

12TH ISPCAN European Regional Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect

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Children with Sexual Behaviour Problems (SBP) and Adolescents with Sexual Harmful Behaviour (SHB) - with other children as their victims

The JANUSCentre was established by the Ministry of Social Affairs in 2003
Part of the Danish Governments plan to prevent CSA



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Victim meets offender

Restorative meetings in cases where
children/adolescents have sexually
abused other children

A therapeutic tool
to improve attachment in
families with sibling incest



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Meetings between offender and
victim is part of intervention and
treatment



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A holistic approach with focus on victims and recognition of their needs as well as a broader consideration -beyond the victim-

to recognise that others have been affected or harmed – both victims and offenders families



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The need to hold the offender
accountable in a meaningful way

The approach aims as well to help a
child/adolescent back to a healthy
sexual development pathway



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Sibling Incest

Especially in cases with sibling incest
the method represents a powerful
driver for a potential restorative
approach and a potential future
relationship between the abuser
and the victim

- And a healer of wounds in the
family as a whole



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The first Danish sample

Data:

>200 children and adolescents,
(age 4-18);
>300 victims
(most of them age 3-12)

25% sibling incest



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Relationships in siblingincest cases
50% siblings; (30% sisters, 20% brothers)
30% "half"siblings and 20% "step"siblings ;

It is meaningful to include "psychological incest"- violation of sexual barriers between people who call themselves a family
(Perlmutter et al 1982)

Meetings between victim and
offender in 25% of cases in the clinic
All siblingcases



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Re-remembering (White 2006/2008)

By remembering/mediation you are included in your "tribe" again

No one can live easily with being excluded from his/hers family

Mediation = re-remembering

Has an impact on others than the two main actors (victim&offender)



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Intervention & treatment methods

Mediation-meetings are part of the *therapeutic* work & other interventions

- Combined (mostly) with group treatment (25x2 timer)- following the assessment
- parent groups and/or parentsessions
- Siblingsessions (non-offending/offended siblings)
- Familiesessions
- Therapeutic treatment of the victim
- Follow-up sessions with the family after treatment and mediation-meeting(s)



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Attachment and sexual abusive behaviour



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Results of psychological assessment of 200 children/adolescents



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Attachment

- 11%: secure attachment; ability to establish close attachment to others and create close interpersonal relationships to others
- 89%: showed problems with attachment, which means they had difficulties concerning basic trust and ability to commit and attach emotionally to other persons.



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Assessment

Many felt so socially insecure that they could not establish lasting equal peer relationships

Many had an insecure attachment pattern

Problems with trust and confidence in others



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The ability to be part of social and interpersonal situations in an unproblematic way is damaged in the large part of the sample



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Summary/assessment:

- 50%: were intellectually normal to wellfunctioning
- 65%:had ADHD difficulties.
- 90%: had emotional problems.
- 63%: had weak social and interpersonal competence.
- 85%: had problems with attachment.



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Background in the Danish sample

Many has neuro-psychiatric problems;

ADHD, autisme-spectrum, mentally disabled

Exposed to child abuse & neglect:

- victim of or witness to sexual abuse
- Dysfuntional families
- victims of or witness to violence in the family
- or exposed to adult sexual activity in the home



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Sexual problematic behaviour and victimisation

The youngest children, age 6-12 år, have more often been victims of sexual abuse (50 %) while it is 1/3 in the whole sample

The *younger* children with sexual behaviour problems are, the more often they have been victims themselves



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Data in the Danish sample

Victims in siblingincest cases

80% of the victims are < 11 år

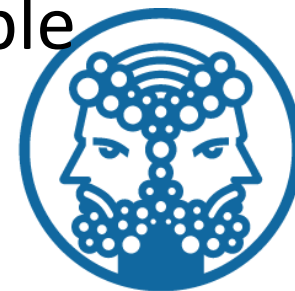
52% between 3 og 8 years

Siblingvictims are *younger* (than the rest of the sample)

They have been exposed to *more incidents* of sexual abuse (than the rest)

The abuse has been *longer lasting* (20% more than a year) compared to the rest of the sample

The abusive incidents have been more *serious* (50% penetration)



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Siblings are exposed more often to sexual abuse, which is more serious and going on for a longer period – and the victims are younger by onset

Compared to the sample of non-sibling offending



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Relationship repair siblingincest and other interfamily relationships

A powerfull driver for a potential restorative approach is a past and therefore potential *future relationship between the young abuser and the victim*

The need to regulate future contact which leaves the victim safe and holds the offender accountable in a meaningfull way within the social context of where the abuse took place

The alternative to relationship repair/negotiation is the painfull destruction of relationships in the family



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Preparation of meeting between victim and offender

Preparatory work with the **victim**– identification of needs and how these can be best represented at the meeting

Preparation with the **abuser** – taking responsibility, expressing remorse, etc

Preparation of other **participants**- understand that the meeting is intended to be constructive and future focused. *Not* a forum to attack and marginalise



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Parents siblingincest

Parents "wearing two hats"-that of parent of both abuser and victim

Sibling abuse research identifies that the parental role in responding to both children is highly significant in terms of outcome

(Gilgun et al 2000)

Identification of the family as a treatment support mechanism – to victim, abuser and non abused siblings. Focus on living environment is *as important* as individual treatment

(Henniker&Mercer,2007)



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Questions and answers

The victim works out his/hers questions together with the therapist

The abuser prepare his/hers answers together with the therapist; responsibility-taking and remorse

The abuser has often prior to the meeting written letters from the victim to him/herself and vice versa (to the victim)

– an exercise that can help the abuser to mentalize and understand the feelings of the victim



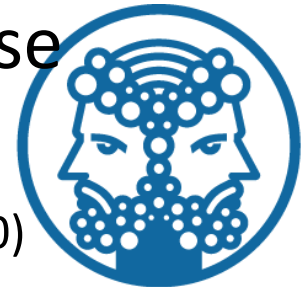
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Attachment and sexuality

The attachment pattern that we learn in early *childhood*, takes form in *adolescence* and has a determining influence of how the adolescent meets *adulthood*

The attachment style influences the capacity to satisfy needs of intimacy, which together with the sexual development contribute to that young people seek other relationships than those with the parents

(Tidefors, 2010)



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Attachment theory and sexuality

Attachment theory is not a theory of sexuality
But in newer attachment research efforts are
made to integrate and understand the sexual
dimension:

**Why and how sexuality can become an arena
where fundamental relation issues are "in
battle"**



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Attachment and Sexual abusive behaviour

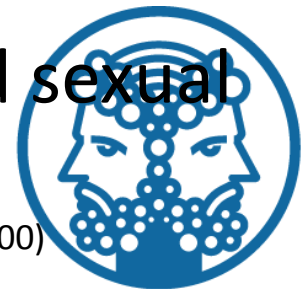
Studies have shown coherence between lack of intimacy to attachment-persons in childhood and sexual offending of children later in life

(Marshall,1995, Pitchers et al 1998)

If a child early has been rejected by its parents, this alone can predict that the person later in life develops sexual abusive behaviour

which indicate that attachmentsystem and sexual development are closely connected

(Marshall&Mazucco1995;Smallbone&Dads,2000)



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Siblingincest

Sexual abuse among siblings

In a comparative study of adolescents with *sibling victims* to a group of adolescents with *victims outside the family* it was found that siblingoffenders to a higher degree had parents with a high level of marital conflicts, a negativ family-atmosphere, more rejective parents and more physical punishment

(Worling 1995)

Family dynamics with rejective parents, abuse and adult conflicts play a significant role in development of adolescents sexual abuse of a sibling

(Schwartz et all 2006)



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Incesttabu and attachment

The bonding between children growing up under "normal" circumstances leads to acceptance of the incesttabu, while the bonding between siblings, exposed to neglect, can lead to a awakening of sexuality

(tidefors,2010)



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summary

Sibling offenders are more often:

Abused (physical, sexual, psychological)

Raised with rejection from parents and high degree of adult conflicts

Family dysfunctioning

Family dynamics play a central role in creation of a context where siblingincest can occur

Parents who are not available increases the need of contact among siblings to satisfy their need for intimacy and comfort – which can be sexualised



“The longing for love without sex”

Teenage boy with sexual abusive behaviour; interviewed by Inga Tidefors (2010)

“For those boys who themselves were abused by parents, questions occur: What happens to the child's attachment, mentalization- and emotional ability, when having experienced sexuality “with” a parent?

Same question can be asked about the victims of the boys, not least the sibling victims; what are the consequences of having sexuality “with” a brother?”



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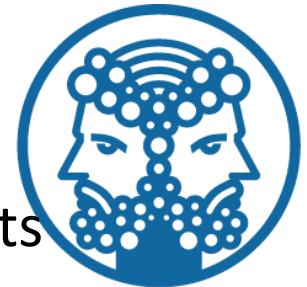
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Attachment in the life cycle

- In early childhood all four qualities of attachment belong to the parents.
- At school-age *proximity maintenance* increases in relations to peers, but *separation distress* remains in the relation to the parents.
- In adolescents in the course of romantic relationships *separation distress* and the feeling of *secure haven* becomes increasingly attached to the love-object. Only the *secure base* remains in the relation to parents.
- In adults mostly the longtime-companion or spouse takes over the role of the main attachment figure which belonged to the parents in childhood



(Hazen, Zeifmann, 1999).

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(Wolfgang Berner, 2011)

Siblings versus the rest of the sample

80 % sibling victims < 11 år; in the rest of the sample it is 67%

More incidents of abuse; 13% siblings exposed to 11-50 incidents; 6% in the rest of the sample

In the sample duration is 1 day in 51% of the cases; in sibling cases only 25%

19 % cases of sibling incest have lasted for years; 10 % in the rest of the sample



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Restorative justice

Holistic approach-that has an offence specific domain but also considers developmental, family and environmental factors (Gilgun 1999)

Recognition of the importance of child/young person/families strengths/resilience and their capacity to develop and reflect on a coherent story about what happened

Affirmation of the parents role in any proces following the sexual harm incident...,particulary in cases of sibling abuse

(Henniker&Mercer,2007)



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RJ

sexually abusive behaviour

A parallel proces:

Addressing the victims needs

Focusing on the abuser

Focusing on both their families



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Tilknytningssystem og sexuel udvikling

Studier har påvist at børn, der afvises af deres forældre tidligt i livet, oftere udvikler en senere destruktiv sexualitet

(Marshall& Mazucci)

Mangler i den tidlige tilknytning kan forudsige en senere udvikling af "tvingende" sexualitet – dvs overgreb på andre

(Smallbone&Dads,2002)

Resultaterne tolkes af forskerne som at tilknytningssystemet og den seksuelle udvikling er nært sammenkoblede

Denne sammenkobling kan *dels* lede til at sexualiteten senere i livet bliver en arena hvor tidligere dramaer udspiller sig og *dels* at sexualiteten bliver en kompensation for tidlige mangler i nærhed (mangelfuld tilknytning)



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Unge med sexuel overgrebsadfærd

I forhold til forskning som fokuserer på voksne krænkere er forskning om unge som har begået seksuelle overgreb begrænset

En metaanalyse af 57 studier viser at følgende aspekter er overrepræsenterede hos unge som begår seksuelle overgreb:

Har tidligt i livet været udsat for seksuelle overgreb

Har været exponeret for sexualitet, sexuel vold og pornografi

Har vanskeligt ved såvel at håndtere egne følelser som være i samspil med andre

Konklusion på metaanalysen er at seksuelle overgreb begået af unge ikke bare kan forstås som udtryk for en generel antisocial problematik

Der mangler skandinaviske studier



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Young people <18 who sexually harm

1. 30-35% of all sexual assaults are committed by young persons under 18 years
2. Approx 30% have been S/A themselves and 60-80% have been victims of or witnessed domestic violence. (children under 12yrs are twice as likely to have been S/A themselves)
3. many have learning difficulties
4. relationship between offender and victim (very few strangers)
5. Denial is a dynamic not static factor.
6. approx 30% of the victims are boys
7. recidivism studies vary from 7-14%. The vast majority do not go on to become adult sex offenders
8. Female abusers: a high percentage appear to abuse independently of others. Have more frequent victimisation issues (abuse history)
9. Empathy: Is not ness. an indicator of further sexual offending. A low clinical presentation was unrelated to sexual recidivism. Many in this group have not experienced empathic responses from others

(Vince Mercer, AIM)



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