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Characteristics of Abused and Nonabused Adolescent Sexual Offenders

Charlayne L. Cooper, M.S.N.,^{1,2} William D. Murphy, Ph.D.,¹ and Mary R. Haynes, M.A.¹

The current study was designed to provide further information on characteristics of adolescent sexual offenders who have and have not experienced abuse. The subjects were approximately 300 adolescent offenders seen in a clinical treatment program. Abused and nonabused adolescent offenders were compared on a number of offense-specific variables and standardized instruments including the MMPI, Interpersonal Behavior Survey, Family Adaptation and Cohesion Evaluation Scale, and Self-Reported Delinquent Behavior Checklist. Results indicated that those offenders who were sexually abused had an earlier onset of their offending, had more victims, were likely to abuse both males and females, and tended to show more psychopathology and interpersonal problems, although no differences were found in terms of self-reported delinquent behavior or family functioning. The data are discussed in terms of their possible etiological significance and clinical implications.

KEY WORDS: adolescent offenders; prediction of violence; sexual offending; victims of sexual abuse.

INTRODUCTION

Over the last 20 years, increased clinical and research attention has been paid to the problem of juvenile sexual offenders (Barbaree, Hudson, & Seto, 1993). The field has a clearer understanding of the scope of the problem with juvenile offending (Murphy, Haynes, & Page, 1992) and ap-

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pears to recognize the heterogeneity of this group. However, there continue to be limited data on the etiology of juvenile sexual offending (Ryan, 1991).

A frequently proposed causative factor is a history of abuse in the juvenile offender (Araji & Finkelhor, 1986; Ryan, 1989). As proposed by Araji and Finkelhor, abuse history would be consistent with a number of more general theories such as conditioning of arousal, modeling, or identification with the aggressor. Although being a victim as a causative factor in sexual offending is intuitively appealing, empirical studies of the actual incidence of abuse in the histories of offenders suggest that abuse in offenders is much lower than popularly assumed.

In the adult sexual offender area, a review of all studies reporting histories of sexual abuse (Hanson & Slater, 1988) indicates wide variations in reported rates, ranging from 0% to 67%, with the average being approximately 28%. They did find higher rates of abuse for those offenders who victimized males (34.6%) versus those who selected female victims (18.2%). Those offenders who abused both male and female victims showed the highest rates of personal abuse (66.7%); however, this was based on only two studies with only 45 subjects. There were no differences between extrafamilial and incest cases, and as would be expected, rates of personal abuse were higher in those studies which used broader definitions of abuse (approximately 33%) than in those which used more narrow definitions (23%). In a reanalysis of these data, Hanson (1991) also clearly showed that as the sample size of studies increased, therefore presumably providing a more reliable estimate of population parameters, rates of reported abuse stabilized between 20% and 30%. Although this rate is higher than the rates of 10% to 16% reported for general community samples (Finkelhor, 1990; Peters, Wyatt, & Finkelhor, 1986), it also suggests that most offenders are not abused.

Similar variability between studies also occurs in studies investigating juvenile offenders (Murphy *et al.*, 1992). In terms of physical abuse, Lewis, Shanok, and Pincus (1979) found rates of 76% in very violent juvenile sexual offenders; however, this was not different than violent nonsexual offenders (75%) but higher than less violent nonsexual offenders (29%). Other studies reported rates of physical abuse within the juvenile offender population ranging from 13% to 40% (Becker, Cunningham-Rathner, & Kaplan, 1986; Becker, Kaplan, Cunningham-Rathner, & Kavoussi, 1986; Ryan, Davis, Miyoshi, Lane, & Wilson, 1987). Sexual abuse estimates also vary widely from 17% to 47% (Becker, Cunningham-Rathner, & Kaplan, 1986; Becker, Kaplan, Cunningham-Rathner, & Kavoussi, 1986; Fehrenbach, Smith, Monastersky, & Deisher, 1986; Gomes-Schwartz, 1984; Longo, 1982; Ryan *et al.*, 1987). Fehrenbach *et al.* (1986) did find that sexual abuse rates among their subjects were higher for those engaging in hands-on of-

fenses (20.2%) versus hands-off (7.5%). Although these rates are higher than would be expected in general community samples, these findings suggest that many adolescent offenders may not report abuse histories and the rates may not vary significantly from those for juveniles engaging in other violent delinquent behaviors or displaying general psychiatric problems.

Although abuse rates among offenders may not be as high as expected, it is possible that offenders with abuse histories differ from those without such histories. The above limited data suggest that there are differences in terms of choice of male or female victims and in those offenders who engage in hands-on versus hands-off offenses. Other data suggest that rates of personal abuse may be higher for those who choose child victims than those who rape adults (Seghorn, Boucher, & Prentky, 1987). This has also been found among adolescent offenders (Ford & Linney, 1995).

There is also some initial evidence supporting the premise that offenders who have been abused may suffer more general psychopathology and family dysfunction in the family of origin than those without histories of abuse. Langevin, Wright, and Handy (1989), in a mixed group of adult patients that included exhibitionists, pedophiles, transsexuals, multiple paraphilics, androphiles and bisexuals, found a number of differences between those who were abused and not abused. The abused group showed evidence of sexualization as children and more frequent, and a wider variety of, sexual experiences as adults. They appeared more emotionally unstable with more frequent suicidal ideation and increased elevations on the mania scale of the MMPI. Their family backgrounds were more disturbed, especially in father/son relationships. However, Hanson, Lipovsky, and Saunders (1994), in a study of incest offenders, found more disturbances in the offender's family of origin for those offenders who had been abused. No differences were found between the two groups in dysfunction in family of procreation, personality profiles, or psychological symptoms. Because of differences in the samples between the two studies and the differences in measures used, it is impossible to resolve the differences between these studies.

Data comparing abused and nonabused adolescent offenders are basically limited to work by Becker and colleagues. Becker, Hunter, Stein, and Kaplan (1989) found that histories of sexual abuse in juvenile offenders were associated with more deviant erectile responses in those who selected males but not in those who selected females. Becker, Kaplan, and Tenke (1992) found that those juvenile offenders who were abused showed higher levels of arousal regardless of cues presented than nonabused subjects, were more likely to show age-inappropriate arousal profiles, and were more likely to show nondiscriminating profiles. They were also more likely to

evidence child profiles when nonresponders were excluded. More recently, Hunter, Goodwin, and Becker (1994) failed to find different arousal patterns between abused and nonabused groups. However, different procedures were employed making it difficult to compare these studies. Kobayashi, Sales, Becker, Figueredo, and Kaplan (1995) have shown, in a study using structural equation modeling, that physical abuse by father and sexual abuse by males were related to more extensive adolescent deviant sexual aggression. However, physical abuse by mothers, physical abuse by others and sexual abuse by females were not related to the extent of deviant sexual aggression.

Although these studies are limited, and there is some variation in results, there is at least suggestive evidence that abused offenders may differ in a number of ways from those offenders not abused. There are limited data on adolescent offenders, however, outside the area of phallometrically assessed sexual arousal.

It is clear that sexual and physical abuse have significant negative psychological sequelae (Browne & Finkelhor, 1986) which may occur regardless of whether one becomes an offender or not. It is possible that those who have been abused show different developmental pathways to their offending than those not abused and a better understanding of these differences might assist in future studies of etiological factors. Differences between abused and nonabused offenders may suggest the need for additional treatment components if abused offenders show clear differences in severity of psychopathology, family dysfunction, or sexualization.

The current study is based on a clinical sample of adolescent offenders seen in an evaluation and treatment program. The study attempts to shed further light on differences between adolescent offenders who have and have not been abused by examining offense history, family functioning, psychological difficulties, and general delinquent behavior using standardized measurement instruments.

METHOD

The sample from which subjects were drawn for this study consisted of 330 subjects who had contact with the Special Problems Unit, Department of Psychiatry, University of Tennessee, Memphis. This is a university-based evaluation and treatment program for juvenile and adult sexual offenders and represents all juvenile offenders seen over a 10-year period. For 30 subjects, there were limited data available, as they may have been seen only for brief consultation, they were seen in early years when limited data were collected, or data were missing from the files, so certain variables

were not coded. To maximize sample size, attempts were made to use all subjects where data were available for the relevant variables. All subjects were seen as part of a general clinical program and were not participating in any specific research project.

The mean age of the population was approximately 15 years ($n = 301$), 63% were Caucasian, 34% African-American, and 2% of other origins ($n = 296$). For 56.4% of the original 330 subjects, no evidence of physical or sexual abuse was obtained from either the subject, the family, or official records. A history of physical abuse alone was present for 9.4% of the sample, a history of sexual abuse alone was present for 22.4% of the population, and a history of both physical and sexual abuse was present for 11.8% of the population. At the time of the evaluation, approximately 70% of the subjects were residing in residential or inpatient facilities and approximately 30% were in the community.

MEASURES

As part of the assessment, the majority of patients received a structured history which is a standard part of the University of Tennessee, Memphis, Sexual Offender Program intake assessment. The history is collected from patients and family members who are present and is supplemented by official records where obtainable. The history focuses on family and social history; educational history; criminal and delinquent history; past psychological and psychiatric problems; drug and alcohol history; peer and family relationships; and sexual history, including deviant and nondeviant histories. From the history, demographic- and offense-specific variables were coded for analyses.

In addition to social and sexual histories, subjects completed a number of standardized inventories, including an IQ screening measure, a measure of personality and psychopathology, family functioning, delinquency, and interpersonal functioning. The Otis Quick Scoring Mental Ability Test was used for most subjects to assess IQ, although in a few cases scores from standardized instruments that had been collected close to the time of the evaluation were substituted. These generally were from the WISC-R. The Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) was used to assess overall personality and psychopathology and was scored using adolescent norms (Marks, Seeman, & Haller, 1974). The MMPI-A was not available during the period when most of the current data were collected.

Interpersonal functioning was assessed with the Interpersonal Behavior Survey (IBS), a standardized measure with a variety of aggressive scales, assertive scales, and relationship scales. The test has an adequate test—re-

test reliability, ranging from .81 to .93 for the various subscales (Mauger & Adkinson, 1980); convergent and discriminant validity has been demonstrated (Mauger & Adkinson, 1980).

Family function was measured by the Family Adaptation and Cohesion Evaluation Scale (FACES-III), a 20-item instrument which measures perceived closeness within families and flexibility of rules. Cohesion, a measure of family closeness, ranges from disengaged to enmeshed, with adaptability ranging from rigid to chaotic. For the present study, families were considered balanced if they showed a cohesion score between 35 and 45 and an adaptability score between 19 and 28. Those falling at the extremes were considered to be unbalanced families. The FACES-III has adequate reliability (Olson, Portner, & Lavee, 1985) and has been found to discriminate between clinically different types of families (Friedman, Utada, & Morrissey, 1987; Olson, 1986).

Delinquent behavior was measured via the Self-Reported Delinquent Behavior Checklist (SRDBC), an instrument developed to categorize and predict if youthful offenders would continue to maintain criminal careers (Elliott, Dunford, & Hurzinge, 1987). This instrument also shows adequate reliability and has been well validated by the Elliott group (1987). The SRDBC provides a self-report measure of two summary scales, a general delinquency scale and an index offense scale, with index offenses including more serious offenses such as aggravated assault, sexual assault, and theft of property worth more than \$50.

In addition to the above tests, subjects also underwent psychophysiological assessment of sexual arousal. However, data from the psychophysiological assessment are not yet available for analyses and are not reported here.

Procedures

Subjects were referred for evaluation by a variety of sources including Juvenile Court, child protective services, attorneys, and mental health professionals. The subjects, and their families when available, were initially seen by doctoral level psychologists, although some were seen by psychology interns and post-master's doctoral practicum students. The procedures were described as being conducted to determine treatment needs and level of placement.

Administration of self-report questionnaires was conducted by either a master's-level or a bachelor's-level technician, both with over 15 years of experience assessing and treating adult and adolescent sexual offenders. Questionnaires were not given in any specific order and were generally

interspersed with psychophysiological assessment. The majority of evaluations was conducted over a 2-day period, with the vast majority completed within 1 week. A few evaluations occurred over longer periods due to difficulties rescheduling appointments or resistance by a few of the patients. Attempts were made to include data from all subjects who had any contact with the program, although at times, especially during early phases, significant data were missing. Data were included for all subjects for whom there was clear history about the presence or absence of sexual or physical abuse even if other relevant information was missing. Sexual abuse was defined as a hands-on offense involving either a clear age difference of at least 5 years between the offender and the patient or where there was clear indication of the use of coercion. Physical abuse was defined as nonaccidental physical injury afflicted on a child by a parent, guardian, or caretaker.

In general, fewer subjects had questionnaire data available than history data. This generally occurred because reading difficulties prohibited the use of certain instruments. In addition, although the MMPI has been used in the evaluation since the inception of the program, the SRDBC, FACES-III, and IBS were added to the assessment battery later, so fewer subjects completed these tests.

Data Analysis Strategy

Subjects were classified as sexually and/or physically abused using the definitions above. Initial analyses compared subjects with a history of any abuse to those with a history of no abuse. In addition, an identical set of analyses was performed excluding subjects who were physically abused. Because of the small number of subjects who had been physically abused only, it was not possible to analyze this group separately. Demographic variables and offense specific variables were analyzed using *t* tests or chi-square for categorical variables, while questionnaires were analyzed with multivariate analysis of variance and follow-up by univariate ANOVAS. The data for the second set of analyses are presented only where differences emerged when physically abused subjects were excluded.

RESULTS

Demographic- and Offense-Specific Variables

Table I presents basic demographic- and offense-specific historical variables. As can be seen, there was no significant difference between

Table I. Demographic- and Offense-Specific Variables

Part 1					
	Not abused	Abused	df	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Age	15.1	14.8	297	1.98	.049
IQ	91.8	93.4	228	.96	NS
Age at first sexual offense	13.6	12.0	276	4.25	.001
Total victims	1.9	3.7	287	2.56	.011
Arrests for nonsexual crimes	1.5	.6	247	2.55	.012
Arrests for sexual crimes	.7	.6	219	2.88	NS
Part 2					
	Not abused	Abused		χ^2	<i>p</i>
Race (<i>n</i> = 290)					
Caucasian	(45.5%) 86	103 (54.5%)		15.0	<.001
African American	(69.3%) 70	31 (30.7%)			
Relation to victim (<i>n</i> = 278)					
Immediate family ^a	24 (16.7%)	31 (23.1%)		10.1	.017
Extended family ^a	29 (20.1%)	22 (16.4%)			
Nonfamily	73 (50.7%)	49 (36.6%)			
Combination	18 (12.5%)	32 (23.9%)			
Age of victim (<i>n</i> = 268)					
LT 5	31 (22.0%)	25 (19.7%)		4.9	NS
6 to 11	40 (28.4%)	40 (31.5%)			
12 or older	33 (23.4%)	18 (14.2%)			
Combination	37 (26.2%)	44 (34.6%)			
Sex of victim (<i>n</i> = 276)					
Male	32 (22.4%)	31 (23.1%)		8.12	.017
Female	86 (60.6%)	62 (46.3%)			
Both	44 (16.9%)	41 (30.6%)			
Admits (<i>n</i> = 284)					
No	45 (30.4%)	32 (23.5%)		2.8	NS
Yes	59 (39.9%)	67 (49.3%)			
Partial	44 (29.7%)	32 (27.2%)			
Type of abuse (<i>n</i> = 267)					
Fondling only	51 (37.2%)	39 (30.0%)			NS
Oral sex only	19 (13.9%)	26 (20.0%)			
Anal/vaginal penetration	67 (48.0%)	65 (50.0%)			

^aImmediate family refers to brothers and sisters or stepbrothers and stepsisters, while extended family refers to cousins, nephews, and nieces.

groups in terms of IQ, age of victim, and presence of an official arrest for a sexual crime. The majority of subjects in both groups had at least one victim less than 12 years of age and 20% to 30% denied their offenses. Also not significant was the type of abuse, as depicted in Part 2 of Table I, which excluded nine subjects who engaged in exhibitionistic behavior only

(six in the nonabused group and three in the abused group). As can be seen, approximately one-half of the subjects engaged in anal or vaginal penetration of their victims.

Subjects did, however, differ on a number of variables. Abused subjects were approximately 4 months younger than nonabused subjects when first seen but had begun their offending approximately 1.6 years prior to the nonabused group and had approximately two times the number of victims. Abused subjects were less likely to have female victims only and more likely to have both male and female victims. For nonabused subjects, approximately 50% of their victims were nonfamily members, while abused subjects were less likely to abuse only nonfamily members.

There was also a cultural/ethnic difference, with fewer African-American subjects reporting a history of abuse than Caucasian subjects. Other ethnic groups, because of their small number, were excluded from this analysis. Although over 54% of the Caucasian subjects reported a history of personal abuse, this was true for only approximately 30% of the African-American subjects. This was due primarily to African-American subjects being less likely to report a history of being sexually abused. Approximately 43% of Caucasian subjects reported a history of sexual abuse, while only 23% of African-Americans reported this history. Groups were more equivalent in reports of physical abuse (approximately 11% of Caucasian subjects and 7% of African-American subjects).

In terms of nonsexual arrests, the nonabused group reported approximately two times the number of nonsexual arrests than the abused group. All the above analyses were similar when repeated excluding subjects with a history of physical abuse only.

Personality and Psychopathology

One hundred ninety-four subjects completed the MMPI. The 3 validity scales and 10 clinical scales were entered into a multivariate analysis of variance, with a significant overall difference observed between the abused and the nonabused groups using Wilks' criteria ($F = 2.25$, $df 13,180$, $p = .009$). Follow-up univariate analyses indicated significant results for the F Scale ($p = .017$) and Schizophrenic Scale ($p = .016$) and marginally significant results for the Psychopathic Deviant Scale ($p = .07$). In each case, the abused group had higher mean scores ($F = 64.67$; Schizophrenia = 64.64, Psychopathic Deviant = 66.10) compared to the nonabused group ($F = 58.56$; Schizophrenia = 59.52, Psychopathic Deviant = 61.13). There were no significant differences on any of the other MMPI subscales. When the above analyses were repeated excluding subjects who were physically

abused only, the overall multivariate F remained significant ($F = 2.022$, df 13,159, $p = .022$), with univariate tests indicating a marginally significant effect for the F Scale ($p = .061$) and a significant effect for Psychopathic Deviant Scale ($p = .05$) but no significant effect for the Schizophrenia Scale. In all cases, the abused group scored higher than the nonabused group.

Social Competence

A total of 119 subjects completed the IBS, 66 in the nonabused group and 53 in the abused group. A multivariate analysis of variance of the three validity scales and 18 clinical scales of the IBS indicated an overall significant effect using Wilks' criteria ($F = 2.11$, df 21,97, $p = .008$). Follow-up univariate analysis indicated significant effects on the Hostile Stance subscale [$F = 5.31$, df 1,117, $p = .017$; X (nonabused) = 9.77, X (abused) = 10.92] and on the Refusing Demand subscale [$F = 12.30$, df 1,117, $p = .001$; X (nonabused) = 3.62, X (abused) = 2.77]. There was also a marginally significant difference ($F = 3.15$, df 1,117, $p = .079$) on the overall Assertiveness scale, with the nonabused group in general being more assertive ($X = 32.31$) than the abused group ($X = 29.49$).

However, when subjects who had been physically abused only were removed from the analyses (13 subjects), there was no significant multivariate effect for the IBS. Univariate analysis of the individual scales indicated a marginally significant effect for the Hostile Stance subscale ($p = .096$) and a significant effect for the Refusing Demand subscale ($p = .006$), with all the means being in the same direction as the analyses with the total sample.

Family Functioning and Criminality

None of the analyses of the FACES-III or SRDBC indicated any significant differences between groups. Groups did not differ in terms of their mean adaptation or cohesion scales of the FACES nor the chi-square analyses comparing groups in terms of balanced versus nonbalanced family functioning. Groups did not differ on either the Index Offense subscale or General Offense subscale of the SRDBC.

DISCUSSION

Results from the current study are consistent in a number of ways with the previous literature. The rates of abuse in the population are fairly

similar to those reported in other studies, suggesting that approximately one-third of subjects have experienced sexual abuse and approximately 45% of subjects have experienced either physical or sexual abuse. Subjects who had experienced abuse began their own offending at a younger age, were more likely to abuse both males and females and less likely to abuse females only, and had more victims. They were less likely to abuse only outside of the family.

The fact that they were less likely to have only female victims is consistent with Hanson and Slater's (1988) finding of lower rates of abuse among offenders who abused only females. Their overall pattern of offending may suggest that they are more paraphilic, which is consistent with Langevin and co-workers' (1989) finding that adult abused offenders appeared to be more sexualized as children. It is also consistent with Becker and colleagues' (1989, 1992) finding of more deviant arousal patterns among their sexually abused subjects.

In agreement with Langevin et al. (1989), the abused subjects appeared to have more psychological disturbance and in general to be less socially competent. This was not found by Hanson *et al.* (1994); however, they studied a father—stepdaughter incest group and this population of offenders may in general be less deviant (Murphy & Barbaree, 1994).

The current study did not find differences in family dysfunction between groups, as originally suggested by both Langevin *et al.* (1989) and Hanson *et al.* (1994). Both of those studies involved adults retrospectively reporting on aspects of their family of origin, while the current study involved adolescents reporting on their perception of current family functioning. This might suggest some recall bias in the adult subjects. However, it should be noted that approximately 70% of the current sample described their families as unbalanced on the FACES, suggesting that most subjects in both groups were reporting dysfunctional family systems. Differences in the populations and differences in the measures make it difficult to draw any firm conclusions regarding family functioning. Future studies may need to focus on whether specific family dysfunctions interact with histories of abuse to increase the probability of a victim developing an offending pattern.

Differences between groups in general criminality and delinquency is mixed in this study. Nonabused subjects had approximately two times the number of arrests for nonsexual crimes than did the nonsexually abused subjects, but groups did not differ on self-reported delinquent behavior. It is possible that subjects tended to overreport or exaggerate on the SRDBC. It could also be hypothesized that sexually abused subjects were more skilled at avoiding detection for criminal behavior, although it is also possible that the differences in official arrests is confounded with the ethnic differences

found. More African-American subjects were in the nonabused group. Possible biases in the criminal justice system could lead to more African-American subjects being arrested for nonsexual offenses than Caucasian youths. The role of general criminality and delinquency remains an important variable in understanding sexual offending. Knight and Prentky (1990) found juvenile and adult antisocial behavior to be important variables in their taxonomic system, in terms of both possible etiology and prediction of recidivism. Future studies investigating the interaction between general criminality and delinquency and histories of abuse are needed with appropriate controls for ethnic differences and possible biases in the criminal justice system. In addition, abused subjects appeared less socially competent and more conduct disordered on self-report measures. This might suggest that abuse history is more linked to general delinquency and social competency deficits than to sexual offending specifically (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990).

Although a number of findings in this study with adolescents are consistent with previous studies and the study has a relatively large sample size, there are a number of limitations. First, and most obvious, is that many of the data were based on self-report. Although for many subjects collaborating data existed on their personal abuse history, this was not true for every case, and there was no way of knowing how many subjects in the nonabused group may have denied actual abuse. It is probable that some subjects in the nonabused group were sexually abused and possible that some subjects in the abused group may have falsely reported abuse as a way of excusing their own behavior. This would tend to minimize differences between groups; thus the current findings may represent minimal differences. In addition, although the results of this study are, in general, consistent with the literature, a large number of analyses were conducted and the possibility of a Type I error cannot be ruled out.

This is a special concern among African-American subjects. It is not clear whether African-American subjects actually experienced less sexual abuse or whether there were cultural factors that mitigated against African-American adolescent males reporting histories of sexual abuse. To our knowledge, there are few normative data available regarding the frequency of childhood sexual abuse among African-American male populations. Future studies are needed with both offender and nonoffender samples that use culturally sensitive measures and culturally sensitive interviewers to address this issue.

It should also be recognized that although group differences were found, mean differences in some cases on the standardized measures were relatively small and there remained a good deal of overlap between these two groups. Even though the current study had a relatively large sample size, it was difficult, because of small numbers, to subdivide subjects further

on what could be important variables. For example, subjects could not be subdivided into those who had been physically abused only versus those who had been sexually abused, nor was it possible to analyze African-American and Caucasian subjects separately on each of the dependent variables. The findings may have also been clearer if subjects could have been subdivided into those who abused only male children versus only female children as opposed to those who abused both, and subdivided by those who abused children only versus those who abused peers. At the current time, further data are being collected that will allow finer analyses of these subgroups in the adolescent offender population.

Finally, it should be recognized that although subjects were divided on their histories of physical and sexual abuse, it is likely that they experienced other traumas not measured. Many subjects may have experienced psychological abuse or neglect and may have witnessed significant violence in their homes. It is also possible that subjects who experienced one type of trauma have more likely experienced other traumas and therefore the two groups studied may have differed on more than their history of physical and/or sexual abuse. It is therefore impossible to determine whether the current results relate to specific forms of abuse or trauma in general.

In summary, the current study supports previous work showing that sexual offenders who have experienced abuse themselves differ in a number of ways from offenders who have not experienced abuse. The importance of these data is not only that these differences exist, but that there may be different developmental pathways to offending for subjects who are and are not abused. The current literature would at least suggest that sexually abused subjects may be more likely to develop deviant sexual arousal patterns and may develop psychological difficulties that interfere with the development of appropriate social interactions. Further studies of abused and nonabused offenders may also have more practical value regardless of etiological significance in that they suggest different treatment needs for abused and nonabused adolescent offenders. For example, the earlier onset of their offending, the increased number of their victims, and their tendency to more likely have male victims suggest that abused offenders have greater deviant sexual arousal. This may suggest the need of specific behavioral treatments to directly impact paraphilic arousal patterns directly.

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