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Male Homosexuality and Interpersonal Violence:

A Summary of Research on Relationship Abuse, Male Rape, and Child Sexual Abuse

Alpha-Zeta Research Group

Abstract

This article reviews and summarizes published reports, mostly from professional peer-reviewed or other official sources, that relate to male homosexuality and violent interpersonal behavior.

The research suggests that male homosexuals have higher rates of relationship violence and rape than do heterosexual males and that homosexual and bisexual men are considerably over-represented in cases of child sexual abuse. Well over 100 articles are cited.

### **Section 1: Relationship Abuse and Male Rape**

The particular topic of domestic violence among male homosexual couples was first broached by David Island and Patrick Letellier with their 1991 book *Men Who Beat the Men Who Love Them*. They introduced their topic by saying,

Gay men's domestic violence is not a new problem, just a newly recognized problem. It has existed ever since gay men began coupling and living together. What is new is that abused gay men all over the United States are starting to come forward seeking help, as victims of domestic violence. Their lovers are violent men, and the victims are battered... (Island & Letellier, 1991, p. 1).

These authors go on to estimate "that as many as 500,000 gay men are victims, and, of course, equal numbers are also perpetrators" of domestic violence (p. 1).

Since the publication of this ground-breaking volume, many social scientists have taken up this topic in both theoretical commentary and empirical research. Their conclusion is becoming quite clear: "Domestic violence is the third largest health problem facing gay men today, second to substance abuse and AIDS" (Peterman & Dixon, 2003, p. 40; see also Cruz & Firestone, 1998; Singer & Deschamps, 1994; Oatley, 1994; Island & Letellier, 1991). In the rest of this section, we discuss some of the principle findings of the recent research on male homosexual relationship abuse and the related issue of sexual coercion.

An important question is, how prevalent is relationship abuse among homosexual men? As the research shows, the answer depends on what type of sample is used and what is included

in the definition of relationship abuse (e.g., physical violence vs. psychological abuse vs. sexual coercion, etc.). One of the earliest studies on this topic by Kelly and Warshafsky (1987) included a sample of 98 homosexual men and women whom they questioned about the presence of physical violence in their relationships. Their findings indicated that 47% of respondents experienced physical violence on at least one occasion during their most recent relationship (Kelly & Warshafsky, 1987 cited in Alexander, 2002). Similarly, Gardner (1989) compared the domestic violence rates of 42 heterosexual couples with 43 lesbian and 39 gay couples. The heterosexual couples had the lowest rate of 28% compared to 38% for gay couples and 48% for the lesbian couples (Gardner, 1989; cited in Merrill, 1998). Using a sample of 393 homosexual and bisexual men from San Francisco, Harms (1995; cited in Merrill & Wolfe, 2000) found that 26% of respondents had perpetrated violence in their current or most recent homosexual relationship while 25% reported that they had been the victim of their partner's violent acts. Surveying 165 homosexual men, Waldner-Haugrud, Gratch, and Magruder (1997) found that 29.7% "reported being or having been the victim of relationship abuse" (p. 178). Moreover, these researchers found that 21.8% admitted using violence against their partners. Such acts included (in order of prevalence): slapping, making threats, pushing, punching, striking with an object, and using a weapon (Waldner-Haugrud et al., 1997).

Landolt and Dutton (1997) recruited 52 homosexual male couples through "gay and lesbian newspapers" (p. 345). Despite finding that the majority of couples had an egalitarian style, "Forty percent of the sample reported that at least one member of the couple perpetrated one or more violent acts in the last year" (p. 346). In addition, they studied a number of characteristics that seem to be associated with the perpetration of domestic violence, which they term the Abusive Personality. Based on their statistical analyses, Landolt and Dutton (1997)

conclude, “Thus, it can be established that in the case of gay male intimate abuse, the Abusive Personality is particularly relevant as it seems to pertain to both members of the dyad” (p. 355).

While the findings of these researchers are very important, several more recent studies have examined the issues of homosexual relationship abuse with improved methods, which have produced clear findings. For instance, Tjaden, Thoennes, and Allison (1999) based their analyses on a national sample of 8,000 men and 8,000 women as part of the National Violence Against Women Survey. They identified those respondents who had cohabited with a same-sex partner at some time in their lives and compared rates of physical violence with those who had cohabited with only an opposite-sex partner. They state, “While nearly two-thirds (64.6%) of the same-sex cohabiting men reported being physically assaulted as an adult, less than half (47%) of the opposite-sex cohabiting males did so” (Tjaden et al., 1999, p. 420). Moreover,

The study found that same-sex cohabitants reported significantly more intimate partner violence than did opposite-sex cohabitants. For example, 23.1% of same-sex cohabiting men said they were raped and/or physically assaulted by a spouse or cohabiting partner at some time in their lives, compared with 7.7% of opposite-sex cohabiting men (p. 421).

The researchers conclude, “These findings suggest that violence is more prevalent among same-sex male couples than either same-sex female couples or heterosexual couples” (Tjaden et al., 1999, p. 422).

Another group of researchers studied domestic abuse among Latin American homosexuals in New York City. They recruited 273 men who “reported having at least one committed relationship with another man during their lifetime” (Nieves-Rosa, Carballo-Diéguez, & Dolezal, 2000, p. 83). Of this sample, a full 51% had experienced psychological, physical, or sexual abuse. A similar study utilized an “ethnically diverse” sample of 213 homosexual men

(Turell, 2000, p. 283). Among these homosexual men, 44% had experienced physical abuse and 83% had experienced various kinds of emotional abuse in their current or past intimate relationship. This figure was replicated by a study examining dating violence among 521 adolescents of varying sexual orientations. Of the male homosexual adolescents, 44% reported experiencing relationship abuse perpetrated by a male partner (Freedner, Freed, Yang, & Austin, 2002).

A recent study using the largest, most representative sample yet (Greenwood, Relf, Huang, Pollack, Canchola, & Catania, 2002) obtained a probability-based sample of 2,881 men who have sex with men (MSM) in four U.S. cities and assessed the prevalence of relationship abuse in their lives during the past five years. They found,

The prevalence of battering within the context of intimate partner relationships was very high among this probability-based sample of urban MSM. Approximately 2 of 5 MSM (39%) reported experiencing at least 1 type of battering by a partner during the previous 5 years, with almost 1 of 5 (18%) experiencing multiple forms of battering (34% reported psychological/symbolic violence, 22% physical violence, and 5% sexual violence) (Greenwood et al., 2002, p. 1967).

The five-year interval employed in this study contributed to making the rates of victimization slightly lower than studies using lifetime prevalence. It also makes comparison with other studies more difficult. Nonetheless, the researchers state,

Our estimates [of physical battering] are substantially higher than those reported for heterosexual men and higher than or comparable to those reported for heterosexual women. This study demonstrates that intimate partner abuse among urban MSM is a very serious public health problem (Greenwood et al., 2002, p. 1967).

Another recent study examining relationship violence among a sample of 199 male Puerto Rican homosexuals found that 48% had been the victim of emotional abuse and 26% experienced physical abuse (Toro-Alfonso & Rodríguez-Madera, 2004). In addition, 40% of the respondents admitted perpetrating acts of emotional abuse while 24% admitted to committing acts of physical abuse (Toro-Alfonso & Rodríguez-Madera, 2004).

Stanley, Bartholomew, Taylor, Oram & Landolt, 2006 investigated the nature of interpersonal violence in a sample of 69 gay and bisexual men. They acknowledged that research implies a greater incidence of violence in gay male relationships and they cite three studies also cited in the present article. They also cite a report by Bartholomew, Landolt & Oram, 1999, which estimated the prevalence rates of violence in male same sex relationships at 41% for those who are abused and 35% for those perpetrating abuse of a romantic partner.

However, their study does not address the question of the prevalence of such violence as compared to heterosexual relationships but instead investigates the characteristics of the violence that does occur in gay couples. The only other somewhat-relevant findings for present purposes which these authors report are that all of their randomly selected sample of subjects had at least one episode of violence in their history and that previously being a victim of violence was the strongest predictor of becoming a perpetrator.

Still another recent study supporting high levels of abuse in male same sex relationships is by Stanley, Bartholomew, Taylor, Oram, & Landolt (2006). This brief review of the research literature underscores the fact that violence is common in male homosexual relationships. Moreover, the true rate of this violence is likely even higher as incidents tend to be underreported (Greenwood et al., 2002). One reason for this is that the experience of domestic violence is physically and psychologically painful for homosexual men who often find it difficult

to get help and leave abusive relationships (Merrill & Wolfe, 2000; Merrill, 1998; Letellier, 1996; Island & Letellier, 1991). For example, Merrill and Wolfe (2000) surveyed 52 male victims of homosexual domestic abuse. “Forms of severe, recurrent physical abuse were reported by 87% of respondents. In fact, 62% of respondents reported experiencing more than five incidents of physical abuse with 37% reporting between 11 and 100 such incidents” (p. 11).

In addition, 62% reported they had been threatened or assaulted with weapons. The weapons most commonly used against respondents by their partners were: household objects such as lamps, ashtrays, and glasses (48%); knives, blades, and other sharp objects (35%); hot objects (19%); clubs, sticks, or bats (15%); and guns (12%) (Merrill & Wolfe, 2000, p. 12). All of the respondents reported emotional abuse while 85% “agreed that they felt trapped and helpless as a result of their partner’s behavior” (p. 12).

Some researchers state (or imply) that homosexual couples have no higher levels of interpersonal violence than do heterosexual couples. In no case did a researcher claim that violence was more common in heterosexual couples. Sometimes a study finds no difference between the levels of violence in the two types of couples, e. g., noted in Kulkin, et al 2007, but the majority of studies as cited here and below provide strong and reliable evidence to the contrary. It is always easy to find no difference between two groups of subjects on almost any dimension or behavioral response. For example if samples are small or atypical, it would not be hard to find that there was “no difference” between the average length of men’s and women’s hair.

One unfortunate consequence of domestic violence among homosexual men discovered by researchers is an increased risk for HIV infection. For instance, Greenwood et al. (2000) found that HIV-positive MSM were more likely to have been victims of battering than HIV-



negative MSM. Relf, Huang, Campbell, and Catania (2004) studied this relationship using data from a systematic sampling of 1062 MSM. They conclude, “Battering victimization was identified to significantly influence engaging in high-risk sexual behavior among this urban probability sample of MSM” (p. 21). While a decreased ability to talk about “safe-sex” practices in a violent partnership is one factor contributing to higher rates of HIV among battered gay men, acts of sexual assault perpetrated by HIV-positive homosexual men against their partners and acquaintances is perhaps more crucial. Letellier (1996) states

Battered gay and bisexual men are clearly at high risk for HIV infection. Rape and sexual assault are often an integral part of a perpetrator’s violence... and there is little reason to believe that a man who will rape his partner will only do so using a condom (p. 72-73).

Likewise, Merrill (1998), states

...many of the battered gay and bisexual men I have worked with have been infected by their abusive partners. Although it may at first seem unthinkable that anyone would intentionally infect a partner, consider the documented frequency of sexual abuse, the reduced capacity that victims usually have to negotiate anything with their partners (including safer sex), and the abusers’ intent to trap their partners in their relationships.

Battered gay and bisexual men are at extremely high risk for HIV transmission (p. 139).

As these authors suggest, empirical research now very clearly shows that sexual assault is a significant part of male homosexual relationship abuse. In Merrill and Wolfe’s (2000) study of domestically abused homosexual men, “Nearly three-quarters (73%) of respondents indicated they had experienced sexual abuse” (p. 14). Moreover, 13% of their sample reported that their HIV-positive partner deliberately tried to infect them “sometimes or frequently” (p. 11). Nearly

half of these respondents became HIV-positive as a result. Returning to Toro-Alfonso and Rodriguez-Madera's (2004) recent study of Puerto Rican gay couples, 25% of their sample had been sexually abused by their partner and 14% admitted perpetrating sexual abuse in a relationship. Among the homosexual men in Turell's (2000) study of same-sex domestic violence, 13% reported that they had been sexually abuse by a lover/partner. Likewise, the study by Nieves-Rosa et al. (2000) of Latino MSM in New York City found that 12% of respondents had experiences sexual abuse in a current or prior relationship. Moreover, 20% of these sexual abused men "stated that they had been forced to have receptive anal sex without condoms in their current relationship, and the remaining 80% had experienced it in previous relationships" (p. 84-85). The authors state, "We found a significant relationship between having experienced physical and sexual abuse, and practicing unprotected receptive anal sex. This suggests that domestic abuse places an additional risk for HIV transmission among Latino MSM" (p. 87). An earlier study using a less systematic sample found that 52% of the gay males sampled reported at least one incident of sexual coercion perpetrated by a partner, and more than half of these homosexual victims experienced unwanted penetration (Walder-Haugrud et al., 1997). Finally, Waterman, Dawson, and Bologna (1989) surveyed 34 homosexual men regarding violence in their current or past relationships. Over 12% claimed to have experienced "forced sex" and 5.9% admitted to having forced their partner into sexual activity.

As these figures illustrate, sexual abuse or assault is in fact common within male homosexual partnerships. However, these steady relationships do not comprise the only context within which homosexual men carry out or experience sexual violence. Numerous studies and a book by Scarce (1997) document the frequency and significance of sexual assault or coercion among homosexual men in general. For example, a study of 412 college students found that

homosexual men were significantly more likely than heterosexual men to answer yes to the question, “Have you ever been forced to have sex against your will?” (11.8% compared to 3.6%; Duncan, 1990, p. 65). The author states, “Present results seem to indicate that gay and lesbian students are at higher risk for sexual victimization than the heterosexual students” (Duncan, 1990, p. 65).

Similarly, Baier, Rosenzweig, and Whipple (1991) investigated lifetime rates of sexually coercive experiences of 702 college students. Their results showed that homosexual and bisexual students (both male and female) experienced significantly more of several types of sexual coercion including being pressured, lied to, threatened, and physically forced to have sex compared to heterosexual students. The homosexual and bisexual students were also significantly more likely to have been raped. Employing a legal definition of rape, they found that 17.6% of gay/bisexual students had been raped compared to 6.1% of the heterosexual students. In explaining this finding, the researchers note

...the gay/bisexual subculture on most college campuses tends to promote sexual activity at the expense of emotional relationship development. The stereotypical “one night stand” in the gay subculture could be encouraging the incidence of sexual assault and victimization among homosexuals (Baier et al., 1991, p. 317).

Using a large sample of 930 homosexual men, another team of researchers investigated the prevalence of nonconsensual sex by any assailant (Hickson, Davies, Hunt, Weatherburn, McManus, & Coxon, 1994). More than a fourth (27.6%) “said they had been subjected to nonconsensual sex at some point in their lives” (p. 286). In 45.2% of these cases, the victim was “forcibly anally penetrated” while unsuccessful penetration was attempted in an additional 5% of cases (p. 286). Regarding the assailants, in 29.2% of cases, “some prior consensual sexual

activity had taken place” (p. 287). “In the remaining 150 (70.8%) cases, no previous sexual activity had taken place between the assailant and victim. The relationships in these cases vary over a range of interpersonal knowledge and kinship” (p. 287). These included friends, family members, colleagues, acquaintances, friends of acquaintances, and strangers.

Kalichman and Rompa (1995) asked 196 homosexual men if they had ever experienced an act of sexual coercion. Twenty-nine percent of the sample said that they had, and 92% of these men reported at least one such incident involved unprotected anal intercourse. Thus, they state,

More than 90% of sexually coercive experiences among gay and bisexual men involved attempted or completed anal intercourse without condoms, the behavior that carries the greatest risk for HIV transmission. Sexually coerced men also reported high rates of non-HIV STDs, further suggesting that coerced men constitute a group at particularly high risk for HIV infection (Kalichman & Rompa, 1995, p. 49).

Similarly, Tjaden, Thoennes, and Allsion (1999) found that 26.2% of their sample of MSM had been forcibly raped at some point in their lives. Most of these incidents were perpetrated by male strangers and acquaintances. Likewise, a group of German researchers (Krahé, Shütze, Fritsche, & Waizenhöfer, 2000) surveyed 310 homosexual men and found that 24.2% had had an experience of coerced sexual touching, 17.1% had been coerced into a masturbatory act, 17.4% had been coerced into oral sex, and 13.5% had been coerced into anal sex. Using only those acts which satisfied the legal definition of rape, the researchers found that 16.1% of the sample had been legally raped.

This German research group went on to conduct a second set of analyses on this data set (Krahé, Scheinberger-Olwig, & Schütze, 2001). They state,

[T]he findings show that sexual aggression is a genuine problem among homosexual men. Over one-fourth of the present sample reported severe victimization (i.e., experiences where another man had used, or threatened to use, physical force or exploited their incapacitated state to make them comply with his sexual advances). In terms of perpetration of sexual aggression, almost 20% of respondents reported sexually aggressive behaviors that meet the legal definition of rape/sexual coercion under German law. A further 9% acknowledged moderate forms of sexual aggression (p. 1402).

While investigating risk factors associated with sexual aggression among homosexual men, these researchers found “that respondents who reported severe forms of sexual aggression were more likely to accept money for sex, to pay money for sex, to have had their first homosexual experience at a younger age, and to endorse a greater probability of raping a man” (Krahé, et al., 2001, p. 1402-1403).

An extensive Canadian study “Sexual orientation and victimization” by Diane L. Beauchamp (2004) has been published using a Canadian government sample based on over 23,000 households. This study reports gays and lesbians were 2.5 times more likely to report being the victim of violence than were heterosexuals. Bisexuals were 4 times more likely to be such victims. When the study reported spousal violence the same pattern held. “Fifteen percent of gays or lesbians and 28% of bisexuals reported being the victims of spousal abuse in comparison to 7% of heterosexuals.”(p.8)

Regarding rape, a study by Kimerling, Rellini, Kelly, Judson, & Learman, (2002) examined the characteristics of male and female patients in a rape treatment center over a five-year period. The male victims were significantly more likely than the female victims to report being homosexual or bisexual. Of the male victims, 10.5% were bisexual, 50.9% were

homosexual, and 38.6% were heterosexual, which reflects the increased prevalence of rape among homosexual men found in the other studies discussed here. Interestingly, the male victims were also significantly more likely than the female victims to have a current psychiatric disorder, a past psychiatric diagnosis, and to have been an inpatient at a psychiatric hospital at some point in their lives.

Using a sample of 595 men attending a gay pride festival, a group of American researchers (Kalichman, Benotsch, Rompa, Gore-Felton, Austin, Luke, DiFonzo, Buckles, Kyomugisha, & Simpson, 2001) administered a survey regarding unwanted sexual contact. More than a third (35%) of these men reported at a least one incident of unwanted sexual intercourse due to threats or physical force in their lifetime. The researchers state, “We conclude that unwanted sexual experiences represent a prevalent and pervasive problem for men who have sex with men” (Kalichman et al., 2001, p. 8). A Canadian study using 358 homosexual men had the same result:

A full 35% of the respondents in this study reported some kind of non-consensual sex, 10% reported involvement in juvenile prostitution, 14% were sexually abused as children, and 14% reported their first non-consensual sexual assault to have occurred at 14 years of age or older (Ratner, Johnson, Shoveller, Chan, Martindale, Schilder, Botnick, & Hogg, 2003, p. 72).

These studies document the disturbing fact that homosexual men are victims of sexual coercion and violence at high rates. Moreover, most of this sexual violence is committed by homosexual men themselves as can be seen in the nature of the acts themselves, the relationships to the victims (as in the case of domestic/relationship abuse and dating violence), and the willingness of many homosexual men to perpetrate sexual violence as assessed by several of the

studies above. One further study helps to illustrate this point. McConaghy and Zamir (1995) examined the sexual attitudes and behaviors of 182 medical students in Australia. Among the male students (N=101), these researchers found that their ratio of homosexual to heterosexual feelings yielded a positive significant correlation with their scores on measures of both sexual victimization by males and sexual aggression toward males. In other words, the more homosexually oriented the participant, the more likely he was to also report committing sexually aggressive acts against men and having been sexually victimized by men (McConaghy & Zamir, 1995).

Another recent relevant report is by Hughes, 2006. This reviewer covered the 1000 most recent articles in the Internet's Medline that reported findings related to homosexuality and lesbianism. (Some of these studies are reported in the present two articles.) In particular Hughes noted that violence of some kind was reported in more than ½ of the homosexual couples studied by Heintz and Melendez, 2006. Another study reported 39% of HIV infected male homosexual couples experienced violence. (Shelton, Atkinson, Risser, et al. 2005.) In addition, a history of child sexual abuse was common in gays, but for unknown reasons was twice as common, 22%, in Latino gays as in non-Latino gays, 11%. (Arreola, Neilands, Pollack, et al 2005.) Hughes noted, as already reported here in Part 1, that suicides, attempted suicides and suicidal ideation are higher in gay males. (D'Augelli, Grossman, Salter et al, 2005; Warner, McKeown, Griffin, et al, 2004) Hughes also cites two studies that reported high levels, 27% and 43%, of mental disorders in gay populations. See Remafedi, Farrow, & Deisker, 1991; Diamant & Wold, 2003.

In an article by McKenery, Serovich, Mason & Mosack, 2006 the authors comment that studies to date indicate as high or higher levels of domestic violence in gay and lesbian relationships than in heterosexual couples. (See Greenwood, et al, 2002.) The authors also note

that gay and lesbian partner violence has increased 25% since 1991 and even more between 1998 and 1999. (Greenwood, et al 2002) This report, however, is mostly concerned with the different characteristics that might predict which member of a gay or lesbian couple would perpetrate the violence as distinct from the victim. Male partners that were perpetrators of violence tended to have more psychiatric symptoms than non-perpetrators, higher masculinity scores and more alcohol use. The study also measured internalized homophobia but this measure did not differ between perpetrators and their victims.

Finally a study by Rohrbaugh, 2006 noted factors contributing to those who abuse their same-sex partners which included: alcoholism, a history of sexual/physical/emotional abuse, compulsive sexual behavior and psychiatric histories. These factors have been noted in Part 1 as high in homosexuals and thus they provide a psychological basis for understanding the gay propensity to interpersonal violence.

In short, the large amount of data presented above clearly demonstrates that a homosexual identity and lifestyle are associated with emotional, physical, and sexual violence among men.

Some may wonder why this large body of research has not received more attention in the media and the larger society. One of the researchers cited above explains,

...the gay community itself is reluctant to acknowledge that gay men intimidate, exploit, and sexually assault other gay men; it is politically embarrassing to the gay movement (in the same way as pedophilia is embarrassing), and it is dangerous ammunition for an oppressive majority (Hickson et al., 1994, p. 284).

### **Child Sexual Abuse**



The most serious forms of violence are those that directly target children. Unfortunately, as we document below, there is good reason to believe that homosexual and bisexual men are more likely to commit acts of sexual violence against children than are heterosexual men.

Researchers estimate that 90% or more of all incidents of child sexual abuse (CSA) are committed by men (see Spataro, Moss, & Wells, 2001; Holmes & Slap, 1998; McConaghy, 1998; Fergusson, Lynskey, & Horwood, 1996a). Besides these reports, Kendall-Tackett and Simon (1987) observed that in 365 cases of CSA, 97% of the perpetrators were male. Even more pertinent is a study by Reinhart (1987) of 189 cases of CSA involving boys. In this study, 96% of the CSA perpetrators against boys were male.

Moreover, as much data show, a large number of CSA victims are boys who are coerced into homosexual acts by male perpetrators (for a review, see Putnam, 2003). Further research supporting this includes a study of 229 child molesters by Erickson, Walbek, and Seely (1988) that found that 26% of CSA victims were male. Another group of researchers interviewed 91 child sex offenders, all of whom were men, and found that 14% targeted boys only and another 28% targeted both boys and girls (Elliott, Browne, & Kilcoyne, 1995). Likewise, in a more recent study of 678 pedophiles, 27% of perpetrators exclusively sought boys and another 25% sought both boys and girls (Blanchard, Watson, Choy, Dickey, Klassen, Kuban, & Ferren, 1999). In a very unusual study of 561 nonincarcerated sex offenders who were granted immunity for the purposes of the study, the authors observed, "The majority of child molestations [in this study] were committed by individuals who target boys outside of the home" (Abel, Becker, Mittleman, Cunningham-Rathner, Rouleau, & Murphy, 1987, p. 18).

These studies document that a substantial proportion of all CSA incidents involve a male perpetrator and a male victim. Thus, keeping in mind the low rates of male homosexuality found

in the general population discussed at this paper's outset, it is clear that child sexual abuse, almost all of which is perpetrated by men, is disproportionately homosexual in nature. Indeed, Freund, Heasman, Racansky, & Glancy (1984) found that among their sample of 457 male child molesters "approximately one third [36%] of these sexual offenders directed their sexual activity against males [boys]" (p. 197). The researchers go on to say, "The observed difference between the proportion of offenders against boys... and the proportion of androphiles [men attracted to men] among males who erotically prefer physically mature partners, is so large that it should not be overlooked" (Freund et al., 1984, p. 198). In other words, the percentage of child molesters who targeted boys (36%) was much greater than the percentage of men in the general population who are primarily attracted to other men (2-3%). Thus, among child molesters, homosexual or bisexual orientation was much more common than expected, and this suggests a link between male homosexuality/bisexuality and pedophilia. Indeed, a "plausible explanation" of this finding offered by the researchers is "that androphiles [men attracted to men] might be more prone to choose a child as a surrogate partner than are gynephiles [men attracted to women]" (p. 198).

The same research group confirmed these findings in a later study in which they proposed that the "high proportion of offenders against males among sex offenders against children, found in the aforementioned earlier study, is only a weak reflection of an even higher proportion of homosexuality in pedophiles" (Freund, Watson, & Rienzo, 1987, p. 263). In yet a further analysis, Freund & Watson (1992) found more support for a male homosexuality-pedophilia link. They state, "Support was given by these results to hypothesis 3, according to which a homosexual development notably often does not result in androphilia [attraction to men] but in homosexual pedophilia [attraction to boys]" (p. 41).

Subsequent studies have reinforced this reasoning. As a group of researchers recently stated,

The best epidemiological evidence indicates that only 2-4% of men attracted to adults prefer men (ACSF Investigators, 1992; Billy et al., 1993; Fay et al., 1989; Johnson et al., 1992); in contrast, around 25-40% of men attracted to children prefer boys (Blanchard et al., 1999; Gebhard et al., 1965; Mohr et al., 1964). Thus, the rate of homosexual attraction is 6-20 times higher among pedophiles (Blanchard, Barbaree, Bogaert, Dickey, Klassen, Kuban, & Zucker, 2000, p. 464).

While discussing the findings of their study on 260 child sex offenders, the same research group went on to state,

The proportion of pedophiles in this study who were exclusively or primarily interested in boys, as assessed from their offense histories, was 25%. This result is consistent with previous studies that suggest the prevalence of homosexuality is about 10 times higher in pedophiles [those attracted to children] than in teleiophiles [those attracted to adults]... (Blanchard et al., 2000, p. 474).

These studies suggest that the male homosexual and/or bisexual orientation is over-represented among child sexual abusers. An extensive review of cases of child molestation reported in newspapers across the English-speaking world corroborates this (CCIC, 2003). However, we should note that two studies contradict this assertion, but we believe there is good reason to discount them. In an early study by Groth & Birnbaum (1978), the researchers investigated 175 men convicted of CSA. They divided these men into “fixated” and “regressed” groups based on how the offenders’ attraction to children developed. Since the majority of offenders in the regressed group targeted female victims, they conclude that homosexual men are no more likely

to be attracted to children than heterosexual men. However, they fail to note that the majority (46%) of sex offenders in the fixated group targeted boys (a further 24% targeted boys and girls). Moreover, if one looks at the whole sample regardless of these subgroups, 28.6% of the offenders targeted boys and a further 18% targeted boys and girls. Therefore, even though the authors argue differently, the data presented by Groth & Birnbaum (1978) still support the assertion that acts of CSA are disproportionately homosexual in nature (i.e., involve a male perpetrator and a male child). In a more recent study, Jenny & Roesler (1994) argue similarly but unconvincingly. The study participants consisted of 352 children admitted to a hospital because of a CSA experience. Ignoring the gender of the child and the gender of the perpetrator, they attempted to determine the abusers' sexual orientation by reviewing the victim's hospital charts. Finding little evidence of homosexuality recorded in the hospital charts, they conclude that homosexuality and CSA are unrelated. However, a serious methodological limitation is that no direct assessment of the perpetrators took place. Review of victims' charts is a highly dubious method of discerning the perpetrators' sexual orientation. Moreover, 22% of the victims were boys, again suggesting that acts of CSA are disproportionately homosexual in nature.

Nonetheless, the relationship between male homosexuality and child sexual abuse has begun to surface in other ways as well. For instance, in the study by Erikson et al. (1988) of 229 men who had sexually abused a child, "Eighty-six percent of offenders against males described themselves as homosexual or bisexual" (p. 83). Marshall, Barbaree, and Butt (1988) compared the sexual arousal of a group of child molesters and a control group to various sexual stimuli.

They state,

Our results reveal two important features of men who molest boys. First, their sexual responses to males in general... were greater than those displayed by controls, and their

arousal to sex with boys... was also greater than that of controls. These offenders as a group, were clearly attracted to males and to male children in particular, but they did not, as a group, differ from controls in their arousal to females (p. 389).

In other words, the child molesters in this study were more homosexually oriented in their sexual attractions than were controls. These researchers further delineated the sexual offenders according to the degree of homosexual attraction present. Interestingly, they found that the most homosexually oriented offenders were more aroused by sexual interactions with boys that involved violence than the rest of the offenders (Marshall et al., 1988).

Silverthorne and Quinsey (2000) compared sexual partner age preferences among homosexual and heterosexual individuals. Their findings indicate that the homosexual men preferred younger partners than the heterosexual men. They state, "Men who preferred male partners preferred younger partners than those who preferred female partners" (p. 74). Thus, "homosexuality is associated with a downward shift in age preference among men..." (Silverthorne & Quinsey, 2000, p. 74).

Dreznick (2003) conducted a meta-analysis of studies examining heterosocial competence among sex offenders. Heterosocial competence refers to "a person's ability to successfully interact with members of the other sex" (p. 170). In his conclusion, he states, "The studies reviewed in this article have consistently shown that child molesters have poorer heterosocial skills than either rapists, incarcerated non-sex-offenders, or nonoffenders" (p. 176).

Despite the arguments put forward by some, sexual encounters between men and boys are frequently violent in nature and tend to carry with them many lasting, detrimental consequences. For instance, Stermac, Hall, and Henskens (1989) examined groups of male child sex offenders. They found that these "offenders had committed largely violent assaults against children.

Threats and physical force were used by the majority of offenders” (p. 457). “As previously noted, common beliefs about child molesters have included notions about the benign nature of sexual contact... The findings of this study demonstrate clearly that, among some child molesters, the use of gratuitous violence is frequent” (Stermac et al., 1989, p. 458; see also Dolezal and Carballo-Diéguez, 2002; Paul, et al., 2001; Romano & De Luca, 2001; Holmes & Slap, 1998; Doll, Joy, Bartholow, Harrison, Bolan, Douglas, Saltzman, Moss, & Delgado, 1992).

In terms of the adverse effects of this abuse, at least one clinician has noted that among male victims he has treated “many did not initially encode premature sex as betrayal. Men in this subgroup considered the sexual events they experienced to have been pleasurable, even though each demonstrated psychological sequelae suggesting that the experiences had abusive and traumatizing aspects” (Gartner, 1999, p. 7). These “abusive and traumatizing aspects” usually take the form of psychiatric and behavioral difficulties, which have been frequently documented in the scientific literature (see Kalichman, Gore-Felton, Benotsch, Cage, & Rompa, 2004; Putnam, 2003; Romano & De Luca, 2001; Spataro et al., 2001; Nordling et al., 2000; Holmes & Slap, 1998; Cermak & Molidor, 1996; Fergusson et al., 1996b; Black & DeBlassie, 1993; Watkins & Bentovim, 1992; Briere, Evans, Runtz & Wall, 1988). For instance, Holmes and Slap (1998) conducted a thorough review of the empirical research on the sexual abuse of boys. They found,

[S]exually abused males were at increased risk for negative clinical sequelae. These sequelae included increased rates of posttraumatic stress disorder, major depression, anxiety disorders, borderline personality disorder, antisocial personality disorder, paranoia, dissociation, somatization, bulimia, anger, aggressive behavior, poor self-image, poor school performance, running away from home and legal trouble (p. 1858).

Research also shows that male victims of sexual abuse are much more likely to fall victim to substance related disorders and experience a rate of suicide 1.5 to 14 times higher than nonabused males (Holmes & Slap, 1998).

Perhaps the most unfortunate consequence of male sexual abuse is an increased propensity to later commit acts of sexual violence (see Toro-Alfonso & Rodríguez-Madera, 2004; Morris, Anderson, & Knox, 2002; Krahe et al., 2001; Holmes & Slap, 1998; Greenfield, 1997; Romano & De Luca, 1997; Romano & De Luca, 1996; Zgourides, Monto, & Harris, 1997; Worling, 1995; Finkelhor, 1990; Freund, Watson, & Dickey, 1990; Dietz et al., 1990; Friedrich & Luecke, 1988; Fehrenbach, Smith, Monastersky, & Deisher, 1986). Commenting on much prior research, Holmes & Slap (1998) state, “Abused males indicated greater difficulty controlling sexual feelings, were hypersexual, and were more likely to perpetrate coercive sexual acts against others” (p. 1858). One study they cite found that “abused males compared with non-abused males were 4.4 times more likely... to have forced someone into sexual contact, and other studies reported that these forced acts typically were with boys” (p. 1858, citing Lodico, Gruber, & DiClemente, 1996).

Moreover, several studies have linked sexual victimization in childhood with later specific perpetration of CSA. Seghorn, Prentky, & Boucher (1987) compared 54 incarcerated child molesters and 97 rapists. Among the child molesters, they observed an incidence of CSA much higher than the general male population and “more than twice as high as the incidence among rapists” (Seghorn et al., 1987, p. 265). In a study of 344 participants, Freund, Watson, & Dickey (1990) found that their “comparison of pedophilic sex offenders against children with controls supports the clinical impression that pedophiles report more often that they were sexually abused in childhood than individuals without such an offense and who were not

pedophilic” (p. 56). In a follow-up study, Freund & Kuban (1994) again found a connection between having been sexually abused in childhood and later being erotically attracted to children. Worling (1995) collected data from 90 male sexual offenders and found that in contrast to those who assault only girls, “most offenders who assault even one male child report a history of sexual abuse” (p. 612). In a small study of 14 men who had sexually abused boys,

The prevalence of childhood sexual abuse... was approximately two times greater than that among nonsexual perpetrators and three times greater than that among nonperpetrators. This finding appears to lend support to past research, which has indicated that boys who have been abused are at greater risk of recapitulating their sexual victimization in the future by assuming the role of the offender, thereby continuing the sexual abuse cycle (Romano & De Luca, 1996, p. 153).

Sawle and Kear-Colwell (2001) compared 25 pedophiles, 22 nonoffending victims of sexual assault, and 23 controls and found that the pedophile group and the victim group did not differ “in terms of the reported levels of sexual abuse in childhood” (p. 41). Thus, the researchers state, “Both victims and pedophiles reported that prior to the age of 14 they had engaged ‘very often’ in sexual activity with an adult (43% and 43%, respectively)” (Sawle and Kear-Colwell, 2001, p. 45). In their study of 64 sex offenders, Lee, Jackson, Pattison, & Ward (2002) found that CSA was “a specific developmental risk factor for pedophilia” and this “is consistent with the theory that male children and adolescents who have been sexually abused are at a greater risk in later years of becoming sexual abusers of children or adolescents” (p. 88).

Thus, it seems clear that boys who are sexually abused by men are especially at risk for committing later sexual crimes against boys, which implies the presence of a homosexual orientation. Indeed, one reviewer states, “The effects of sexual victimization on male children,



placed in the context of the prevailing concept of masculinity, include mental disorders, the probability of becoming rapists and incest offenders as adults, and the development of homosexual identification” (Vander Mey, 1988, p. 61). Several studies support this claim. For instance, Finkelhor (1984) found a statistically significant relationship between CSA victimization and later homosexual activity in adulthood (cited in Dimock, 1988). In a study of 25 adult males who had been sexually abused in childhood, the majority of these men experienced “masculine identity confusion” characterized by “confusion regarding sexual preference and... male roles” (Dimock, 1988, p. 208). Homosexual feelings and/or behaviors were common among these men. Noting that “the literature reports that there may be a significant number of gay men who have been sexually abused as children,” Schwartz (1994) presented clinical data from eight men who had been victims of CSA. “Six of the eight men identified themselves as homosexual in their sexual identity; two were heterosexual. Of the two heterosexuals, one continuously questioned his sexual orientation” (Schwartz, 1994, p. 182). Likewise, Johnson & Shrier (1985) compared 40 male victims of CSA and an age-matched control group and found that 47.5% of the CSA victims went on to develop a homosexual orientation and another 10% became bisexual. “The study group identified themselves as currently homosexual nearly seven times as often and bisexual nearly six times as often as the control group” (Johnson & Shrier, 1985, p. 374).

These studies that have found an increased likelihood of homosexual identification in male victims of CSA are corroborated by at least twelve more recent and systematic ones that have all documented elevated rates of CSA among homosexual men (Saewyc, Pettingell, & Skay, 2004; Kalichman et al., 2004; Ratner et al., 2003; Garcia, Adams, Friedman, & East, 2002; Dolezal & Carballo-Diéguez, 2002; Tomeo et al., 2001; Paul et al., 2001; Krahé et al., 2001;

Paris et al., 1995; Doll et al., 1992; Baier et al., 1991; Haverkos, Bukoski, & Amsael, 1989; for reviews see Relf, 2001; Holmes & Slap, 1998). For instance, using a nonclinical sample of 942 participants, Tomeo et al. (2001) found that 46% of homosexual men had been sexually abused as a child by a man. This was significantly greater than the 7% rate found among heterosexual men in that study. Among a convenience sample of 307 Latin American men who have sex with men (MSM), Dolezal and Carballo-Diéguez (2002) observed “that early sexual contact [with men] is common among these men. Fifty-nine percent had had some sexual/genital contact prior to their 13<sup>th</sup> birthday. In the majority of those cases, they had a partner who was at least 4 years older than they were” (p. 169-170). In addition, “the majority of the men who had such experiences were either forced or threatened or were physically or emotionally hurt” (p. 172). Finally, in a systematic study using a probability sample of 2881 MSM, Paul et al. (2001) found that one fifth of these homosexual men had experienced CSA. They state,

Our study confirms and extends prior research indicating high prevalence levels of childhood sexual abuse (CSA) among MSM. Such prevalence levels might be higher if we had elicited data about experiences involving non-contact sexual victimization (i.e., sexual exposure or exhibitionism). Overall, these men’s CSA experiences were characterized by high levels of penetrative sex, physical force, and perceptions of these events as distressing (Paul et al., 2001, p. 575).

Not only does this abuse carry with it the many risk factors noted above, but among homosexual and bisexual men, CSA brings further consequences. Studies have shown that gay men who have been sexually abused as children are more likely to be promiscuous, more likely to engage in HIV spreading behavior such as unprotected anal intercourse, and are more likely to

be HIV-positive (Kalichman et al., 2004; O'Leary, Purcell, Remein, & Gomez, 2003; Paul et al., 2001; Relf, 2001; Bartholow, Doll, Joy, Douglas, Bolan, Harrison, Moss, McKirnan, 1994).

To summarize, the research discussed in this section shows: 1.) Incidents of CSA tend to be disproportionately homosexual in nature (i.e., involving men and boys more often than one would predict based on rates of male homosexuality in the population). 2.) There is good evidence from a variety of sources suggesting that pedophilia and homosexuality in men are linked. 3.) CSA has many lasting, negative effects on boys that persist into adulthood. These negative effects include confusion over sexual orientation, increased likelihood to identify as homosexual, and a propensity to commit acts of sexual violence, especially further acts of CSA. 4.) Higher rates of CSA victimization exist among homosexual men compared to heterosexual men. Based on these lines of evidence, we conclude that homosexual and bisexual men are more likely to sexually abuse children than are heterosexual men.

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