father, erected a brick wall around myself and related to no one after that. I had terrible nightmares which still trouble me. I smashed my best toys, got into heaps of trouble at school, killed the neighbour's racing pigeons, set fire to their fernery and dropped my own pets from the roof and killed them all to punish myself. And they presumed that I was just acting irrationally to the news that I was adopted!'

Problems with sexual relationships

The inability to relate to adults was common to all victims of sexual abuse involving offences by perpetrators who were known and trusted. The victims distrusted all adults. Those who married experienced marital problems, separations and divorces. These men tended to marry women who

had also been sexually abused. At times of stress, there was a high risk of father-child incest in these families. Women who lacked sound protective models in their own lives were unable to protect their children from the risks.

After the age of sixteen, most male victims (in both groups) engaged in homosexual activity which did not involve relationships or commitment. This experimentation arose from the victims' doubts about their own sexuality. When asked about whether they were heterosexual or homosexual, a large number of men in both groups responded, 'Neither'.

The men found it difficult to give affection and, when it was offered, they always suspected that it was not genuine because they had 'done nothing to deserve it' and could not reciprocate. There was a tendency to destroy all budding relationships and that resulted in isolation and depression. They sexualised their emotions and many turned to 'one night stands' rather than expose themselves to the risks involved in creating relationships.

Men who had been abused by women experienced the same problems in creating heterosexual relationships but they tended to engage in promiscuity with females. Some committed incest with their daughters at times of stress.

It was common for men (in both groups) to lack experience of heterosexual relationships until their late twenties or thirties and, not surprisingly, their first clumsy attempts were disastrous and they did not repeat them. At the same time, if men had abused them, they often loathed homosexuals. Some visited the 'beats' and had one-off homosexual encounters with strangers. After years of counselling, many members of the non offenders group (but none of the prisoners) joined the gay community where they found understanding and support.

With minimal education, no history of family life and normal socialisation and no experience of heterosexual relations, it was very easy for victims in schools run by Brothers to be recruited for the Brotherhood. The requirement for so-called celibacy was not a hardship in these circumstances.

Some of the victims joined the defence forces where their lives continued to be ordered and they remained in male dominated environments. Some were identified as different and they were raped by other servicemen. This resulted in mental ill health and early release.

Most of the men who married, experienced several marriages and divorces. Having sexualised and suppressed their natural emotions throughout their lives, they found it impossible to give and receive love and provide for the emotional needs of wives and children.

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.

Feelings of guilt and self recrimination

About one quarter of control group members (28%) referred to long term feelings of guilt and self blame. Only one of the prisoners referred to this in relation to his own victimisation.

Feelings of guilt and shame crept in when children learned of the taboo on homosexuality and feared that they had been chosen for their homosexual characteristics. They suffered most of all when they enjoyed the relationship or genital stimulation.

Boys in boarding schools felt 'dirty' because of the nature of some of the acts they were forced to do but they did not suffer the same sense of guilt as other boys because 'everyone was doing it; we had no choice'.

Feelings of anger and frustration

Most non offenders recorded feeling angry about their abuse. Even when boys escaped from abusive strangers, the intrusion adversely affected their lives.

'I resented the fact that it was no longer safe for me to use the reference library. Those dirty old men changed my life'.

'I no longer felt safe going for walks in the bush which had, up to that time, been my favourite pastime'.

'I didn't go to the pictures for years after that'.

'I was angry because I knew instinctively that he shouldn't be doing it. I also knew that if I challenged him, he would make me look stupid. Doctors have the facility to provide rational explanations for that kind of sexual exploration. And I was frustrated that I couldn't tell my parents because it was too embarrassing. They would have said that I was mistaken and got mad with me. So far as they were concerned, our doctor was next to God. And because they were unapproachable. I was as angry with them as I was with the doctor'.

The only prisoners who registered strong angry feelings about their abusers were those who were degraded, dehumanised and abused in residential institutions by employees of religious organisations and social welfare departments.

With the benefit of hindsight, non offenders and prisoners in sex offender programs could clearly see how paedophiles in children's services had systematically targeted children who had no visitors and had no one to tell about what was happening.

Men in a sexual void were also sad and angry that they had been deprived of the opportunity to marry, have children and enjoy a happy family life.

Non offenders were the ones most likely to have sought protection and failed and they felt a great deal of bitterness towards the parents and teachers who ignored them. In most cases, they were more angry with their parents than with the offenders. They were angry with their fathers who failed to provide affection and approval. They were angry with both parents for failing to provide sufficient information to protect them from homosexual abuse. And those abused by priests and Brothers were angry with the Catholic Church which was perceived as protecting its own devious members who were wrecking children's lives.

A sense of helplessness

About one third of non offenders (32%) and only 4% of prisoners recalled experiencing a sense of helplessness relating to their abuse. The small number of prisoners recording helplessness reflects their acceptance of abuse as a way of life. Some were already abusing younger children which gave them the sense that they had some control over their lives.

Ambivalence

Equal numbers of men from the two groups registered feelings of ambivalence about the abuse and their abusers. This was most marked when the perpetrator was someone who made them feel special and appreciated. Their bodies and their minds gave them different messages which they found confusing. Committed paedophiles often described their abusers as kindly father figures who filled the gaps left by their own negligent, uncaring parents. When they became offenders, they replicated the seduction techniques used by their abusers and protested that,

'It didn't harm me!'

'I did no harm!'

'I fill a need.'

'Boys like it.'

The fact that they were in prison was perceived as society's problem in failing to understand the sexual needs of boys.

Self destructive tendencies

Although some prisoners reported that they had attempted suicide, most suicidal thoughts occurred after their arrest. The self destructive behaviours of prisoners tended to involve alcohol and drug abuse and anti social behaviour such as car theft. The drug abuse not only involved conventional drugs but in some cases included cough mixtures, sea sickness pills and bizarre concoctions.

The most self destructive prisoners were those who had been subjected to the highest number of offences by the highest number of perpetrators. One man calculated that he had been subjected to 1850 offences.

Prisoners who were boys in paedophile rings supplied sex for up to forty clients a week. Although clients paid \$200-\$250 a session for their services, the boys were initially unaware of this and received nothing for their efforts. By the time they realised that they were prostitutes, they were trapped in fear of their lives.

Some sense of value was experienced by boys who felt that clients loved them, requested them by name, came back again and again for them. They fulfilled a special role in 'pleasing men'. Although they hated what they were asked to do, when they were suddenly rejected and abandoned at around the age of fifteen, they felt lost and unloved with no purpose in life. Some suffered depression and tried to commit suicide when they realised that they had been duped into prostitution and used by men who were regarded as the pillars of society.

Self destructiveness was linked with anti social behaviour. Thirty per cent of prisoners had criminal convictions for non sexual offences. Many offences related to anger against society. One prisoner had 35 such convictions. Sexually violated by his father and step mother, he was placed in foster care where he was again violated by his foster mother. He was repulsed and when he exhibited unmanageable behaviour, he was sent to a children's home where the pattern was repeated. He felt like a 'puppet' and 'thought that it happened to everybody'.

Adolescents who were confused about their sexuality often put themselves in dangerous situations where they could be victimised:

'When I went out looking for it, it was a form of self punishment. If I was beaten up or raped, it merely confirmed that I was worthless garbage and this was what I deserved. I felt dirty, filthy and disgusting. And what could be more disgusting than going to dirty toilets for sex. I would go there when I was feeling at my lowest and in the foulest weather and I'd vomit all the way home'.

Twenty per cent of prisoners had felt suicidal but only the prostitutes made suicidal attempts before they were charged; the remainder felt suicidal after they had been arrested. By comparison, 34% of the control group attempted suicide because of despair relating to depression and their incapacity to fit into the social world. The same number tried to hide their pain by abusing alcohol or drugs.

JUVENILE PERPETRATORS

The pattern of sexual abuse began did not commence in adulthood for most offenders. Instead it was a 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 (whoever, whenever and wherever possible). 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.

During discussions of juvenile sexuality, it became apparent that a proportion of the so-called 'non offender' group had indeed committed acts which constitute sexual abuse. Thus the claim that these men were non offenders was based on their affirmations that they were not offenders as adults. Nevertheless, all men who admitted to offending as juveniles were removed from the 'non offender' group and the statistical analyses reported earlier did not include these men. Most commonly, the juvenile offences which came to light in the non offender group involved the abuse of younger boys under the instructions and control of clergy and Brothers in religious orders (12 cases). In addition there were 4 cases where 'non offender' juveniles had sexual intercourse with adolescent females under the age of consent and 4 cases involving re-enactment of abuse by female adults with their young sisters aged 4-5.

The relevance of the gender of past offenders to the gender of their own victims

Although the data do not allow strong conclusions to be drawn on the basis of statistical tests there was an apparent association between the gender of past offenders and the gender of new victims.

The men who abused younger boys were themselves being abused by men. The men who abused younger girls were being abused by adult females. Those who abused both boys and girls were being abused by male and female adults. When mothers or older sisters abused boys, there was a strong likelihood that the boys would repeat the abuse with younger female relatives. When older brothers abused them, the boys abused younger brothers and younger peers. When adult paedophiles abused them, they abused any young male who could be victimised.

WAS THE ABUSE REPORTED? IF SO, TO WHOM? WHAT HAPPENED?

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 that the abuse had become violent and oppressive and they were 'just fed up with it'. 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.

Non offenders were much more likely to have reported the abuse than prisoners. Only 14% of all subjects reported abuse, nearly three quarters of whom were in the non offender group. Mothers were the main recipients of information (50%) followed by teachers (17%), siblings (10%) and friends (10%). The remainder were foster mothers, police, a children's home superintendent and a father.

Of the twenty eight people who received reports of child sexual abuse, only one acted responsibly and reported the abuse to police. Two mothers were 'supportive at a personal level' but failed to report the abuse to the authorities because it involved priests and reporting 'might damage the Catholic Church'. Other parents feared that reporting would result in a backlash from the local Catholic community. This was a serious concern when the parents owned businesses and relied on local goodwill.

The parents in one case reported the abuse to a senior church administrator. The priest was 'sent to a retreat for a few months until the fuss died down'. No further action was taken.

The remaining mothers disbelieved their sons and some punished them for 'dirty talk'. The boy who confided in his father fared no better because the report involved his dad's best mates whom he trusted more than the word of his son.

Reports to older siblings were believed but ignored. In one case, reporting resulted in further abuse. Two older brothers reassured the victim that sex with older youths was 'OK' and they began using him for sex shortly afterwards.

A trusted grandmother said that God would rip off the victim's arms and legs if he told anyone else about what the priest had done to him.

Victims of religious Brothers and Social Welfare Department employees suffered the most prolonged and violent abuse and they were brutalised whenever they tried to report offences. A complaint to the Welfare Department social worker was 'ignored'.

A boy reported a Brother to his housemaster and was reprimanded for being 'dirty minded'. Another teacher accused the victim of 'lying'.

An eight year old who had suffered daily abuse from the age of three escaped in the middle of the night, shoeless and dressed in pyjamas to report that he had been pack raped and brutalised by a group of seven housemasters and senior boys. He found his way to the house of the Superintendent responsible for the Boys' Homes. The man listened attentively to his complaint then assured him that the men really loved him and did not mean to hurt him. He was calm and kind and when he enquired whether the victim would like to become his 'favourite boy', the boy happily agreed. Although he was abused by the Superintendent until he left the boys' home at the age of nineteen, he held the man in high regard because he, unlike the housemasters, was 'gentle', spoke quietly and never hurt him.

A boy in a Catholic College told a fellow student of his abuse and learned that his friend had also been victimised by the same Brother. They reported it but no action was taken. The victim recently joined a group for adult survivors and, with their support, he reported it again. The Brother was charged and convicted in 1993.

'The case was publicised and I attracted a great deal of hostility from members of the community because of the damage to the church, the time factor and the age of the perpetrator. A lot of people thought that I should have forgotten about it but when your life has been wrecked by someone, you never forget'.

Teachers constituted the second largest group of recipients of disclosures of abuse. Reports involved abusive parents, foster parents and fellow teachers in boarding schools. When reports were received, teachers absolved themselves of responsibility by informing the perpetrators of the allegations. This suggests that either they did not believe the boys, were ignorant of reporting procedures, did not want to get involved or thought, naively, that the abuse would stop if the perpetrators knew that their behaviour was no longer a secret. Realising that the school was not

taking any action and that they were safe from prosecution, the perpetrators beat and threatened their victims and the abuse continued with more violence than before.

One boy was sexually abused by his foster parents' older sons.

'After I'd put up with it for more than a year, I told the teacher at school that I was just sick of it. The school principal telephoned the foster parents and told them what I'd said. When I got home, they flogged me for telling lies and I was sent to another foster home the next day. The new foster father was a paedophile. By that time, I felt totally helpless'.

Six members of the non offender group complained to their mothers and were disbelieved.

One adolescent victim broke the news to his mother with the announcement, 'I think I need to see a psychologist'. When she enquired why, he told her what was happening. She said, 'You're telling lies. He would never do that'.

Most of the men complained that 'No one ever listened to me at home, they just talked at me.'

Because paedophiles select sad and lonely children, most of the boys were 'loners' and they had 'no one else to tell.'

An adolescent in the offender group confided in a friend that he was having sexual intercourse with both his mother and her best friend and the response was, 'I don't believe you! You're just bragging!'

Another boy told an older student who told the class teacher who told the head teacher who told the police that he was being abused but 'nothing happened'.

A nine year old contacted police directly and 'They told me to go home and stop wasting their time. They didn't want to know about it'.

In adolescence, a youth told his girlfriend about long term group sex involving the pastor of their church. They stopped going to church but 'daren't tell my parents because they would never have believed it...They thought that the pastor was next to God'.

The most appalling example of a parent supporting the perpetrator was when a boy told his mother that he had been raped by his step father.

'She didn't help. She just belted me for crying and having blood stains and messing my clothes and the bed sheets. When he came to live with us, I had to live in the garage. I was locked in when I got home from school and they only let me out to go back to school the next day. My mother knew from the very beginning that my step father was coming in to the garage at night to use me for sex'.

REASONS FOR NOT REPORTING ABUSE

Most subjects told no one of their abuse until comparatively recently. Some said, 'I never told anyone about this before today'. Most control group members disclosed their abuse after attending counselling sessions for social, psychological and sexual problems. It had never occurred to them that their problems related to their childhood experiences. Their reasons for not reporting abuse when they were younger were as follows:

I didn't know that it was wrong

This was the most common explanation for failing to report abuse. Seventy per cent of abused prisoners and 60% of abused non offenders said that they thought that sexual abuse was 'normal'.

I was scared of getting into trouble

Six per cent of non offenders and 2% of prisoners gave this as their main reason for not reporting the abuse.

I had no one to tell

This explanation was given by 15% of subjects in each group. Victims in boarding schools and boys' homes fell into this category.

I didn't think anyone would believe me if I 'told'.

Fifteen per cent of control group members and 5% of prisoners provided this explanation.

I was indebted to the perpetrator

This was the reason given by older victims who knew that what was happening was wrong but felt powerless to protest. One boy was abused by the priest responsible for the hostel to which he had been sent to recover from drug abuse following earlier sexual abuse. He knew that it was wrong but feared that he had more to lose by reporting given that the priest found him employment and accommodation.

Fear of violence and retribution from the perpetrator

Eighteen per cent of non offenders and 9% of prisoners fell into this category. All but one of the men were either residents in cottage homes or boarding schools run by Brothers in religious orders. The exception was a prisoner who was abused by a police officer and taken to a brothel used by paedophiles. The police officer held his gun in the boy's mouth to maintain his silence.

I felt guilty, embarrassed and ashamed

Only 2% of prisoners were inhibited from reporting by feelings of shame compared with 17% of non offenders. When offences continued for several years, the abuse usually started out feeling

'normal' and shame crept in when victims began to understand the taboos relating to homosexuality.

My mother already knew

Most mothers give boys the impression that they are all-seeing and all-knowing when they make statements such as, 'I know what you're thinking' and 'I have eyes at the back of my head'. Several victims believed that their mothers were aware of sibling incest and one received confirmation when, at the age of twelve, his parents told his offending, older sister that he was 'growing up' and it was now 'time for it to stop'.

SEX OFFENDERS SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING PROTECTION OF BOYS

All of the prisoners who had been sexually abused in childhood were invited to provide suggestions for safety strategies which might have protected them from victimisation in childhood or, later, protected their own victims from sexual abuse.

It is interesting to note that, although most of the men were abused by known and trusted adults and all but one had selected victims who knew and trusted them, 75% were so indoctrinated by the myth of the stereotyped dangerous stranger that they responded spontaneously that children should be taught to avoid male strangers in cars.

Prisoners in Cooma Correctional Centre's sex offender treatment program had already given considerable thought to protection issues and offered valuable insights for improving child protection strategies. South Australian prisoners, none of whom had been involved in an offender program, were more dogmatic, more negative and less realistic than their NSW counterparts. They made statements such as:

'Tell kids not to do it before they're 17'.

‘Stop mothers from working. They’re to blame for family life as it is today’.

‘Mothers should supervise their kids more closely. They give too much freedom to boys because they don’t understand the risks’.

‘Tell kids only to turn to their parents for love; not their brothers or sisters, not people outside the home...just their parents’.

‘Tell kids to stay with their parents’.

‘Parents should have more control over their kids’.

‘There’s nothing you can do to protect kids from people like me. I know all the tricks. I bribe, I flatter, I show an interest in kids who desperately need affection and approval. I tap into their sexual curiosity when parents pretend that they’re asexual. I answer questions that they daren’t ask their own fathers. Once they’re hooked on sex, they come looking for it’. (Paedophile aged 58 with multiple convictions)

Focus on how to stop offenders from offending

Prisoners involved in sex offender programs were unanimous in their belief that, as a matter of priority, there should be a community focus on stopping offenders from offending. They believed that the incidence of child sexual abuse will decline if we lift the taboo on the human body and open up channels of communication between parents and children. Prisoners pointed out that, if children are not given sufficient information relating to their sexuality, they will seek it from inappropriate and less reliable sources, placing them at risk of abuse.

Comments from prisoners suggested that we should teach child protection professionals, teachers and parents how to recognise the signs and symptoms of child sexual abuse and handle cases more supportively with a greater focus on therapy for victims and juvenile offenders. Many of the prisoners had been offending since they were aged 8 years old and their offences were ignored by parents and teachers.

Prisoners suggested that we should provide more sex offender programs and advertise them well, using the media to persuade offenders to seek help. Some prisoners were reported to police when they voluntarily sought help from child protection services in NSW. They pointed out that prison sentences and good behaviour bonds do nothing to change long standing sexual patterns, preferences and attitudes unless there are assessment and re-education programs readily available. Given that paedophiles have usually been offending since childhood, it is vital that they are assessed immediately after admission to prison. In South Australian prisons there were no enclaves of sex offenders and prisoners felt the need to conceal their crimes because of the risk of violence from other prisoners. They dare not seek therapy because their status as 'rock spiders' would be identified. Because of the lack of specialist staff to tackle offending behaviours, counselling was restricted to matters affecting parole. Social workers were on short term contracts, carried enormous workloads and there were no opportunities for prisoners to discuss their sexual preferences or life problems with knowledgeable professionals.

Prisoners wanted more back-up services for parolees. Offenders, family members and victims should have separate counselling and group counselling before prisoners return to their homes. The children should be given an intensive course in assertiveness training and protective education. There should also be a 24 hour help line for offenders, most of whom experience advance warning signs when they are at risk of re offending.

More effective screening is needed to protect children from the risk of sexual abuse by house fathers, foster parents and care givers.

Many of the paedophiles became offenders under the tuition of their parent replacement figures while in the care and protection of the state in foster homes, cottage homes, orphanages and

schools and hostels run by religious organisations. Boys who attempted to report abuse to their social workers or members of staff were disbelieved, punished and abused more violently.

Both prisoners and control group members revealed that they had abused other children in residential schools under the instructions of Marist or Christian Brothers and/or priests. They were extremely bitter about the damage to their own lives and the damage they had caused to the lives of others 'while the Brothers who did this to us were and still are protected by the Catholic Church'.

Victims felt that, without a realistic personal safety education program, it was

'unreasonable to expect kids to resist and report priests. They present themselves as God's representatives, carrying the ultimate authority. Catholic boys are the most vulnerable of all because they are taught to obey higher authority in their catechism'.

Victims abused by priests and brothers were unanimous in their demands that, 'the leaders of the Catholic Church should be made to understand that child sexual abuse is not a trivial matter' and the 'so called celibate priests must be kept right away from kids'.

Men reared and abused in Social Welfare Department Cottage Homes were equally concerned about staff screening. Some reported that despite the employment of married couples as houseparents, they had been abused by the Superintendent and house fathers in up to seven different cottage homes. The housefathers who had children also abused their own sons. Their question was, 'How was it that all of the homes were staffed by paedophiles?'. Similarly, in Western Australia, there were allegations of abuse involving boarders at all of the Christian Brothers' schools.

Introduce developmentally appropriate sex education to boys of 5 years

Half of the offenders believed that their own abuse could have been prevented had they been given realistic education relating to sexuality and sensuality at an early age. They pointed out that sex education is left predominantly in the hands of women who are ignorant of the specific concerns of boys, their high levels of curiosity and the fact that many boys live in highly sexualised peer environments from age five onwards. Their parents put up barriers to communication about sexual matters and deprived them of the vocabulary needed for reporting. The children picked up the message that their genitals were unmentionable and invisible to the adult world. Paedophiles tapped into boys' curiosity and filled the gaps left by parents. They created close, trusting relationships with the boys, introduced sex talk and pornography and answered questions which would have made their parents 'freak out'. When they enquired whether boys had been circumcised and they replied, 'I don't know', the curious victims were easily tricked into unzipping their pants to let their helpful 'educators' take a look and handle their genitals.

Although peer group sex is commonly viewed as experimental and harmless and adults tend to ignore it, prisoners reported that membership of a highly sexual peer group increased their vulnerability to abuse by adolescent and adult paedophiles. When young boys were abused by older boys, they were given the impression that they were privileged to be admitted to the world of adults. Men likened abuse to a contagious disease which spread and affected everyone that it touched. When young boys were abused and enjoyed any aspect of it, they introduced it to their curious peers who, in turn, involved their friends and neighbours. They became obsessed with sex and met daily in school toilets, garden sheds, bedrooms and cubbies. Some were identified, targeted and victimised by adolescent and adult paedophiles who paid them comparatively large sums of money 'to do what we were already doing with each other'. The boys thought that the men were stupid, that this was 'no big deal' and they accepted the proposal and the money. They did not view

the behaviour as wrong or bad until they were raped and then found that they could not complain because the responsibility for their injuries was placed on their own shoulders.

The men pointed out that, the only 'official' sex education they received was in adolescence and, at best, consisted of access to a book about conception and childbirth. Neither parents nor teachers had discussed male sexual issues which were the main concerns of abused boys.

One Cooma inmate put the problem very succinctly:

'I knew that sex was wrong. But what was sex? It was about men and women making babies. That had nothing whatsoever to do with what was happening to me. How could I have known that it was wrong when everyone else was doing it? Why should I have suspected when I was put into the same bed as a paedophile by my own God fearing aunt. He said he loved me. He kissed me and cuddled me and it was the most gentle touching I'd ever received and I loved it. I was hooked and when I got home, I taught the other kids and went looking for it. It was only when I got into adolescence and the others labelled me 'poofte' that I realised that something was wrong. And by that time, my parents chose to ignore the fact that I had a problem. Like ostriches, they thought that if they put their heads in the sand, it would go away. And, of course, it didn't. It got worse. By the time I was in my late teens, I was an isolate and the only people who didn't reject me were pre pubescent boys'.

Provide more realistic child protection programs

A third of the men were derisive about child protection programs which are vague and rely on the recognition of unsafe feelings, uncomfortable, bad or yukky touching and avoid mentioning sex and the possibility that it might feel good.

‘Protection programs ignore the fact that children are sexual, tactile beings and we present genital fondling and oral sex as exciting...fun. Boys feel very safe if it is presented in a loving way. Boys get abused not because they hate sexual touching but because they like it or the affection and attention that accompanies it. Paedophiles specialise in making kids feel good about themselves’.

A second criticism was that,

‘Child protection programs fail to address the seduction techniques used to target boys. We should be telling kids, (especially boys), to avoid and report older kids and men who use dirty talk, dirty pictures, magazines and videos. They should be warned to steer clear of men who offer to teach them about sex. However this will only be effective if parents are more open and honest with their kids. We spent months and even years grooming kids (and their parents) before we introduced sexual touching. Sex is presented as fun, exciting and something that males do together when they have a special relationship. Protective Behaviours is totally irrelevant to boys. In these situations, they feel safe and it never occurs to them that it’s wrong’.

‘Child protection programs should teach and provide opportunities for kids to practice reporting skills. Few of us here reported what was happening to us because we didn’t realise that it was reportable. When everyone else is doing it you think it’s normal. And even when we hated it, we didn’t know what to say....we had no one to tell’.

Many of the men who thought that they had reported abuse realised, with the benefit of hindsight, that they did not make clear statements but gave hints which the adults failed to recognise.

‘Children need opportunities to practice reporting problems in a clear and articulate way’.

'Children, and boys in particular, should be taught to respect their bodies and the bodies of others. This is especially important with the risks associated with STD's'.

It was pointed out that boys' 'private parts' are anything but private. They handle their genitals several times a day in public. This contributes to their vulnerability to abuse. Unsupervised toilets in schools offer opportunities for competition: who has the largest penis with and without an erection, who can urinate higher, longer and further than anyone else. These 'harmless' activities lead all too easily to more dangerous pursuits. Toilets often remained the focus of sexual activity for abused boys in later life.

Children need to know that they should report sexual behaviour regardless of the relationship and authority of the initiator.

Better community and parent education are needed, starting with maternal and child health services.

Male prisoners who were abused by paedophiles were convinced that they would not have been abused if their own fathers had been educated to understand and respond to their emotional needs. The men referred to a 'cultural gap' between children's needs and what parents think they need. Parents distance themselves from the children's world and 'pretend that by saying nothing, they can keep kids asexual', confusing childhood innocence and ignorance. Boys are made vulnerable to paedophiles when they have no affectionate father figure who gives them attention and approval.

'Boys are much easier to get than girls because more boys than girls are starved of physical affection. Fathers hug, kiss and cuddle their daughters but not their sons. In trying to mould sons who will be brave, strong, self sufficient and macho, they ignore their emotional needs.'

Prisoners were highly critical of parents who ignore the risks of child sexual abuse and pretend that their families are immune from these risks. They are

'naive, too trusting and careless with their children. They give boys too much independence, let paedophiles into their homes, give us access to their children, accept willingly when we offer to babysit, take their kids on outings and even camping for weekends. Some are just glad that someone is taking them off their hands. Mothers let us share the same bedroom and even the same bed as their sons. They are blind to what is happening under their own roofs. And when kids send out signals that something is wrong, the parents refuse to listen because they trust us and can't believe that their trust might be misplaced'.

ATTITUDES TO CHILD REARING

Given that the vast majority of prisoners and many of the control group members had unhappy childhoods, we asked both groups about their views on child rearing. This question was particularly relevant to prisoners convicted of father-child incest. We found that prisoners were much more rigid and more punitive than control group members. Incest offenders were the most rigid of all. Although all of them had experienced unhappy and violent childhoods, they consistently emphasised the need for a father who controls and uses strict discipline and punishment. The men in South Australian prisons (with no access to sex offender programs) were the most rigid of all. Despite their own loveless backgrounds, they gave no indication that children needed affection or had emotional needs. The following responses were typical of the incest offenders:

'Feed them, clothe them and keep them in order.'

'Discipline must come first. I lay down the law and the kids have to do what I say.'

'Keep them clean, fed and housed.'

'I use the biblical system. Smack them and cuddle them.'

'I am old fashioned...obey your parents and the law.'

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 and 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.

Few of the control group members were parents and probably by virtue of their higher levels of education, they 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

The discussion will proceed by highlighting major findings from each section from the results. As each section is summarised, information accumulates which amounts to an emerging profile contributing towards an understanding of the replication of sexual abuse across generations.

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

There were several 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 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 severe beatings as children more frequently than the non offenders and were more likely to have received verbal abuse.

Other factors revealed no group differences. 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 frequently 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 frequency of involvement in sporting groups and clubs.

In summary, the prisoners were very similar to the non offenders on a range of variables, thought likely to distinguish the two groups. However, they were more socially disadvantaged than the non offenders and they received less physical affection and more physical beatings and verbal abuse than the comparison group.

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, 16 +), the non offender group reported a greater frequency of sexual abuse than did the prisoners. Thus sexual abuse at particular ages and 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 are 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 do seem to 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 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.

Thus, sexual abusers often regarded their own sexual abuse as normal, even enjoyable. They were abused by people they knew and by many people. Given this context, 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

Negative effects of childhood sexual abuse were more commonly reported by the non offender group. Again, this is in part a function of the selection procedure which used men who were troubled by their past abuse. In spite of this selection bias, 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.

To an outside observer it might seem apparent that offenders had been seriously damaged by sexual abuse in childhood. They 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

Although a Sexual Offender Treatment Working Party Report (Department for Community Welfare - South Australian Health Commission, 1988) recommended the introduction of a re-education process for sex offenders in that State, 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.

Wincze (1987) and others reported that 80% of incarcerated sex offenders who do not receive treatment re-offend. Wincze also stated that when incarcerated sex offenders receive treatment, the recidivism rate drops to 20%. In the 1992-1993 Annual Report describing the treatment plan operating at the Cooma Correctional Centre, a national search found that none of the program participants had been re-convicted since release. Before the introduction of the program in Western Australia, the recidivism rate was said to be 80%. Although statistics relating to convictions

present a very inaccurate picture of offences committed in the community as a whole, the differences before and after treatment are too great to be ignored.

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'. These men sexualised children's normal behaviour and perceived that when a three year old sat on an adult's knee, she was 'asking for sex'. 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 confirmed 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. Those who lived in residential institutions run by paedophiles

were trained to become abusers; the more sadistic and degrading their treatment of younger boys, the more praise they received from their masters.

When survivors understood their lost childhood, they went through a grief process which involved sadness, depression, anger, blame, self recrimination and guilt. When their abusers were their primary care givers, men mourned for the relationship that they should have had and never had. They needed a great deal of support to pass through these stages to a healthier outcome.

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.

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.

NON REPORTING OF ABUSE

Very few men reported their abuse. Reports of abuse were most often ignored.

Only 14% of subjects reported their abuse and it is significant that three quarters of these reports came from non offenders. The most common reason given for not reporting abuse was that the victim had simply not known that the abuse was wrong and that it should be reported. This is consistent with picture that prisoners were very much constrained by their perspective that abuse was just a part of life, rather than some aberration which could or should be resisted.

Reporting failed to stop the abuse because most trusted adults either rejected the information or failed to pass it on to the statutory authorities responsible for investigating allegations of abuse. When reports were made to police or social workers about abusive professionals, they took no action. Mothers also rejected their children's reports. All of the teachers either punished the victims or informed the perpetrators of the accusations. The offenders then realised that they were safe, the victims were beaten and the abuse continued, leaving the children feeling more helpless, hopeless and powerless than before.

Given that only a very few of thousands of offences were reported to police and no prosecutions resulted from those reports, we can see why national statistics relating to reports of abuse give a very inaccurate picture of the risks of sexual abuse to boys. They are dangerous in that society has been lulled into the belief that the protection of boys is less important than the protection of girls. The reality is that most boys do not complain about abuse, do not recognise that it is wrong and the few who complain are unlikely to be believed.

Although the youngest subject was sixteen and the oldest was a prisoner of fifty eight, the responses of recipients of reports in recent years were no different to those made fifty years ago.

These findings have implications for schools, community and parent education. If children are taught about their rights, the knowledge is only likely to be useful if parents, teachers and other

trusted adults are also well informed on how to handle disclosures of child sexual abuse in supportive ways.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING PROTECTION OF BOYS

The advice from sex offenders about how to reduce the incidence of offending focused on secrecy and poor communication about sex as problems. Not only does the taboo or uneasiness felt by parents about discussing sex mean that paedophiles can more easily exploit the natural curiosity of children, but the reticence to acknowledge matters sexual means that reports of abuse are ignored and juvenile offenders are able to continue their activities even when adults are aware of their behaviour.

Sex offenders criticised current sex education programs as inadequate. They also criticised current child protection programs as being naive in their avoidance of frank sexual issues.

The prisoners emphasised that incarceration without therapy is very unlikely to result in behavioural change and that if society is serious about reforming sexually abusive behaviour, then re-education and therapy programs should be emphasised.

The evidence from the subjects suggests that much abuse occurs because our society chooses not to confront sexuality in a more honest and less hypocritical way. We are not sufficiently open in our education about sex and we are hypocritical to the extent that we ignore evidence of sexual abuse activity.

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

It is important to reiterate our concerns about limitations in the methodology used. 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. They were disproportionately victims of child sexual abuse by the clergy and religious leaders. Their membership of support groups also made them a distinctive group. This does not invalidate the comparisons with the prisoners, however a third group consisting of ordinary men who were not sexually abused as children would have proved useful benchmarks to compare each of the two special groups against. Such a comparison could be the focus of a subsequent study.

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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