

Reporting Childhood Sexual Abuse of Boys to Police:

Does Perpetrator Sex Matter?

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Abstract

In Canada, the lifetime prevalence of the sexual abuse of boys is estimated at one in six (Dorais, 2009; Dube, Anda, Whitfield, Brown, Felitti, Dong, & Giles, 2005; Hopper, 2010; Briere & Elliot, 2003). Despite growing awareness of male victims of childhood sexual abuse, it is estimated that police reports are made in only 4.4% of cases (Priebe & Svedin, 2008). There continues to be little understanding as to why the reporting rate is so low.

A sample of 155 male survivors of childhood sexual abuse was obtained through a community agency that provides support to this population. Data were gathered from participants' intake forms on four variables that were expected to influence police reporting: 1) the survivors' age at the time of the first incident 2) the duration of the abuse; 3) the relationship between the survivor and the perpetrator; and 4) the sex of the perpetrator. It was predicted that the perpetrator's sex would be the most powerful predictor of a male's decision to report sexual abuse because of the 'feminization of victimization' phenomenon. This is the culturally based assumption that victims are female and perpetrators are male that leads male victims' to question their own experiences and to a tendency by others to not take their victimization seriously.

The findings revealed that perpetrator sex was not a significant predictor of police reporting. Only abuse duration was associated with whether a police report had been made. Other important findings were: 1) the mean age of this sample seeking support for childhood abuse was 50 years; 2) in almost 30% of cases, abuse began before the participant was six years old; 3) 49% of participants had been abused by family members; 4) 20% of participants had been abused by female perpetrators; and 5) in 75% of cases, a police report had not been made. Further research is needed to identify the factors influencing whether sexual abuse of boys is reported to police in order to enhance support services and police response.

Chapter 1

Introduction

The 1984 Royal Commission on Sexual Offences against Children in Canada (Badgley, 1984) raised awareness of child sexual abuse, reporting that one in two females and one in three males had been victims of one or more unwanted sexual acts in their lifetime; 80% of these incidents happened while the victim was a child or youth. Not until the publication of the *Badgley Report* did government officials, Crown prosecutors, police officers, mental health professionals, and the public begin to understand the scope of child sexual abuse in Canada. Following the *Badgley Report* came the 1991 Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Response of the Newfoundland Criminal Justice System to Complaints (Hughes, 1991), which led an investigation into the sexual abuse of young boys living in the Mount Cashel Orphanage in Saint John's, Newfoundland during the mid-1970s. The *Hughes Inquiry* heightened public awareness of institutionalized sexual abuse, specifically of Canadian boys. Public awareness continued to grow following the publication of the 1996 Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (Dussault, Erasmus, Chartrand, Meekison, Robinson, & Sillett, 1996) and the Indian Residential School Truth and Reconciliation Commission (Walker, 2009), as Indigenous survivors of Canada's residential school system came forward to disclose their experiences of abuse.

Although research on child sexual abuse has increased substantially over the past three decades, male survivors have not received the same degree of research attention as their female counterparts. Data on prevalence of sexual abuse of boys remain inconclusive. Bagley, Wood, and Young (1994) conducted a community study in Calgary of 750 men between the ages of 18 and 27 years about their experiences with unwanted sexual contact before the age of 17. This

study found a prevalence rate of 15.6%. The Mental Health Supplement to the 1991 Ontario Health Survey (MacMillan, Fleming, Trocmé, Boyle, Wong, Racine, Beardslee, & Offord, 1997) collected a random sample (n = 9,953) of residents aged 15 years and older, making it Canada's largest general population survey of its time to examine physical and sexual abuse. Its authors found that the prevalence of childhood sexual abuse for males was 4.3%. Recent estimates of prevalence rates of childhood sexual abuse in Canadian males fall closer to Bagley et al.'s (1994) findings, with the most common estimate being one in six or 16% (Dorais, 2009; Dube, Anda, Whitfield, Brown, Felitti, Dong, & Giles, 2005; Hopper, 2010; Briere & Elliot, 2003).

One of the obstacles to research on male survivors is their apparent reluctance to disclose their sexual abuse histories and our inability to study those who do not come forward (Finkelhor, Hotaling, Lewis, & Smith, 1990; Sas, 1993 as cited in Goodman-Brown, Edelstein, Goodman, Jones, & Gordon, 2003; Schoen, Davis, DesRoches, & Shekhdar, 1998 as cited in Tang, Freyd, & Wang, 2007; Ullman & Filipas, 2005). Indeed, the Mental Health Supplement (MacMillan et al., 1997) revealed that the highest rate of disclosure by males of lifetime occurrence of severe childhood sexual abuse (5.8%) occurred between the ages of 45 and 64 years. The postponement of disclosure not only limits research opportunities; it can have serious long-term effects on the survivors themselves, including symptoms of poor mental health (e.g., attempted or completed suicide; substance misuse) and problems in interpersonal relationships (Easton, Renner, & O'Leary, 2013; Harrison, Fulkerson, & Beebe, 1997 as cited in Holmes & Slap, 1998).

Disclosure of child sexual abuse

“Disclosure is the process by which the suspected abuse comes to the attention of others” (Beniuk & Rimer, 2006, p. 3). Alaggia (2004) conducted a study of 24 survivors (57% females and 43% males) of childhood sexual abuse. In 42% of cases, disclosure occurred during

childhood; in the remaining 58% of cases, disclosure did not occur until adulthood. Alaggia (2004) identified six categories of disclosure. Three of these categories were previously established in the literature, and 42% of the sample disclosed in ways that fit into these three categories. ‘Purposeful’ disclosures (25% of participants) are made when the child explicitly tells another person of the abuse. ‘Elicited’ or ‘prompted’ disclosures were made by 8.3% of the sample and occur when another’s questions provoke disclosure, most often in counselling or interview settings. ‘Accidental’ disclosures also constituted 8.3% of the cases, occurring when a third party discovers the abuse (e.g., it is witnessed, or discovered through a medical examination).

Alaggia also identified three additional types of disclosure through her analysis. ‘Behavioural’ disclosures emerge from the intentional use of non-verbal cues such as temper tantrums, angry outbursts, withdrawal, and running away that survivors use to signify that something is wrong. This type of disclosure is seen when the child wants adults to detect that he or she is struggling with something. Most of the participants in Alaggia’s sample (62.5%) used behavioural means to disclose their abuse. Other participants (25%) ‘intentionally withheld disclosures’, meaning that they deliberately did not tell anyone about their abuse due to a fear of the consequences. ‘Triggered disclosures’ were made by 29% of participants, when childhood ‘forgotten’ memories were triggered by something (or someone) and a purposeful disclosure followed.

Factors influencing purposeful disclosures

Most of the literature on children’s disclosure of sexual abuse has focused on purposeful disclosures in which the child explicitly and intentionally told someone about their abuse. Priebe and Svedin (2008) investigated disclosure rates and patterns among male and female adolescents

with self-reported experiences of sexual abuse in order to examine predictors of non-disclosure. A sample of 4,339 high school seniors (2,324 girls, 2,015 boys) was examined. In this sample, 65% of girls and 23% of boys reported experiences of sexual abuse. Among these groups, the disclosure rate was 81% for girls and 69% for boys. Of the boys who had disclosed, 45% had told a peer, 17% their mother, 14% their father, 13% an adult relative or friend, 12% a sibling, 3% a professional, and 31% had told no-one. A disclosure made to a professional was more likely to result in a report to social authorities or the police (33.9%) compared to a disclosure made to someone other than a professional (4.4%). The relatively high abuse and disclosure rates found in this study may be a result of the broad definition of sexual abuse used in this study, which included non-contact abuse (i.e., exposure) and contact abuse (i.e., indecent touching), in addition to penetration (i.e., sexual intercourse). Further, 45.5% of their male sample did not indicate whether they disclosed their abuse to authorities. Finally, abuse that was not disclosed or reported by the survivor could have still been reported to the police by a third party.

The decision of a survivor to report sexual abuse is a complex one. Several factors have been found to influence children's purposeful disclosures.

Child's age. A child's decision to disclose depends on his or her cognitive level. The child must be able to process and frame an experience as traumatic, and then have the verbal capacity to articulate this to others (Alaggia, 2004; Goodman-Brown et al., 2003). Smith, Letourneau, Saunders, Kilpatrick, Resnick, & Best's (2000) sample of female adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse found that the age of the victim was negatively related to the length of time to disclosure; whereas Goodman-Brown et al. (2003) found that older children (n=218; 77% females 33% males) took longer than younger children to disclose abuse. Their findings suggested that this relationship was at least partially attributable to older children's greater fear

of negative consequences and their greater likelihood of believing that they had some responsibility for the abuse.

Survivor-perpetrator relationship. The relationship of the survivor to the offender will also influence one's decision to tell. Victims of familial abuse tend to fear the consequences of 'betraying' a family member and the family disruption their disclosure will cause (Goodman-Brown et al., 2003; Sauzier, 1989). Survivors also have identified the role of traumatic bonding, the allegiance they may feel toward their perpetrators, in their disclosure decisions (Deyoung & Lowry, 1992; Furniss, 1991).

Duration of abuse. In a study on reporting by women who were raped before age 19, Smith et al. (2000) found that single abuse incidents were more likely to be reported than multiple abuse incidents. Conversely, Arata's (1998) sample of 240 women with a history of child sexual abuse found a non-significant relationship between disclosure and duration of the abuse; however, 41% of participants disclosed when the abuse lasted for one day or less whereas only 17% disclosed when the abuse lasted more than one year. No studies have been conducted on the relationship between duration of abuse and disclosure among male survivors although given the influence that duration of abuse has on women's decision to report, it is a factor that may impact a male's decision as well.

Context of the disclosure. The context of disclosure includes factors such as the child's individual characteristics, familial dynamics, and societal norms (Alaggia, 2010). For example, if previous disclosure attempts were negatively received, might this hinder future disclosures? Further, who the survivor disclosed to, where the disclosure occurred, and what spurred the survivor's decision to speak about the abuse may play a role in whether the survivor will reveal that history. A strong message to come out of the literature regarding the context of disclosure

has been the need for a supportive relationship in order for survivors to feel safe to speak about their abuse (Sorsoli, Kia-Keating & Grossman, 2008). Denov (2003) explored the influence of supportive relationships through her meta-analysis of professional reactions to the disclosure of sexual abuse histories. Those who experienced a positive outcome following their disclosure reported the importance of the establishment of a trusting and supportive environment in order to help them disclose their abuse. However, in circumstances where a negative professional response was experienced, survivors reported that they were angry and distrustful towards their supports and began to question or diminish the reality of their own abuse histories.

Fear. Goodman-Brown et al. (2003) examined survivors' fear of negative consequences following disclosure and the time it took for both female and male survivors of sexual abuse to tell. When children believe that their disclosures will bring harm to others, they take longer to disclose than children who do not express these fears. Interestingly, fear of negative consequences towards the perpetrator or the survivor was not a significant predictor of the time it took for children to disclose. Rather, it was their fear of harm being done to the children's loved ones that affected the time it took for them to disclose their abuse.

Unfortunately, the realities of survivors' fears are often realized following their disclosures. Burgess and Hartman (1987) found that 17 adolescent boys who had disclosed extra-familial sexual abuse felt pressured, threatened, or rejected after the disclosure; experienced parental blame and punishment; and consequently regretted their disclosures. Shame and fear are significant barriers to males' disclosure (Goodman-Brown et al., 2003; Paine & Hansen, 2002), including fear of: 1) one's sexual identity being called into question; 2) fear and shame of feeling powerless against the abuse; 3) fear of family disruption; 4) feeling that they were responsible for the abuse; and 5) fear of the perpetrator's reprisals.

Factors Influencing Purposeful Disclosure: The Role of Social Exchange Theory

Social exchange theory states that “[the] individual [will] pursue...social relationships and interactions in which, based on perceptions of rewards and costs, they get the best payoffs, or the greatest reward for the least cost” (Leonard, 1996, p. 107). This theory predicts that child victims of sexual abuse will choose the option that they perceive will have the fewest costs. Therefore, children are likely to remain silent to reduce the ‘costs’ to themselves and to those they care about. But what then explains why some children do decide to disclose?

Although social exchange theory helps to explain why and how some survivors choose to tell, it is likely that the process is more fluid than this theory suggests, with ‘costs’ and ‘rewards’ calculated at each step of disclosure. It may also be that the perceived costs can be different for male and female victims. Male survivors often reveal that the greatest barrier to their disclosure was the belief that they were victimized because they did not fit into the typical masculine standard of self-sufficiency and self-protection (Finkelhor & Russel, 1984; Holmes & Slap, 1998). Boys or others reporting sexual abuse may weigh the odds of a report resulting in a charge, conviction, and subsequent protection from the perpetrator’s revenge (Leonard, 1996).

Delayed disclosure may also be a result of the perpetrator’s sex. This fear has been identified if the offender was male, if the survivor feared being labelled homosexual and/or being perceived as inviting the abuse to occur, as well as when the perpetrator was female, in which case the survivor himself, as well as others, did not perceive the event as assault but rather sexual initiation (Denov, 2003).

Of course, as Allagia’s (2004) study revealed, a minority of disclosures are actually purposeful. Fewer than half (42%) of her small sample of male and female survivors stated that their abuse was disclosed during childhood – and only 6% of those were purposeful disclosures.

The remaining 58% of survivors did not reveal their histories until adulthood. Her findings were supported by those of Sorsoli et al. (2008), who conducted a qualitative thematic analysis on the narratives of a sample of 16 men with histories of childhood sexual abuse. Of this sample, only one participant had purposefully disclosed his abuse in childhood. The authors identified three categories of barriers to males' disclosure: 1) personal (i.e., what they personally could or could not do or handle, or how they would feel if they disclosed); 2) relational (i.e., what someone else would do/say if they reported); and 3) sociocultural (i.e., abstract rules about what was appropriate and normal for men to experience, feel, and discuss). Regardless of how the abuse is disclosed, the next decision to be made is whether to report it to authorities, including the police. The child could make this decision, but it is more likely, especially in the case of young children, that others on behalf of the child make this decision (Priebe & Svedin, 2008).

From Disclosure to Reporting

The decision to reveal childhood sexual abuse to peers, parents, or professionals is a complex and difficult one. Even more difficult is the decision, whether by the victim or another person, to report the abuse to police. By reporting to police, children or others in their lives have made a clear decision that the abuse was a violation of the child's rights under the law. It is an action that requires the reporter to define the act as 'wrong' both morally and legally, and to view the act as one requiring a just response that places full responsibility on the perpetrator. The importance given by our society to reporting is reflected in the mandatory reporting laws that are part of child welfare legislation across the country. Further, in some jurisdictions, such as British Columbia, cases of severe physical or sexual abuse that are reported to child welfare must be referred to the police. Police reports allow both victims and offenders to access victim services, which could be critical to their healing, as well as potentially stopping the abuse and preventing

the perpetrator from accessing other children. To encourage police reporting, British Columbia offers the option of reporting a sex crime through a third party, such as a community-based victim service program, so that survivors remain anonymous to the police.

Despite the emphasis placed on reporting, as well as its practical and symbolic significance, Priebe and Svedins (2008) found that only 4.4% of sexual assaults of boys are reported to authorities or to police. In Canada, McDonald and Tijerino (2013) found that only 28% of their sample ($n=59$) of male survivors reported to the police or told another individual who reported it to the police; 4% were contemplating whether to report to the police at the time of the study. Those who did not report their childhood sexual abuse to police (30%) stated that they were worried they would not be believed, had feelings of shame and embarrassment, were unaware that they could report the abuse, or believed that the abuse was 'normal' at the time that it occurred.

Sexual assaults are among the crimes least likely to be reported to the police overall (McDonald, Wobick, & Graham, 2006). This low rate at which sexual abuse is reported to police has been revealed by Canada's General Social Survey (GSS) on Victimization, an incidence survey designed to produce estimates of the extent to which persons are the victims of eight criminal offences including sexual assault, which is defined as forced sexual activity, an attempt at forced sexual activity, or unwanted sexual touching, grabbing, kissing, or fondling (Perrault & Brennan, 2009). Rates of self-reported sexual assault have remained stable since 2004, with males reporting sexual assault at a rate half that of females (15 versus 34 per 1,000) (Perrault & Brennan, 2009). The Incident-Based Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Survey is an annual census of all *Criminal Code* incidents that come to the attention of the police. Data from the

2010 UCR Survey show that males accounted for 12% of sexual assault victims reported to police in 2010 (Brennan, 2012).

The reporting rate for sexual abuse of boys is low (Priebe & Svedins, 2008; Perrault & Brennan, 2009; Brennan, 2012; McDonald & Tijerino, 2013). An offender study revealed that those sexual offenders who abused the greatest number of children before their victims disclosed to authorities had the highest ratio of male to female victims (British Columbia's Ministry of Health, 1994). A key factor that might account for the low rate of police reporting of sexual abuse of boys is the consistent finding that boys are more likely to be sexually abused by female perpetrators than are girls. Finkelhor and Russell (1984) conducted a meta-analysis of retrospective self-report studies to explore the prevalence of female perpetrators of sexual abuse of children. Their analysis focused on abuse that took place when the male and female victims were prepubescent and the female perpetrator was postpubescent and at least five years older than the child. They concluded that approximately 20% of the boys' sexual contact had involved a female offender compared to 5% of the girls'. More recently, Dube et al. (2005) found that of the 17,337 men and women they studied, 16% of males and 25% of females identified a history of childhood sexual abuse; 40% of the males (compared to 6% of the females) reported being abused by females. French, Tilghman, and Malebranche (2015) explored peer-to-peer sexual victimization in an American mid-Western state with a sample of 284 adolescent males in high school and college. The results indicated that 43% had experienced sexual coercion. Of those who reported sexual coercion, 95% reported that women were the perpetrators. In a survey of 124 men in therapy who had been sexually abused as children, Mendel (1994) found that 60% had been abused by female perpetrators (46% by both males and females, 14% by females only). Among a sample of 595 male college students, Lisak, Hopper, and Song (1996) found that 11%

reported childhood sexual abuse. Of those who reported, 61% identified as being abused by a male, 28% by a female, and 11% by both male and female perpetrators. In cases of female-perpetrated abuse that are reported, action is less likely to be taken and sentencing tends to be lighter (Denov, 2001; 2004). These outcomes could play a role in the decision of the male victim – or others in the child’s life – to report the abuse to police (Finkelhor & Russell, 1984).

Sepler’s (1990) concept of the *feminization of victimization* helps to explain why this may be the case.

The Feminization of Victimization

Sepler (1990) coined this term to describe the binary gendered division of perceptions of females as ‘victims’ and males as ‘offenders’. According to Sepler (1990), the *feminization of victimization* leads to only a small percentage of male victims being recognized as such. Sepler points out that juvenile males tend to be recognized only as sexual aggressors, and their experiences of victimization are “discounted or minimized in lieu of an immediate focus on the current aggressive acts”(p. 76). In Sepler’s view, the traditional model for defining victimization and offering treatment breaks down when we are confronted with male victims.

Critical theory and an anti-oppressive perspective may further contribute to an understanding of why males are reluctant to reveal childhood sexual abuse by females. The experience of male sexual abuse is difficult to unravel, for can the oppressor be the oppressed? Freire’s (1970) concept of the oppressed-oppressor dichotomy would predict that the initial reaction of a male victim of sexual abuse would be confusion because his identity “is to be [man]; but for [him], to be [man] is to be [an] oppressor” (p. 46). This cognitive dissonance can create challenges for victims’ disclosures, for how will they hold the tension between identities of the oppressed and the oppressor? Men may minimize their abuse histories in order to reduce

this dissonance, sometimes overcompensating by identifying with the oppressor, having “no consciousness of themselves as persons or as members of an oppressed class” (Freire, 1970, p. 46).

According to gender theory, the experience of masculine socialization - “the process whereby culture conditions males to feel, think, and behave in ways consistent with the norms of masculinity” (Lisak, 1995, p. 259) - demands that men display physical strength and prowess, while inhibiting acknowledgement of pain, especially emotional expressions that include feelings of vulnerability (Lisak, 1995). Traditional sexual scripts characterize men as sexually active and aggressive; females as passive (Lisak, 1995). As a result, male identity is threatened by the disclosure of, or association with, anything that may not be socially accepted as part of this identity (such as victimization), leading to a state of personal dissonance for the male survivor. In order to reduce this dissonance, many survivors may deny or minimize their experiences of victimization.

Furthermore, the cultural expectation of female care provision can contribute to a belief that women are incapable of committing sexual offences (Denov, 2003). Ongoing contact with young children is still predominantly viewed as falling within women’s domain - the cultural views of female-child interactions as caring and maternal narrow the lens through which we define and therefore detect abusive relationships. These notions diminish the abuse perpetrated by females, labelling it as “subtle...gentle...[and] not serious” compared to abuse committed by men (Hetherington, 1999, p. 165). Such stereotypes may be reflected in offender studies comparing the sentences given to female and male perpetrators of sexual abuse. For example, in Vandiver and Teske’s (2006) comparison of 61 female and 122 male perpetrators of childhood sexual abuse, 83% of females and 50% of males received a sentence between 1 and 4 years, whereas

5% of females and 27% of males received sentences of 10 years or more. It is uncertain whether these differences in sentencing time are a reflection of the severity of abuse or the sex of the perpetrator.

This potential re-victimization by the system may contribute to the lack of reporting of sexual abuse against boys. Denov (2004) found that survivors expressed more difficulty in disclosing abuse perpetrated by females than by males, stating that it was particularly shameful to be abused by a woman. Survivors were fearful that disclosures would elicit hostile responses, disbelief, and minimization (Denov, 2003). A theme in this literature was males' embarrassment that they were not 'masculine enough' to fend off a woman (Denov, 2004; Gartner, 1999). These fears are supported by evidence; victims are more likely to be believed if the perpetrator was a male rather than a female (Bornstein et al., 2007). Cultural norms and stereotypes that diminish the seriousness of female perpetration may serve as a barrier to police reporting of boys' sexual abuse because that perpetrated by females is considered to be less serious and less of a crime than that perpetrated by males (Denov, 2001; 2004; Goodman-Brown et al., 2003; Sorsoli et al., 2008; Vandiver & Teske, 2006).

Limitations of the Literature

Limitations of the existing literature influence our understanding of male survivors of sexual abuse and the factors that influence both disclosure and reporting. Research on male survivors is predominantly qualitative and utilizes small samples (Sorsoli et al., 2008; Alaggia, 2004), limiting its external validity. When predictors of disclosure and reporting are examined, survivor samples are predominately female (Smith et al., 2000; Goodman-Brown et al., 2003; Arata, 1998) and cannot be generalized to males. Further, prevalence rates depend on how studies define and measure sexual abuse, and reporting rates are affected by low response rates.

Purpose of the Present Study

The purpose of the present study was to add to our understanding of the factors that influence reporting of sexual abuse of boys to police. Previous research has suggested that the age of a child at the time of the abuse, the survivor-perpetrator relationship, the duration of the abuse, context of the disclosure, and fear each play a role in disclosure. But little is known about why boys' abuse is so unlikely to be reported to police. Social exchange theory would predict that the victim, or others considering a police report, would weigh each of the above variables. Given the extremely low rate of reporting of boys' sexual abuse, especially when the perpetrator is female, the sex of the perpetrator may be the primary factor in the decision to report to police.

It was hypothesized that the cultural stereotype of the *feminization of victimization* is the primary factor influencing the reporting to police of sexual abuse of boys. If this is the case, the abuse of boys by female perpetrators would be less likely to be reported to the police than the abuse of boys by male perpetrators.

In the present study, an examination was made of the relative contributions of four variables to police reporting of boys' sexual abuse: 1) the survivor's age at the time of the first incident; 2) the duration of the abuse; 3) the relationship between the survivor and the perpetrator; and 4) the sex of the perpetrator. It was predicted that the perpetrator's sex will be the most powerful predictor of a male's decision to report sexual abuse because of its strong cultural underpinnings and its powerful implications for the survivor's fundamental identity.

Chapter II

Method

Sample

I obtained my sample from British Columbia's Society for Male Survivors of Sexual Abuse (BCSMSSA), a non-profit society offering survivors a range of services including individual and group therapy, support groups, educational outreach, and victim services programs. Over the past 25 years, approximately 9,000 boys and men have sought services from BCSMSSA. Clients are predominantly male, although support to female partners or family members of male survivors can be offered. Support is also provided to transgender males and females. BCSMSSA has seen boys as young as 8 years old; however the majority of their clientele are over the age of 19 and are victims of sexual abuse or assault, gay bashing, or spousal assault. The participants who constitute this study's sample are open files of boys and men who have sought services for childhood sexual abuse occurring prior to age 19. Only those cases in which there was a single perpetrator were included in this study in order to maximize the homogeneity of the sample.

To receive services from BCSMSSA the participants have, by definition, disclosed their histories of abuse to the service agency. However, not all cases will have been reported to the police. Clients seeking support from BCSMSSA complete an intake form (Appendix A), which asks for information regarding their abuse histories. No files in this sample had completed more than one intake form, meaning that client files had not been closed and then re-opened for services. Files were only included in the sample if the client had indicated whether a report had been made to police. The final sample for the study comprised 115 clients.

Ethical Considerations

Clients' blanket consent to have their data used in research was obtained by employees of BCSMSSA during the intake process. As part of that process, clients were explicitly informed that their identities would not be shared with researchers and that services would be guaranteed whether or not they agreed to allow their data to be used in research.

Before I accessed any intake forms to this specific study, BCSMSSA's Executive Director gave all current clients who met the inclusion criteria a letter describing the study, identifying the measures that would be taken to ensure participants' confidentiality and anonymity, and inviting clients' consent to participate. The intake forms of those clients who provided consent were then accessed. Of the 200 clients who consented to participate, 85 had not indicated on their intake forms whether a report had been made to the police, resulting in the final sample size ($n = 115$).

I carried out all data coding at the BCSMSSA office in order to protect participants' privacy. Clients' data were recorded by their client numbers, which had been assigned at intake. No names appeared on their intake forms.

Measures

Participants' responses to the "Details of the Abuse" portion of the intake form constitute the data used in this study. Only men who experienced childhood sexual abuse (i.e., occurring before they turned 19 years) were included.

Demographic variables. The intake forms provided demographic information on the sample, specifically employment status, education level and sexual orientation. Employment status, education level, and sexual orientation were open-ended questions. The age of the survivor at intake was determined by subtracting the client's date of birth from the date of intake. These variables were coded so that a description of the sample could be provided.

Outcome variable: Report to police. On the intake form, clients indicated whether their abuse was reported to the police. Their response to this question constituted the outcome variable, which was coded 0 (No) or 1 (Yes).

Predictor variable 1: Age at time of abuse. The intake form asks clients to indicate their age at the time of the first incident, as well as their age when the abuse ended. The client's age when the abuse event began was entered as a continuous variable in the univariate analysis and later recoded into four categories for the bivariate analysis. These categories reflected the main developmental stages: 1) infancy and early childhood (5 years and younger); 2) middle childhood (6 to 9 years); late childhood and early adolescence (10 to 14 years); and adolescence (15 to 18 years).

Predictor variable 2: Duration of the abuse. The client's age when the abuse began (in years) was subtracted from the survivor's age at the time the abuse event ended (in years). The difference was entered as a continuous variable in the univariate analysis and later classified into four categories of duration for the bivariate analysis: 0 (less than 1 year); 1(1 year); 2(2 – 3 years); and 3(4 years and more).

Predictor variable 3: Participant-perpetrator relationship. For each abuse event, the intake form records the identity of the perpetrator and the perpetrator's relationship to the client. As this question was open-ended, I coded the responses into the following categories: 0 = biological father; 1 = step-father; 2 = biological mother; 3 = step-mother; 4 = biological brother; 5 = step sibling; 6 = stranger; 7 = family; 8 = uncle; 9 = aunt; 10 = teacher; 11 = babysitter ; 12 = coach; 13 = clergy member; 14 = other; 15 neighbour; 16 = acquaintance; 17 = grandfather; 18 = family friend; 20 = inmate; 21 = cousin; 22 = police officer/law enforcement; 23 = nurse/doctor; 24 = grandmother; 25 = foster brother; 26 = biological sister; 27 = peers; and 28 = social worker.

The 28 categories were reduced into three for the bivariate analysis: 0 (professional/semi-professionals); 1 (biological and non-biological family); and 2 (strangers/acquaintances).

Predictor variable 4: Perpetrator sex. The intake form records the sex of the perpetrator for each abuse event, which I coded as 0 (female) or 1 (male). No perpetrators were identified as transsexual so this variable was binary.

Analysis

First, frequencies were obtained on the sample's demographic characteristics (i.e., age at the time of intake, employment status, education level, and sexual orientation) in order to provide a description of the sample. Second, univariate descriptive statistics were obtained on the outcome, predictor and control variables. Third, the bivariate relationships between each predictor variable and the outcome variable (whether a police report had been made) were examined through t-tests on the interval-level predictor variables (age at time of abuse, duration of abuse) and chi-square tests on the nominal-level predictor variables (participant-perpetrator relationship, sex of perpetrator). Bivariate relationships among the predictors were also examined to explore any potential interactions among them. Finally, any predictor variables that were significantly associated with the outcome variable were entered into a logistic regression equation to examine the strength of their impact on the outcome variable.

Summary

The purpose of the present study was to explore the relationship between four variables identified in the literature as contributors to the decision to report childhood sexual abuse to the police: 1) the child's age at the time of the abuse; 2) the duration of the abuse; 3) the relationship between the child and the perpetrator; and 4) the sex of the perpetrator. It was hypothesized that the perpetrator's sex would be the most influential predictor of police reporting, due to the

feminization of victimization phenomenon. Data were collected from intake completed by clients seeking services from BCSMSSA. Only male survivors of childhood sexual abuse who experienced one abuse event involving one perpetrator before the age of 19 were included.

Chapter III

Results

Univariate Descriptive Statistics

Demographic variables. Table 1 presents the sample's demographic characteristics. Participants' mean age at the time of intake was 50 years. Of those who indicated their employment status, more than 60% were employed at least part-time. Of those who provided their education levels, 56.4% had completed high school or less; 22.9% had some college or university education; and 21.9% had completed a diploma or degree. Approximately two-thirds of the participants who identified their sexual orientation self-identified as heterosexual.

Reports to the police. In most cases (75%), a police report had not been made. In the remaining 25% of cases, a police report had been made prior to the participant's intake at BCSMSSA.

Participants' age when sexual abuse began. The age at which participants' sexual abuse began ranged from 0 to 18. The mean age was 9 years ($SD = 4.67$).

Duration of abuse. The duration of participants' abuse ranged from less than 1 year to 18 years. Table 2 presents the distribution of abuse duration across the sample. Approximately half the sample (46%) had been abused for two years or less; about one-third (30%) had been abused for four years or more.

Participant-perpetrator relationship. As Table 3 shows, participants were abused by a wide range of perpetrators. Approximately one-half (49.6%) were abused by family members, either biological (mother, father; brother; uncle; aunt; grandfather; cousin; grandmother; sister)

Table 1

Sample demographics of age, employment, education, and sexual orientation.

<u>Age range (n=113)</u>	<u>%(n)</u>
30 – 39	8.0(9)
40 – 49	41.6(47)
50 – 59	34.5(39)
60+	15.9(18)
<u>Employment (n=101)</u>	<u>%(n)</u>
Yes	58.4(59)
No	36.6(37)
Part-time	5.0(5)
<u>Education (n=32)</u>	<u>%(n)</u>
Grade school (completed gr. 8)	6.3(2)
Some high school	18.8(6)
Completed high school (gr. 12)	31.3(10)
Some college	9.4(3)
Completed college	6.3(2)
Some university	12.5(4)
Completed university	15.6(5)
<u>Sexual orientation (n=44)</u>	<u>%(n)</u>
Homosexual	18.2(8)
Heterosexual	68.2(30)
Bisexual	13.6(6)

Table 2

Sample duration of childhood sexual abuse (n=115)

<u>Years</u>	<u>%(n)</u>
0	22.6(26)
1	22.6(26)
2	14.8(17)
3	8.7(10)
4	4.3(5)
5	7.0(8)
6	0.9(1)
7	6.1(7)
8	1.7(2)
9	1.7(2)
10	0.0(0)
11	1.7(2)
12	0.9(1)
13	0.9(1)
14	0.9(1)
15	0.0(0)
16	1.7(2)
17	0.9(1)
18	0.9(1)

Table 3

Participant-perpetrator relationship in the sample (n=115)

<u>Biological Family</u>	<u>%(n)</u>
Father	9.6(11)
Mother	5.2(6)
Brother	7.8(9)
Sister	3.5(4)
Grandfather	3.5(4)
Grandmother	0.9(1)
Uncle	5.2(6)
Cousin	1.7(2)
Family	4.3(5)
<i>Total</i>	<i>41.7(48)</i>
<u>Non-biological Family</u>	<u>%(n)</u>
Step-father	6.1(7)
Foster brother	1.7(2)
<i>Total</i>	<i>7.8(9)</i>
<u>Professional/Semi</u>	<u>%(n)</u>
Teacher	7.0(8)
Babysitter	6.1(7)
Clergy member	1.7(2)
Police officer	4.3(5)
Nurse/doctor	1.7(2)
Social worker	0.9(1)
<i>Total</i>	<i>21.7(25)</i>
<u>Stranger/Acquaintance</u>	<u>%(n)</u>
Stranger	6.1(7)
Neighbour	10.4(12)
Acquaintance	2.6(3)
Family friend	7.8(9)
Inmate	0.9(1)
Peer	0.9(1)
<i>Total</i>	<i>28.7(33)</i>

or non-biological (step-father; step-mother; step-sibling; and foster-brother). Of perpetrators who were family members, 84.2% were biologically related to the participant. One-third of participants were abused by an acquaintance or stranger (neighbours, family friends, inmates, peers, other acquaintances). In approximately one-fifth of cases, the perpetrator was in a professional or semi-professional role (teacher, babysitter, coach, clergy, police officer/law enforcement, nurse, doctor, social worker).

Perpetrator sex. Most (80.9%) of the participants had been abused by a male perpetrator.

Bivariate Analyses

Participant age when abuse began and police reporting. A t-test for independent groups was conducted to determine whether the mean age at which abuse began differed according to whether the abuse was reported to police. This difference was significant ($t = -2.205$, p (2-tailed) = .030). Among those cases where the abuse was reported to police, the mean age at which the abuse began was 9.6 years. Among participants whose abuse was not reported to police, the mean age at which the abuse began was 7.7 years. The variances were equal between the group whose abuse was reported to police ($SD = 4.1$) and the group whose abuse was not reported to police ($SD = 3.8$; $F = .476$, $p = .492$).

In order to examine whether police reporting was associated with the child's developmental level, I collapsed child age into the following categories: infancy and early childhood (5 years and younger); middle childhood (6 to 9 years); late childhood and early adolescence (10 to 14 years); and adolescence (15 to 18 years). As Table 4 shows, abuse that

Table 4

Crosstabulation and test of significance of age when abuse began by whether the abuse was reported to police (n=100; alpha = .05)

<u>Participant age when abuse began (in years)</u>	<u>Abuse reported to police</u>		<u>χ^2</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>p(2-tailed)</u>
	<u>No</u>	<u>Yes</u>			
	<u>%(n)</u>	<u>%(n)</u>	3.780	3	.286
5 and younger	31.8(17)	20.0(5)			
6 – 9	35.3(30)	28.0(7)			
10 - 14	18.8(16)	36.0(9)			
15 - 18	14.1(12)	16.0(4)			
<i>Total</i>	100.0 (75)	100.0(25)			

began prior to age 1 was more likely to go unreported than to be reported; 67.1% of unreported cases involved children in the two youngest age groups. When the abuse began at age 10 or later, it was more likely to be reported than unreported; 52.0% of reported cases involved children in the two oldest age groups. Abuse that began between the ages 6 and 9 was least likely to be reported, while abuse that began between the ages of 10 and 14 was most likely to be reported. However, the association between the child's age when abuse started and police reporting was not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 3.780$, $df = 3$, p (2-tailed) = .286).

Duration of abuse and police reporting. Given that there were five or fewer participants in 13 of the 19 duration categories, I collapsed this variable into four categories that divided the sample into approximately equal groups: 1) less than one year (23%); 2) one year of abuse (23%); 3) two to three years of abuse (24%); and 4) four years or more (30%). A chi-square test on the collapsed variable revealed a significant association between abuse duration and police reporting ($\chi^2 = 9.289$, $df = 3$, p (2-tailed) = .026). As Table 5 shows, abuse that continued for four years or more was least likely to be reported whereas abuse of durations of less than one year or between 2 and 3 years was most likely to be reported.

Participant-perpetrator relationship and police reporting. Given that the number of perpetrators who were non-biological family members was small ($n = 9$), I collapsed biological ($n = 48$) and non-biological ($n = 9$) family into a familial variable. Therefore, the three participant-perpetrator relationship categories were: 1) familial (non-biological and biological); 2) professional/semi-professional; and 3) acquaintance/stranger. The association between this variable and police reporting was non-significant ($\chi^2 = 1.861$, $df = 2$, p (2-tailed) = .394).

Table 5

Crosstabulation and test of significance of abuse duration by whether the abuse was reported to police (n=105; alpha = .05)

<u>Duration of abuse (in years)</u>	<u>Abuse reported to police</u>		χ^2	<u>df</u>	<u>p(2-tailed)</u>
	<u>No</u> <u>%(n)</u>	<u>Yes</u> <u>%(n)</u>			
Less than 1	18.6(16)	34.5(10)	9.289	3	.026
1 year	27.9(24)	6.9(2)			
2 to 3 years	19.8(17)	34.5(10)			
4 years or more	33.7(19)	24.1(7)			
Total	100.0(76)	100.0(29)			

Perpetrator sex and police reporting. Child sexual abuse perpetrated by males was not reported to police in 72.0% of cases. Child sexual abuse perpetrated by females was not reported to police in 86.4% of cases. The association between perpetrator sex and police reporting was not significant ($\chi^2 = 1.935$; $df = 1$, p (1-tailed) = .130).

Participant age when abuse began and perpetrator sex. In the present sample, 80.0% of participants were abused by males and 20.0% were abused by females. The mean age at which the abuse began was 8.7 years ($SD = 4.7$) when the perpetrator was male. The mean age at which the abuse began was 8.1 years ($SD = 4.7$) when the perpetrator was female. A t-test based on the assumption of equal variances ($F = .004$; $p = .949$) revealed that the mean age at which the abuse began did not differ by perpetrator sex ($t = .512$; p (2-tailed) = .609).

Duration of abuse and perpetrator sex. The mean abuse duration was 5.2 years in the case of male perpetrators and 3.9 years in the case of female perpetrators. Despite the large difference between the groups' standard deviations (SD for male perpetrators = 14.4; SD for female perpetrators = 5.5), the groups' variances did not differ significantly ($F = .309$; $p = .580$). A t-test based on the assumption of equal variances revealed that abuse duration did not differ by perpetrator sex ($t = .513$; p (2-tailed) = .612). The association between the four categories of abuse duration and the sex of the perpetrator was also not significant ($\chi^2 = 26.808$; $p = .061$).

Participant-perpetrator relationship and perpetrator sex. The relationship between the perpetrator's sex and his or her relationship to the participant was significant ($\chi^2 = 10.239$, $df = 2$, p (2-tailed) = .006). As Table 6 shows, both male and female perpetrators were most likely to be family members; female perpetrators were more likely than male perpetrators to be in

Table 6

Crosstabulation and test of significance of the survivor-perpetrator relationship by perpetrator sex (n = 113; alpha = .05)

<u>Relationship of perpetrator to participant</u>	<u>Perpetrator Sex</u>		χ^2	df	<u>p(2-tailed)</u>
	<u>Male</u> <u>%(n)</u>	<u>Female</u> <u>%(n)</u>			
Family (biological and non-biological)	47.3(43)	54.5(12)	10.239	2	.006
Professional/semi-professional	17.6(16)	40.9(9)			
Acquaintance/stranger	35.2(32)	4.5(1)			
<i>Totals</i>	100.0(91)	100.0(22)			

professional or semi-professional roles; and male perpetrators were more likely than female perpetrators to be acquaintances or strangers to the child.

Test of the Hypothesis

The only predictor variable found to be significantly associated with police reporting was abuse duration. Therefore, this predictor was entered into a logistic regression equation to determine whether it affected the odds of police reporting. Duration of less than one year was set as the reference category. As Table 7 shows, abuse occurring for one year was significantly less likely to be reported than abuse occurring for less than one year ($df = 1$; $p = .016$; $\text{Exp}(\beta) = .133$).

Perpetrator sex was not associated with police reporting in the bivariate analysis, but it was associated with participant-perpetrator relationship. Therefore, it is possible that these two variables interact to predict police reporting. To investigate this possibility, two logistic regression analyses were conducted – one for the subsample in which the perpetrator was male and the other for the subsample in which the perpetrator was female. Participant-perpetrator relationship was entered as the predictor variable. As Table 8 and 9 show, the participant-perpetrator relationship did not predict reporting regardless of whether the perpetrator was male or female.

Table 7

Results of logistic regression predicting police reporting from abuse duration (n = 105; alpha = .05)

Variables in the equation	β	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(β)
Less than 1 (reference)			8.127	3	.043	
1 year	-2.015	.839	5.765	1	.016	.133
2 to 3 years	-.061	.567	.011	1	.915	.941
4 years or more	-.951	.583	2.663	1	.103	.386
Constant	-.470	.403	1.359	1	.244	.625

Table 8

Results of logistic regression predicting police reporting from male perpetrator-participant relationships (n = 93; alpha = .05)

Variables in the equation	β	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(β)
Professional/Semi- (reference)			4.138	2	.126	
Family (bio and non-bio)	-1.194	.617	3.748	1	.053	.303
Stranger/Acquaintance	-1.099	.645	2.897	1	.089	.333
Constant	.000	.500	.0001	1	1.000	1.000

Table 9

Results of logistic regression predicting police reporting from female perpetrator-participant relationships (n = 22; alpha = .05)

Variables in the equation	β	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(β)
Professional/Semi- (reference)			.128	2	.938	1.600
Family (bio and non-bio)	.470	1.313	.128	1	.720	.000
Stranger/Acquaintance	-19.123	40192.970	.000	1	1.000	.125
Constant	-2.079	1.061	3.844	1	.050	

Chapter IV

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore whether three variables previously identified in the literature as contributors to children's disclosures of sexual abuse (age when the abuse started, abuse duration, survivor-perpetrator relationship) also predict whether boys' sexual abuse is reported to police, and whether the sex of the perpetrator contributes to police reporting. I had hypothesized that the perpetrator's sex would be the most powerful predictor of whether sexual abuse of boys was reported to police due to what Sepler (1990) called the *feminization of victimization*: a belief that genders the terms 'victim' as female and 'offender' as male. Based on this notion and social exchange theory, these cultural meanings were expected to result in a greater 'cost' to males if the offender was female than if the offender was male. This influence of cultural socialization over the male narrative was expected to be the primary factor affecting whether a police report would be made. However, this study revealed that the sex of the perpetrator did not predict whether the abuse was reported to police.

This finding suggests that the *feminization of victimization* concept does not fully explain police reporting in cases of male survivors of childhood sexual abuse; especially when. Perhaps it is the experience of sexual abuse itself, irrespective of the perpetrator's sex, which is the primary threat to masculinity. The 'rewards' associated with reporting (i.e., charging and sentencing of the perpetrator) might not outweigh the 'cost' of making one's victimization public. Others in a position to report might not take males' sexual abuse seriously, regardless of the perpetrator's sex - or they may view reporting as potentially humiliating to the survivor, rather than healing. An alternative explanation of the failure of this study to find an effect of perpetrator sex on police reporting is that the proportion of cases involving female perpetrators was relatively small (20%; $n = 23$), making an effect difficult to detect.

Although the original hypothesis was not supported, some useful findings did emerge from this study. First, participants whose abuse was reported to police were older, on average, than those whose abuse was not reported to police. This finding is consistent with those of Smith et al. (2000) who found that the older the child at the time of abuse, the shorter the time to disclosure. However, in the present study, the association between participant age when the abuse began and police reporting became non-significant when age was collapsed into categories reflecting developmental stages (infancy/early childhood, middle childhood, late childhood/early adolescence, adolescence). This inconsistency in the present findings is surprising and may reflect the relatively small ($n = 16$) group of participants whose abuse began in adolescence. Perhaps with a larger sample in this age group, the relationship between child age and police reporting would become clarified.

Second, a significant association was found between the duration of abuse and police reporting. Goodman-Brown et al. (2003) found that abuse of shorter duration was more likely to be reported. In the present study, the relationship found was more complex: abuse that occurred for less than one year or between two and three years was most likely to be reported; almost 70% of reported abuse fell into these duration categories. Abuse that occurred for one year was significantly less likely to be reported than abuse occurring for less than one year; only 6.9% of abuse in this duration category was reported. However, the relationship between abuse duration and police reporting might be confounded by the reporting itself, as abuse that is reported is more likely to end than abuse that is not reported. It might also be the case that abuse duration is confounded by the number of abuse incidents that occurred over a given period of time (Smith et al., 2000). Alternatively, it may be the case that duration interacts with other variables that increase or decrease the likelihood of reporting, such as fear of the repercussions.

Third, the perpetrator-child relationship was not associated with whether abuse was reported to the police. This finding differs from that of previous research revealing that children abused by family members were less likely to report than those abused by others due to their anxiety about betrayal (Goodman-Brown et al., 2003). However, Table 8 does indicate that abuse of boys by male family members or by strangers/acquaintances were almost 70% less likely than that perpetrated by professionals/semi-professionals. Boys might be reluctant to disclose familial abuse due to a fear of family separation following disclosure (Goodman-Brown et al., 2003; Sauzier, 1989). The greater likelihood of reporting of abuse perpetrated by professionals semi-professionals relationships might be due to the greater likelihood that these perpetrators are more likely to be discovered by a third-party (Alaggia, 2004). A challenge in interpreting the results of the present study is that information is not available on who made the police report - the survivor or someone else. The lack of this important piece of information makes it difficult to draw conclusions about the meaning of this finding. Additionally, the relatively small sample size ($n=93$) may also impact the significant of this relationship.

Fourth, the perpetrator-child relationship was significantly associated with the sex of the perpetrator. More than half of female perpetrators (54.5%) were in a familial relationship with the child. This proportion exceeds that of male perpetrators who were family members (47.3%). Further, female perpetrators were more likely than male perpetrators to be in a professional/semi-professional relationship with the child (40.9% of females, 17.6% of males). Of female perpetrators in this category, the majority were babysitters (22.7%), teachers (9.1%), or a nurse/doctor (9.1%). In comparison, the majority of male perpetrators were teachers (6.5%) and police officers/law enforcement (5.4%). Interestingly, three of the five participants who were abused by police officers and law enforcement had their abuse reported to the police. The fact

that perpetrators in familial and professional/semi-professional relationships to the child were more likely to be female than male contradicts the cultural stereotype of women as carers; a stereotype that likely restricts the public from perceiving that women are capable of committing sexual offences (Denov, 2003). Perpetrators who were strangers to or acquaintance of the child were more likely to be male; a finding that echoes others in the literature (Hamby, Finkelhor, & Turner, 2015; Faller, 1989; Holmes & Slap, 1998).

Fifth, the mean age of survivors at the time of intake, whether they reported to the police ($\bar{x} = 48.8$; $SD=7.6$) or not ($\bar{x} = 50.5$; $SD=8.6$) were similar. This means that, on average, survivors were abused in the 1970s and 1980s, before and just after the release of the *Badgley Report*. This timing might have influenced whether the abuse of participants was reported.

A final surprising finding was that one-third of the sample identified as homosexual/bisexual (32%; $n = 14$). Although the response rate to this question was low ($n = 44$), this is still a much higher proportion than would be found in the general population (3%; Statistics Canada, 2015). It may be that the geographic location of the BCSMSSA in a predominantly gay neighbourhood in Vancouver has heightened awareness of its services in the gay and bisexual communities.

Questions Raised by this Study

The main outcome of this research is that it raised more questions than it answered. First, intake form provided limited information about the perpetrator-participant relationship. For example, relationships with a neighbour were classified into the ‘stranger/acquaintance’ category, yet some relationships among neighbours could be at least as close as family relationships. Second, only one participant identified a peer as the perpetrator, whereas a self-report study of a community sample found the rate of sexual coercion by peers to be as high as

43% (French, Tilghman, and Malebranche, 2015). The present finding might suggest that boys who are sexually coerced by peers are particularly unlikely to seek services, for reasons that cannot be not illuminated by these data.

Third, 18% of the sample was over the age of 60 at the time of intake. Does this suggest that the transition to the senior years or to retirement creates a space for reflection and time to seek support? This finding was surprising and merits further study. Fourth, police reporting might not have the same meaning across participants. While it might symbolize movement toward justice from the perspective of law enforcement, it might not be viewed this way by survivors. For example, a boy might be deeply affected emotionally by an abuse experience, but not consider it to merit police involvement. Finally, even if a significant relationship between sex of the perpetrator and police reporting had been found, would the *feminization of victimization* fully explain this relationship or could other variables influence this association? All of these questions require qualitative research to be conducted to deepen our understanding of the complex meanings of the variables explored in the present study.

Methodological Limitations

This study has several methodological limitations that restrict the generalizability of its findings. First, the validity of the reports to police were impossible to assess, as this would require triangulation with other data, such as victim services or police records. However, the value of accessing those databases would need to be weighed against the importance of maintaining participants' anonymity.

Second, there was a lack of a standardized definition of 'childhood sexual abuse'. This term could have different meanings for different individuals and it represents a wide range of potential acts. Therefore, it is difficult to draw comparisons with other studies on childhood

sexual abuse. Furthermore, ambiguity in perpetrator-child relationships could have affected the findings as it might have led to inaccurate coding. For example, some individuals might call a close friend of the family an 'uncle'. These perpetrators would have been coded as 'biological family,' although they are actually friends.

Third, clinical samples may differ from the general population of male survivors. The present sample comprised survivors who had already disclosed their abuse history to a professional through purposeful self-referral to the BCSMSSA. A previous study found that survivors who have disclosed sexual abuse to a professional were more likely to have this abuse reported to authorities (Priebe & Svedin, 2008), although that study did not specify whether the report occurred before or after disclosure to the professional.

Fourth, the use of secondary data restricts the researcher's control over what data are collected and how they are collected. For example, the skills of an intake worker could influence the level of detail a survivor chooses to share on the intake form. In addition, the intake forms ask whether the client's abuse was reported to the police but does not ask who made this report. The absence of this detail makes interpretation of the present findings difficult.

Fifth, abuse duration is founded by police reporting, as once the abuse is reported it becomes more likely that the abuse will end. Consequently, the significant relationship found between abuse duration and police reporting might be spurious. This relationship could be understood further by including information about who made the police report, the date when the police report was made, and the dates (not ages) when the abuse began and ended.

Finally, although the present sample was relatively large for studies on male survivors of sexual abuse, it was small for detecting statistically significant relationships – particularly

because the subgroup of participants who had been abused by females was quite small ($n=23$), as was the proportion of cases that had been reported to the police ($n=29$).

Implications of the Present Findings

The present findings can contribute to the dialogue on supporting male survivors of childhood sexual abuse. The Ontario Mental Health Supplement (MacMillan et al., 1997) found that the most common age for disclosure was between 45 and 64 years. In the present study, the mean age of participants at the time of intake at BCMSSA was 50 and in 75% of cases, their abuse had not been previously reported to police. While we cannot know how many of those arriving at the agency had previously disclosed their abuse to anyone, it is clear that male survivors of childhood sexual abuse tend to seek assistance much later in life. Several studies have documented the negative outcomes associated with delayed disclosure (Easton, Renner, & O'Leary, 2013; Harrison, Fulkerson, & Beebe, 1997 as seen in Holmes & Slap, 1998). Together, these findings indicate that policies and programs must be enhanced to encourage earlier disclosure and reporting.

Participants whose abuse was reported to police were older than those whose abuse was not reported. Of those cases that were reported, less than 20% involved children aged five and younger. This finding may indicate that for children under the age of five, reporting is related to the child's development, language and cognitive capacity to view an experience as abusive. Further research is needed to explore the significance between these variables in order to appropriately inform preventative strategies.

Further knowledge of the reporting process could be obtained if agencies included a question regarding who made the police report (if one was made). It also would be helpful to ask

for information on whether clients had previously disclosed their abuse and, if so, at what age and to whom. These questions would enable more precise research on disclosure and reporting.

Finally, education on male survivors of childhood sexual abuse should be required learning for front-line workers with the aim of increasing their understanding of the prevalence of male sexual victimization; the emotional, physical, spiritual, and mental sequelae of abuse; and the beliefs held among the public that can facilitate or impede reporting of crimes against children.

Directions for Future Research

As discussed, a number of questions were raised by the findings of this study that merit further investigation. First, the duration of abuse appears to significantly contribute to reporting decisions, but it is unclear why abuse lasting for one year is least likely to be reported. It may be the case that abuse duration is confounded by the number of abusive incidents that occur during a given period. It would be useful for investigators to explore this question to shed additional light on the contribution of abuse duration to police reporting.

Second, the disclosure histories of the participants in this study are unknown, so no conclusions can be drawn about the role of their disclosure experiences in police reporting. We do not know, for example, whether early disclosure to a trusted adult facilitated police reporting. Increased knowledge of the disclosure-reporting process would provide useful information to support providers, police and Crown attorneys.

Third, further exploration of the role of the child's age in police reporting is needed. In this study, the role of child age in reporting seemed to depend on whether child age was treated as an interval- or ordinal-level variable. Therefore, further research is needed to determine why this was the case and which finding was a statistical artifact.

Fourth, research on how decisions are made by individuals (either the survivor or someone else) to make police reports would be very useful. Qualitative research exploring the decision-making process and to understand the feminization of victimization would provide information that could inform victim services programming and police responses to reports of childhood sexual abuse. Finally, replication of the present study with a larger sample of survivors who were abused by female perpetrators would provide a stronger test of the hypothesis.

Conclusion

Perhaps the two most important findings of this study are that: 1) after thirty years of research, there is still little known regarding male survivors of childhood sexual abuse; and 2) in 75% of cases, participants' childhood sexual abuse had not been reported to police. This finding raises the question of how many male survivors in the general population have not had their experiences defined as criminal violations or had the support and protection of law enforcement; unfortunately, neither the literature nor this study provides a clear answer. Perhaps the abuse experience is too complex, multi-faceted and individualized to be captured by quantitative research. Regardless, it is a matter of urgency that we gain a clearer understanding of why this is the case so that action can be taken to ensure children's rights to protection are upheld.

**Appendix A
Therapy Intake Form**

Client contact and personal information

Name _____ Client # _____

Address _____

Phone () _____ () _____

Messages _____ D.O.B. _____ Email: _____

Services requested:

Victim services

Individual therapy

Group therapy

Other _____

Additional information

Intake date _____ Intake with _____

Therapist _____

Referred by: _____

In treatment with other health professionals? _____

Whom? _____

Medication 1: _____ For: _____

Medication 1: _____ For: _____

Pay Code _____ Compensation source _____ # _____

Employed: _____ If No, source of income _____

Highest level of education: _____

Sexual orientation: _____

Details of abuse

Offended by:

1. _____ From age _____ To age _____ Reported _____

2. _____ From age _____ To age _____ Reported _____

3. _____ From age _____ To age _____ Reported _____

4. _____ From age _____ To age _____ Reported _____

Alcoholic: Father _____ Mother _____ Client _____ Other _____

Drug Abuse: Father _____ Mother _____ Client _____ Other _____

Violent: Father _____ Mother _____ Client _____ Other _____

Comments _____

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