

Recalled childhood sexual abuse related to marital satisfaction

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by

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Abstract

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Sexual satisfaction of participants who recalled childhood sexual abuse was investigated. A survey asking several questions pertaining to sexual activities was completed by 417 adult heterosexual females and 179 adult heterosexual males. The results indicated that three groups had lower sexual satisfaction than controls: (1) underage females who were victims of coerced sexual situations with male partners who were within four years of the victim's age, (2) underage females who voluntarily experimented sexually with underage males who were more than four years older than themselves, and (3) females who reported that they were raped as adults by adult males. Underage males who voluntarily experimented with underage females who were more than four years older than themselves reported higher sexual satisfaction than controls.

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Introduction

Childhood sexual abuse has effects that are not fully understood. Victims of childhood sexual abuse have a wide range of physiological and psychological symptoms. Specifically, the experiences of childhood have a direct impact on the adult sexuality of the individual (Finkelhor, 1984). The experiences of childhood that relate to the sexual attitudes and sexual function of the adult have not been specifically identified. The purpose of this study was to identify the specific childhood sexual experiences that had a statistically significant impact on the adult sexual satisfaction of the individual.

Childhood Sexual Abuse

Immediate effects. The immediate effects of childhood sexual abuse have been extensively studied by various researchers inside the realm of psychology (Finkelhor, 1984; Altemus, M. Cloitre, M., & Dhabhar, F. S., 2003; Bremner, J. D., Vythilingam, M., Vermetten, E., Adil, J., Khan S., Nazeer A., Afzal, N., McGlashan, T., Elzinga, B., Anderson, G. M., Heninger, G., Southwick, S.M., Charney, D. S., 2003; Edwards et al, 2003). No single syndrome has been identified as the constant result of sexual abuse (Bauserman & Rind, 1997; Resick, 2003). If left untreated, the effects of childhood sexual experiences could follow the victim well into his or her adult life (Finkelhor, 1984).

Childhood sexual abuse prevalence. The prevalence of childhood sexual abuse is high. The actual numbers are difficult to discover, considering the number of individuals who are abused and do not report it. Eighteen percent of boys and 25% of girls reported having been sexually abused (Edwards et al, 2003). Studies have shown that more women had a history of sexual abuse than did men, but one-third to one quarter of sexually abused children were male

(Edwards et al, 2003). Male children were more frequently sexually assaulted by men than by women (Finkelhor, 1979; Hall, 1995).

The actual population percentages were also affected by the perception of the individual in question. Research showed that some incidents of what was legally classified as sexual abuse were interpreted as pleasurable by a percentage of the victims as an adult (Finkelhor, 1979; Sandfort, 1992; Williams, 1993; Hazzard, 1993; Weaver & Clum, 1995). A small portion of the U.S. population who had sexual relations with an adult as a child considered the incident to be positive (Sandfort, 1982).

General Effects of Childhood Sexual Abuse on the Victims

Physiological effects. Evidence suggested that sexual abuse was linked to physiological effects on a victim. A history of childhood sexual abuse was correlated with an increased physiological response (Altemus et al, 2003; Bremner et al, 2003). When placed in stressful situations, blood levels of ACTH and cortisol were shown to be increased in women who had a history of being abused as a child when compared to those who were not (Heim, 2000).

Psychological effects on sexuality. Finkelhor (1984) stated that childhood sexual abuse resulted in four types of effects on the abused individual. The effects, according to Finkelhor (1984), were traumatic sexualization, stigmatization, betrayal, and powerlessness. Finkelhor (1984) described traumatic sexualization as being either negative feelings about sex, such as disgust or general avoidance of sexual activity, an infatuation with sex, or sexual identity problems. Stigmatization, according to Finkelhor (1984), resulted when children withdrew from social settings because of the knowledge that the sexual abuse they had experienced is taboo. Finkelhor (1984) stated that children felt betrayal over the sexual abuse and found it hard to trust others because the abuser was often someone they trusted. Finkelhor (1984) stated that the

abused child felt powerless when he or she discovered that he or she could not stop the abuse or remove the memory of the abuse and began to feel overwhelmed.

Many other independent studies supported the work of Finkelhor (1984). Children who were sexually abused became confused about sexuality and relationships because they had learned to define relationships by measurement of sexual activity (Breslin, 1990). Victims of childhood sexual abuse were found to develop a variety of problems and disorders including a distorted self-image, problems with his or her view of him- or herself in relation to others, problems with his or her view of personal desires and needs, problems with his or her reaction to his or her own sexual feelings, post-traumatic stress disorder, low self-esteem, and anxiety (Breslin, 1990; Hollenberg & Ragan, 1991; Mayall & Gold, 1995; Messman & Long, 1996; Fergusson, Horwood, & Lynskey, 1997).

Other studies dispute some of these findings. The subjective experiences that an individual has, such as childhood sexual abuse, may not be viewed by the victim as abusive. The amount of adjustment that the victim needed would be altered by the perception of the victim (Williams, 1993; Hazzard, 1993; Weaver & Clum, 1995). Some findings have supported this view, in that sexual interaction that the victim views as voluntary positively impacts the individual (Sandfort, 1992).

Non-sexual psychological effects. The trauma of childhood sexual abuse has also been found to impact the individual in ways not directly related to sexual activity. Victims of childhood sexual abuse were found to exhibit symptoms of eating disorders, inappropriate sexual behavior, anger, depression, anxiety, aggressive behavior, self-destructive behavior, drug abuse, post-traumatic stress disorder, low self-esteem, sexual dysfunction, potential for revictimization, and mistrust of others (Breslin, 1990; Hollenberg & Ragan, 1991; Mayall & Gold, 1995;

Messman & Long, 1996; Fergusson et al, 1997; Edwards et al, 2003). Also, older children have been found more likely to become substance abusers (Herrer & McCloskey, 2003).

Differences between the genders in their response to childhood sexual abuse were found (Edwards et al., 2003). Edwards (2003) indicated that males exhibited the affects of childhood sexual abuse externally in ways such as physical aggression. Edwards (2003) stated that females expressed their reaction to the trauma in internal ways, such as eating disorders and depression. While these differences did exist, flashbacks, numbing of emotions, nightmares, feelings of estrangement, and other post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms were exhibited by both genders who were victims of childhood sexual abuse (Herrera & McCloskey, 2003).

Adult Effects of Sexual Abuse on the Victims

Adult effects of childhood sexual abuse. Many experiences from childhood had an impact on the life of the adult. Social learning theories focus on patterns of past reinforcement and modeling in current behavior (Miller & Dollard, 1941). If an individual's action was met with a painful consequence, then he or she would not be likely to repeat this behavior. If a behavior was met with positive reinforcement, then the likelihood of a repetition of the behavior increased (Skinner, 1953). Studies also support the theory that an individual's relationship with his or her parents had an effect on that individual's adult romantic relationships (Shaver and Hazan, 1988). Shaver and Hazan (1988) indicated that the relationship between the parents and the child often paralleled that of the child when he or she matured into an adult and attempted to establish romantic relationships with other adults.

Childhood and adolescent sexual relationships also had an impact on the individual's adult life. A sample of university and college students found that engaging in voluntary childhood sexual encounters had a negative impact on females as an adult (Finkelhor, 1984).

Childhood sexual encounters with a partner who was more than five years older than the respondent would have a greater negative impact on the respondent's adult life than sexual encounters with individuals who were of closer ages (Finkelhor, 1979; Finkelhor, 1984).

A traumatic experience such as childhood sexual abuse was found to impact adult life. Women who were sexually abused as children were found to have a greater negative attitude towards marriage, wait longer to be married, and considered themselves less prepared for marriage than those who were not sexually abused (Larson & Craig, 2005). Many victims of childhood sexual abuse feel guilt and blame for the incident and, in some cases, for their feelings of sexual excitement resulting from the trauma (Stream, 1988). Adults who experience sexual problems frequently report that they were abused as children (Meiselman, 1978). A study of 100 prostitutes in Vancouver, Canada, found that seventy-two percent of their subjects had been abused as children (Farley, M., Lynne, J., & Cotton, A., 2005).

Effects of adult rape. Even as an adult, sexual traumas such as rape possibly result in psychological problems such as severe depression, adjustment problems, and sexual problems (Koss, Figueredo, & Prince, 2002). Rape victims exhibited symptoms such as lack of sleep, frequent crying, eating problems, headaches, irritability, and mood changes. These individuals became withdrawn, sullen, and mistrustful of others. Rape victims reported experiencing these emotions that peaked approximately three weeks after the sexual assault and began to decline approximately two months after the incident, with the bulk of the improvement occurring between one and three months after the sexual assault (Koss, Gidycz, & Wisniewski, 1987; Koss et al., 2002). Those who survived rape often had sexual problems, such as a lack of sexual desire, a general fear of sex, and difficulty becoming sexually aroused (Koss et al., 2002). Victims of

rape reported that they had obtained less satisfaction from sexual activity than they had before the rape (Koss et al., 2002).

Marital satisfaction. It has been found that a good indicator of a satisfying marriage was found in the various aspects of sexual activity within the marriage (Matthias, Lubben, Atchison, & Schweitzer, 1997). Specifically, marital satisfaction of an adult was an adequate indicator of traits such as social skills and intimacy. It was suggested that marital satisfaction was positively correlated with the sexual frequency and sexual satisfaction within the marriage (Donnelly, 1993; Morokoff & Gilliland, 1997; Young, 1998).

Lack of sexual arousal and desire was correlated with psychological problems (Bancroft, Loftus, & Long, 2003). Many psychological problems that result from childhood sexual abuse, such as anxiety and depression, were related to a lack of sexual interest (Frohlich & Meston, 2002). Finkelhor (1984) stated that childhood sexual abuse was correlated with a lack of sexual self-esteem, indicating that the victims of childhood sexual abuse viewed current sexual feelings and sexual activity in a negative manner. This finding has been shown to be true despite differences in family income, emotional deprivation, and family sexual practices (Finkelhor, 1984). Therefore the internal psychological problems resulting from childhood sexual abuse could be expected to be correlated with a lack of satisfying adult sexual relationships.

Unanswered questions. Despite the massive amount of data on victims of childhood sexual abuse, the question of what kinds of childhood sexual experiences had an impact on the adult sexual satisfaction of those individuals remains unanswered. Variables such as respondent's age, sex, and perception of the incident as well as the perpetrators' age and sex at the time of the experience could greatly alter the impact of any given behavior on the sexual satisfaction of the adult victim.

Current Study. The focus of the current study was to ascertain the impact of sexual behaviors that occurred when the victims were under the age of 18 on the sexual satisfaction of the victim once he or she reached adulthood. The current study utilized data obtained by the computerized sexual survey, S-SAPE1 (©S-SAPE, LLC, 2002), to determine the variables that had a significant impact on the victim's adult sexual satisfaction.

Seven predictor variables were used for both males and females. Four of the variables involved coerced sexual experiences before the respondent reached 18 years of age. Two of the variables involved voluntary sexual experiences with individuals at least 4 years older than the respondent while the respondent was less than 18 years of age. Because coerced sexual events that occurred after the respondent had reached adulthood were expected to produce adverse effects similar to those of the childhood experiences, I adjusted for the effect of adult coerced sexual events in the statistical analyses by including a variable coding for coerced sexual events that occurred when both the respondent and the perpetrator were over 18 years of age.

Hypotheses. There were three hypotheses in this study. The first hypothesis was that sexual childhood experiences that the victims viewed as coerced had a negative impact on the sexual satisfaction of those individuals once they reached adulthood. The second hypothesis of this study was that voluntary sex with partners who were more than four years older than the respondents had a negative impact on the sexual satisfaction of those individuals once they reached adulthood. The third hypothesis of this study was that coerced sexual events that occur during adulthood negatively effected the sexual satisfaction of the respondents.

Method

Participants

The number of participants (n) was 983 prior to selection of those without errors on the lie scale. Due to positive lie scale scores and restriction of the data to heterosexual respondents, an n of 387 was removed. This left 179 males and 417 females. All participants were over the age of 18 and gave informed consent before beginning the survey.

Instrument

All participants completed a computerized survey instrument, S-SAPE1, that was accessed with a floppy key that stored all the data until the survey was completed. The basic behaviors included 15 childhood masturbation behaviors, 15 adult masturbation behaviors, 23 childhood behaviors with partners, and 10 adult behaviors with partners (©S-SAPE1, 2002).

The answers provided by the respondent in the S-SAPE1 survey remained anonymous. Respondents were directed to provide an age within two years of their current age and were asked to respond to questions concerning their present or most recent relationship.

The dependent measure, sexual satisfaction, was a scale called the Sexual Relationship Index (Appendix A). The Sexual Relationship Index (©S-SAPE, LLC, 2002) was a 27 item questionnaire designed to assess adult sexual satisfaction (Appendix A). The Sexual Relationship Index is comprised of 27 statements utilizing a clear 5-item response variable for each item that was assigned values from 0 to 4. Thirteen statements with randomized locations are reverse scored (items 4-8, 11, 13-15, 18, 20, 24, 26). Higher scores (after reversal of reverse-scored items) indicated a higher-quality sexual relationship (©S-SAPE1, LLC, 2002). The scores will hereafter be referred to as Sexual Satisfaction.

On the questions related to sexual satisfaction, the respondent was prompted with a directory statement provided above the questions he or she answered. The prompt stated “This screen will present a series of statements designed to evaluate your sexual relationship with your current spouse or long-term partner. If a medical condition or advanced age now makes sex difficult or impossible, think of a time before the problems developed. If you do not currently have a spouse or long-term partner, think of each statement as applying to your relationship with your last (or deceased) spouse or long-term partner. If you have never had a sex partner, later questions will clarify this - choose ‘less than 10% of the time’ for each statement. For each statement, please select the item in the list which best describes how often the statement applies to your sexual relationship” (©S-SAPE, LLC, 2002).

The independent variables were various measures chosen for the relationship each had to childhood sexual abuse. The independent variables were all dummy variables, meaning that they could only have a 0 or a 1 answer. The answer of 1 coded for participation in the behavior while 0 coded for not having participated in the behavior. Each independent variable used was specific to the gender of the partner.

Results

The dependent measure, sexual satisfaction, was used to measure the level of sexual satisfaction of the respondents. This dependent variable was analyzed using a number of independent variables which represented various types of sexual experiences. Heterosexual females and heterosexual males were analyzed separately.

Study 1: Females

Statistically Significant Results. Based on the one way analysis of variance of the dependent variable, sexual satisfaction in heterosexual females, I found two independent

variables that were statistically significant at the $p < 0.05$ level: (1) coerced sexual situations of any kind with males who were no more than four years older or younger than the respondents while the respondents were under the age of 18, $F(1, 415) = 4.77, p = 0.03$ with $n = 66$ for victims, a result that supported the hypothesis that experiencing coerced sexual situations under the age of 18 had a negative effect on the sexual satisfaction of the respondents as adults and (2) coerced sexual situations involving the respondents being raped in any way by males who were age 18 or older while the respondents were over the age of 18, $F(1, 415) = 7.83, p = 0.005$ with $n = 47$ for victims, a result that supported the hypothesis that coerced sexual events that occurred during adulthood negatively effected the sexual satisfaction of the respondents (means and standard deviations are shown in Table B1).

The fact that coerced sex during adulthood had effects similar to the childhood events that I was studying meant that controlling for such events statistically was important if the effects of the childhood and adult events were to be separated. The variables above remained statistically significant in two-way ANOVA's. I found that statistical significance remained for female respondents who were victims of coerced sexual situations of any kind with males who were no more than four years older or younger than the respondent while the respondent was under the age of 18. The two-way ANOVA yielded significant effects, $F(1, 416) = 7.51, p = 0.006$ with $n = 66$ for victims and $F(1, 416) = 4.45, p = 0.035$ with $n = 47$ for victims respectively (See Table B2). This result supported the hypothesis that experiencing coerced sexual situations under the age of 18 had a negative effect on the sexual satisfaction of the respondents as adults.

The other variable that was statistically significant in a two-way ANOVA adjusting for rapes that occurred while the respondents were adults was the variable that measured female

respondents who engaged in sexual experimentation of any kind with males who were more than 4 years older than the respondents but under age 18 while the respondents were under 18 years of age; the statistical analysis showed $F(1, 416) = 8.76, p = 0.003$ with $n = 59$ for victims and $F(1, 416) = 4.08, p = 0.04$ with $n = 47$, respectively. The two-way analysis of variance indicated that both variables had negative effects on sexual satisfaction (See Table C1). This result supported the hypothesis that voluntary sex with partners who were more than four years older than the respondents had a negative effect on the sexual satisfaction of those individuals once they reached adulthood.

Non-significant Results. I found that the remaining four variables had a trend toward negative effects on the dependent measure of sexual satisfaction of the respondent, but none of the trends were found to be statistically significant whether I used one- or two-way ANOVA's. The first three variables included: (1) coerced sexual situation of any kind with under age males who were more than 4 years older than the respondents while the respondents were under the age of 18 $F(1, 415) = 2.12, p = 0.15$ with $n = 15$ for victims, (2) coerced sexual situations of any kind with males who were more than 4 years younger than the respondents while the respondents were under the age of 18 $F(1, 415) = 1.14, p = 0.29$ with $n = 3$ for victims(See Table B1), (3) coerced sexual situations of any kind with males who were age 18 or older and more than four years older than the respondents while the respondents were under the age 18 $F(1, 415) = 0.35, p = 0.56$ with $n = 27$ for victims (See Table B1). These results did not support my hypothesis that sexual childhood experiences that the victims viewed as coerced had a negative impact on the sexual satisfaction of those individuals once they reached adulthood. However, the small size of the n in each case indicated that the failure to support the hypothesis may well be due to the small n . The fourth variable was sexual experimentation of any kind with males who were 18

years of age or older and more than four years older than the respondents while the respondents were under the age of 18 $F(1, 415) = 0.11, p = 0.74$ with $n = 67$ for victims. This result did not support my hypotheses that voluntary sex with partners who were more than four years older than the respondents had a negative impact on the sexual satisfaction of those individuals once they reached adulthood, yet the n of 67 for victims was relatively large.

Study 2: Males

Statistically Significant Results. I then used a series of one-way analyses of variance to analyze the male data. None of the tests reached statistical significance.

When I used a two-way ANOVA to adjust for the effect of coerced sexual situations of any kind with females who were no more than 4 years older or younger than the respondents while the respondents were under the age of 18 on sexual experimentation of any kind with females age 18 or older and more than 4 years older than the respondents while the respondents were under the age of 18, I found $F(1, 178) = 1.60, p = 0.21$ with $n = 14$ for victims and $F(1, 178) = 3.95, p = 0.049$ with $n = 23$ for victims, respectively (See Table B5). The two-way ANOVA showed trends toward increased in sexual satisfaction of the respondent in response to participating in either behavior, but only participation in sexual experimentation of any kind with females age 18 or older and more than 4 years older than the respondents while the respondents were under the age of 18 reached statistical significance. This result indicated that my hypothesis that voluntary sex with partners age 18 or over who were more than four years older than the respondents had a negative effect on the sexual satisfaction of those individuals once they reached adulthood was not supported in the case of males.

Non-Significant Results. Sexual experimentation of any kind with females age 18 or older and more than 4 years older than the respondents while the respondents were under the age of 18

narrowly missed statistical significance with $F(1, 177) = 3.70, p = 0.06$ with $n = 23$ for victims. The small number of respondents ($n = 23$) who engaged in the behavior was one important factor in the explanation behind the lack of statistical significance (See Table B4); however, confounding due to the effects of other behaviors was also important. This finding does not support the hypothesis that voluntary sex with partners who were more than four years older than the respondents had a negative impact on the sexual satisfaction of those individuals once they reached adulthood.

I found that male victims of coerced sexual situations of any kind with females no more than 4 years older or younger than the respondents while the respondents were under the age of 18 and male victims of coerced sexual situations of any kind with underage females who were more than 4 years older than the respondents while the respondents were under the age of 18 each had a tendency toward increase in sexual satisfaction of the respondents, but neither reached statistical significance. The lack of statistical significance ($F(1, 177) = 1.33, p = 0.25$ with $n = 5$ and $F(1, 177) = 1.34, p = 0.25$ with $n = 14$, respectively) was almost certainly because of the low number of respondents who reported that they had engaged in this behavior ($n = 5$ and $n = 14$ respectively, see Table B4). While these results did not support my hypothesis that sexual childhood experiences that the victims viewed as coerced had a negative impact on the sexual satisfaction of those individuals once they reached adulthood, the small number of respondents included in each group of respondents who were classified as victims is a possible reason for the lack of significance for these variables.

I found that the remaining four independent variables did not have any significant effect on the sexual satisfaction of the respondents, but these variables did have a trend toward a negative effect on the sexual satisfaction of the male respondents. It is notable that all four

variables had a relatively small number of respondents who reported engaging in the behaviors in question. Males who engaged in sexual experimentation of any kind with females who were under the age of 18 but more than 4 years older than the respondents while the respondents were under the age of 18 yielded $F(1, 177) = 0.235, p = 0.63$ with $n = 25$ for victims. This result did not support my hypothesis that that voluntary sex with partners who were more than four years older than the respondents had a negative impact on the sexual satisfaction of those individuals once they reached adulthood. Males who reported that they were coerced into sexual situations of any kind with females who were age 18 or older and more than 4 years older than the respondents while the respondents were under age 18 yielded $F(1, 177) = 0.34, p = 0.56$ with $n = 5$ for victims. This result did not support my hypothesis that sexual childhood experiences that the victims viewed as coerced had a negative impact on the sexual satisfaction of those individuals once they reached adulthood. Males who were coerced into sexual situations involving the respondents being raped in any way by females who were age 18 or older while the respondents were over the age of 18 yielded $F(1, 177) = 0.16, p = 0.69$ with $n = 2$ for victims. This result did not support my hypothesis that that coerced sexual events that occurred during adulthood negatively effected the sexual satisfaction of the respondents. The variable containing males who were victims of coerced sexual situations of any kind with females who were more than 4 years younger than the respondents while the respondents were under the age of 18 contained no respondents who reported engaging in this behavior and therefore could not yield significance (See Table B4).

Discussion

In evaluating the effects of childhood sexual experiences on adult sexual satisfaction, determining the specific variables that were correlated with a negative impact on the sexual

satisfaction of the respondents was essential to understanding the effects of childhood sexual experiences. Four of the target behaviors with adequate *n*'s that I hypothesized to have an impact on sexual satisfaction of the respondent as an adult were found to have a statistically significant impact on the sexual satisfaction of the respondents. Due to a small sample size within the database, there were too few respondents to evaluate the effects of engaging in some of the target behaviors that this study hypothesized had a negative impact on the sexual satisfaction of the respondents as adults. As the number of respondents who participate in the S-SAPE1 (©S-SAPE, LLC, 2002) survey increases, further analysis of the data could possibly increase the number of variables that have a statistically significant impact on adult sexual satisfaction.

In congruence with the past research by individuals such as Finkelhor (1984), analysis of data in this study indicated that childhood sexual abuse had an impact on the sexual satisfaction of the victims as adults.

Study 1: Females: Significant Findings

Hypothesis 1: Childhood sexual experiences that the victims view as coerced will have a negative impact on the sexual satisfaction of those individuals once they reach adulthood. One variable related to females who were victims of coerced childhood sexual experiences had a significantly negative impact on the sexual satisfaction of the respondents once they reached adulthood. This variable supported the hypothesis that childhood sexual experiences that the victims viewed as coerced negatively impacted those respondents' adult sexual satisfaction. Female respondents who participated in coerced sexual situations of any kind with males who were no more than four years older or younger than the respondents while the respondents were under 18 years of age had a statistically significantly lower sexual satisfaction than controls once they reached adulthood (See Table B1).

Hypothesis 2: Voluntary sex with partners who are more than four years older than the respondents will have a negative impact on the sexual satisfaction of those individuals once they reach adulthood. Engaging in sexual experimentation of any kind with males who were under the age of 18 and more than 4 years older than the respondents while the respondents were under 18 years of age was found to have a statically significant negative impact on the sexual satisfaction of the respondents once they reached adulthood when adjustments were made for female respondents who were victims of coerced sexual situations involving the respondents being raped in any way by males who were age 18 or older while the respondent was over the age of 18 (See Table B3). This is in congruence with Finkelhor's finding that voluntary sexual experiences with males who were more than five years older negatively impacted female respondents (Finkelhor, 1979; Finkelhor, 1984).

Hypothesis 3: Rapes that occur during adulthood will negatively effect the sexual satisfaction of the respondents. My hypothesis that rapes that occurred during adulthood negatively impacted the sexual satisfaction of the respondents was supported by the variable that measured females who were coerced into sexual situations involving the respondents being raped in any way by males who were age 18 or older while the respondents were over the age of 18. This variable was found to have a statistically significant negative impact on the sexual satisfaction of the respondents as adults (See Table B2). This finding is in congruence with earlier research that indicated that female victims of rape have lowered sexual desires, lack of sexual arousal, a general fear of sex, and lower sexual satisfaction than they did before the rape occurred (Feldman-Summers, Gordon, and Meagher, 1979; Benedict, 1985; Koss et al., 2002).

Study 2: Males: Significant Findings

Hypothesis 2: Voluntary sex with partners who are more than four years older than the respondents will have a negative impact on the sexual satisfaction of those individuals once they reach adulthood. A two-way ANOVA found a statistically significant effect of engaging in sexual experimentation of any kind with females age 18 or older and more than 4 years older than the respondents while the respondents were younger than 18 years of age. As adults, those respondents had significantly higher sexual satisfaction, an outcome diametrically opposed to the outcome predicted by the hypothesis. This finding could possibly be explained by theories such as sexual self-esteem (Finkelhor, 1979; Finkelhor, 1984). However, this finding was not in congruence with the finding that sexually victimized participants had lower levels of sexual self-esteem than other participants in the sample used (Finkelhor, 1984). (See Table B4)

Another possible explanation of the above finding was that the subjective view that the individual takes about the abuse affects the adjustment of the victim (Williams, 1993; Hazzard, 1993; Weaver & Clum, 1995). Sandfort's controversial finding that sexual experimentation with an adult that the child viewed as consensual was associated with increased levels of sexual desire and lower sexual anxieties was supported by the findings in this study (Sandfort, 1992). Further studies would be required to distinguish among such possibilities.

Study 1: Males: Non-Significant Findings

Hypothesis 1: Childhood sexual experiences that the victims view as coerced will have a negative impact on the sexual satisfaction of those individuals once they reach adulthood. None of the variables had a statistically significant negative effect on the sexual satisfaction of the male respondents who engaged in sexual experimentation that they viewed as being coerced. The low number of respondents who answered yes to each of these variables is a plausible explanation for the lack of significance. The admixture of positive effects in some respondents

and negative effects in others is a possible explanation for the lack of statistical significance in some of the other variables where the n was adequate but significance was not found. (See Table B2)

The low number of respondents who reported coerced sexual experiences could be attributed to findings that suggest that male children are more frequently sexually assaulted by men (Finkelhor, 1979; Hall, 1995). However, when the sample was limited to heterosexuals, the sample size was too small to have sufficient numbers who reported either coerced or voluntary sex with same-gender partners in any of the analogous age groups for either males or females for adequate statistical analysis.

Hypothesis 3: Rapes that occur during adulthood will negatively effect the sexual satisfaction of the respondents. The predicted result involving male respondents reporting an incident of rape by females in any way while both the respondents and the perpetrators were over 18 years of age was not found to have a statistically significant negative impact on the sexual satisfaction of the respondent (See Table B2). The low number of respondents who reported that they had been raped by females as adults ($n = 2$) was the most likely cause of the lack of statistical significance. Also, considering that male adults are more likely to be raped by other heterosexual male adults (Finkelhor, 1979; Hall, 1995), many of the incidents reported would be removed due to the elimination of all non-heterosexual individuals from the study.

Limitations to the study

The major limitation to the current study was the sample size. Due to the fact that the S-SAPE1 survey had not been administered to a random sample of any definable portion of the population, the findings based on that data was not adequate for specific generalizations to larger

populations. The majority of the sample consisted of college and university students attending classes in the northern region of the Appalachian Mountains.

A second limitation to the current study was the restriction of the data analysis to heterosexual respondents. While inclusion of the few gay respondents in the database in the statistical analysis of the present study would have confounded the study in many ways, the results of this study as it is presently constituted would not be applicable to sexual satisfaction in individuals who primarily engage in same-sex sexual activities.

A third limitation to the current study was confounding variables, such as depression and health, that have a negative impact on sexual satisfaction that could not be corrected for. While some studies stated that these variables have a negative impact on the sexual satisfaction of the individual, others have indicated that many psychological and health problems occurred as the result of childhood sexual abuse (Breslin, 1990; Hollenberg & Ragan, 1991; Mayall & Gold, 1995; Messman & Long, 1996; Fergusson, Horwood, & Lynskey, 1997; Edwards et al, 2003).

Another limitation of this study was that the statistical analysis did not differentiate between those who engaged in the target behaviors on one occasion and those who engaged in the target behaviors on multiple occasions.

Future Research

Future research concerning the sexual satisfaction of individuals would benefit from a larger sample size including individuals from diverse populations and from a wider array of cultures. As the number of individuals from diverse areas who respond to the S-SAPE1 survey increases, the range of the population to which the findings of such data can be generalized will increase.

Including homosexual respondents in the sample would also increase the amount of generalization that data derived from the S-SAPE1 survey could contribute. The childhood sexual background of such individuals could help in the understanding of the shaping of various areas of sexual growth, including sexual satisfaction.

Controlling for confounding variables, such as depression, that develop independently from childhood sexual abuse while also effecting the sexual satisfaction of the respondent in ways parallel to childhood sexual abuse would be of use in future research. While it would be nearly impossible to distinguish such symptoms that developed as a result of problems unrelated to childhood sexual abuse in victims who report childhood sexual abuse, the separation of the two would be useful in the full understanding of the pure effects of childhood sexual abuse.

Controlling for the difference between those who engaged in target behaviors on multiple occasions and those who engaged in the target behavior on one occasion could produce results that would be useful to future research.

Appendix A

Sexual Relationship Index (©S-SAPE, 2002)

Instructions:

This screen will present a series of statements designed to evaluate your sexual relationship with your current spouse or long-term partner. If a medical condition or advanced age now makes sex difficult or impossible, think of a time before the problems developed. If you do not currently have a spouse or long-term partner, think of each statement as applying to your relationship with your last (or deceased) spouse or long-term partner. If you have never had a sex partner, later questions will clarify this - choose 'less than 10% of the time' for each statement. For each statement, please select the item in the list which best describes how often the statement applies to your sexual relationship.

Choices for response scale:

- (1) less than 10% of the time
- (2) about 25% of the time
- (3) about 50% of the time
- (4) about 75% of the time
- (5) more than 90% of the time

Items for Index:

- 1) Our sexual interaction greatly enhances our over-all relationship.
- 2) My partner uses sexual behaviors that I enjoy.
- 3) I really think that our sexual relationship is sensational.
- 4R*) My spouse or long-term partner shames me for some of the sexual behaviors that I want to try with him/her.

- 5R) My spouse or long-term partner criticizes me when we are having sex.
- 6R) My spouse or long-term partner does not satiate my sexual appetite.
- 7R) I perform sex-acts that I don't like to please my spouse or long-term partner sexually.
- 8R) My spouse or long-term partner actively uses certain ways to avoid sexual relations with me.
- 9) My spouse or long-term partner is receptive to introducing new and innovative sex-acts into our sexual relationship.
- 10) My spouse or long-term partner goes out of his/her way to please me sexually.
- 11) My spouse or long-term partner does not seem to want sex when I am in the mood for it.
- 12) My spouse or long-term partner is very responsive to my sexual requirements and cravings.
- 13R) When we have sex, my spouse or long-term partner is too rough-and-tumble or mean.
- 14R) Having sex with my spouse or long-term partner is a tedious duty for me. (0.42)
- 15) My sexual relationship with my spouse or long-term partner is boring and monotonous.
- 16) I believe that I please my spouse or long-term partner sexually.
- 17) It is easy for me to become aroused sexually by my spouse or long-term partner.
- 18R) I think that sex with my spouse or long-term partner is filthy and revolting.
- 19) My spouse or long-term partner relishes our sexual relationship.
- 20R) When my spouse or long-term partner and I have sex it is finished too quickly.
- 21) Our sexual relationship is very arousing to me.

- 22) I believe that sex is a normal part of our over-all relationship.
- 23) I find my spouse or long-term partner to be very sexually arousing.
- 24R) I believe that my sexual relationship with my spouse or long-term partner is
deficient in essential ingredients.
- 25) My spouse or long-term partner and I both have fun at sex.
- 26) I attempt to avoid sexual relations with my spouse or long-term partner.
- 27) My spouse or long-term partner is a great sex companion.

*R Indicates that the item is reverse scored

Appendix B

Table B1

One-way Analysis of Variance for Sexual Satisfaction in a Heterosexual Female

Voluntary or coerced sex with a male who was:	Controls (<i>n</i> = xx) Mean±SD	Victims (<i>n</i> = xx) Mean±SD	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i> -value
...more than 4 years older than the respondent but under age 18 while the respondent was under 18 years of age (Voluntary)	<i>n</i> = 358 86.2±17.6	<i>n</i> = 59 81.6±21.2	3.148	.077
...18 years of age or older and more than 4 years older than the respondent while the respondent was under the age 18 (Voluntary)	<i>n</i> = 350 85.6±17.7	<i>n</i> = 67 84.8±20.5	.114	.736
...within 4 years of the respondent's age while the respondent was under the age of 18 (Coerced)	<i>n</i> = 351 86.4±17.6	<i>n</i> = 66 81.1±20.7	4.768	.030
...more than 4 years younger than the respondent while the respondent was under the age of 18 (Coerced)	<i>n</i> = 414 85.6±18.1	<i>n</i> = 3 74.3±23.6	1.142	.286
...more than 4 years older but under the age of 18 while the respondent was under the age of 18 (Coerced)	<i>n</i> = 402 85.8±17.9	<i>n</i> = 15 78.8±24.1	2.124	.146
...18 or older and more than 4 years older than the respondent while the respondent was under the age of 18 (Coerced)	<i>n</i> = 390 85.7±18.0	<i>n</i> = 27 83.5±18.0	.345	.557
...raped in any way by a male who were age 18 or older while the respondent was over 18 (Coerced)	<i>n</i> = 370 86.4±17.9	<i>n</i> = 47 78.6±19.0	7.832	.005

Table B2

Two-Way Analysis of Variance for Sexual Satisfaction in a Heterosexual Females (being a victim of coerced sexual situations of any kind with a male who was no more than four years older or younger than the respondent while the respondent was under the age of 18 adjusted for being a victim of coerced sexual situations involving the respondent being raped in any way by a male who was age 18 or older while the respondent was over age 18)

0 codes absence of the event. 1 codes for occurrence of the event.		Coerced – with a male who was no more than four years older or younger than the respondent while the respondent was under the age of 18		$F = 4.45$ $p = .035$	
		0	1		Means
<i>Coerced - raped in any way by a male who was age 18 or older while the respondent was over age 18</i>		0	$n = 313$	$n = 57$	Total $n = 370$
		1	$n = 38$	$n = 9$	Total $n = 47$
$F = 7.51$	Means	86.4	81.1		
$p = .006$		Total $n = 351$	Total $n = 66$		Total $n = 417$

Table B3

Two-Way Analysis of Variance for Sexual Satisfaction in Heterosexual Females (engaging in sexual experimentation of any kind with a male who was under the age of 18 but more than 4 years older than the respondent while the respondent was under the age of 18 adjusted for being a victim of coerced sexual situations involving the respondent being raped in any way by a male who was age 18 or older)

0 codes absence of the event.	<i>Voluntary - with a male who was under</i>		<i>F = 4.08</i>
1 codes for occurrence of the event.	<i>the age of 18 but more than 4 years older than the respondent while the respondent was under the age of 18</i>		<i>p= .044</i>
		0	1
			Means
<i>Coerced - raped in any way by a male who was age 18 or older while the respondent was over age 18</i>			86.4
	0	<i>n = 314</i>	<i>n = 56</i>
			Total <i>n = 370</i>
			78.6
	1	<i>n = 44</i>	<i>n = 3</i>
			Total <i>n = 47</i>
<i>F = 8.76</i>	Means	86.2	81.6
<i>p= .003</i>		Total <i>n = 358</i>	Total <i>n = 59</i>
			Total <i>n = 417</i>

Table B4

One Way Analysis of Variance for Sexual Satisfaction in a Heterosexual Male

Voluntary or coerced sex with a female who was ...:	Controls (<i>n</i> = xx) Mean±SD	Victims (<i>n</i> = xx) Mean±SD	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i> -value
...more than 4 years older than the respondent but under age 18 while the respondent was under 18 (Voluntary)	<i>n</i> = 154 82.1±17.5	<i>n</i> = 25 83.9±16.2	.235	.629
...age 18 or older and more than 4 years older than the respondent while the respondent was under 18 (Voluntary)	<i>n</i> = 156 81.4±17.8	<i>n</i> = 23 88.8±11.8	3.696	.056
...no more than 4 years older or younger than the respondent while the respondent was under 18 (Coerced)	<i>n</i> = 165 81.9±17.7	<i>n</i> = 14 87.5±10.5	1.344	.248
...more than 4 years younger than the respondent while the respondent was under the age of 18 (Coerced)	<i>n</i> = 179 82.4±17.3	<i>n</i> = 0	-	-
...under the age of 18 and more than 4 years older than the respondent while the respondent was under 18 (Coerced)	<i>n</i> = 174 82.6±17.2	<i>n</i> = 5 73.6±18.5	1.325	.251
...age 18 or older and more than 4 years older than the respondent while the respondent was under 18 (Coerced)	<i>n</i> = 174 82.2±17.5	<i>n</i> = 5 86.8±7.7	.338	.562
...raped in any way by a female who was age 18 or older while the respondent was over 18 (Coerced)	<i>n</i> = 177 82.4±17.3	<i>n</i> = 2 77.5±12.0	.159	.690

Table B5

Two-Way Analysis of Variance for Sexual Satisfaction in Heterosexual Males (Engaging in sexual experimentation of any kind with a female age 18 or older and more than 4 years older than the respondent adjusted for being a victim of coerced sexual situations of any kind with a female no more than 4 years older or younger than the respondent)

		Voluntary - with a female age 18 or older and more than 4 years older than the respondent while respondent under age 18		Means
		0	1	
0 codes absence of the event.				$F = 3.95$
1 codes for occurrence of the event.				$P = .049$
Coerced - with a female no more than 4 years older or younger than the respondent while respondent under age 18				81.9
0	$n = 143$	$n = 22$		Total $n = 165$
				87.5
1	$n = 13$	$n = 1$		Total $n = 14$
$F = 1.60$	Means	81.4	88.8	
$p = .207$		Total $n = 156$	Total $n = 23$	Total $n = 179$

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