



March 26 & 27, 2010
Mystic Lake Casino Hotel
Prior Lake, MN

**CASA MINNESOTA – 2010
GUARDIAN AD LITEM
CONFERENCE**

Signs of Child Sexual Abuse
with Cultural & Age-Specific
Information

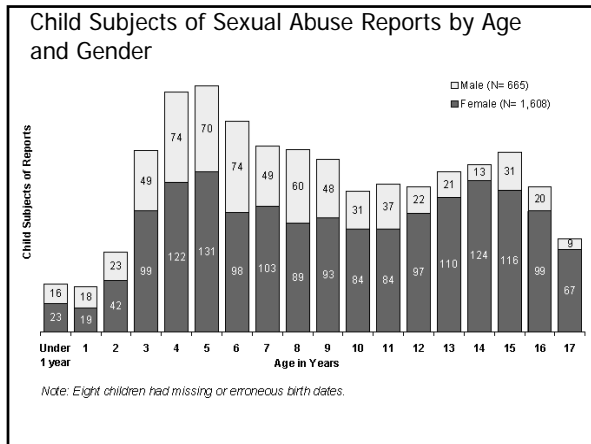


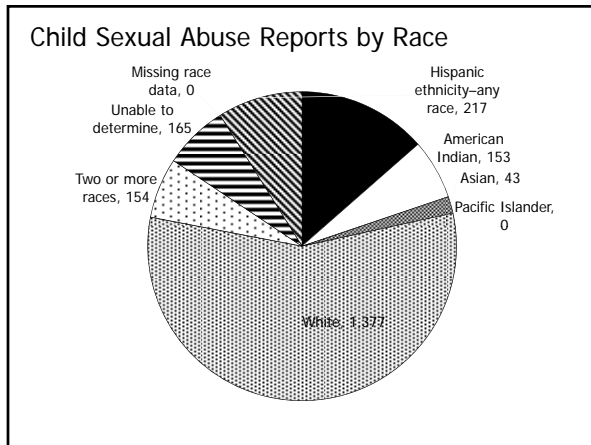
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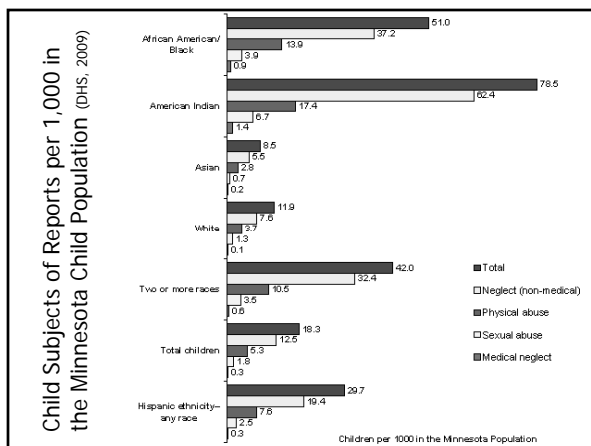
MN Sexual Abuse Allegations

Traditional Family Investigations (n=1635)
■ Not Determined □ Determined









Definition: Child Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is the subjection of a child to a criminal sexual act or threatened act by a person responsible for the child's care or by a person who has a significant relationship to the child or is in a position of authority.

Sexually Abusive Behaviors

- Voyeurism
- Fondling
- Child prostitution
- Pornography
- Sexual penetration
- Sodomy
- Oral-genital contact
- Exhibitionism

Sexual Abuse Includes Abuse by...

- Person in a position of authority
 - Duty or responsible for health, welfare or supervision of child no matter how brief
- Person responsible for child's care inside family unit
 - Child care responsibilities
- Person responsible for child's care outside family unit
 - School or daycare employees, coach, etc.
- Person w/ significant relationship to child
 - Related by blood, marriage or adoption

Criminal Sexual Contact

- Penetration
 - Any intrusion into genital or anal opening for sexual gratification, including oral sex
- Sexual Contact
 - Touching of child's "intimate parts" or having child touch intimate parts of another on skin or clothes if w/ sexual or aggressive intent
- Degrees of CSC aggravated by use of force, threats or infliction of harm, age or vulnerability of child

CSA Also Includes:

- Violation of prostitution laws w/ minor
- Involving child in sexual performance
- Threatened sexual abuse:
 - Unsupervised exposure to untreated sex offender
 - Purposefully exposing private parts to child
 - Purposefully walking in on bathing or dressing child
 - Peeping on a child

History and Medical Evaluation

- Three components to consider:
 - History or child's statements
 - Behavioral assessment
 - Physical examination
- NOTE: Neither physical examination nor behavioral indicators should stand on their own; they can only support the history

Physical Signs of Child Sexual Abuse

- Vaginal or rectal bleeding, pain, itching, swelling or discharge
- Difficulty with bowel movements, urinating or swallowing
- Recurring complaints of stomach-aches and/or headaches



Physical Indicators of Child Sexual Abuse

- Trauma to breasts, buttocks, lower abdomen or genital or rectal areas
- Torn, stained or bloody undergarments
- Vaginal infections or venereal diseases
- Difficulty in walking or sitting
- Pregnancy in young adolescent

Behavioral Indicators of Sexual Abuse

- Extreme changes in behavior (loss of appetite, eating disorder, clinginess, withdrawal, aggressiveness)
- Recurrent nightmares, disturbed sleep patterns, or a sudden fear of the dark
- Regression to infantile behavior (bedwetting, thumb sucking, excessive crying)
- Fear of a particular person or fear of being left alone with a particular person or at a particular place
- Frequent lying, delinquent behavior or a fall in grades at school

Behavioral Signs of Sexual Abuse

- Unusual interest in or knowledge about sexual matters
- Inappropriate expression of affection for age
- Engaging other children in sexual activities
- Acting out sexual behaviors (intercourse or masturbation)
- Poor relationships with other children
- Lack of self-confidence
- Self-destructive behavior (biting oneself, pulling out hair, wrist-cutting)

Verbal Indicators of Child Sexual Abuse


- Tentative disclosure of abuse
- Disclosure of abuse to a friend
- Disclosure of abuse of a "friend"
- Verbal report of sexual victimization



"Besides, no one ever keeps a secret so well as a child."




~ Victor Hugo, Les Miserables



Roland Summit (1983)

**CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE
ACCOMMODATION SYNDROME**

Child Sexual Abuse Accommodation Syndrome



- Secrecy
- Helplessness
- Entrapment and Accommodation
- Delayed / Unconvincing Disclosure
- Retraction / Recantation

(Summit, 1983)

Child Sexual Abuse Accommodation Syndrome


Secrecy

- Nondisclosure Rates (Lyon, 2002)
 - Women: 33% to 92%
 - Men: 42% to 85%
- 86% of sexual assaults to adolescents unreported (NIJ, 2003)
- 70% of sample told to keep abuse secret (Berliner & Conte, 1990)
- 55-69% of adults did not report abuse in childhood (London et al, 2007)

Child Sexual Abuse Accommodation Syndrome

Helplessness

- ❑ Victims report saying "no" would have only resulted in continued abuse and perhaps further harm (Berliner & Conte, 1990)



Child Sexual Abuse Accommodation Syndrome


Entrapment and Accommodation

- ❑ Behavioral Strategies
- ❑ Psychological Strategies
 - ❑ Fragmenting
 - ❑ Dissociation
 - ❑ Dissociative Identity Disorder (MPD)

Child Sexual Abuse Accommodation Syndrome

Delayed or Unconvincing Disclosure

- ❑ Sample of 248 sexually abused children
 - ❑ 75% of did not disclose within a year of onset (Elliot and Briere, 1994)



Child Sexual Abuse Accommodation Syndrome

Retraction

- Recantation rates across studies range from 4-50% (Lyon, 2002)
- Recantation rates from 4-27% (London et al, 2005)
- Children with non-supportive mothers more likely to recant initial disclosure (Elliot & Briere, 1994)



Consider developmental abilities and motivational issues that might hinder disclosure for children...

EXPLAINING DISCLOSURE PATTERNS

Reasons for Nondisclosure

- Victims seek to protect familiar perpetrators, especially family members
- Victims are yielding to requests for secrecy
- Victims assume some responsibility or blame
- Victims feel ashamed or embarrassed

(Herzkowitz et al., 2006)

Reasons for Nondisclosure

- Victims fear threatened or imagined negative outcomes
- Young victims may not understand that they have been abused
- Young victims may have failed to encode or remember experiences that did not appear salient to them

(Hershkowitz et al., 2006)

Predictors of (Non)Reporting

- Prior disclosure predicts interview disclosure
- Caretaker support predicts interview disclosure
 - Non-supporting caregivers: Relationship with offender, DV victim, substance abuser, history of child neglect
- Proximity of perpetrator-child relationship predicts nondisclosure
 - Offending parents or parental figures less likely to result in disclosure

(Faller, 2007; Pipe, et al, 2007; Olafson & Lederman, 2006)

Predictors of (Non)Reporting

- Intrusiveness of abuse
 - "Ambiguous" abuse less likely to be reported
- Children from homes with domestic violence may be less likely to report sexual abuse
 - Battering father-figures are 4-9 times more likely to sexually abuse children in the home
- Children first abused as adolescents are more likely to disclose than are younger children
 - Older children generally more likely to disclose


(Faller, 2007; Pipe, et al, 2007; Olafson & Lederman, 2006)

Predictors of (Non)Reporting

- Suspect confession increases disclosure rates
- Boys may be more reluctant to report abuse than girls
- Children from minority groups may be more reluctant to report abuse
- Children suffering from PTSD may impact disclosure rates

(Faller, 2007; Olafson & Lederman, 2006)

Understanding Children's Sexual Behaviors



Avoid attributing adult meaning to children's sexual behaviors

Natural and Health Sexual Behavior

- 40-85% of children will engage in some sexual behaviors before age 13
- Information-gathering and exploration
- Similar age, size and developmental levels
- Mutual and voluntary participation
- Limited in type and frequency
- Light-hearted and spontaneous activities

(Johnson, 2007)

Sexual Behavior in Preschool Children

Natural and Healthy

- Touches or rubs own genitals
- Touches "private parts" of familiar adults/children
- Showing genitals to others
- Interested in bathroom functioning
- Plays "doctor" with others
- Puts object in genitals or rectum once for exploration

(Johnson, 2007)

Sexual Behavior in Preschool Children

Concerning Behaviors

- Hurts genitals by touching/rubbing
- Touches "private parts" of strangers
- Refuses to put on clothes in public
- Forces way into bathroom to watch others
- Forces other children to touch or be touched
- Inserting objects in genitals with coercion, force or pain

(Johnson, 2007)

Sexual Behavior in K-4th Grade Children

Natural and Healthy

- Uses "dirty" words for bathroom functions or genitals
- Interest in intercourse / having babies
- Shows genitals in private
- Touches/rubs genitals for comfort
- Simulates all roles of parents while playing house
- Wants privacy when in bathroom or changing clothes
- Plays sex-related games with peers
- Looks at nude pictures

(Johnson, 2007)

Sexual Behavior in K-4th Grade Children

- Concerning Behaviors
 - Continues use of "dirty" words after exclusion from school and activities
 - Fear or anger about babies or intercourse
 - Publicly shows genitals to express anger
 - Touches/rubs genitals to exclusion of normal activities
 - Intercourse with another child
 - Aggressive or fearful in demand for privacy
 - Forces others to play sexual games
 - Masturbates to nude pictures

(Johnson, 2007)



CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE AND CULTURE

Disclaimer ...

"'Ethnic lumping' [or] the use of broad ethnic categorizations in the study of cultural differences [in child maltreatment] ... discounts the diversity of cultures within these categories and obscures potentially important intra-group differences."



(Elliott & Urquiza, p. 797, 2006)

Religion and Disclosure of Child Sexual Abuse

- High value of loyalty within community
- Homophobic culture may reduce disclosure for males
- "Active" satan may promote false memory concerns
- Value of unquestioning parental obedience
- Fear of ostracization by community
- Fear of "outsiders" fostering children within closed religious communities

(Lovett, 2004)

CSA in the African American Community

- Retrospective self-reports of CSA do not differ from Anglo-American populations
- Factors impacting disclosure
 - History of negative involvement with authorities
 - Lack of culturally-specific services
 - Report as betrayal of group
 - Lack of sensitivity of over-representation in criminal justice system
 - Reliance on religious and spiritual interventions

(Lovett, 2004; Lowe et al, 2005; Elliott & Urquiza, 2006)

CSA in the African American Community

- Cultural definition of victim of sexual abuse
 - "Serious" abuse experience
 - Victim with "no responsibility"
 - Must involve "extreme coercion"
 - Actual or threatened physical harm must be present

(Lowe et al, 2005)

CSA in the Hispanic American Community

- Retrospective self-reports of CSA do not differ from Anglo-American populations
- Longer delay in disclosure than African Americans
- Latinas may be more likely to express shame and self-blame than African- or Anglo-Americans
- Abuse more likely to be perpetrated by family member than Anglo-Americans

(Elliott & Urquiza, 2006; Lovett, 2004; Katerndahl et al, 2005)

CSA in the Hispanic American Community

- Factors impacting disclosure
 - Level of acculturation
 - History of prejudice and economic oppression
 - Inequitable treatment by law enforcement
 - Lack of culturally-specific services
 - Tradition of subordination of individual to the family (*familismo*)
 - Cultural encoding of male dominance (*machismo*)
 - Value of female virginity and passivity (*marianismo*)

(Elliott & Urquiza, 2006; Lovett, 2004; Lowe et al, 2005)

CSA in the Asian American Community

- Significantly lower rates of CSA than other ethnicities
 - Cultural norms prohibiting early sexual activities
- Asian Americans less likely to exhibit behavioral and emotional disturbances
- Generally older at time of abuse
- Factors impacting disclosure
 - Emphasis on family loyalty and harmony
 - Caregivers less supportive following disclosure
 - Value of virginity
 - Reduced invasiveness of victimization

(Elliott & Urquiza, 2006; Zhai & Gao, 2009)

Sexual Abuse of Hmong Girls

- Three-fourths of study (vs 20%) experienced:
 - Gang rape
 - Prostitution
 - Multiple assaults
- More likely to have multiple perpetrators (5+)
- More likely to report penile-vaginal or penile-oral assault
- More likely to be under influence of drugs/alcohol
- More likely to be threatened with gun or restrained during assault

(Edinburgh et al, 2006)

CSA in the Anglo American Community

- More likely to be investigated for allegations than minority children
- Families are less likely to receive restrictive or punitive interventions than minority families
- Mothers less likely to be supportive of disclosure than African-American mothers

(Lovett, 2004; Elliott & Urquiza, 2006)

Questions or comments?



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