

RESEARCH ARTICLE

**Female perpetrators of child sexual abuse: characteristics of the offender and
victim**

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1 **Abstract**

2 **Purpose:** This study investigates the prevalence rates of female perpetrated
3 child sexual abuse in Ireland and explores the victim and perpetrator characteristics
4 associated with the abuse. **Methods:** Data were from a nationally representative survey
5 investigating sexual violence among adults living in Ireland ($n = 3120$). Descriptive
6 statistics and regression analysis investigated the characteristics of female versus male
7 perpetrated sexual abuse. **Results:** Approximately 6% of all the victims of child sexual
8 abuse in the sample were abused by a lone female, which represents 1.5% of the overall
9 adult population. Analyses indicated that male and female perpetrated abuse differ
10 mainly in terms of the demographic characteristics of the perpetrators and victims:
11 Female perpetrators are more likely to be younger, and are more likely to abuse male
12 victims and older children and adolescents (9-17 years), compared with male
13 perpetrators. Additionally, female perpetrators are less likely to be a stranger to the
14 victim and in a position of authority, compared with male perpetrators. **Conclusion:**
15 Treatment services should be particularly tailored for female perpetrated abuse, as the
16 dynamics between the victim and perpetrator are likely to be different to male
17 perpetrated abuse. The study adds to this relatively neglected area of research.

18

19 **Keywords**

20 Gender differences; females; prevalence; child sexual abuse; child abusers

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1 Despite the typical view of a sex offender being male, it is now well established
2 that a proportion of child sex offenders are female (Cortoni & Hanson, 2005; Finkelhor,
3 Hotaling, Lewis, & Smith, 1990; Faller, 1996; Gannon & Rose, 2008; Peter, 2009). The
4 substantial body of research on male child sex offending aims to identify risk factors for
5 offending, and to improve the assessment and treatment of these offenders. However, less
6 research has been conducted on female offending and thus much less is known about
7 these offenders. To date, there has been no study investigating the prevalence of female
8 perpetrated sexual abuse in Ireland. This relative lack of research has hampered
9 developments in the appropriate assessment and treatment for female offenders (Gannon
10 & Rose, 2008). The aim of the current research is to investigate the prevalence and
11 characteristics of female perpetrated child sexual abuse in Ireland, using data from a large
12 retrospective study of sexual abuse.

13 The reported prevalence of female perpetrated child sex abuse varies considerably
14 across studies depending on the methodology used and the sample under investigation.
15 For example, a US national adult survey reported a prevalence rate of just over 1% for
16 female perpetrated child sexual abuse, compared with a prevalence rate of 20% for male
17 perpetrated abuse (Finkelhor et al., 1990), whereas data from national crime statistics in
18 the US suggest that 6% of offenders who sexually assaulted juveniles between 1991 and
19 1996 were female (Snyder, 2000). Elsewhere, a prevalence rate of 10.7% for female
20 perpetrated abuse was reported by child abuse victims from welfare agencies in Canada
21 (Peter, 2009). In a review of international studies from both official court and police
22 records and victimisation studies, Cortoni and Hanson (2005) found that women were
23 responsible for 4-5% of all sexual offences. Cortoni, Hanson & Coache (2010) estimate
24 that the ratio of female to male sex offenders is approximately 1:20

1 It is generally accepted that a large proportion of sexual abuse goes unreported,
2 and official records of abuse may not be an accurate reflection of its occurrence
3 (Finkelhor, 1994; Fergusson, Horwood, & Woodward, 2000). Additionally, it has been
4 suggested that incidents of female perpetrated abuse may be particularly vulnerable to
5 underreporting given the barriers and myths surrounding the abuse (Hetherington, 1999;
6 Gannon & Rose, 2008), such as the traditional gender role of females as non-sexual, non-
7 violent nurturers who could not commit sexual abuse (Denov, 2004; Johansson-Love &
8 Fremouw, 2006). Denov (2004) suggests that when professionals encounter female
9 perpetrated abuse, they attempt to realign the offender and their offences with more
10 culturally acceptable notions of female behaviour as being nurturing, thus distorting the
11 information presented.

12 Researchers have identified a number of commonalities and differences between
13 male perpetrated and female perpetrated child sexual abuse. A history of childhood sexual
14 victimisation is common to both male and female perpetrators, although the rate is higher
15 among female perpetrators than that of male perpetrators (Giguere & Bumby, 2007;
16 Johansson-Love & Fremouw, 2006). For example, Mathews, Hunter and Vuz (1997)
17 found that 78% of juvenile female perpetrators reported childhood sexual victimization
18 compared with a frequency of 44% for their male counterparts. Whilst both male and
19 female perpetrators are likely to know their victim (Faller, 1996; Fromuth & Conn, 1997;
20 Vandiver & Kercher, 2004), female sex offenders are more likely than male perpetrators
21 to be in a care-giving role with the victim (Lewis & Stanley, 2000; Vandiver & Walker,
22 2002); to be relatively young (Faller, 1996; Vandiver & Walker, 2002; Vandiver &
23 Kercher, 2004); and to have a co-offender (typically male) present during the abuse
24 (Kaplan & Green, 1995; Nathan & Ward, 2001).

1 Research findings on whether male or female children are most at risk for female
2 perpetrated abuse are inconsistent, possibly due to methodological differences across the
3 studies. Finkelhor et al. (1990) reported that 17% of male victims and 1% of female
4 victims of child sexual abuse were abused by a female perpetrator. The UK National
5 Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children found that 17% of the callers to
6 Childline in 2008/2009, who reported sexual abuse and named the gender of the
7 perpetrator, reported that their abusers were female ; 6% of female children and 36% of
8 the male children reported that their abuser was female (Mariathasan, 2009). However,
9 other research suggests that females may be more at risk for female perpetrated abuse
10 than males (Faller, 1987; Peter, 2009). The increased risk for girls, found in these studies,
11 may be due to the female perpetrator co-offending with a male, and males have been
12 found to offend against girls at a higher frequency than they offend against boys (Snyder,
13 2000). Research also indicates that victims of female perpetrated abuse tend to fall into
14 the pubescent and post-pubescent age range (12-17 years) (Vandiver & Kercher, 2004;
15 Ferguson & Meehan, 2005).

16 It has also been suggested that the effects on victims of female perpetrated abuse
17 are similar to those of male perpetrated abuse, and include low self-esteem, anger,
18 emotional and behavioural difficulties (Dube et al., 2005). However, Bunting (2005) has
19 argued that the myths surrounding abuse by females, such as women are incapable of
20 sexual abuse, or sexual abuse by women is harmless (Hetherton, 1999), leads to increased
21 stigma and isolation for victims. These myths may also affect the victims' perception of
22 the abuse, such that victims may hold gender-role expectations of females as non-abusive
23 nurturers which can lead to confusion and difficulty perceiving the behaviour as abusive
24 (Denov, 2004). Bunting (2005) suggested that the primary difference between male and
25 female perpetrated abuse is the increase in the sense of isolation felt by the victims of

1 female perpetrators and the incredulous reactions of professionals. This highlights the
2 importance of increased awareness of female perpetrated abuse, through research studies
3 investigating the prevalence of such abuse, particularly in countries where evidence is
4 relatively sparse, such as Ireland.

5 The invisibility of female perpetrated abuse is particularly evident in the Irish
6 context, in which the first conviction of a female perpetrator of a sexual offence was in
7 2009 (Children at Risk in Ireland, 2009), likely due to recent changes to the law on
8 defilement of a child under the age of 17 years. Notwithstanding the low official
9 conviction rate, a recent Irish study found that a large proportion of health care
10 professionals (social workers, counsellors and psychologists) had experience of victims
11 of such offences; 60% of the sample of 86 respondents had contact with victims of female
12 perpetrated child sex abuse and 44% had contact with the female perpetrators of abuse
13 (Lambert & Hammond, 2009). However, despite the frequency of contact, only 8% of the
14 sample reported having received training specifically related to female sexual offending.

15 These findings highlight the lack of attention given to sexual abuse by females,
16 particularly in Ireland. The current study investigates this issue using a large nationally
17 representative sample. While much of the research studies to date have employed small
18 clinical samples, the current study employs a large cross sectional sample from the Sexual
19 Abuse and Violence in Ireland (SAVI) (McGee, Garavan, de Barra, Byrne & Conroy,
20 2002; McGee, Garavan, Byrne, O'Higgins & Conroy, 2011) study. This study
21 investigated the retrospective accounts of adults' experiences of sexual abuse in
22 childhood and adulthood. This was the first of such studies carried out in Ireland and
23 found that 27% of the adults living in Ireland experienced some form of sexual abuse in
24 their childhood. Specifically, the current study conducts secondary analysis on the SAVI
25 study to investigate the prevalence of, and characteristics associated with, female

1 perpetrated child sexual abuse in Ireland. The study will also investigate how these
2 characteristics may be different to male perpetrated abuse.

3 **Method**

4 **Survey**

5 The data used was obtained from the Sexual Abuse and Violence in Ireland
6 (SAVI) study (McGee et al., 2002). The SAVI study was the first large scale survey of
7 sexual abuse and violence in Ireland and collected retrospective data on adult accounts of
8 childhood abuse. The study design was a national cluster-randomized interview study.
9 All interviews were conducted by telephone. Calls were conducted using random digit
10 dialling which enabled contact with ex-directory/unlisted numbers and new telephone
11 numbers to ensure a nationally representative sample of community dwelling Irish adults.
12 Fieldwork was carried out between March and June, 2001. A total of 3,120 adults (49%
13 male and 51% female) were interviewed (response rate, 71.4%). The survey items
14 covered demographics, public perceptions of violence, education and interventions, rape
15 attitudes, experiences of sexual harassment, and experiences of sexual abuse.
16 Respondents who reported experience of abuse also completed a section detailing their
17 personal experiences of, and barriers to, disclosure, after-effects of sexual victimisation,
18 and experiences with counselling or therapy services. Public perceptions of abuse were
19 also investigated, which involved general questions, not related to their own abuse, on
20 media coverage of abuse and services offered for abuse victims.

21 **Sample**

22 The sample consisted of 1529 (49%) men and 1591 (51%) women. The data were
23 not weighted. The representativeness of the sample was examined against the 2001
24 Quarterly National Household Survey. The gender breakdown was identical and the age

1 breakdown was broadly similar across the two populations and therefore the actual figures
2 obtained in the survey are used in analyses (see McGee et al., 2002 for further details).

3 **Procedure**

4 Ethical approval for the SAVI study was obtained from the Royal College of
5 Surgeons in Ireland Research Ethics Committee. Given the sensitive nature of the topic,
6 guidance was provided by the Dublin Rape Crisis Centre Study Monitoring Group and
7 the data were gathered in line with the World Health Organisation's framework for
8 research on domestic violence against women (World Health Organisation, 1999).
9 Researchers were specifically trained to conduct the interviews and received regular
10 supervision.

11 **Measures**

12 **History of child sexual abuse**

13 Participants were asked a number of behaviourally specific and explicit questions
14 relating to their sexual experiences before the age of 17 (see Appendix for complete
15 questionnaire). Respondents were advised that the questions did not refer to consensual
16 acts with someone of a similar age to them at the time to ensure consensual
17 experimentation sexual behaviour was not included. There were 12 items measuring child
18 sex abuse (CSA). CSA was defined as one or more of the listed types of sexual interaction
19 which occurred before the age of 17. The items measuring CSA were categorised
20 according to whether the abuse involved 'non-contact abuse'; 'non-penetrative contact
21 abuse' and 'penetrative abuse'. Non-contact abuse was operationalized as abuse that did
22 not involve any physical contact between the child and the perpetrator, which included
23 the child being shown pornography that made them feel uncomfortable, being asked to
24 take off their clothes, someone exposing their genital organs to the child and someone
25 masturbating in front of the child (items E10, E11, E12 and E13 in the History of child

1 sexual abuse Questionnaire). Non-penetrative contact abuse was operationalized as abuse
2 where there was physical contact between the perpetrator and victim, excluding
3 penetration but including attempted penetration (items E14, E15, E16 and E17).
4 Penetrative abuse included oral, anal or vaginal penetration (items E18, E19, E20 and
5 E21). Those respondents who reported a history of child sexual abuse ($n = 835$) were
6 asked a follow-up questions to investigate the context of the abuse.

7 **Detailed interview on abuse experiences**

8 Respondents were then asked about the context in which the abuse occurred. This
9 interview investigated the details of the experience of the abuse, details of the victim at
10 the time of the questionnaire and details of the perpetrator (as outlined below).

11 *Victim specific variables*

12 Respondents were asked how old they were when the abuse started/happened.
13 This variable was coded into categories representing the pre-pubescent period ('0-8
14 years'); the pubescent period ('9-14 years') and the post-pubescent period ('15-17 years').
15 Respondents were asked if they ever told anyone about the abuse (labelled 'disclosure of
16 abuse to others' and coded as 'yes' or 'no'); and whether their experiences were ever
17 reported to the police.

18 *Perpetrator specific variables*

19 Respondents were asked what gender the perpetrator was. Respondents were also
20 asked whether there was more than one male perpetrator involved in the abuse but they
21 were not asked about the presence of a female co-perpetrator¹. Therefore only data on the

¹ Respondents were asked if the person involved in the abuse was, one male; one female; more than one male; or 'other'. Data was not available on the other category and therefore no information was available on the presence of a female co-perpetrator. Forty-two cases were removed from analysis where the 'more than one male' or 'other' response was given.

1 single perpetrator abuse was analysed ($n = 677$) (coded as ‘one male perpetrator’ or ‘one
2 female perpetrator’). Respondents were also asked about the relationship the person had
3 with them (coded as ‘acquaintance’; ‘stranger’; ‘relative’ or ‘other’); what age the person
4 was when the abuse started/happened (coded as ‘under 16’; ‘16-25 years’ and ‘26 years
5 and over’); and whether the perpetrator was in a position of authority.

6 *Type of the abuse*

7 Respondents were asked whether physical force or restraints were ever used
8 during the abuse (labelled as ‘force used’ and coded as ‘yes or ‘no’). As noted above, the
9 type of abuse involved was coded as ‘non-contact abuse’, ‘contact abuse’, and
10 ‘penetrative abuse’.

11 **Analytic Plan**

12 The analysis involved three steps. First, the overall prevalence of female
13 perpetrated abuse was examined. Second, descriptive statistics explored the
14 characteristics of female and male perpetrated abuse. The results are presented in relation
15 to victim characteristics (gender, age, whether they ever told and whether they reported
16 the offence to the police); perpetrator characteristics (age, relationship with victim, and
17 position of authority); and the abuse type (whether force was used during the abuse and
18 whether the abuse was contact/non-contact/penetrative). The age difference between the
19 victim and the perpetrator across the two victim groups (male perpetrated abuse and
20 female perpetrated abuse) was investigated using a t-test. The characteristics of female
21 perpetrated abuse were also examined in relation to the gender of the victim, using
22 descriptive statistics. Finally, a binary logistic regression was conducted to examine the
23 characteristics associated with female perpetrated abuse, compared with male perpetrated
24 abuse.

25 **Results**

1 **Prevalence Rates**

2 Almost 6% of those who experienced CSA were abused by a female perpetrator ($n = 47$).

3 This represents 1.5% of the total population.

4 [Insert Table 1 about here]

5 **Descriptive Statistics of Female Perpetrated Abuse**

6 **Victim characteristics**

7 As indicated in Table 1, eighty-five per cent of all the female perpetrated abuse victims
8 were male ($n = 40$). Eighty per cent of the female perpetrated abuse victims were abused
9 when they were over 8 years old ($n = 38$). Most victims of female perpetrated abuse never
10 told anyone about the abuse (60%) ($n = 28$). Of those victims of female perpetrated abuse
11 who told someone else about the abuse, six of the 14 victims were in the younger age
12 group (0-8 years) (43%), three were in the middle age group (9-14 years) (21%) and the
13 remaining five were in the older age group (15-17 years) (36%) when they were abused.
14 Ten of the 14 victims who told someone about the abuse were male (71%) and the
15 remaining four were female (29%). None of the female perpetrated abuse victims reported
16 the abuse to the police.

17 **Perpetrator characteristics**

18 A very low proportion of female perpetrated abuse was committed by a stranger (4%) (n
19 = 2) and 53% of the perpetrators were non-relatives, known to the victim ($n = 25$). The
20 majority of female perpetrators were not an authority figure (75%) ($n = 35$).

21 Almost one in three of the female perpetrators were under 16 years of age ($n =$
22 15). The mean age of the female perpetrators at the time of the abuse ($M = 21.3$ years, SD
23 = 9.7) was lower than that of the male perpetrators ($M = 34.1$ years, $SD = 15.5$); $t(655) =$
24 5.56, $p < 0.001$.

1 The difference between the age of the victim and the age of the perpetrator was
2 also examined. The age difference between the victim and the perpetrator was smaller for
3 female perpetrators ($M = 9.1$ years, $SD = 9.7$) than it was for male perpetrators ($M = 23.2$
4 years, $SD = 15.9$) ($t(652) = 5.97$, $p < 0.001$).

5 **Offence Characteristics**

6 Thirteen per cent of the female perpetrated abuse involved non-contact abuse ($n = 6$);
7 66% involved non-penetrative contact sexual abuse ($n = 31$); and 21% involved
8 penetrative abuse ($n = 10$). Of those female perpetrated abuse victims who experienced
9 non-penetrative contact abuse, 23% were in the younger age group (0-8 years); 42% were
10 in the middle age group (9-14 years); and the remaining 35% were in the older age group
11 (15-17 years) at the time of the abuse. Of the 10 female perpetrated abuse victims who
12 experienced penetrative abuse, one was a female in the youngest age category (0-8 years)
13 (10%), three were males in the middle age group (9-14 years) (30%) and six were males
14 in the older age group (15-17 years) (60%). Half of the cases of female perpetuated
15 penetrative abuse consisted of abuse where there was less than five years difference
16 between the perpetrator and the victim ($n = 5$). Only one respondent reported that force
17 was used during the female perpetrated abuse (2%).

18 **Characteristics of Female Perpetrated Abuse According to Victim Gender**

19 There were seven female and forty male victims of female perpetuated abuse. The
20 majority of the male victims of female perpetrators were in the older age groups; 43% of
21 the victims were ages 9-14 years ($n = 17$) and a further 47% were ages 15-17 years ($n =$
22 19) when the abuse occurred. Five of the seven female victims were in the younger age
23 group (0-8 years) (71%) and the remaining two in the middle age group (9-14 years)
24 (29%).

1 Eleven of the (28%) male victims were abused by a perpetrator under the age of
2 16; 21 (52%) were abused by a perpetrator ages 16-25 years; and eight (20%) were abused
3 by a perpetrator aged 26 years or over. Of the seven female victims, four were abused by
4 a perpetrator under the age of 16 (57%) and three were abused by a perpetrator aged 26
5 years and older (43%). The age difference between the victim and the perpetrator was
6 also examined. The mean age difference between a female perpetrator and a female victim
7 was 12.7 years ($SD = 12.2$). The mean age difference between a female perpetrator and a
8 male victim was 8.5 years ($SD = 9.2$).

9 Five of the male victims (13%) experienced non-contact abuse; 26 (65%)
10 experienced contact abuse; and nine victims (22%) experienced penetrative abuse. Five
11 of the seven female victims experienced non-penetrative contact sexual abuse (71%)
12 while one experienced non-contact abuse (14%) and one experienced penetrative abuse
13 (14%).

14

15 **Comparison of Female Perpetrated and Male Perpetrated Abuse**

16 A binary logistic regression investigated the characteristics associated with female
17 perpetrated abuse compared with male perpetrated abuse. As indicated in Table 2, female
18 perpetrators were more likely to abuse male victims than female victims ($OR = 10.62$,
19 $95\% CI = 3.85 - 29.28$). Female perpetrators were less likely to abuse younger victims
20 (0-8 years ($OR = 0.13$, $95\% CI = 0.06 - 0.47$); 9-14 years ($OR = 0.13$, $95\% CI = 0.05 -$
21 0.34)) compared with older victims (15-17 years).

22 Female perpetrators were less likely to abuse a stranger compared with an
23 acquaintance ($OR = 0.08$, $95\% CI = 0.01 - 0.77$). Female perpetrators were also more
24 likely to be young when they abused their victim (under 16 years ($OR = 7.44$, $95\% CI =$
25 $0.06 - 0.47$); 16-25 years ($OR = 4.17$, $95\% CI = 1.60 - 10.87$)) than old (over 26 years of

1 age). Female perpetrators were less likely to be an authority figure ($OR = 0.21$, 95% CI =
2 0.07 - 0.59). There were no differences between male perpetrated and female perpetrated
3 abuse in terms of the type of abuse and use of force. Victims did not differ in their
4 likelihood of disclosing the abuse to others.

5 [Insert Table 2 about here]

6 **Discussion**

8 The current results, using nationally representative data, indicate that six per cent
9 of those who experienced child sexual abuse in the current study were abused by a female
10 perpetrator, similar to Cortoni and colleagues estimates of 4-5% (Cortoni & Gannon,
11 2011). This indicates that a considerable number of individuals in Ireland have been
12 sexually abused by a female in childhood or adolescence, yet the crime remains invisible
13 and does not appear to be reflected in official crime statistics.

14 A number of variables were identified which distinguished between male and
15 female perpetrated abuse; these differences were generally found in the demographics of
16 both the victims and perpetrators. The current findings suggest lone female perpetrators
17 are more likely to abuse male victims, which is consistent with some previous studies
18 (Finkelhor et al., 1990; Dube et al., 2005) but inconsistent with others (e.g. Faller, 1987;
19 Peter, 2009). Additionally, females were more likely to abuse victims in the middle and
20 older age groups (9-17 years), similar to previous findings (Vandiver & Kercher, 2004;
21 Ferguson & Meehan, 2005). This may indicate that female perpetrators are more likely to
22 show more hebephilic sexual interest, compared to the typical view of the paedophilic
23 sexual offender.

24 Furthermore, female perpetrators were more likely to be young compared to male
25 perpetrators, consistent with previous findings (Faller, 1996; Vandiver & Walker, 2002;
26 Vandiver & Kercher, 2004). The age difference between the perpetrator and the victim

1 was smaller for the female perpetrators, approximately 10 years. In particular, the age
2 difference for heterosexual abuse (between the female perpetrator and the male victim)
3 was particularly small, at 8.5 years (compared with 12.7 years for female perpetrated
4 abuse of females and 23.2 years for male perpetrated abuse). Furthermore, female
5 perpetrators were less likely to be a stranger to the victim and less likely to be in a position
6 of authority, compared with male perpetrators.

7 Taken together, these are notable findings which indicate that lone female
8 perpetrators offend at a young age and are more likely to offend against adolescent males
9 (9-17 years) known to them. These findings suggest that treatment services aimed at both
10 perpetrators and victims should be particularly tailored for female perpetrated abuse, as
11 the dynamics between the victim and perpetrator are likely to be different to that of male
12 perpetrated abuse.

13 There were no differences found between the male perpetrated and female
14 perpetrated abuse victims in terms of their likelihood of disclosing the abuse. Similar to
15 male perpetrated abuse, the majority of those abused by a female perpetrator have never
16 told anyone about the abuse and none of the 29 respondents who responded to this
17 question, reported the female perpetrated abuse to the police. This may, in part, explain
18 the poor conviction rate for female perpetrated abuse. Given that most of the perpetrators
19 were known to the person reporting abuse, it is possible that the perpetrator-victim
20 relationship may have made disclosure of the abuse difficult (Denov, 2004).

21 There were no differences between male and female perpetrated abuse in terms of
22 the type of abuse perpetrated or the use of force during the abuse. The majority of the
23 female perpetrated abuse involved non-penetrative contact abuse, similar to male
24 perpetrated abuse. However, a notable percentage (21%) consisted of penetrative abuse.
25 Half of the female perpetrated penetrative abuse involved victims who were less than five

1 years younger than the perpetrator, which again highlights the small age-difference
2 between victim and perpetrator.

3 The large nationally-representative sample is a particular strength of the current
4 study which provides valuable information on the prevalence of this type of abuse.
5 Furthermore, the study investigates female perpetrated abuse from the point of view of
6 the victim rather than the perpetrator and therefore allows for the consideration of aspects
7 such as disclosure of the abuse. However, there are also limitations to the study, including
8 its reliance on retrospective accounts of abuse which may have resulted in the data being
9 affected by recall effects. Additionally, the respondents were only asked about male co-
10 perpetrators and thus the prevalence of female perpetrators offending with a male
11 accomplice could not be investigated.

12 In conclusion, the current findings suggest that female perpetrated abuse affects
13 1.5% of the population, which translates to over 67 000 people in the Republic of Ireland.
14 However, conviction rates and awareness of this type of abuse is still relatively low
15 compared with male-perpetrated abuse. As noted by Peter (2009), although female
16 perpetrated abuse is less prevalent than male perpetrated abuse, denying a woman's
17 capacity to sexually abuse children only succeeds in silencing this type of abuse. It is only
18 through the acknowledgement of, and research on, such abuse can we provide informed
19 evidence-based prevention and education programmes, and appropriate treatment and
20 assessment procedures for such abuse.

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- 12
- 13
- 14

1 Table 1

2 *Descriptive statistics for male perpetrated and female perpetrated child sexual abuse*
3 *characteristics*

	Male perpetrator	Male perpetrator
	n (%)	n (%)
9 Victim gender		
10 Male	230 (37)	40 (85)
11 Female	400 (64)	7 (15)
12 Victim age group		
13 0-8 years	154 (24)	9 (19)
14 9-14 years	363 (58)	19 (40)
15 15-17 years	108 (17)	19 (40)
16 Missing	5 (1)	-
17 Disclosure of abuse to others		
18 Yes	311 (49)	14 (30)
19 No	280 (44)	28 (60)
20 Missing	39 (6)	5 (11)
21 Reported to the police		
22 Yes	38 (6.0)	0
23 No	399 (63)	29 (62)
24 Missing	193 (31)	18 (38)
25 Perpetrator-Victim Relationship		
26 Acquaintance	229 (36)	25 (53)
27 Stranger	147 (23)	2 (4)

1	Relative	131 (21)	11 (23)
2	Other	114 (18)	9 (19)
3	Missing	9 (1)	-
4	Perpetrator age group		
5	Under 16 years	78 (12)	15 (32)
6	16-25 years	148 (24)	21 (45)
7	26 + years	384 (61)	11 (23)
8	Missing	20 (3)	
9	Perpetrator an authority figure		
10	Yes	113 (18)	12 (26)
11	No	517 (82)	35 (75)
12	Abuse type		
13	Non-contact abuse	158 (25)	6 (13)
14	Contact abuse	363 (58)	31 (66)
15	Penetrative abuse	109 (17)	10 (21)
16	Force used		
17	Yes	83 (13)	1 (2)
18	No (or uncertain)	491 (78)	43 (92)
19	Missing	56 (9)	3 (6)

20

21

22

23

1 Table 2

2 *A comparison of male perpetrated and female perpetrated child sexual abuse*3 *characteristics*

4	5 Offence	6 SE	7 Adjusted
8	9 Characteristics		10 OR (95% CI)
9	Victim gender		
10	Male	0.52	10.62 (3.85-29.28)***
11	Female		1.00
12	Victim age group		
13	0-8 years	0.65	0.13 (0.06-0.47)**
14	9-14 years	0.48	0.13 (0.05-0.34)***
15	15-17 years		1.00
16	Disclosure of abuse to others		
17	Yes	0.43	0.88 (0.37-2.05)
18	No		1.00
19	Perpetrator-Victim Relationship		
20	Acquaintance		1.00
21	Stranger	1.13	0.08 (0.01-0.77)*
22	Relative	0.52	1.66 (0.60-4.64)
23	Other	0.57	0.62 (0.20-1.88)
24	Perpetrator age group		
25	Under 16 years	0.59	7.44 (2.34-23.69)***
26	16-25 years	0.49	4.17 (1.60-10.87)**
27	26+ years		1.00
28	Perpetrator an authority figure		

1	Yes	0.53	0.21 (0.07-0.59)**
2	No		1.00
3	Abuse type		
4	Non-contact abuse	0.63	0.39 (0.11-1.33)
5	Contact abuse		1.00
6	Penetrative abuse	0.48	1.74 (0.68-4.43)
7	Force used		
8	Yes		1.00
9	No (or uncertain)	1.07	6.97 (0.85-56.82)

10

11 Note: * $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$. *** $p < 0.001$

12

13

1 *Appendix: Child Sexual Abuse Questionnaire*

2
3 Now, I want to ask you to think back to when you were younger, **before your 17th birthday**. The
4 following questions are also about sexual experiences. Just to be clear, we're not talking about sexual
5 experiences that were 'consensual' or that you agreed to, for example, with a boyfriend or girlfriend who
6 was a similar age to you at the time.
7

8 No Yes Unsure
9 E.10 During your childhood or adolescence did anyone ever show you or
10 persuade you to look at pornographic material (for example, magazines, videos,
11 internet etc.) in a way that made you feel uncomfortable? _1 _2 _3
12 _4 _5 _6
13

14 E.11 Did anyone ever make you or persuade you to take off your clothes, or
15 have you pose alone or with others in a sexually suggestive way, or in ways that
16 made you feel confused or uncomfortable in order to photograph or video you? _1 _2 _3
17 _4 _5 _6
18

19 E.12 As a child or adolescent, did anyone expose their sexual organs to you? _1 _2 _3
20 _4 _5 _6
21

22 E.13 During this time did anyone masturbate in front of you? _1 _2 _3
23 _4 _5 _6
24

25 E.14 Did anyone touch your body, including your breasts or genitals, in
26 a sexual way? _1 _2 _3
27 _4 _5 _6
28

29 E.15 During your childhood or adolescence, did anyone try to have you arouse
30 them, or touch their body in a sexual way? _1 _2 _3
31 _4 _5 _6
32

33 E.16 Did anyone rub their genitals against your body in a sexual way? _1 _2 _3
34 _4 _5 _6
35

36 E.17 Did anyone attempt to have sexual intercourse with you? _1 _2 _3
37 _4 _5 _6
38

39 E.18 Did anyone succeed in having sexual intercourse with you? _1 _2 _3
40 _4 _5 _6
41

42 E.19 Did anyone, male or female, make you or persuade you to have oral sex? _1 _2 _3
43 _4 _5 _6
44

45 E.20 Did a man make you or persuade you to have anal sex ? _1 _2 _3
46 _4 _5 _6
47

48 E.21 Did anyone put their fingers or objects in your vagina or anus?
49 (back passage) _1 _2 _3
50 _4 _5 _6
51

52 **Go to Sect. H**

53 E.22 Did you have any other sexual experience that I haven't already
54 mentioned?

No _1 Yes _2

55
56 If so, can you tell me what happened?
57 _____
58 _____