
children behavior Factors associated with sexual behavior problems in young sexually abused children

Posted by jason.pope - 2008/11/18 07:15

Factors associated with sexual behavior problems in young sexually abused children Hall DK, Mathews F, Pearce J Child Abuse Negl 1998 Oct 22:10 1045-63 Abstract OBJECTIVE: To identify variables associated with the presence of sexual behavior problems in young sexually abused children. METHOD: Data were gathered from the clinical records of 100 sexually abused boys and girls ages 3-7 years enrolled in two treatment programs. Information was coded systematically on approximately 350 areas related to the child and family's history and functioning, the sexual abuse experience, and treatment outcome. The children were grouped and compared according to their presenting sexual behavior into three categories: (1) developmentally "expected"; (2) "sexualized/self-focused"; and (3) problematic "interpersonal" sexual behavior. RESULTS: Bivariate and multivariate analyses highlighted five variables which were predictive of sexual behavior problems among sexually abused children. Sexual arousal of the child during his/her sexual abuse, the perpetrator's use of sadism, and a history of physical and emotional abuse differentiated between those children with and without "interpersonal" sexual behavior problems. Who the child blamed for his/her sexual abuse further contributed to the distinction between children whose sexual behavior was exclusively "self-focused" (sexualized) versus "interpersonal." CONCLUSIONS: The five major predictor variables, as well as other variables identified in this study, have potential utility in assessing child risk for negative outcomes and determining referral priorities for sexual abuse treatment. Given that sexual arousal and who the child blames for the abuse are prominent variables associated with sexual problems and self-blame, clinicians will need to ensure that sexually abused children and their caregivers are given specific opportunities to deal with these areas in the supportive context of treatment. Children with sexual behavior problems differ not only in the type and level of sexual behavior they exhibit but in most other areas as well, suggesting a need for differential assessment and individualized treatment approaches.

=====