Adolescent child sexual abusers: previous victimization and current perpetrators

Carol Jonese Thomas

Atlanta University

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ABSTRACT

SOCIAL WORK

Thomas, Carol Jonese B.A. Elizabeth City St. Univ., 1988

ADOLESCENT CHILD SEXUAL ABUSERS: PREVIOUS VICTIMIZATION AND CURRENT PERPETRATORS

Advisor: Professor Hattie Mitchell
Thesis dated: May, 1990

The overall objective of this study was to determine some of the factors associated with adolescent child sexual abusers. To obtain this objective, the following factors were addressed by the researcher: (a) previous victimization, and (b) current perpetrators. Percentages and the frequency distribution data analysis was used as a research design for this study. A self administered questionnaire was given to 20 adolescent sex offenders in Atlanta Youth Development Center, located in Atlanta, Georgia.

The results showed that there was a relationship between the variables and adolescent child sexual abusers. The two prominent factors were previous victimization and current perpetrators.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The writer wishes to thank Professor Hattie Mitchell and Dr. Amos Ajo for the immeasurable help they have extended to her during this study. Gratitude is extended to Kathy Burke for her continued understanding and for offering help when it was most needed. Last but definitely not least, the writer wishes to express sincere thanks to her family, whose constant faith and encouragement has been a source of inspiration throughout the period of research.

C.J.T.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This is an exploratory descriptive study which will examine factors associated with previous victimization and current perpetration of child sexual abuse among adolescents.

The existence of sexual abuse of children is not a new phenomenon. Walker (1988) notes that professionals have been aware of the potential negative effects of child sexual abuse since the late 1980s. Since that time, there has been an explosion of interest in and concern about child abuse of all types. Johnson (1988) reports that professionals acknowledged and recognized the seriousness of the sexual behavior of adolescents against children in the early 1980s. His study further revealed that 30% to 50% of child molestation can be attributed to male adolescent sex offenders between the ages of 13-16.

The impact of child sexual abuse is felt both physically and emotionally. Adolescent perpetrators carry with them anger and frustration of that experience which leads them to sexually victimize a less powerful person than themselves (Cohn, Finklehor,
and Holmes, 1985). Perhaps the most common trait among those who abuse children is that they themselves often less victims of sexual abuse; therefore, suggesting a cyclical pattern in sexual abuse.

Very revealingly, most professionals who treat offenders agree generally that the longer the perpetrator has engaged in the sexual behavior, the more difficult it is to treat the adolescent. It is essential for social work practitioners to recognize and understand this caution, as it will impact on treatment and prevention strategies aimed at potential perpetrators.

Clearly, there is much to learn about the consequences of child sexual abuse by adolescents. The development of knowledge in this area for social work practitioners will provide valuable information and may allow them to develop increasingly effective methods of prevention.

**STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

In recent years, Johnson (1989) in his seminal article, suggested that professionals acknowledge and recognize the seriousness of the sexual behavior of
adolescents against children.

The adolescent child sexual abuser has become a subject of increasing interest to social workers, health, welfare, juvenile justice system, and educational agencies to combat the devastating impact on the individual, family, and community. Adolescent sex offenders suffer a variety of negative consequences and these may last for many years. Victims and perpetrators have feelings of guilt, anger, depression, and helplessness. Currently, no theories are generally accepted as providing the definitive view about the source of the consequences. The flexibility will not force the experiences of all victims and perpetrators into a particular framework. It will enable social workers to consider a variety of possible sources of the consequences, and help social workers to successfully work with many difficult types of victims and perpetrators.

This study explores those factors which contribute to adolescent child sexual abuse.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Until recently, the issue of adolescent child sexual abuse has been paid little attention by professional social workers. The purpose of this
exploratory descriptive study is to identify and address those factors that contribute to adolescent child sexual abusing behavior.

This researcher became interested in this population within the Atlanta Youth Development Center, Atlanta, Georgia. It seemed appropriate to pursue this course of study to enhance the researcher's understanding as well as contribute something to the social work profession. Clearly associated with this purpose are the following concerns:

1) Identify those factors that influenced adolescent child sexual abusing behavior

2) Explain the various interactions between these factors

3) Ascertain which of these factors had the greatest influence on adolescent child sexual abuse - victim or perpetrator

This researcher will draw freely from the Social Learning Theory.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The early literature on adolescent sexual offenders was rather optimistic with respect to recidivism in adolescence and adulthood (Atcheson, 1954), Doshay (1943), and Markey (1950), and may have contributed to the apparent lack of serious interest in the study of the juvenile sexual offender by social work practitioners.

An attempt was made to evaluate the favorable and unfavorable factors which have impacted upon the adolescent. Professionals believe that these favorable and unfavorable factors may be due to biological and constitutional disturbances with secondary manifestations in the psychological field, and opposite viewpoint is that of the psychoanalysts who believe that the behavior was shaped and molded preeminently by psychological factors and emotional influences (Waggoner, 1941).

According to Boyd (1941), sexual perversions offer an outlet for tension and anxiety for juvenile offenders, and give them approval and reward from adult
perverts with the possibility of a chance to express symbolically their hostility, aggression, or submission.

During the 1950s, in juvenile court experience, "immortality" is a relatively frequent charge brought against a juvenile who had committed a sexual offense. In addition, the psychiatrist was quickly involved with diagnostic responsibility and less concerned with the act, for he recognized that perverted activity during adolescence as a developmental step on the road to heterosexual normality, fixed morbidity in a personality too immature to handle instinctual sex pressure, or an act which is expressed while growth is taking place in itself relatively unimportant (Markey, 1950).

Much of the literature during the 1960s-1970s suggest that the adolescent's sexual behavior continued to be reveal a reluctance on the part of the courts and other agencies to view juvenile sexual offenders as significant or serious. It appears that such an offense is regarded as merely sexual experimentation, situational nature, or as an expression of the normal aggressiveness of a sexually maturing male (Groth, 1976).
U.S. Department of Justice (1980) Uniform Crime Reports during the late 1970s showed that of those individuals arrested for rape, 30% or more were adolescents. For example, evidence from the Child Sexual Abuse Victim Assistance Project Research Foundation of Children's Hospital in Washington, DC (1981) showed that in 56% of the reported cases of child molestation, the offender was under 18 years old.

Professionals and the law began to look at juvenile sex offenders differently in the late 1970s and 1980s. More research has been done on adult sex offenders, these adult sex offenders reported they committed sexual offenses as teenagers and they were abused as children before they reached puberty.

In analyzing any particular sex offense committed by an adolescent, society might well find that there has been a physical root for his problem associated, perhaps with some childhood disease which has inhibited his physical development; or unwholesome parental attitudes, or even seduction into sexual practice at an early age within or outside the family itself (Hahn, 1971).

In a family situation, many parents of these adolescent sex offenders establish an intimate,
emotional parent-child relationship which bonds the child to the parents. This not only promotes marked emotional immaturity, but provokes the child to transfer his affection to others.

An unstable family background and a history of witnessing family violence or being the recipient of physical or sexual abuse and neglect plays a contributing role in the life histories of adolescent sex offenders (Gomes-Schwartz, 1984). Many adolescent sex abusers appear to have been subjected to early sexual contact with adults, as is demonstrated by a growing number of studies. In one of the earliest studies, Gebhard, Gagnon, Pomeroy, and Christensen (1965) found that their male-object and female-object pedophile group had higher rates of childhood sexual contacts with adults. Sigmund Freud was so dismayed by the frequency with which his clients reported sexual abuse as children that, rather than face the reality that they expressed, he decided that it was largely fantasy. No one wants to admit the reality of child sexual abuse, so eyes and ears are closed to its victims who seek help. If no one "sees it", then it does not exist; however, statistics state otherwise: 38% of the females and 1 in 10 males will be sexually
molested by age 18 (Fortune, 1983).

In Gail Ryan's Annotated Bibliography: Adolescent Perpetrators of Sexual Molestation of Children (1966) stated that the histories of both juvenile and adult sex offenders reveal a high incidence of sexual victimization in the childhood experience of these offenders, suggesting a cyclical pattern in sexual abuse. Sexual victimization may produce either a learned helplessness or a repetitive aggressiveness. The victims, without therapeutic intervention, are often destined to a future of repeated victimization of themselves, or the backlash of perpetrating similar sexual abusive behavior toward others. Just as a child who is physically abused may grow up to physically abuse his own child, one who is sexually victimized may grow up to sexually victimize others.

There frequently can be found in the history of adolescent sex offenders a thread of violence and destructive behavior, both internal and external. In the aggressive adolescent sex offenders' formative years, there may have been sexual or physical abuse and violence, especially at the hands of one or more parents or other significant adults.

Shorr, Speed, and Bartelt (1966) examined 80 male
adolescent child molesters and found several characteristics that set these youths apart from their normally developing peers. Typically, they are lonely and socially isolated from peers; they prefer the company of younger children; they are naive, and portray low self-esteem, and lack suitable sex education. The socioeconomic level is from a lower middle class family, and adolescent sex offenders frequently experience disturbed family relations which are emotional and psychological. Their disturbed family relations may be a result of physical or sexual abuse to the adolescent during his childhood.

This early sexual experience in the lives of adolescent sexual offenders suggest that they may have been introduced to adult sex prematurely and this may influence their overall outlook about sex. Such unresolved trauma may prompt a compulsive re-enactment of the experience in an attempt to gain mastery and control over it.

In a study of 84 convicted sexual offenders, Longo and McFadin (1981) found that 62% of the sample population had engaged in repetitive exhibitionism and/or voyeurism during their lives. The mean age for the sample population was 14.5 years of age, the moral
age was 12. Longo (1982) also studied a sample population of seventeen: 8 Blacks and 9 Caucasians (all under the age of 19). Each subject was administered a confidential questionnaire. The general profile of an adolescent sex offender revealed him to be 17 years old at the time of conviction, but 14 years old at the time of onset of his sex assaultiveness. For the most part, this data reveals that the adolescent sexual offender began his sexual experience at a rather early age. Eight adolescents (47%) from the sample population reported that they had been sexually molested during their childhood. This included those individuals who reported being molested, 13 offenders (76%) reported their first sexual experience occurred before the age of 12. Similarly, Lewis, Shanok, and Pincus (1981) found that in an incarcerated sample of adolescents, 75% of those who had committed a sexual offense or a violent nonsexual offense had been physically abused, compared with 29% of other delinquents. In addition, 79% of the adolescent sex offenders had observed some type of intrafamily violence. This type of experience occurring at such a tender age may have been traumatic in itself. The results from this study indicate that the adolescent sex offender generally has sexual
experiences during the elementary school years, prior to the onset of puberty. These experiences may be a non-coerced, passive, sexual act of a curious nature, although a significant number appear to have been experienced as a sexual trauma.

In more recent surveys of adolescent sex abusers, Groth and Burgess (1984) did a study of 106 adolescent child molesters, 32% reported some form of "sexual trauma" in their early development. Groth's concept of "sexual trauma" includes such things as witnessing sex acts, suffering from physical abnormalities, and being circumcised in addition to what is more commonly considered sexual abuse. Moreover, Groth (1984) observed that these offenders tended to duplicate in age of victim and type of sex act the form of victimization they themselves had suffered.

While reviewing the literature, it appears that most adolescent sex offenders have been sexual victimized (or perceived an early childhood experience as sexual victimization) during their early childhood. Their subsequent violent reaction to feelings of being controlled or powerless appear to be related to this event. Many of the youths recall the event vividly,
but a few just have vague memories. The experience usually creates feelings of fear; of being controlled and not having the power to get away or successfully fight; of helplessness to stop the assault and a sense that something shameful or wrong has occurred. Lane and Zamora (1984) believe that previous sexual victimization is the source of rapists' strong aversion to feeling helpless, being controlled, or fearful. The feeling of helplessness that adolescent sex offenders experience at the time of their victimization seems to become the basis for their learning how to make others feel helpless and controlled.

The adolescent sex offenders has many characteristics concerning his offenses. Fehrenbach, Smith, Monasterky, and Deisher (1986) have described the adolescent sex offender as a multiple perpetrator. According to these authors and their descriptive data on 305 adolescent sexual offenders (under age 18) there is no "typical" adolescent offender pattern. Rather these young males may perpetrate offenses that range widely. The most frequent offense is that of indecent liberties in which sexual touching, which falls short of penetration, occurs. This relatively common circumstance is followed in frequency by rape, and
"hands-off" offenses such as exhibitionism, peeping, obscene phone calls, and letters. Extreme cases which pose the risk of physical injury to the victim are rape or sexual homicide.

It is likely that the offender and his victim knew each other, at least casually, and the offense is twice likely to happen indoors as well as outside the single most frequent place of assault being the victim's home (Groth, 1976). According to Fehrenbach, Smith, Monastersky, and Deisher (1986), in their study 63% of offenses studied were rapes or indecent liberties committed by male adolescents with children less than three years younger than the offender himself. Descriptively, 11% of these offenders had a history of sexual abuse with an additional seven percent reporting a combined history of sexual and physical abuse. Another 16% of these adolescent reported exclusively physical victimization. In sum, a number of studies support the contention that an unusual number of convicted child molesters were the subjects of victimization themselves, this is one of the most consisted findings of recent research (Finkelhor, 1986).

While the factors which lead a person to become a
rapist or child molester are complex and multidimensional, one aspect which deserves attention is the offenders experience of abuse in his own development. The scars that sexually abused children live with are traumatic. Many adolescent offenders are now telling their tragic stories and revealing their emotional scars with which they are still attempting to deal. That cycle of the abused becoming abusers, while by no means universal, is one that professionals say they are seeing more and more. Fulton County Juvenile Court, Judge Tom Dillon, in Atlanta stated, "That is the tragedy we always fear, when we see a little child who is the victim of sodomy by some teenage male, we worry that this poor little child is going to grow up with that attraction to some other child," (The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, October, 1989, pp. (A 1, 18).

Although the complex social problem of sexual assault cannot be reduced to merely the result and perpetuation of early sexual victimization, the sexual assault of children and adolescents poses an issue that should not be ignored and underscores the need for intervention services to prevent any long-range after effects, whether these be sexual dysfunction, sexual aversion, sexual aggression, or other nonsexual
problems that may occur. Understanding that some aspect of the offenders' own early experience may contribute to his attacks, but it can enable more effective intervention, treatment, and counseling services for adolescent offenders. This is one way to begin breaking the cycle of abusive behavior, which seems to be so easily passed from generation to generation.
OVERVIEW OF MAJOR THEORETICAL ORIENTATIONS

If there is a history of sexual victimization connected to later child molestation, this evidence is consistent with the Social Learning Theory.

According to Muss (1988), social learning explanation can be used to understand some of the behavioral consequences seen in sexually abused children. A victim who later becomes an abuser may have "learned" from the previous abuse experience that it is an appropriate way to gain warmth, intimacy, sexual release, or power and control. As such, the victim wants to demonstrate power or to achieve warmth or intimacy.

The sexual behavior and repeated exploitation of some abuse victims can be explained using a classical paradigm. Some abuse experiences are nonthreatening and provide the child with considerable pleasure, at least initially. If the stimulation of the sexual activity results in physical pleasure for the child, the child may begin to associate physical pleasure and warm feelings with the exploitative situation of the abuse. The victim may encourage his or her own future exploitation because the exploitation has taken on the
same properties as the physical pleasure.

In psychological terms, the unconditioned stimulus of physical stimulation becomes paired with the conditioned stimulus of an exploitative situation.

Eventually, the presence of any exploitative situation alone brings about the physical pleasure. This theory will inform our research.
DEFINITION OF TERMS

Child sexual abuse - Any inappropriate suggestion or actual sexual exposing or touching between and adolescent or adult and child; forcing, manipulating, or tricking someone into sexual contact; contacts or interactions between a child and an adolescent or adult when the child is being used for sexual stimulation of that person (Hoyde, 1984).

Child Molestation - A person is guilty when he/she does any immoral or indecent act to or in the presence of or with any child under the age of 14 years with the intent to arouse or satisfy sexual desires of either the child or the person (Johnson, 1988).

Sexual Victimization - A child who is physically or sexually abused by an older person.

Incest - Sexual relations between opposite-sexed individuals, closely connected by blood kinship, the degree of kinship defined by law and social custom (Dictionary of Behavioral Science).

Sexual Perversions - A socially disapproved or prohibited form of conduct, particularly in sexual life (Dictionary of Behavioral Science).

Exploitation - Taking advantage of another person or group for one's own personal needs without consideration of the needs of that person or group (Dictionary of Behavioral Science).

Adolescent Sex Offender - An adolescent who commits sexual offenses.

Adolescent Perpetrator - A person between the ages of 13-17 who commits a crime or an offense for which he can be tried.

Pedophile - Sexual preference or attraction for children.
Indecent Liberties - Touching offenses which include fondling; vaginal, oral, or anal intercourse or attempted intercourse; touching of the genitals; incest, prostitution, and rape (National Committee for Prevention of Child Abuse).

Hands-Off Offenses - Nontouching offenses which include verbal sexual stimulation, such as frank discussions about sexual acts intended to arouse the child's interest or to shock the child; obscene telephone calls; exhibitionism; voyeurism, and letting down the bars of privacy so that the child watches or hears an act of sexual intercourse (National Committee for Prevention of Child Abuse).

Exhibitionism - A sexual impulse to exhibit one's genitals which may be displaced to their areas of the body (Dictionary of Behavioral Science).

Voyeurism - Sexual gratification obtained from peeping, especially from watching people engage in sexual intercourse (Dictionary of Behavioral Science).

Penetration - To find or force a way into or through; enter by piercing; to affect or move deeply.
STATEMENT OF HYPOTHESIS

There is no statistical significant difference between the relationship of previous sexual victimization and current perpetrators among adolescent child sexual abusers.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

"This is an exploratory and descriptive research design. This researcher will address primarily those factors that contributed to adolescent child sexual abuse as previous victims and current perpetrators in the Atlanta Youth Development Center. Adolescent child sexual abusers as "victims" and "perpetrators" is a complex phenomenon that cannot be ascribed to a single causative factor."

SAMPLING

This non-probability sampling consisted of all male adolescents who were convenient to the researcher and willing to respond to the researchers questionnaire. The sampling population was drawn from the Atlanta Youth Development Center for sex offenders. Variables used to select this population included confirmed adolescent child sexual abusers, victims and perpetrators between the ages of 13-18. The total
number of 25 adolescent child sexual abusers initially interviewed met the criteria; however, only 20 agreed to participate in the sample group.

Of the 20 males, all subjects were between the ages of 9-17, experiencing all of the psychosocial problems that the state of incarceration for adolescent child sexual abusers might endure.

**DATA COLLECTION**

The data for this study was obtained through group interviews, since this is the agency's recognized treatment model. Subsequently, individual interviews were scheduled with each participant, using a structured questionnaire before administering the questionnaire. These included written permission to the Director Mrs. Anne Strand, and a copy of the questionnaire. Confidentiality was ensured from the sample. Persons were given the option to refuse to participate in the study.

Each participant was interviewed, the purpose goals, and clear instructions for completing the questionnaire were provided. Time was allocated for questions and answers; the questions took approximately
30 minutes to complete. Expressions of appreciation were given to all participants and employees of Atlanta Youth Development Center who assisted with the questionnaire. The questionnaire was collected from the participants on the day of completion.

The instrument was adapted from the Sexual Assault Questions and Sexual Assault Victim Questions (Ageton, 1983); Index of Peer Relations (IPR); Index of Self-Esteem (ISE); Index of Sexual Satisfaction (ISS); Child's Attitude Toward Mother (CAM); Child's Attitude Toward Father (CAF) and Index of Family Relations (IFR), Hudson (1976).

A pretest was administered to four sex offender residents for the purpose of refining the instrument. As a result of this process, there were no deletion of items. The participants did not express any anxiety about sharing this type of information, therefore, there were no alterations in the questionnaire.

DATA ANALYSIS

The collected data was analyzed manually. This process allowed for certain basic principles regarding the observation of the data to emerge. This process allowed the researcher to discern a pattern in the
scores that perhaps was not immediately apparent.

The descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data, this included percentages and the frequency distribution data analysis.
CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

The Null Hypothesis:

\[ H_A: \text{There is no statistical significant difference between the relationship of previous sexual victimization and current perpetrators among adolescent child sexual abusers.} \]

Tables 1-2 indicate the strength of the relationship between the variables by describing different types of victimization and offenses associated with adolescent child sexual abusers.

**TABLE 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Victimization</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child Molestation</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggravated Child Molestation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Assault</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rape</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 indicates the history of abuse associated with
adolescent child sexual abusers. Thirty-five percent of the respondents had been victims of child molestation; 15% of the respondents had been victims of sexual assault or rape; 5% of the respondents were victims of aggravated child molestation, and 30% response was other indicating that of the identified categories, this 30% was not violated; however, there was evidence of some type of victimization.

**TABLE 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Offense</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child Molestation</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggravated Child Molestation</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Assault</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rape</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>20</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
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</table>

Table 2 reveals current offenses among adolescent child sexual abusers. Fifty-five percent of the respondents committed child molestation; 35% committed aggravated child molestation; and 5% had committed sexual assault or rape.

We reject the Null Hypothesis. We know that there is a relationship between previous sexual victimization and current perpetrators based on the results of the
percentages and the frequency distribution data analysis. We do not know how strong the variables are related. However, Tables 1-2 indicate the four types of victimization and offenses in rank order. Many respondents had been victimized by child molestation, sexual assault, and rape. Likewise, the respondents committed these types of offenses.

The following presentations are the results of the collected data. Table 3 reflects demographic profiles.

TABLE 3

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA OF RESPONDENTS

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<th>Variables</th>
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<tr>
<td>12-14</td>
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<td>15-17</td>
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<td>Variables</td>
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<td><strong>HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION:</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PARENTS YEARLY SALARY:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under $8,000</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$8,000 - $12,000</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$13,000 - $18,000</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$20,000 - $24,000</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over $25,000</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Demographically, the male adolescent child sexual abusers at Atlanta Youth Development Center, who
participated in the survey ranged from 9 to 17 years old. One (5%) was age 9-11; five (25%) were ages 12-14; and fourteen (70%) were ages 15-17.

Participants were of three ethnic backgrounds as reflected in Table 1. Thirteen out of the 20 respondents were white, six were black, and the remaining one was Indian. The educational level of respondents were: two had completed grades 7-9; twelve had completed grades 7-9; and six had completed grades 10-12. The respondents' parents marital status included to whose parent was single; seven whose parents were married; four whose parents were divorced; and seven whose parents were separated. With results indicating yearly household salary, out of the 20 respondents nine (45%) between $13,000 - $18,000; two (10%) between $20,000 - $24,000; two (10%) under $8,000; three between $8,000 - $12,000; and the remaining four (20%) over $25,000.

Table 4 covers the area of victimization of the respondents.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex against your Wishes:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexually threatened by a touch, grab, or kiss:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Contact with any of the following:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbor</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friend</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sister</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncle</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stepfather</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stepsister</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Cousin</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Involved in any of the following situations:

Threatened by

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sexual violence</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There was sexual violence towards me

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Violence towards me</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Afraid of being sexually Assaulted

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sexually Assaulted</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

None of the above

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>None of the above</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total:

| Total:            | 20        | 100     |

Eleven of the respondents (55%) had sex against their wishes and sexually threatened by touch, grab, or kiss; other nine (45%) had no experiences of sex against their wishes or sexually threatened by a touch, grab, or kiss. The respondents had sexual contact with
the following: six with a friend; three with a neighbor; three with a first cousin; two with a sister; and one with either mother, father, uncle, stepfather, stepsister, or other. When asked if they had ever been sexually threatened, out of 20 respondents two had been threatened; seven had sexual violence towards them; two afraid of being sexually assaulted; and the remaining nine had no experience of being sexually threatened.

According to Tables 5-10, the respondents were scored on their peer relations, sexual satisfaction, self-esteem, attitude toward mother, attitude toward father, and family relations. The maximum score was 25 and the lowest below 15.

Table 5 illustrates Index of Peer Relations, the scores ranged from 20-25 good peer relations, 15-19 fair peer relations, and below 15 poor peer relations.

**TABLE 5**

**INDEX OF PEER RELATIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scores</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20-25</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-19</td>
<td>Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below</td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Eight (40%) of the respondents had poor peer relations; seven (25%) had good peer relations; and five (25%) had good peer relations.

Table 6, Index of Sexual Satisfaction scores were 20-25 sexually satisfied, 15-19 moderately satisfied, and below 15 not sexually satisfied.

**TABLE 6**

**INDEX OF SEXUAL SATISFACTION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scores</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20-25</td>
<td>Satisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-19</td>
<td>Moderately Satisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below 15</td>
<td>Not Satisfied</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Sexual Satisfaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sexual Satisfaction</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately Satisfied</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Satisfied</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Out of 20 respondents, nine were moderately satisfied; six were not satisfied; and five were satisfied.

Table 7 shows Index of Self-Esteem the scores were 20 - 25 higher esteem, 15-19 moderate self-esteem, and below 15 low self-esteem.

**TABLE 7**

**INDEX OF SELF-ESTEEM**

**SCORES**

- **20-25** High
- **15-19** Moderate
- **Below 15** Low
Eight of the participants had low self-esteem; seven had moderate self-esteem; and five had high self esteem.

Tables 8-9 illustrate Index of Child's Attitude toward Mother and Father. The scores were 20-25 favorable attitude, 15-19 moderately favorable attitude, and below 15 unfavorable attitude.

TABLE 8
INDEX OF CHILD'S ATTITUDE TOWARD MOTHER

Scores
20-25 Favorable
15-19 Moderately Favorable
Below 15 Unfavorable

Attitudes Toward Mother  Frequency  Percent
Favorable             5        25
Moderately Favorable  10       50
Unfavorable           5        25
Total                 20       100
TABLE 9

INDEX OF CHILD’S ATTITUDE TOWARD FATHER

Scores
20-25   Favorable
15-19   Moderately Favorable
Below 15 Unfavorable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitude Toward Father</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The respondents scores: ten moderately favorable attitudes toward mother and seven moderately favorable attitudes toward father; five favorable attitudes toward Mother and eight favorable attitudes toward Father; and five unfavorable attitudes toward both Mother and Father. In addition, Table 10, Index of Family Relations scores ranged from 20-25 good family relations, and 15-19 fair family relations, and below 15 poor family relations.
TABLE 10

INDEX OF FAMILY RELATIONS

Scores
20-25 Good
15-19 Fair
Below 15 Poor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Relations</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Seven of the respondents had both fair and poor family relations and the other six had good family relations.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter presents an overview of this study. Specifically, a summary, conclusions, limitations, and recommendations are presented.

SUMMARY

The data analysis indicates that there is a relationship between previous sexual victimization and current adolescent perpetrators. The most prominent type of victimization and type of offense is child molestation, 35% victimization and 55% offense; aggravated child molestation 5% victimization and 35% offense; sexual assault and rape 15% victimization and 5% offense. The indication that there is a relationship between the variables supports the literature. There is some agreement with the pervasive belief among writers such as Johnson (1988), Finkelhor (1986), and Groth (1984) that previous sexual victimization impacts current adolescent perpetrators.

Child molestation is the most significant type of
victimization and offense. The reasons for the response were concrete. The abuser had sexually threatened the child, and the child later uses this threat as a means of power and control over someone else. Therefore, it is interpreted that the real immediacy felt by child molestation resulting from tangible experience rendered the high response.

An explanation for the low significance of the remaining contributing factors is that with a larger sample, different findings, conclusions, and interpretations may have developed.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions are justified. Adolescent child sexual abusers are being abused and abusing others. Many reported that they had sex against their wishes, sexually threatened, or afraid of being sexually threatened. Also these offenders molested, sexually assaulted, or raped others. Eleven (11) adolescent sex offenders had sex against their wishes and eleven (11) had a committing offense of child molestation. It appears that family violence impacts on adolescents who
are abused during childhood. The sample size was administered at the Atlanta Youth Development Center in one regional locale - Atlanta, Georgia. This study did not represent participants from other localities. The study cannot be generalized to the entire population of adolescent child sexual offenders.

SUGGESTED RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

The study of adolescent sex offenders is not an easy task. Such individuals do not make enthusiastic or cooperative subjects, and the matters of most interest to the researcher are least interested in divulging. Yet, there is perhaps no more important need in the field of sexual abuse. Research on adolescent sex offenders is an area in which little is known and additional findings may provide large funding for prevention and treatment efforts. For example, when research on sexual child abusers demonstrated that the abused child was at high risk of becoming an abuser, it led very rapidly to prevention programs or treatment groups aimed at providing services to the abused child. In addition, studies of offenders and their likelihood to reoffend may cast light on many crucial questions concerning the handling and treatment
of child sex abuse cases. It is of utmost importance in the effort to deal with the problem of sexual abuse that research be turned in this direction.
CHAPTER VI

IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

Social workers play an integral part in the area of child sexual abuse. During the span of their practice, social workers will encounter adolescent child sexual abusers, such as in child protective services, hospital settings, courts, and juvenile detention centers. The implication for social workers based on the findings of this study can be carried out through research, practice, and education.

Social workers are unique because they are trained in various theories and values. Social Learning Theory takes into account the client's physical, social, and psychological environment. Social Learning Theory for adolescent child sexual abusers can include the family, community, or health services. Social workers will need to integrate and negotiate these systems and identify other treatment and preventive strategies.

Although social workers help people in crises, more attention may need to be given to prevention. The problems of children growing up in the cycle of violence needs to be addressed. The results indicate
that abuse affects the child later in life. Usually, that child becomes an abuser himself.

Society's values and attitudes bear a double standard towards sex abusers. It is important that clinicians employ humanistic values toward their clients. Social workers who treat juvenile sex offenders must communicate caring through limit setting, support, and helping the juvenile come to grips with unresolved life issues such as lack of self-confidence, immaturity, and feelings of inferiority to name a few. The humanistic principles enable the uniqueness of each individual and their situation.

The seriousness of the problem involving adolescent sex offenders should not be overlooked or underestimated. From this point, social workers need to develop treatment programs to work with the adolescent sex offender as well as continue to research this segment of the population.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


March 2, 1990

Mrs. Anne Strand, Director  
Atlanta Youth Development Center  
4525 Bakers Ferry Road, S.W.  
Atlanta, Georgia 30331

Dear Mrs. Strand:

I am requesting permission to collect information from the adolescent sex offenders in the Atlanta Youth Development Center, as part of my research project in the Clinical Social Work Program at Clark Atlanta University.

The goal of this research project is to find those factors that are associated with previous sexual victimization and how it affects the adolescent in becoming a perpetrator of children. Confidentiality and anonymity will be assured. The resident's name will not appear on the questionnaire. The questionnaire will be destroyed once the study is completed.

I hope that you will be willing to help in my research project. Participation in this project is not mandatory. You are welcome to ask questions regarding the study. You may contact me at my office 696-1020 extension 5261 or at my Thesis Supervisor's number 880-8561.

Respectfully yours,

Carol Thomas  
Graduate Student

CT/map
APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE

This is not a test. Your responses are confidential. Please do not write your name on this questionnaire.

All of the questions should be answered by marking one of the answer spaces. Please mark an "X" on the line for the answer that best applies to you.

Demographic Data:

1. Sex
   ____ Male
   ____ Female

2. What is your race?
   ____ Black
   ____ White
   ____ Hispanic
   ____ Indian
   ____ Other

3. How old are you?
   ____ 9   ____ 13   ____ 7
   ____ 10   ____ 14
   ____ 11   ____ 15
   ____ 12   ____ 16

4. What is your highest level of education?
   ____ Grade
   ____ College Graduate
   ____ Some college

5. How many siblings do you have?
   ____ Brothers
   ____ Sisters

6. Parents marital status:
7. Who lives in your household?

___ Mother
___ Father
___ Siblings
___ Other

8. What is your parents yearly income?

___ Under $8,000
___ $8,000 - $12,000
___ $13,000 - $18,000
___ $19,000 - $21,000
___ $21,000 - $24,000
___ Over $25,000

SEXUAL VICTIMIZATION DATA

9. What is your committing offense?

___ Aggravated child molestation
___ Child molestation
___ Sexual assault
___ Rape

10. Were you ever the victim of:

Aggravated child molestation

___ Yes
___ No

Child molestation

___ Yes
___ No

Sexual assault

___ Yes
___ No
11. How old were you when you became aware of sex?  
   ____ Age

12. How old were you when you first had sex?  
   ____ Age

13. a. Before you turned 13, did anyone (an adult) ever show their vagina or penis to you?  
       ____ Yes  
       ____ No

   b. If "yes", how did it make you feel?  
       ____ Angry  
       ____ Scared  
       ____ Excited  
       ____ Other ____________________

   c. Was there anyone for you to discuss this with?  
       ____ Yes  
       ____ No

14. a. Has anyone ever had sex with you against your wishes?  
       ____ Yes  
       ____ No

   b. If "yes", how old were you when this happened?
c. How old was the person who did this to you?

___ 18-21    ___ 34-37
___ 22-25    ___ 38-40
___ 26-29    ___ Over 40
___ 30-33

d. What was their sex?

___ Male
___ Female

15. a. Has anyone ever felt you, grabbed you, or kissed you in a way in which you felt was sexually threatening?

___ Yes
___ No

b. If "yes", what happened during this experience?

__________________________________________________________________________________

16. Some people have experienced unwanted sexual advances by someone who had authority over them. Did you ever have any unwanted experience with the following?

___ Doctor    ___ Policeman    ___ Minister
___ Social Worker    ___ Nurse    ___ Teacher
___ Neighbor    ___ Friend
___ Other    ___ Counselor

17. People often do not think about their relatives when thinking about sexual experiences. Have you ever had any sexual contact with the following?

___ Mother
___ Father
___ Uncle
18. Has anyone closely related to you had any sexual contact with you?

- Aunt
- Brother
- Sister
- Other

19. Have you ever been in any of the following situations?

- Threatened by sexual violence
- There was sexual violence towards
- Afraid of being sexually assaulted
- None of the above

20. Can you think of any other unwanted sexual experience that you have not mentioned?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please explain what the unwanted sexual experience was?

21. Instructions: Answer each item as carefully and as accurately as you can by placing a number beside each one as follows:

"1" Rarely or none of the time
"2" A little of the time
"3" Some of the time
"4" A good part of the time
"5" Most or all of the time

**Peer Relations**

22. I get along well with my peers
23. I cannot stand to be around my peers
24. My peers seem to look down on me
25. I really feel that I am disliked by my peers
26. I feel that I am an important member of my peer group

**Sexual Satisfaction**

27. Sex is fun for me
28. I feel that sex is dirty and disgusting.
29. I try to avoid sexual contact with children.
30. It is easy for me to get sexually excited by a child.

**Self-Esteem**

31. I feel that people would not like me if they really knew me well.
32. I feel that I am a beautiful person.
33. I feel that I am a bore to people.
34. I feel that I get pushed around more than others.

**Attitude Toward Mother**

35. My Mother gets on my nerves.
36. I get along well with my Mother.
37. I feel that I can really trust my Mother.
38. I wish I had a different Mother.
39. I feel I do not love my Mother.

**Attitude Toward Father**

40. I really hate my Father.
41. I feel violent toward my Father.
42. I really enjoy my Father.
43. I wish I had a different Father.
44. I am proud of my Father.
Family Relations

45. The members of my family really care about each other.
46. I wish I was not part of this family.
47. Life in my family is generally unpleasant.
48. My family does not understand me.

Thank you for your cooperation.