

Child Sexual Abuse Among Polish Adult Population: Prevalence and Abuse Characteristics

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Abstract

The present study aimed to consolidate on and expand on existing knowledge on the issue of child sexual abuse (CSA) by identifying the prevalence of and characteristics of CSA among Polish adult population with inclusion of other gender identities and socio-demographic characteristics. A cross-sectional study was performed, using a self-reporting, anonymous, questionnaire. Data were analyzed by frequency/percentages, using SPSS software. A total of 234 individuals of various gender identity (male, female, non-binary, demigirl, agender, gender fluid) participated in the study ($M_{\text{age}} = 22.52$, $SD = 6.65$). The results indicate a 39.7% ($N = 93$) prevalence of CSA in the tested Polish population. Of the total sample, 13.2% knew other 3 or more individuals who suffered from CSA, 14.5% knew other 2 persons, and 26.1% knew one individual. Of the abused participants, 36.5% was of intra- and extrafamilial (51.6%) nature, whilst 11.8% experienced both. The mean age the first abuse occurred was 9.20 ($SD = 3.43$). The duration of CSA varied: 2 weeks up to 8 years. The most common type of violation was fondling (91.4%) and other sexual activities, excluding penetration (62.4%). All of the CSA victims experienced at least 2 types of sexual violation. The overall prevalence found in the current study was higher than expected, suggesting that victims may currently be more likely to self-report on CSA experiences, as majority of respondents, more than 80%, are in the 18-30 age group. It is suggested that there is a greater need for understating the scale of CSA in Poland and for inclusion of other gender identities in the research on this topic.

INTRODUCTION

Childhood sexual abuse (CSA) is a pervasive problem, affecting children across the globe independently of race, culture, gender, religion, and social strata. A recent systematic review of 55 studies from 24 countries found CSA to range from 8 to 31% for girls and 3 to 17% for boys (Barth, Bermetz, Heim, Trelle, and Tonia, 2013). Other worldwide systematic reviews have reported disturbing rates of sexual abuse as well: with averages of 18–20% for females and of 8–10% for males. The lowest rates of 11.3% and 4.1% for both girls and boys were reported in Asia, whilst the highest, 21.5% for girls in Australia and 19.3% for boys in Africa (Pereda, Guilera, Forns, and Gómez-Benito, 2009; Stoltenborgh, Van Ijzendoorn, Euser, and Bakermans-Kranenburg, 2011). Significant gender differences were found in Europe, Asia, United States, and Australia with boys indicating a lower prevalence than with girls. Non-of the above studies included Poland.

Definition of CSA based on the Penal Code of Poland

The definition of CSA is to some extent stipulated in the Chapter XXV of the Penal Code of Poland, regulating crimes against sexual freedom and decency (Kodeks Karny, 1997 and rev. 2020). The articles of the penal code can be separated into two categories: 1) articles that protect everyone (including minors) against specific sexual behaviours, such as rape (Art. 197), sexual intercourse with abuse dependency relationship (Art. 199) and incest (Art. 201); and 2) articles that specifically protect minors from sexual behaviours or exploitation, such as sexual intercourse with a person below 15 years of age (Art. 200) and involving a minor with pornographic content (Art. 202). The consent age is set at 15 as specified in the penal code and the age of civil majority in Poland is 18 in accordance with the Art. 10 of the Civil Code of Poland (Kodeks Cywilny, 1964 and rev. 2019).

Contact and Non-contact CSA

Child sexual abuse can be understood as an involvement of “dependent developmentally children or adolescents in sexual activities they do not truly comprehend, and to which they are unable to give full consent (...)” (Schechter &

Roberge, 1976). Child sexual abuse consists of contact and non-contact sexual abuse (World Health Organization, 1999). What falls under the umbrella of contact CSA is any activity that involves physical contact with the use of coercion, the threat of force, or force, such as oral, anal, and vaginal penetration with an object or another body part; sexual intercourse; and fondling of private parts. Non-contact CSA, on the other hand, is any act of sexual nature without any physical contact with use of coercion, the threat of force, or force (e.g. exposure to pornographic materials, exhibitionism, voyeurism, and sexual exploitation for financial gain). The involvement of coercion, the threat of force, or force are not always involved in CSA incidents, as some of them might be very subtle and/or unexpected. For example, “incidentally” fondling genitals when dressing up a child, “incidentally” walking on a child when he or she is taking shower, or “incidentally” exposing genitals by walking around in underwear in such a way that a child becomes aware of it. What is important to mention is that CSA results in sexual gratification of the person who perpetrates it.

The Prevalence of CSA in Poland

In the case of Poland, there is limited research available on the prevalence of CSA. However, some insights on the scale of the violence against children can be found in the data generated by the police, judicial system, NPO organization, and psychiatric and psychological research studies.

In 2017, there were 1,324 reported and confirmed cases of CSA (Art. 200), 626 cases of seduction of a minor below the age of 15 using an ICT system or a telecommunications network (Art. 200a), and 3 cases of incest (Art. 201) (Kodeks Karny, 1997 and rev. 2020a; Komenda Główna Policji, n.d.).

In addition, the Empowering Children Foundation (Fundacja Dajemy Dzieciom Siłę) reported that 6.4% teenagers experienced contact CSA before the age of 15, whilst 8.9 % non-contact CSA (Włodarczyk and Makaruk; 2013). The study was conducted on the sample of 1005 ($n_{\text{boys}} = 502$, $n_{\text{girls}} = 503$) individuals, age 11-17. A detailed breakdown revealed that more boys (3.9%) than girls (2.3%) had a sexual intercourse with an adult. Out of the total sample, 2.4% declared unwanted touching or being forced to engage in other sexual behaviours. As for non-contact CSA, 5.3% experienced verbal sexual abuse and

1.5% exhibitionism. The latest nationwide report, which was conducted in 2018 on diagnosis of the scale of child abuse on students of 11–17 of age ($N = 1115$), points out that 20% admitted to have experienced incriminating sexual incidents; and 7% experienced sexual abuse (Włodarczyk, J., Makaruk, K., Michalski, P., and Sajkowska, M., 2018).

In another study, Heitzman, Lew-Starowicz M., Pacholski, and Lew-Starowicz Z. (2014) analysed medico-legal reports related to child sexual offenders ($N = 257$, CSO). In relation to characteristics of CSA, the study revealed that the most common type of abuse was fondling (touching genitals, 56.6%), vaginal intercourse (39%), oral sex (27.6%), anal penetration (11.8%), exhibitionism (25%), and masturbation of the offender by the victim (14.9%). Study by Beisert (2011) on the 248 CSOs found similar results: fondling – 65.3%, vaginal intercourse – 39.5%, oral sex – 26.6%, anal penetration – 18.1, exhibitionism – 12.9%, and masturbation of the offender by the victim – 15.7%.

In 2016, for the first time in Poland a study on adverse childhood experiences was carried out on the behalf of the World Health Organization and the Ministry of Health on 1772 students ($M_{\text{age}} = 20.46$, $SD = 1.24$) (Hughes et al., 2019; Makaruk et al., 2018). The main aim of the study was to diagnose the scale of violence experienced in childhood and the possible consequences of these experiences in the form of risky behaviours. In relation to CSA, 4.8% admitted to have been victims of sexual abuse by an adult.

Another source of information is data generated by the Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Policy (Ministerstwo Rodziny, Pracy i Polityki Społecznej; MPiPS). The 2011's report investigated participants of corrective and educational programs who committed physical and/or psychological and/or sexual violence acts towards a family member/s (MPiPS, 2011). The surveys were distributed by leading specialists invited to cooperate in that study. Out of the sample of 360 participants, 6% ($n = 20$) used sexual violence towards their family members (intrafamilial abuse), 5% used sexual violence towards a stepdaughter and 5% towards a sister. No extrafamilial abuse was reported. Only 2% and 3% endured sexual violence in childhood and adulthood, respectively. Three years after that, in 2014, research on diagnosis and comparison of the scale of the phenomenon of domestic violence and assessment of the

effectiveness of actions taken to prevent domestic violence on behalf of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy was carried out, which was implemented as part of “Polish Family Free from Violence” campaign (MPiPS, 2014a). What the result showed is that 1.1% of the sample, out of 2971 ($n_{\text{female}} = 1550$, $n_{\text{male}} = 1421$) respondents, declared that they had experienced sexual violence in the family circle as a child, of which 2.0% were women and 0.2% were men. Little more than 4% of respondents knew families in their surroundings in which sexual violence against children occurred. This was a significantly lower result than that obtained during the study in 2008, where 4.8% of respondents knew about sexual violence against children in the immediate environment. Part of this national survey was specific research on diagnosing the phenomenon of violence in the perception of children and adolescents between the age 11 and 17 ($N = 1231$), including sexual violence towards children (MPiPS, 2014b). The questionnaire assumed that sexual exploitation is manifested by touching the child's intimate parts or forcing the child to touch adults' intimate parts, persuading the child by adults to watch pornographic films or photos, and talking to the child about inappropriate sexual topics. The survey found that in the perception of participants almost all or more than half of their peers experienced at least one type of physical violence; neglect was less frequently mentioned—32%, psychological violence—23%, and least often sexual violence—6%.

Finally, Guziak (2020a, 2020b, 2020c, 2020d, 2020e) investigated the prevalence of CSA, its characteristics, in addition to characteristics of CSA perpetrators by analysing quantitatively a discussion forum. The study found very low prevalence among total forum members. It was reported that the majority of victims were females ($n = 80$) and males ($n = 1$) of age 14-61. Such high rate of female victims was assumed to be due to the nature of the website. The age the abuse occurred ranged from 3-5 (13.6%), 6-10 (32.1%), 11-15 (10%), in 38.3% cases no information was provided. The most common type of perpetrator was of intrafamilial identity (48.1%).

THE CURRENT STUDY

Fully understanding the scope of CSA problem is with no doubt of great importance. As such, the purpose of this study is to consolidate existing CSA-related knowledge and expand on it by investigating the prevalence and characteristics of CSA in Poland. The study is a part of a larger project, investigating attitudes towards CSA preventive measures, psychological consequences of CSA, and other forms of abuse (physical and psychological). The current study, however, reports in detail on only CSA characteristics among Polish adult population.

First of all, research examining the prevalence of CSA in Poland is limited to traditional gender types (male and female), overlooking other gender identities. As some research suggests the effect of CSA on sexual identity formation among, bisexual, lesbian, gay, and queer (Walker, Hernandez, and Davey, 2012), the study addressed this issue by ensuring inclusion of other gender identities. In the Polish context, to the knowledge of the author, no study so far has considered this factor.

Second of all, much of the literature conducted on members of the general population is devoid of detailed socio-demographic characteristics of victims, in addition to the lack of characteristics of CSA, specifically duration and/or frequency of abuse and the context of abuse (intra and interfamilial context). Literature indicates a victim-perpetrator relationship is associated with the duration of abuse (Faller, (1989). Additionally, suicidal ideation, more depressive symptoms, self-harm, and suicidal ideation seem to be more common for CSA victims abused for longer duration of time, as oppose to individuals abused for shorter duration (Boudewyn and Liem, 1995; Lopez-Castroman et al., 2013; Trickett, Noll, Reiffman, and Putnam, 2001). Considering the above, having knowledge about duration and the context of abuse are important for treatment planning. In relation to socio-demographic information, this study tackled these shortcomings by asking respondents about the highest education obtained, employment, and martial and parental status. In relation to CSA characteristics, questions about duration and context were included in the questionnaire.

METHOD

Participants

The participants of the study consisted of 234 adults recruited through Facebook platform. The age of participants varied between 18 and 65. The mean age was 22.52 ($SD = 6.65$). The full characteristics of the sample are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. *Participants Characteristics*

		Frequency (N = 234), n (%)	Mean Age (SD)
Gender	Female	204 (87.2)	22.62 (6.88)
	Male	17 (7.3)	23.00 (6.15)
	Non-binary	5 (2.3)	18.50 (1.00)
	Gender fluid	2 (0.9)	22.00 (1.41)
	Demigirl	2 (0.9)	21.50 (3.53)
	Agender	1 (0.4)	-
	Prefer not to say	3 (1.3)	20.33 (2.08)
Age	18-20	111 (47.4)	18.92 (0.81)
	21-30	103 (44)	22.88 (2.12)
	31-40	16 (6.8)	36.00 (3.08)
	41-50	1 (0.4)	44 (-)
	51-60	1(0.4)	59 (-)
	61-70	2 (0.9)	64.00 (1.41)
Employment Status	Employed	50 (21.4)	24.80 (6.01)
	Self-employed	6 (2.6)	30.67 (7.17)
	University Student	121 (51.7)	20.41 (1.88)
	Student/Pupil	13 (5.6)	18.42 (0.64)
	Full-time Parent	8 (3.4)	25.00 (6.54)
	Unemployed	30 (12.8)	22.00 (5.36)
	Retired	2 (0.9)	64.00 (1.41)
	Annuity	2 (0.9)	51.50 (10.60)
	Parental Leave	1 (0.4)	-
	Medical Leave	1 (0.4)	-
Highest Level of Education	Doctoral Level	3 (1.3)	46.00 (14.73)
	Master Level	28 (12)	33.34 (10.49)
	Bachelor Level	20 (8.6)	24.15 (2.62)
	Vocational Level (5-year training)	31 (13.2)	20.86 (2.31)
	High School Level	117 (50)	20.29 (3.02)
	Post High-School Level	25 (10.7)	21.40 (1.78)
	Vocational Level (3-year Training)	1 (0.4)	-
	Primary School Level	9 (3.8)	18.55 (1.03)
	Prefer not to say	2 (0.9)	18.00 (0.00)
Marital Status	Single	107 (45.7)	20.93 (3.68)
	Relationship (non-married)	101 (43.2)	21.21 (3.52)
	Married	26 (11.1)	34.15 (12.10)
Parental Status	With Children	27 (11.5)	32.92 (12.93)
	Without Children	207(88.5)	21.14 (3.56)

Materials and Measures

A questionnaire consisted of socio-demographic questions, questions related to forms of violence (physical, emotional, and sexual violence) and CSA experienced below the age of 15, including the age CSA occurred, the duration of the abuse, context of the abuse (intra- or extrafamilial), types of CSA (contact and non-contact CSA), and awareness about others sexually abused as a child.

Equipment

IMP SPSS Statistics software, version 25, for MacBook Pro was used to analyse quantitative data obtained from a survey the author created in Google Forms.

Procedure

A questionnaire with instructions was advertised on Facebook between June 9 and 15, 2020. Using Google Forms, each participant completed demographic questions related to forms of violence experienced: physical, emotional (psychological) and CSA. Those who were abused as children were redirected to questions on consequences the abuse had on them and more details questions on types of CSA experienced. Those who had no such experiences were redirected to a section investigating public opinion on what should be done to prevent CSA in Polish society. The questionnaire was then closed, data transferred to a SPSS spreadsheet, after which deleted from Google Forms.

Data Analysis

Data was analysed using descriptive statistics such as percentage and frequency.

Ethics

All participants were fully informed about what they will be asked to do, about the topic of the study and its sensitive nature and potential psychological effect by participating in the study, about what will happen to the data gathered according to GDPR, who and how to contact—should they have any questions, and exclusion and inclusion criteria (Appendix A). In every section of the questionnaire, they were reminded about their right to withdraw from the study and how to proceed in case of any unexpected feelings or reaction. Consent was

obtained from participants through a Consent Form included in the questionnaire. The participants were asked to complete all sections of the online form, which included confirming that they have read the Participant Information, are aware that their participation is voluntary and they have 2 weeks to withdraw from the study, that they are over eighteen, agree to take part in the study and have read and agreed to how their data will be used and understand what the research team's obligations are to them regarding their data. As the participants have been recruited online they had to tick all the boxes in the Consent Form in order to participate in the study. During the debrief process participants were once again asked to consent to their data being used at the end of the questionnaire. Deception was not used in this study. No request has been in relation to withdrawing their data from the study. Participants were informed that they will not be mentioned by name and their responses will be made anonymous and kept confidential at all times. They were given a unique code at the beginning of the study, which was used if any of participants wish to withdraw. Participants' information has been stored on a password-protected computer. No request has been made so far in relation to withdrawing their data from the study. After the data was transferred to a SPSS sheet, it was removed from Google Forms. The author reports no conflict of interest.

RESULTS

Prevalence of CSA

Of the total sample, 39.7% (N = 93) had experienced child sexual abuse before the age of 15. Of the CSA victims, 91.4% were girls. For boys, the corresponding percentage was 3.2%. Age group of 18-30 accounted for majority of victims. Full characteristics of CSA victims, by gender, age, education, marital status, parental status, and employment are shown in Table 2.

Awareness about other adults sexually abused as children

Majority of the participants (53.8%) know someone who was sexually abuses as a child (Table 3).

Table 2. *Forms of Abuse*

		CSA
Total (N = 234)	Yes	93 (39.7)
	No	141 (60.3)
Total Abused (N = 93)		
Gender	Female	85 (91.4)
	Male	3 (3.2)
	Non-binary	2 (2.15)
	Gender fluid	1 (1.1)
	Demigirl	1(1.1)
	Prefer not to say	1(1.1)
Age	18-20	36 (38.7)
	21-30	45 (48.4)
	31-40	8 (8.6)
	41-50	1 (1.1)
	51-60	1 (1.1)
	61-70	2 (2.15)
Employment	Employed	22 (23.7)
	Self-employed	4 (4.3)
	University Student	41 (44.1)
	Student/Pupil	5 (5.4)
	Full-time Parent	4 (4.3)
	Unemployed	12 (12.9)
	Retired	2 (2.15)
	Annuity	2 (2.15)
	Parental Leave	1 (1.1)
	Medical Leave	-
The Highest Level of Education Obtained	Doctoral Level	2 (2.15)
	Master Level	13 (14.0)
	Bachelor Level	9 (9.7)
	Vocational Level (5-year training)	15 (16.1)
	High School Level	38 (40.9)
	Post High-School Level	9 (9.7)
	Primary School Level	7 (7.5)
Martial Status	Single	37 (39.8)
	Non-married Relationship	41 (44.1)
	Married	15 (16.1)
Parental Status	With Children	14 (15.0)
	Without Children	79 (84.9)

Note. CSA = Child Sexual Abuse;

Table 3. *Awareness about other adults sexually abused as children*

Awareness	Frequency (N = 234) n (%)
I don't know anyone	108 (46.2)
I know 1 person	61 (26.1)
I know 2 people	34 (14.5)
I know 3 or more	31 (13.2)

Age the Abuse Occurred

The mean age the abuse occurred was 9.20 ($SD = 3.43$). The ages of the victims varied between 3 and 15. The most common age the abuse happened was 5 (15.1%) (Table 4).

Table 4. *The Age of the Respondent at the Time of the First CSA*

Age	Frequency (N = 93) n (%)
3	1 (1.1)
4	4 (4.3)
5	14 (15.1)
6	7 (7.5)
7	7 (7.5)
8	11 (11.8)
9	9 (9.7)
10	3 (3.2)
11	7 (7.5)
12	7 (7.5)
13	11 (11.8)
14	7 (7.5)
15	5 (5.4)

Duration of CSA

The duration of abuse spanned from approx. 2 weeks to up to 8 years and from singular to multiple incidents (Table 5). The longest period of abuse was approx. 8 years ($n = 1$). The duration of abuse for 15.1% of respondents abused was up to 6 months. For many, it was 1-time (17.2%) and 2-time incident (12.9%).

Table 5. *Duration/Incidents of CSA*

Duration/Frequency	Frequency (N = 93) n (%)
Only 1 time	16 (17.2)
Only 2 times	12 (12.9)
Only 3 times	1 (1.1)
Several times	2 (2.1)
Approx. 2 weeks	1 (1.1)
Up to 6 months	14 (15.1)
6 to 12 months	8 (8.6)
1 to 2 years	7 (7.5)
2 to 3 years	8 (8.6)
3 to 4 years	1 (1.1)
4 to 5 years	4 (4.3)
Approx. 8 years	1 (1.1)
I don't remember	16 (17.2)

Context of CSA

According to the data, the most common context of abuse was extrafamilial abuse father (51.6%). Of the victims, 11.9% ($n = 11$) were also exposed to sexual victimization by other intra/extrafamilial individuals (Table 6).

Table 6. *Context of CSA*

Context	Frequency (N =93) n (%)
IF	34 (36.5)
EF	48 (51.6)
IF + EF	11 (11.8)

Note. IF = Intrafamilial Abuse; EF = Extrafamilial Abuse

Characterization of CSA

In general, the practices most commonly described were fondling (n = 85; 91.4%), followed by other sexual activities excluding penetration (n = 58; 62.4%), and forced to touch another person (n = 41; 44.1%). Other types were less common (Table 7). All victims experienced at least two types of abuse. Every person who reported vaginal penetration through a sexual intercourse (n = 11) reported also other types of abuse: fondling (n = 11), forced to touch another person (n = 5; Table 8).

Table 7. *Characterization of CSA*

Type of Abuse	Frequency (N = 93) n (%)	CSA Category
Sexual intercourse	11 (11.8)	Contact
Penetration with an object	9 (9.7)	Contact
Other sexual activities (not penetration)	58 (62.4)	Contact
Fondling	85 (91.4)	Contact
Forced to watch other having sex	19 (20.4)	Non-contact
Forced to watch him masturbating	28 (30.2)	Non-contact
Forced to touch another person	41 (44.1)	Contact
Asked to share my naked pictures	22 (23.6)	Non-contact
Other than the above	33 (35.5)	-

Note. Contact = CSA with physical contact, Non-contact = CSA without physical contact, Other sexual activities (not penetration) = other sexual activities than vaginal penetration (oral sex), Other than above = other sexual activities, including anal penetration, verbal abuse.

Table 8. Relationship between Types of CSA

Types of CSA	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
					n %				
1	11	3 (27.3)	7 (63.6)	11 (100)	1 (9.1)	5 (45.4)	8 (72.2)	5 (45.4)	2 (18.2)
2	-	9	8 (88.9)	8 (88.9)	1 (11.1)	4 (44.4)	5 (55.5)	3 (33.3)	3 (33.3)
3	-	-	58	56 (96.5)	13 (22.4)	20 (34.5)	32 (55.2)	16 (27.6)	22 (37.9)
4	-	-	-	85	16 (18.8)	24 (28.2)	41 (48.2)	21 (24.7)	27 (31.8)
5	-	-	-	-	19	6 (31.6)	10 (52.6)	9 (47.4)	5 (26.3)
6	-	-	-	-	-	28	20 (71.4)	11 (39.3)	11 (39.3)
7	-	-	-	-	-	-	41	16 (39.0)	14 (34.1)
8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	22	8 (36.4)
9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	33

Note. 1 = Sexual intercourse, 2 = Penetration with an object, 3 = Other sexual activities, (not penetration), 4 = Fondling, 5 = Forced to watch other having sex, 6 = Forced to watch him masturbating, 7 = Forced to touch another person, 8 = Asked to share my naked pictures, 9 = Other than above. Shaded fields indicate the total cases of a given CSA type.

DISCUSSION

This article further contributes to the literature regarding prevalence and characteristics of CSA in Poland. The present study had three main objectives: a) to investigate the prevalence of CSA among Polish adult population adolescents, b) to determine detail characteristics of CSA, and c) to determine detail characteristics of CSA victims.

It was found that the prevalence of CSA (before 15 years of age) among 243 Polish adults examined was 39.7%. Females were more likely to be victims of CSA than males and other genders. The findings are similar to the previously reported ones in Poland; however, it is important to consider the number of male respondents was rather low compare to female respondents and other gender identities. Although it is understood that the higher prevalence amongst girls is

expected (Barth et al., 2013), there is some evidence suggesting that it may be subject to change depending on the type of abuse experienced. For example, the overall higher prevalence was reported for girls than for boys in one study in Poland; however, more boys than girls experienced 'sexual contact' before the age of 15 with a person of 18 years of age or older under mutual consent (Włodarczyk and Makaruk, 2013). Although from the perspective of the penal code, this is considered as a punishable act (Kodeks Karny, 1997 and rev. 2020a), one study, investigating the age of sexual initiation of Polish adolescents ($N = 1753$), found that teenaged boys ($n = 118$) and girls ($n = 79$) had their first sexual intercourse before and at the age 15 (Izdebski and Wąż, 2018). The study did not report on the nature of the sexual initiation for girls and boys. In addition, of the self-reported CSA experiences, 51.6% occurred in an extrafamilial context: by a person who victims do not consider as a family member; 36.5% in intrafamilial context (a person considered as a family member), remaining cases were of both nature. These results cannot be confirmed by other research; however, one study that investigated characteristics of CSA perpetrators found the most common type of a perpetrator identity ($N = 81$, 34.8% unidentified perpetrator) to be a family member for 48.1% CSA victims, including a biological father (16%), a sibling (9.9%), a stepfather, an uncle (3.0%), a cousin (7.4), another relative (8.6%), and grandfather (4.9%). Some of the victims of intrafamilial context were victimised by several family members (Guziak, 2020e). Furthermore, of the total sample of the present study, 13.2% knew other 3 or more individuals who suffered from CSA, 14.5% knew other 2 persons, and 26.1% knew one individual. The knowledge of members of the general population about abused adults as children or abused children heightens the overall prevalence rate. The overall prevalence found is higher than expected, suggesting that victims may currently be more likely to self-report on CSA experiences, as majority of victims, more than 80%, are in the 18-30 age group. The number of respondents in older age groups was very low. It is suspected that this may be due to traditional way of thinking about sexual affairs.

The present study found that of the abused respondents ($N = 93$), the most reported type of abuse was fondling (91.4%) followed by other types of sexual activities excluding penetration (62.4%) and forced to touch the abuser

(44.1%). Sexual intercourse accounted for only 11.8%. The result is similar to the results in studies by Heitzman et al. (2014) and Beisert (2011), showing that the most common type of CSA found was fondling (56.6%) and 65.3%, respectively. Among individuals abused there was no person who experienced only one type of abuse.

The findings show that all individuals abused were sexually abused when they were under the age of consent. Research into the prevalence of CSA indicates that sexual abuse in many different forms is seen to occur in all ages (World Health Organization, 2002). Investigating the age at the onset of abuse is important as it may ensure a better treatment planning and treatment success. Research shows that sexual abuse during childhood and adolescence target specific regions of brain, (i.e. visual, somatosensory, and auditory cortex) and pathways that are responsible for processing and conveying the aversive experiences, which may disrupt especially in children cognitive, language, and social development (Teicher and Samson, 2016).

Limitations and Future Research

Several shortcomings of this study must be noted. First, measurements of research variables were based on self-reporting from respondents and validity could not be tested. However, compare to the previous study (Guziak, 2020a; 2020b; 2020c; 2020d; 2020e) the profiles of victims and CSA characteristic is much more informative and complete. Another strengths of the study is that it was inclusive of other gender identities—to the knowledge of the author no previous studies reported on such a detailed gender distinction. In relation to the prevalence of CSA, it was difficult to compare it with prevalence rates reported elsewhere on CSA-type level primarily to due differing definitions of types of CSA and differences in the populations surveyed. Yet another strength of the study is that it addresses limitations of previous research by examining in depth socio-demographic characteristics of victims and characteristics of CSA; consolidate the existing and expands on it. The fact that only few participants were of male and queer identities as well as of older generation suggests that a more sampling technique, aiming at these groups, should be reconsidered. Future research should mitigate these shortcomings.

As being part of the larger research project, future research will examine differences between intra and extrafamilial CSA characteristics, the psychological impact of CSA on victims, and attitudes towards preventive measure for CSA.

Conclusions

The results of the present study emphasize the importance of

- a) reporting various gender identities when measuring the rates of CSA prevalence and
- b) considering types of abuse and gender differences when measuring the prevalence of CSA.

The study also indicates willingness of younger generations to self-disclose CSA and that CSA is an issue across various socio-demographic characteristics.

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