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Elsa Gomes Lage
Risk and Protective Factors
Associated with Juvenile
Delinquency and Juvenile Sexual
Offending Behavior: The Role of
Ethnic Identity, Exposure to
Violence, and Parenting Practices
and Attachment

Abstract

This study examined whether having a strong ethnic identity plays a protective role against juvenile delinquency and sexual offending behavior; the link between having witnessed domestic violence, having been physically abused, and having experienced both types of maltreatment and subsequent juvenile delinquent and sexual offending behavior; and, the link between parental support and attachment versus alienation, inconsistency in parenting, and communication patterns and subsequent juvenile delinquent and juvenile sexually aggressive behaviors.

Paper and pencil surveys were collected from 332 sexual abusers and 170 non-sexually offending youth at 6 residential facilities in a Midwestern state. Participants responded to questions regarding traumatic experiences in their childhood, delinquent acts committed, sexually offending behavior, importance of ethnic identity, violence witnessed, perceived attachment to mother and father, parental inconsistency and warmth, and communication patterns with parents.

Results indicated that race was associated with group, with a majority of the sexual offenders reporting as White (72%) versus a minority of the non-sex offenders reporting as White (27.8%) and that for the sexual abusers, feeling close to other members of one's race is associated with less severe sexual crimes and fewer reported

victims. Sexual abusers reported witnessing more violence and experiencing more forms of maltreatment. Both exposure to domestic violence and having been physically abused were related to various delinquent behaviors for non-sex offenders and to delinquent and sexually abusive behaviors for sexual abusers. There was no difference between reported communication patterns with parents, but juvenile sexual offenders reported less attachment and warmth, more feelings of alienation, and more inconsistency in parenting than did non-sexually offending youth.

Risk and Protective Factors Associated with Juvenile Delinquency and Juvenile
Sexual Offending Behavior: The Role of Ethnic Identity, Exposure to
Violence, and Parenting Practices and Attachment

A project based upon an independent investigation,
submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Social Work.

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Article I

Ethnic Identity as a Protective Factor against Juvenile Delinquency and
Juvenile Sexual Offending Behavior

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Abstract

This study examined whether having a strong ethnic identity plays a protective role against juvenile delinquency and sexual offending behavior. Paper and pencil surveys were collected from 332 sexual abusers and 170 non-sexually offending youth at 6 residential facilities in a Midwestern state. Participants responded to questions regarding traumatic experiences in their childhood, delinquent acts committed, sexually offending behavior, and importance of ethnic identity. Results indicated that race was associated with group, with a majority of the sexual offenders reporting as White (72%) versus a minority of the non-sex offenders reporting as White (27.8%) and that for the sexual abusers, feeling close to other members of one's race is associated with less severe sexual crimes and fewer reported victims.

Introduction

Ethnic Identity as a Protective Factor

Several definitions of ethnic identity have been proposed. Some argue ethnic identity involves a sense of a group identity through a shared ethnic heritage with members of a particular ethnic group (Bennett, 2006; Jones-Thomas & Speight, 1999; McMahon & Watts, 2002; Rotherman & Phinney, 1987). An achieved ethnic identity involves both pride in one's ethnic heritage and a sense of self-worth (Arroyo & Zigler, 1995; Bennett, 2006; Greig, 2003). Having an achieved ethnic identity has been associated with facilitating coping strategies and social capabilities linked to self-esteem and self-efficacy (Arroyo & Zigler, 1995; Bennett, 2006; Greig, 2003). On the other hand, lacking an achieved ethnic identity has been linked to poor social and developmental outcomes including: depression, anxiety, delinquency, low academic achievement and school dropout, low self-esteem, and substance abuse (Arroyo & Zigler, 1995; Bennett, 2006; Cross, 1991; Greig, 2003; Yasui, Dorham & Dishion, 2004).

Ethnicity and culture have a large impact on an individual's daily life functioning. Having a strong ethnic identity has been found to be associated with lower rates of adolescent delinquency (Bennett, 2006; Kosterman, Graham, Hawkins, Catalano & Herrenkohl, 2001; Lyon, Henggeler & Hall, 1992; Valdez, Yin & Kaplan, 1997), substance use (Mackesy-Amiti & Fendrich, 2000; McClelland, Elkington, Teplin & Abram, 2004; McGarvey, Canterbury & Waite, 1996; Jobli, Dore, Werch & Moore, 2005), and several other risk behaviors. In addition, ethnic identity is related to psychological well-being through self-esteem (Aleixo, Blud & O'Keeffe, 1997). Researchers have suggested that members of minority groups with high ethnic identity

engage in self-protective strategies in order to maintain high levels of self-esteem and, in turn, maintain psychological well-being (Aleixo et al., 1997).

Ethnic identity has also been deemed a critical component of self-concept, especially for adolescents who often experience discrimination which would otherwise impact their psychological well-being (Yasui et al., 2004). Adolescents who engage in delinquent behaviors show much lower levels of both self-concept and self-esteem when compared to their nondelinquent peers (Calhoun, Connley & Bolton, 1984). In addition, ethnic identity has been linked with positive social and emotional adjustment (Yasui et al., 2004).

Researchers have found that more White adolescents display problem behaviors than do adolescents of other races and cultures, implying there is a protective effect among the ethnic identities of minority groups (Gavazzi, Yarcheck & Lim, 2005; Sickmund, 2000). Some of the problem behaviors that have been found in higher rates among the nonminority culture include: substance use (Gavazzi et al., 2005; Sickmund, 2000), academic concerns, mental health problems, multiple offenses, accountability, and exposure to traumatic events (Gavazzi et al., 2005). These findings are consistent with other researchers who have found that White youth are quite likely involved with most drug offenses, as high as 73% of the youth in some samples (Sickmund, 2000). These findings are especially important as oppression and low socioeconomic status, both of which are risk factors for juvenile delinquency (Guadalupe & Bein, 2001; Stouthamer-Loeber, Loeber, Wei, Farrington, & Wikstrom, 2002; Wight, Botticello, & Aneshensel, 2006), are present among minority groups.

Research on Ethnic Identity among Various Racial and Cultural Groups

While researchers often seek to understand entire populations and racial groups, it is important to keep in mind the danger of generalizing information to all individuals within each group. Despite findings being accurate for the samples within research studies and thereby for some members of each ethnic group, individual differences should be accounted for among youth belonging to ethnic groups other than White.

African American Youth. Various protective effects of ethnic identity have been found among the African American culture. First, ethnic identity appears to protect against substance abuse among African American adolescents (Mackesy-Amiti & Fendrich, 2000; McClelland et al., 2004; McGarvey et al., 1996; Jobli et al., 2005). African American youth have been found to have less substance use disorders involving illicit drugs, other than marijuana, when compared to youth of other ethnic groups, including White youth (McClelland et al., 2004). Among studies looking at inhalant use among teens, findings show African American teens are much less likely to engage in this behavior than are other groups (Mackesy-Amiti & Fendrich, 2000; McGarvey et al., 1996). Despite often having other risk variables including receiving poor grades and being less likely than their counterparts to live in an intact home present within the group, decreased levels of use continue to be found (Mackesy-Amiti & Fendrich, 2000), indicating ethnic identity may be a protective factor against engaging in the behavior.

Researchers have also identified ethnic identity as a protective factor against alcohol consumption among African American youth. African American adolescents have been found to engage in the behavior at lower rates than have other groups of

adolescents (Jobli et al., 2005). The findings appear consistent across the board, regardless of type of alcohol consumed (Jobli et al., 2005).

Another protective factor associated with African American adolescent males is a dark skin tone (Oyserman, Brickman, Bybee & Celious, 2006). Dark skin tone teens have reported greater feelings of acceptance among peers than have those who have a lighter skin tone (Oyserman et al., 2006). Furthermore, skin tone, as a symbol of belonging, acts as a buffer for African American youth who are at a higher risk of not engaging with and failing school (Oyserman et al., 2006). African American boys with a darker skin tone tend to have better grades and feel more academically successful and accepted by peers (Oyserman et al., 2006).

A third protective factor associated with African American juveniles is church attendance and faith (Boone, 1991; Christian & Barbarin, 2001). Regular church attendance by parents is related to fewer reports of problems with peer conflict, depression, and oppositional behaviors among African American children and adolescents (Boone, 1991; Christian & Barbarin, 2001). Researchers have also suggested that religiosity might be passed on to children, thereby enhancing their ability to self-regulate by teaching and reinforcing several virtues including: patience, obedience, anger control, and delay of gratification (Christian & Barbarin, 2001).

Next, nondelinquent African Americans who report higher levels of racial centrality, defined as the extent to which race is a central identity, also report lower levels of subsequent psychological distress (Sellers, Caldwell, Schmeelk-Cone & Zimmerman, 2003). Having an achieved ethnic identity and racial centrality has been associated with buffering African American children and adolescents from psychological distress

resulting from living in a society that often discriminates against these youth (Bennett, 2006; Sellers et al., 2003).

A feeling of unity and connection with peers in school also appears to be protective for nondelinquent African American youth (Ross, 1995). Some researchers investigating school environments have found that self-esteem is significantly higher among adolescents in mostly Black school environments than in mostly White or equally mixed environments. The findings have led researchers to hypothesize African American adolescents who attend mostly black schools experience less teasing, conflicting cultural norms and values, and comparisons of academic achievement, all of which damage levels of self-esteem (Ross, 1995). In addition, mostly Black school environments report higher levels of race-esteem and school commitment and lower levels of delinquency (Ross, 1995). Ethnic identity is also positively related to academic motivation and school attachment (Bennett, 2006).

As shown, researchers have suggested that a strong ethnic identity and strong cultural ties can protect African American adolescents from engaging in several different delinquent behaviors. However, little research has been done on whether or not ethnicity is a protective factor against sexual aggression for these youth. Some researchers have found African American sexually offending adolescents are less likely to respond to various forms of arousal stimuli than are Caucasian offenders, suggesting ethnicity may play a part in lowering recidivism risk (Murphy, DiLillo, Haynes & Steere, 2001).

Latino Youth. Several protective factors have also been found among the Latino community. As with African American adolescents, Latino adolescents appear to fare better when they believe they look Latino (Oyserman et al., 2006). Latino boys who feel

they look their race receive better grades, participate more in class, and feel more engaged with school when compared with peers who feel they do not (Oyserman et al., 2006).

Ethnic identity has also been associated with lower levels of both general and home delinquency among Latino delinquent adolescents when compared to Caucasian delinquents (Lyon et al., 1992). Furthermore, delinquency among this population has been proven lower among families high in solidarity, cohesion, and interdependence (Smith & Krohn, 1995). Latino families have a very large impact on the behavior of adolescents being reared within those families and are crucial in the prevention of problem behaviors and in aiding the development of prosocial ones (Kerr, Beck, Shattuck, Kattar & Uriburu, 2003). This speaks to the importance of feelings of belonging and close-knit ties among this group of adolescents.

Ethnic identity has also been found to be a protective factor among this group following sexual abuse. In a recent study, it was found that, contrary to previous findings, Hispanics scored significantly lower on the Impact of Event Scale, which measures intrusion, avoidance, and total distress following a traumatic life event, than did other ethnic groups (Andres-Hyman, Cott & Gold, 2004). This suggests that the Hispanic ethnicity may have a defense against Post Traumatic Stress Disorder symptoms following victimization (Andres-Hyman et al., 2004).

Within the Latino community are Mexican Americans among whom ethnic identity has also been identified as a protective factor. The identification with core values and beliefs of the Mexican American culture has been associated with contributing to resilience among second generation nondelinquent adolescents as collectivism and

related values are often prominent in the lives of successful Mexican American adolescents (Holleran & Waller, 2003).

As with African American adolescents, faith and church attendance also appear to be related to decreased levels of risk behaviors for nondelinquent adolescents of Mexican American descent (Mitchell & Dodder, 1990). Church attendance appears to be more of a deterrent to delinquency among Mexican American than among Caucasian youth (Mitchell & Dodder, 1990).

Finally, some researchers have found that Mexican American adolescents are much less likely to engage in substance use than are other groups of adolescents (Valdez et al., 1997). This suggests that values and beliefs within the culture may minimize the acceptance and thereby use of various substances.

Asian American Youth. Several protective effects have also been found among the Asian American culture. As with both the African American and the Latino groups, feeling physically and emotionally close to other members of the group is of utmost importance among Asian American youth (Tsai, 2006) and has been associated with minimizing delinquent acts (Bankston & Zhou, 1997; Batta, McCulloch & Smith, 1975) and increasing prosocial behaviors (Bankston & Zhou, 1997). The collectivistic views among the culture cause Asian American youth to rate delinquent behaviors more seriously, suggesting Asian American adolescents may be less likely to commit delinquent acts in order to show more respect for their parents and their culture as a whole (Tyson & Hubert, 2003). Other researchers have supported this speculation finding the Asian American ethnicity to be a significant protective factor against violence throughout adolescence (Kosterman et al., 2001). Low crime rates have been found to remain true

despite youth facing several risk variables including: living in poor environmental conditions, discrimination, and prejudice, all of which have been associated with delinquency among other groups of adolescents (Kitano, 1967).

Finally, loss of face has been identified as a protective factor against acting out in sexually aggressive ways for Asian American men (Hall, Teten, Sue, DeGarmo & Stephens, 2005). Thus, for this group ethnic identity appears to be a protective factor because within the culture it is important to maintain social integrity (Hall et al., 2005). Ethnic identity has also been shown to moderate early abuse experiences among this group and among European Americans (Hall et al., 2005). In addition, for European Americans, ethnic identity has been associated with easing feelings of control over partners (Hall et al., 2005). These findings imply that ethnic identity has positive effects on all groups and may lead to positive perceptions of other ethnic groups than one's own (Hall et al., 2005).

In general, researchers have found several protective effects of ethnic identity among various groups from racial backgrounds other than Caucasian. Ethnic identity has been associated with protecting against several delinquent acts including alcohol and drug use and various forms of crimes for African American, Latino, and Asian American youth. There has also been some evidence to support a link between cultural beliefs and less sexual aggression among these groups.

As shown, researchers have indicated that having a strong ethnic identity protects youth from committing several delinquent acts and others have suggested it may also protect against sexually aggressive behavior. In examining results from a surveyed group of adjudicated youth in a residential treatment facility, this study seeks to answer whether

ethnic identity is related to the types of crimes committed among racially diverse youth. Various types of delinquency will be examined for both sexually and non-sexually offending youth. In addition, the study will investigate whether there is a difference in the number of victims and the severity of the acts committed among the juvenile sex offenders when a strong ethnic identity is identified.

Methods

After consents were obtained, confidential data were collected from youth with sexual and non-sexual offenses in 6 residential facilities in a Midwestern state. Multi-paged pencil and paper surveys were collected from 332 adjudicated juvenile sexual abusers and 170 non-sexually offending youth. The average age of the sexually offending sample ($N = 332$) was 16.70 years ($SD = 1.65$ years) with no difference between groups ($t(323) = 1.46, p = .145$). The average current grade level was 9th grade ($SD = 1.63$ grades), with no difference between groups on grade level ($t(319) = .986, p = .325$). The two groups differed in terms of racial composition ($\chi^2(4) = 5.7, p = .000$) with 50% of the juvenile sexual offenders selecting Caucasian ($n = 156$), 29% selecting African American ($n = 90$), and 13% selecting Other ($n = 43$). In contrast, only 38% of non-sexually offending youth reported their race as Caucasian ($n = 60$), while 56% identified as African American ($n = 90$), and the remaining 4% as Other ($n = 7$).

Measures

The Childhood Trauma Questionnaire (CTQ) (Bernstein & Fink, 1998) was used to gather information regarding traumatic experiences in childhood. This 37-item measure asks participants to respond to various questions through a 5-point scale ranging from never true to very often true and provides a brief and relatively noninvasive

screening of traumatic experiences. All of the subscales have acceptable inter-item reliability in this study. The subscales include: Sexual Abuse ($\alpha = .83$), Physical Abuse ($\alpha = .91$), Emotional Abuse ($\alpha = .90$) and Physical ($\alpha = .76$) and Emotional Neglect ($\alpha = .92$).

Elliot, Huizinga, and Ageton's (1985) Self-Reported Delinquency (SRD) scale was used to assess delinquency. The scale has 32 questions using a 7-point frequency scale from 0 (never) to 7 (2-3 times per day) on questions ranging from drug use to aggression. The instrument has several subscales including Alcohol Use, Drug Use, Felony Assault, Felony Theft, General Delinquency, Property Damage, Public Disorderly, Robbery, and Selling Drugs. These subscales have acceptable inter-item reliability with the exception of Drug Use ($\alpha = .46$) and Public Disorderly ($\alpha = .52$).

Non-standardized questions about importance of feeling close to other members of the same ethnic or racial group measured on a 4-point scale ranging from not close at all to very close, about the importance of belonging to one's ethnic or racial group measured on a 4-point scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, number of victims, and worst sexual crime perpetrated (total perpetration score) measured on a 7-point scale (1 = exhibitionism; 2 = fondling; 3 = exhibitionism and fondling; 4 = penetration; 5 = penetration and exhibitionism; 6 = penetration and fondling; 7 = penetration, exhibitionism, and fondling) were also used in the study.

Results

Based on the current literature, questions to be answered by data collected from the adjudicated youth are: How does race relate to crimes committed (i.e. sexual versus nonsexual)? How is ethnic identity related to type of crime reported by non-sexually

offending youth? Is there a difference in the number of victims and the severity of sexual acts perpetrated among the juvenile sexual abusers when a strong ethnic identity is identified?

Race of both those youth with sexual offending histories and those with delinquent, but non-sexual offending histories were compared. Results of a Chi-Square reveals that race is associated with group ($\chi^2 (2) = 39.5, p = .000$), with a majority of the sexual offenders reporting as White (72%) versus a minority of the non-sex offenders reporting as White (27.8%).

In looking at the relationship between the importance of ethnic identity, using closeness to race and the importance of belonging to one's racial or ethnic group, and types of crimes reported (including: general delinquency, property damage, felony theft, public disorderly, alcohol and drug use, assault, and selling drugs) among non-sexually offending youth, results of a Pearson Correlation reveal a weak, but significant correlation ($r (135) = -.19, p = .029$) between closeness to race and reported property damage as well as between importance of belonging to one's racial or ethnic group and felony theft ($r (130) = .21, p = .015$), but no other significant differences were found.

Descriptive statistics among juvenile sex offenders reveal that the largest number of participants responding to questions regarding ethnic identity report identifying as White (49.8%), followed by those identifying as Black (28.8%). The remaining participants (21.4%) include those identifying as Hispanic or Latino, Asian or Pacific Islander, Native American, Arab American, and Other and were grouped into the category of Other due to too small a number of participants within each group.

Descriptive statistics for a perpetration score which reflects the complexity and severity

of sexual crimes (see Table 1) reveal that the largest percentage of sexually offending youth (32.4%) report engaging in exhibitionism, fondling, and penetration, followed by those who report their worst crime as penetration alone (25.9%).

When looking at the importance of ethnic or racial group as reported by the participants, the largest majority (69.7%) of sexual abusers report somewhat or strongly agreeing that belonging to their racial or ethnic group is an important part of their self image.

Pearson Correlation was calculated for juvenile sexual offenders to examine the relationship between the perpetration score, total number of victims reported, how close the participant describes feeling to other members of his race or ethnic group, and whether or not belonging to his ethnic or racial group is important. Results reveal a weak, but significant, correlation ($r(269) = -.21, p = .001$) between perpetration score and how close participants report feeling to other members of their racial or ethnic group. Another small, yet significant, correlation is found between the total number of victims reported and closeness to race ($r(302) = -.12, p = .037$).

Using a total delinquency or crime score as the dependent variable and a total trauma score as the independent variable, results of a regression equation reveal trauma accounts for 14.5% of the variance in the total non-sexual crime score ($F(1, 120) = 21.50, p = .000$), but closeness to race does not contribute to the equation significantly for juvenile non-sexual offenders.

However, among the sample of juvenile sexual offenders, using the perpetration score as the dependent variable and a total trauma score as the independent variable, results of a regression equation reveal trauma accounts for 2.3% of the variance in the

perpetration score ($F(1, 267) = 6.42, p = .012$) and closeness to racial or ethnic group contributes to the equation significantly ($F(2, 266) = 9.39, p = .000$) with an R^2 change of .043. In other words, 4.3% of the variance in the perpetration score is accounted for by closeness with a negative beta value indicating that youth who are closer to other individuals belonging to their race commit less severe crimes.

Results of a third regression equation using the total number of victims as the dependent variable and a total trauma score as the independent variable reveal trauma accounts for 4.9% of the variance in total number of victims ($F(1, 298) = 16.30, p = .000$) and closeness contributes to the equation significantly ($F(2, 297) = 10.19, p = .000$) with an R^2 change of .012. Thus, 1.2% of the variance in the total number of victims reported is accounted for by closeness with a negative beta value indicating that youth who are closer to their race report fewer victims.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the importance of ethnic identity as a protective factor against various forms of juvenile delinquency and sexual aggression. Initial results of the investigation reveal that group membership (non-sexually versus sexually abusive) is differentially distributed by race in this sample, with a majority of the sex offenders reporting as White, but a minority of the non-sex offenders reporting as White. Other findings reveal a weak, but significant correlation between closeness to race and reported property damage and between importance of belonging to one's racial or ethnic group and felony theft for non-sexually offending youth. Among the adjudicated juvenile sexually abusing youth, there is a weak, but significant correlation

between both a total perpetration score and total number of victims and how close each participant reports feeling to other members of his racial or ethnic group.

These initial findings are somewhat consistent with the literature as studies have found that a majority of sexually offending youth report as White. And, while the correlations were fairly weak, there was minor support for a link between both some forms of delinquency and sexual aggression and closeness to racial or ethnic group.

Support for assessing trauma is found in the literature of both non-sexually and sexually offending youth. For non-sexually offending youth, studies have consistently found that being exposed to trauma as a child is correlated with juvenile delinquency (Widom, 1989). The typical juvenile offender has been exposed to numerous traumatic events including physical and sexual abuse, creating a high risk for developing Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) (McMackin, Leisen, Cusack, LaFratta & Litwin, 2002). PTSD rates are even higher among juvenile sex offenders. A recent study supports that more than 90% of adolescent sex offenders have been exposed to some type of trauma resulting in clinically reported PTSD rates as high as 60% or more (McMackin et al., 2002), consistent with previous findings. Rates of sexual abuse among sexually offending adolescents have been found to range from about 55 to over 90% (Burton, Miller & Shill, 2002; McMackin et al., 2002; Veneziano, Veneziano & LeGrand, 2000). Some results have also shown sexual molestation and abuse is often under-reported among the population (Brannon, Larson & Doggett, 1989), implying rates may even be higher than is known. Other research has found childhood sexual abuse to increase the risk of sexual perpetration by this group (Brannon et al., 1989; Burton et al., 2002;

Veneziano et al., 2000) due to several parallels between the victim and the victimizer (Ryan, 1989).

Results of these secondary analyses reveal that for non-sexually offending youth, trauma accounts for a part of the variance in a total crime score, but that closeness to race does not contribute significantly. However, results among the sexually offending youth show that trauma again accounts for variance in both the perpetration score and the total number of victims, but closeness to race does contribute significantly, indicating youth who report feeling close to other members of their race commit less severe sexual crimes and perpetrate on fewer victims.

As shown, results of this investigation show limited support for the literature describing ethnic identity as a protective factor against general forms of delinquency. On the other hand, findings show support for ethnic identity being associated with less sexual aggression. While this study was not able to look at Asian American youth alone due to too small a sample size, support for Hall et al.'s (2005) study describing the protective effects of ethnic identity and importance of cultural beliefs against sexual offending behavior was found in the results of this study as closeness to race was associated with lower numbers of and less severe sexual crimes.

Findings describing the importance of feeling close to other members of one's race are also related to the literature on African American, Latino, and Asian American youth. Ross (1995) found that unity and connection with peers of the same racial group was protective and led to more positive results in school among African American youth. Kerr et al.'s (2003) findings imply feelings of belonging and close-knit ties to family members and others of the same ethnic group are of utmost importance to Latino youth in

choosing prosocial behaviors. Finally, Tsai (2006) found feelings of being close to other members of the same ethnic group is protective for Asian American youth and helps limit engagement in delinquent acts. While these studies looked at both nondelinquent and non-sexually offending youth, this study expanded these findings to sexually offending youth as results showed that feelings of closeness to others within one's cultural group was related to both fewer victims and less severe sexual crimes.

Strengths of this study include two well used scales, the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire and the Self-Reported Delinquency scale, which both have good inter-item reliability. In addition, the sample size of the study was large (N = 502).

Despite the various strengths of this investigation, there are also several limitations. First of all, the data was not collected for the purposes of this study so there are not many questions addressing ethnic identity and its importance. In addition, the two questions that were asked regarding ethnic and racial identity were not standardized questions. Another limitation is most of the youth reported as White and perhaps there would be differing results had the sample been more diverse. This is especially true since racial groups other than Black and White had to be collapsed into one group to provide a large enough sample size for analysis. Next, surveys were not anonymous as participants were asked to write both their first and last names. This may have impacted the responses in some way as participants were cautioned that new information on sexual offenses would be shared with authorities. A final limitation of the study is that the youth surveyed were all in residential facilities and thus were serious offenders who most likely lacked a strong connection to their families who are often responsible for facilitating a

strong ethnic identity. Results may have been different for youth with less severe offending histories and for those more closely tied to their families and communities.

Results of this investigation give several implications for practice. Ethnic identity was supported as a protective factor against sexually offending behavior. Thus, it would be of extreme importance to work with and strengthen this among sexually offending youth and among those at risk to offend in order to decrease recidivism risk. Also, because both the literature and the current findings support the importance of feeling close to other individuals of one's race, it would be crucial to identify supports of similar ethnic background for clients.

Future studies should further expand on the link between both juvenile delinquency in general and adolescent sexual offending and ethnic identity. This investigation sheds light on there being protective effects of closeness to race among sexually offending youth, but does not show much of a correlation between delinquency and ethnic identity, which may perhaps be accounted for by the sample size being fairly small for non-sexually abusing youth. Future investigations should also seek to include larger samples of the ethnic groups that were not able to be studied here in an attempt to better understand the contributions of each specific race and ethnicity.

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Table 1

Perpetration Score for Juvenile Sex Offenders

Worst sexual crime reported	Frequency	Valid percent
Exhibitionism	9	3.2
Fondling	31	11.2
Exhibitionism & fondling	15	5.4
Penetration	72	25.9
Penetration & exhibitionism	8	2.9
Penetration & fondling	53	19.1
Penetration & fondling & exhibitionism	90	32.4
Total	278	100.0

Article II

The Effects of Witnessing Domestic Violence and Suffering Various Forms of
Maltreatment among Children and its Connection to Subsequent Juvenile
Delinquency and Juvenile Sexual Offending Behavior

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Abstract

This study examined the link between having witnessed domestic violence, having been physically abused, and having experienced both types of maltreatment and subsequent juvenile delinquent and sexual offending behavior. Paper and pencil surveys were collected from 332 sexual abusers and 170 non-sexually offending youth at 6 residential facilities in a Midwestern state. Participants responded to questions regarding traumatic experiences in their childhood, delinquent acts committed, sexually offending behavior, and violence witnessed. Results indicated the sexual abusers had witnessed more violence and experienced more forms of maltreatment. Both exposure to domestic violence and having been physically abused had independent and additive effects on various delinquent behaviors for non-sex offenders and on delinquent and sexually abusive behaviors for sexual abusers.

Introduction

Theoretical Perspectives

Social learning theory has been used to explain both juvenile delinquency (Kelley, Lewis, & Sigal, 2004; Mihalic & Elliott, 1997) and juvenile sexual aggression (Fagan & Wexler, 1988; Ryan, 1989). The theory states that children learn from observing both the behaviors of others and the outcomes of those behaviors (Bandura, 1986). Later, children model what they have seen and are reinforced for the behavior (Bandura, 1986). Thus, researchers have suggested that children who have been maltreated later become violent themselves (Fagan & Wexler, 1988; Kelley, Lewis, & Sigal, 2004; Mihalic & Elliott, 1997; Ryan, 1989).

In the juvenile delinquency literature, social learning theory states that youth model behavior they were exposed to as children and thus violence is learned through role models provided by family members and reinforced throughout childhood (Mihalic & Elliott, 1997). During childhood and adolescence, observations of how parents and other adults interact in interpersonal relationships helps shape thoughts about what is and what is not appropriate behavior in these relationships (Mihalic & Elliott, 1997). Thus, if a child grows up in a family environment in which stresses and arguments are faced with anger and aggression, the child will be at a high risk for displaying these same behaviors (Mihalic & Elliott, 1997).

Social learning theorists also believe that children's moral feelings and actions are highly dependent on the punishments, rewards, and examples they experience during their childhood (Kelley et al., 2004). Therefore, children who have a father who actively

engages in criminal behaviors may learn to make poor decisions and engage in inappropriate behaviors themselves (Kelley et al., 2004).

Researchers investigating the sexually aggressive behavior of adolescent males suggest that this behavior stems from their own victimization as children (Ryan, 1989). A traumatized child's experience has been described as one in which the child may become "fixated" on the trauma and begin recreating the experience leading to rigid, elaborate, and secretive ritualistic patterns (Ryan, 1989). This coincides with the aspect of social learning theory that suggests that sexually aggressive behaviors are learned through repeated exposure and reinforcement (Fagan & Wexler, 1988).

The Effects on Children of Witnessing Domestic Violence

In the past, attention has been focused primarily on the women in abusive relationships, with little consideration given to the children who witness the violence (Fantuzzo & Mohr, 1999). More recently, researchers have begun to focus on the negative impact and long-lasting effects witnessing this form of abuse can have on children (Edleson, 1999; Fantuzzo & Mohr, 1999). Researchers have found that as many as 63% of child witnesses fare more poorly than do children who have not been exposed to family violence, demonstrating the psychological, emotional, and social impact violence can have on children (Kitzmann, Gaylord, Holt & Kenny, 2003).

Children who have been exposed to intrafamilial violence often exhibit more internalized and externalized behaviors than do children reared in nonviolent homes (Diamond & Muller, 2004; Edleson, 1999; Fantuzzo & Mohr, 1999; Perry, 2001; Wilson, 2006). Internalized behaviors have been described as fearful and inhibited (Edleson, 1999) or are often described as hurtful to oneself, as unusual or repetitive habits, or to

include withdrawal or inattentive behavior (Fantuzzo & Mohr, 1999; Groves, 1999; Wilson, 2006). Children may experience depression, anxiety, isolation, sleep disturbance (Barber & Olsen, 1994; Fantuzzo & Mohr, 1999; Groves, 1999; Wilson, 2006), suicidal ideation, fears, phobias (Fantuzzo & Mohr, 1999; Wilson, 2006), bed-wetting, and low self-esteem (Fantuzzo & Mohr, 1999). Externalized behaviors are more aggressive (Edleson, 1999) and have been described as hurtful to others, destructive to property, and to include various types of disruptive behaviors (Fantuzzo & Mohr, 1999; Wilson, 2006). Children who exhibit these behaviors may throw tantrums and get into fights both in their community and at school (Barber & Olsen, 1994; Fantuzzo & Mohr, 1999; Wilson, 2006). Other internalized and externalized problems associated with children's witnessing of domestic violence include: an increased risk of becoming batterers (Bancroft & Silverman, 2002) and of engaging in other forms of violence (Borum & Verhaagen, 2006; Edleson, 1999; Perry, 2001; Wilson, 2006), poor social skills, feelings of powerlessness and hopelessness, increased lying, cheating, and stealing, poor definition and understanding of personal boundaries, confusion and insecurity, self-blame, running away, and sexual acting out (Wilson, 2006).

The witnessing of domestic violence impacts children of different ages in different ways. Infants and toddlers who are exposed to this form of violence show internalized behaviors including: anxiety (Smyke, Wajda-Johnston, & Zeanah, 2006), sleep disturbance, irritability, emotional distress, regression in both language and toilet training, immature behaviors, fears of abandonment (Osofsky, 1999; Wilson, 2006) and separation anxiety (Wilson, 2006), and may be disorganized in their attachment to their caretakers (Smyke et al., 2006). Violence may also impede children's development of

trust and autonomy and children may experience symptoms similar to those of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (Osofsky, 1999; Smyke et al., 2006; Wilson, 2006). These symptoms include: repeated reexperiencing of the traumatic event, numbing, increased arousal, and avoidance (Osofsky, 1999). In addition, witnessing domestic violence often leads to a failure to thrive in infants (Cohen, Mannarino & Deblinger, 2006).

Externalized behaviors associated with this group include aggression toward adults and peers (Smyke et al., 2006).

School-age children who are exposed to domestic violence often show increases in internalized behaviors such as sleep disturbance and nightmares (Cohen et al., 2006; Osofsky, 1999) and in regressive behaviors such as “baby talk” and wetting the bed (Cohen et al., 2006) and are much less likely to explore and play freely or seek to master their environment than are other children (Osofsky, 1999). These children also have difficulty concentrating, focusing, and learning (Cohen et al., 2006; Wilson, 2006) due to intrusive thoughts, including what they could have done to prevent the abuse (Osofsky, 1999). They may experience shame about the difficult situation and may feel guilt for not being able to intervene in the abuse (Wilson, 2006). In addition, they may experience anxiety, numbing (Osofsky, 1999), fears of leaving their homes and difficulty separating, withdrawal, decreased school performance (Cohen et al., 2006; Osofsky, 1999; Wilson, 2006), and may display externalized behaviors such as aggressiveness toward their siblings and peers (Cohen et al., 2006; Graham-Bermann & Levendosky, 1998; Osofsky, 1999; Wilson, 2006). Other problem behaviors include: running away from home, experiencing a role reversal thereby taking on a parental role, and verbal aggressiveness (Cohen et al., 2006). Preschoolers who witness domestic violence have also been found

to have more ambivalent relationships with their teachers, to experience more negative affect, and to respond less appropriately to situations (Graham-Bermann & Levendosky, 1998).

Finally, adolescents who witness domestic violence show high levels of externalized behaviors such as aggression and acting out, often accompanied by problems at school, truancy, various behavioral problems, and revenge seeking behavior (Osofsky, 1999). They often experience internalized behaviors as well including: anxiety, distractibility, unwanted fears or thoughts, feelings of not belonging, and, for those who are severely traumatized, seem as though they cannot experience feelings or pain (Osofsky, 1999). Some adolescents have reported giving up hope and expecting that they may not live through their teenage years (Osofsky, 1999).

Adolescents who have witnessed domestic violence are also at an increased risk of becoming physically, verbally, or sexually abusive with their partners (Borum & Verhaagen, 2006; Cohen et al., 2006; Wilson, 2006). In addition, adolescents may display violence toward the battered parent by imitating behaviors and words of the abuser (Cohen et al., 2006), may batter their mothers or siblings, may take on a parental role (Wilson, 2006), may try to protect the battered parent (Cohen et al., 2006; Wilson, 2006) or sibling (Wilson, 2006), or may engage in risk behaviors such as drug and alcohol abuse (Cohen et al., 2006; Wilson, 2006), prostitution, and sexual assault crimes (Wilson, 2006).

The Effects of Witnessing Domestic Violence and Experiencing other Trauma

Researchers have investigated the link between child maltreatment and subsequent delinquency and sexual aggression. Indeed, a high percentage of adolescent

sex offenders have been victimized themselves (Brannon, Larson, & Doggett, 1989; Burton, Miller, & Shill, 2002; Veneziano, Veneziano, & LeGrand, 2000) and their risk for perpetration is increased due to several parallels between the victim and the victimizer (Ryan, 1989). Following the experience of abuse, later situations that result in similar feelings of being out of control or helpless may generate a sequence of thoughts and feelings, known as the sexual assault cycle, that contribute to perpetration (Ryan, 1989). In addition, abused and neglected children are at an increased risk for being arrested for both non-violent and violent crimes and for comorbidity of substance abuse and non-violent crime (Widom & White, 1997). They are also likely to experience increased rates of depression (Gover & Mackenzie, 2003).

Some researchers have sought to distinguish whether having witnessed domestic violence in addition to being maltreated increases the risk of problem behaviors (Spaccarelli, Coatsworth, & Bowden 1995; Widom, 1989) since as many as one-half of all children of battered mothers are likely to be physically abused as well (Wilson, 2006). Researchers have found that among samples of delinquent adolescent males, physical abuse and domestic disputes involving weapons have both independent and additive effects on youths' level of risk for committing a serious crime (Spaccarelli et al., 1995). The odds of committing at least one serious act of violence doubled when either of the risk factors was included and quadrupled when both risk factors were present (Spaccarelli et al., 1995).

In addition, observing hitting between parents is more strongly related to involvement in severe marital aggression than is physical abuse alone (Widom, 1989).

However, the probability of engaging in marital aggression increases dramatically when both types of familial aggression are experienced (Widom, 1989).

Witnessing Domestic Violence and Juvenile Delinquency

Juvenile delinquency is becoming an increasing epidemic in our society today. Studies have shown that 92.8% of adolescents between the ages of 12 and 18 years old have committed at least one delinquent act within the past year (Marcotte, Marcotte, & Bouffard, 2002). Several risk factors have been associated with the development of delinquent behavior including physical abuse (Spaccarelli et al., 1995; Widom, 1989), familial factors (Bean, Barber, & Crane, 2006; Krohn, Stern, Thornberry, & Jang, 1992), and exposure to violence (Gover & MacKenzie, 2003; Herrera & McCloskey, 2001).

Researchers have found that violence often occurs within the families of adolescents involved in juvenile delinquency. Rates of exposure within samples of juvenile delinquents have been found to range from 43% (Herrera & McCloskey, 2001) to 54% (Gover & MacKenzie, 2003). Researchers have found that approximately three times as many violent non-sexual adolescent offenders have witnessed domestic violence than have noncontact offenders (Caputo, Frick, and Brodsky, 1999). It seems then that adolescent males who are exposed to violent acts between parents within the home are at a high risk of perpetrating violent acts themselves. Some researchers have even found that weapons use between parents doubles the likelihood of committing at least one serious violent act (Spaccarelli et al., 1995) and that witnessing any form of marital violence causes children to be two times more likely to become involved with the court system (Herrera & McCloskey, 2001).

Researchers have found high levels of marital violence within the families of juvenile delinquents (Widom, 1989). Some of the findings of Widom's well respected longitudinal study include: 53% of 62 cases of habitually violent offenders had seen their parents engage in physical violence; families of 31 adolescents charged with either homicide or attempted homicide were described as "violent and chaotic;" 79% of violent children studied reported having witnessed domestic violence whereas only 20% of nonviolent offenders had seen their parents engage in violence; 23% of the fathers of violent adolescents had engaged in violence toward their spouse; and, a fifth study found that youths who were violent toward their parents had experienced their parents being violent toward each other at a much higher rate than did those children who were not violent toward their parents (Widom, 1989). It has also been noted that literature on family violence suggests that, not only is witnessing domestic violence linked to violence among the exposed children, but that these children are also at a greater risk for self-punishing behavior and internalized behaviors such as withdrawal and depression (Widom, 1989).

Other literature on juvenile delinquents has shown that witnessing domestic violence contributes to a tendency for adolescents to perceive lower competence in peer relationships, in self-control, and in autonomy and to cope with stress by seeking to control or provoke others (Spaccarelli et al., 1995).

Witnessing Domestic Violence and Juvenile Sexual Offending

Researchers studying adult sex offenders have revealed a long pattern of sexual offenses that may begin in adolescence (Fagan & Wexler, 1988). Retrospective studies show that as many as 60% to 80% of adult sex offenders began committing sexual

offenses in adolescence (Ford & Linney, 1995). Researchers have also shown that as many as one-fifth of all forcible rapes are committed by adolescent males (Ford & Linney, 1995). Arrest statistics between 1975 and 1980 showed that over one-half of reported rapists were under 25 years of age and that the largest group of perpetrators were between the ages of 16 and 24 (Fagan & Wexler, 1988). Crime data gathered in 2000, revealed that 16% of arrests for forcible rapes and 19% of arrests for other sex offenses involved adolescent males under the age of 18 (Righthand & Welch, 2004). Despite these high percentages, the problem may in fact be underestimated as the number of juvenile sex offenders who become known to the system might in fact be much lower than the number of adolescents committing the offenses (Righthand & Welch, 2004). In a recent study, researchers found that 55% of an adult sample of sexual abusers admitted to engaging in sexually abusive behaviors in adolescence when administered a confidential computer generated test, but only 37% had official documentation of the juvenile offending histories (Knight and Prentky, 1993).

Many risk factors have been associated with the development of sexually aggressive behavior among adolescent males. Some of these include: prior sexual victimization (Duane, Carr, Cherry, McGrath, & O'Shea, 2003; Kelley et al., 2004; Ryan, Miyoshi, Metzner, Krugman, & Fryer, 1996; van Wijk, Vermeiren, Loeber, Hart-Kerkhoffs, Doreleijers, & Bullens, 2006), physical abuse (Duane et al., 2003; Kelley et al., 2004; Ryan et al., 1996), and family factors including violence (Duane et al., 2003; Kelley et al., 2004; Ryan et al., 1996). Researchers have found that juvenile sex offenders are more likely to witness family violence than are other adolescents (Caputo et al., 1999; Fagan & Wexler, 1988; Ford & Linney, 1995; Kobayashi, Sales, Becker,

Figueredo, & Kaplan, 1995). Researchers have also found that as many 43% to 81% (Baker, Tabacoff, Tornusciolo, & Eisenstadt, 2001; Caputo et al., 1999; Richardson, Kelly, Bhate, & Graham, 1997; Salter et al., 2003; Saunders, Awad, & White, 1986; Wieckowski, Hartsoe, Mayer, & Shortz, 1998) of adolescents who have sexually abused others have witnessed domestic violence at some point in their lives. In fact, some researchers have shown adolescent sex offenders are over three times more likely to have witnessed severe domestic violence even when compared with juveniles charged with theft and other non-contact offenses (Caputo et al., 1999).

Some researchers have pointed out that the number of adolescent sex offenders who have witnessed domestic violence may in fact be much higher than what is reported. Researchers have found that the number of reports of children's witnessing of domestic violence often rises significantly following treatment (Baker et al., 2001). In a recent study, findings showed that maternal reports of domestic violence rose from 42.6% to 68.1%, reports of paternal perpetration of domestic violence rose from 36% to 51%, and reports of adolescent sex offenders witnessing of domestic violence rose from 42.5% to 57.4% following treatment (Baker et al., 2001).

Witnessing domestic violence not only increases risk for engaging in violence, but it has also been associated with internalized behaviors such as elevated symptoms of comorbid depression and anxiety (Hunter, Figueredo, Malamuth, & Becker, 2003). In addition, a link between both exposure to violence against women and antisocial behavior modeled by a male and externalized behaviors such as nonsexual delinquency and aggression among populations of juvenile sex offenders has been found (Hunter, 2004).

As shown, researchers have indicated that having been exposed to domestic violence greatly increases the risk of both general forms of juvenile delinquency and juvenile sexual offending. In exploring this link, this study will first examine the reported rates of intrafamilial violence witnessed by both sexually offending and non-sexually offending youth and crimes reported for those who report witnessing and those who do not will be investigated. The study will then investigate the amount of other forms of abuse reported by each group (sexually offending versus non-sexually offending) and whether those who report having been physically abused also report higher crime rates. Finally, because the literature supports that having been both physically abused and having witnessed domestic violence greatly increases the risk of committing crimes, differences in reported criminal behavior among those who report one type of abuse, both types of abuse, and neither type of abuse will be investigated.

Methods

After consents were obtained, confidential data were collected from youth with sexual and non-sexual offenses in 6 residential facilities in a Midwestern state. Multi-paged pencil and paper surveys were collected from 332 adjudicated juvenile sexual abusers and 170 non-sexually offending youth. The average age of the sexually offending sample ($N = 332$) was 16.70 years ($SD = 1.65$ years) with no difference between groups ($t(323) = 1.46, p = .145$). The average current grade level was 9th grade ($SD = 1.63$ grades), with no difference between groups on grade level ($t(319) = .986, p = .325$). The two groups differed in terms of racial composition ($\chi^2(4) = 5.7, p = .000$) with 50% of the juvenile sexual offenders selecting Caucasian ($n = 156$), 29% selecting African American ($n = 90$), and 13% selecting Other ($n = 43$). In contrast, only 38% of

non-sexually offending youth reported their race as Caucasian ($n = 60$), while 56% identified as African American ($n = 90$), and the remaining 4% as Other ($n = 7$).

Measures

The Childhood Trauma Questionnaire (CTQ) (Bernstein & Fink, 1998) was used to gather information regarding traumatic experiences in childhood. This 37-item measure asks participants to respond to various questions through a 5-point scale ranging from never true to very often true and provides a brief and relatively noninvasive screening of traumatic experiences. All of the subscales have acceptable inter-item reliability in this study. The subscales include: Sexual Abuse ($\alpha = .83$), Physical Abuse ($\alpha = .91$), Emotional Abuse ($\alpha = .90$) and Physical ($\alpha = .76$) and Emotional Neglect ($\alpha = .92$).

Elliot, Huizinga, and Ageton's (1985) Self-Reported Delinquency (SRD) scale was used to assess delinquency. The scale has 32 questions using a 7-point frequency scale from 0 (never) to 7 (2-3 times per day) on questions ranging from drug use to aggression. The instrument has several subscales including Alcohol Use, Drug Use, Felony Assault, Felony Theft, General Delinquency, Property Damage, Public Disorderly, Robbery, and Selling Drugs. These subscales have acceptable inter-item reliability with the exception of Drug Use ($\alpha = .46$) and Public Disorderly ($\alpha = .52$).

Non-standardized questions about number of victims, worst sexual crime perpetrated (total perpetration score) measured on a 7-point scale (1 = exhibitionism; 2 = fondling; 3 = exhibitionism and fondling; 4 = penetration; 5 = penetration and exhibitionism; 6 = penetration and fondling; 7 = penetration, exhibitionism, and fondling), and a "yes" or "no" question asking participants whether their families were

characterized with “hitting, slapping, punching or other violence between parents or adults at home” were also used in the study.

Results

Based on the current literature, questions to be answered by data collected from the adjudicated youth are: Is there a difference in the reported amount of violence witnessed both at home and otherwise between non-sexually offending youth and juvenile sexual abusers? How do reported rates of abuse and neglect compare between sexually offending and non-sexually offending youth? Is there a difference in crimes reported by both groups among those who report witnessing domestic violence versus those who do not? For both groups, what types of crimes were reported by those who reported being physically abused versus those who did not? Are there differences in the crimes reported among both groups between those who describe not having witnessed violence and not having been physically abused, those who report having either witnessed violence or being physically abused, and those who report having both been beaten and having witnessed violence?

Chi-Square Test results reveal there is a significant association between type (sex offending versus non-sex offending youth) and witnessing hitting, slapping or punching between adults at home ($\chi^2 (1) = 48.92, p = .000$) with 47.5% of the sexually abusive youth reporting having witnessed domestic violence compared to 14.9% of the non-sexually abusive youth. In addition, an independent samples *t* test reveals sexually offending youth report significantly more frequent exposure to domestic violence ($t (495) = 7.96, p = .000$) with nonsexual offenders reporting an average of .27 ($SD = .61$) and sexual abusers reporting an average of .87 ($SD = .88$) and of witnessing other forms of

violence as well (witnessing strangers, friends or relatives being beat up, stabbed, shot or killed) ($t(495) = 2.45, p = .015$) with non-sexually offending delinquents reporting an average of 21.69 ($SD = 7.92$) and sexually offending youth reporting an average of 23.69 ($SD = 8.92$).

Abuse comparisons between the two groups of sexually offending and non-sexually offending youth reveal that sexual abusers report significantly more frequent abuse of all five types CTQ scales (emotional neglect, physical neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse, and sexual abuse) than do non-sexually offending youth (see Table 1). In addition, while most youth within the entire sample report multiple forms of abuse, the sexually abusive youth have significantly more types of abuse than the non-sexually abusive youth ($t(497) = 12.74, p = .000$) with sexual abusers reporting an average of 1.92 ($SD = 1.44$) types of abuse and nonsexual delinquent youth reporting an average of .39 ($SD = .78$) types of abuse.

Results of an independent samples t test indicate that for non-sexually offending youth, those who report witnessing domestic violence also report higher rates of several forms of delinquency, with the most significant difference found for both general delinquency ($t(126) = 2.67, p = .009$) and property damage ($t(132) = 2.97, p = .004$) (see Table 2). Among juvenile sexually offending youth, a significant difference is found for all types of crimes with the exception of total perpetration score ($t(263) = 1.41, p = .160$) and selling drugs ($t(281) = 1.94, p = .053$) (see Table 3).

An independent samples t test reveals that for non-sexually offending youth, those who report having been hit or beaten report significantly more crimes in every category of the SRD scale with the exception of robbery ($t(133) = 1.87, p = .064$) than do those

who do not report the abuse (see Table 4). Similarly, juvenile sexual abusers who report having been physically abused also report significantly more crimes in every category of delinquency, with the exception of selling drugs ($t(289) = .43, p = .67$), and report more victims ($t(304) = 2.38, p = .018$) and more severe sexual crimes ($t(272) = 2.73, p = .007$) than do those who do not report being hit or beaten (see Table 5).

Information gathered from participants (both sexually offending and non-sexually offending) regarding whether or not they had witnessed violence in the home and whether or not they had been physically abused was analyzed using a one way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and a Multiple Comparisons Post Hoc Test. Results reveal that for non-sexually offending youth there is a significant difference between at least two of the three groups of having been either hit or beaten or of having witnessed domestic violence (DV), having experienced neither abuse, or having experienced both types of abuse for every crime except public disorderly and selling drugs (see Table 6). And, for juvenile sexual offenders there are significant differences between at least two of the three groups for every crime except the total perpetration score and selling drugs (see Table 7).

Discussion

The purpose of this investigation was to examine the link of witnessing domestic violence and experiencing other forms of maltreatment, in particular physical abuse, and subsequent juvenile delinquent and juvenile sexually aggressive behaviors. Results indicate that juvenile sexual offenders report having witnessed more domestic violence than the non-sexually offending youth. This supports Caputo et al.'s (1999) findings that

juvenile sexual abusers are more likely to have witnessed severe domestic violence, even when compared with juveniles charged with theft and other non-contact offenses.

Results of analyses used to examine whether there is a difference in reported crime rates between those juvenile non-sexually offending youth who report having witnessed domestic violence and those who do not report exposure do not show a significant difference in number of crimes for several types of delinquent behavior. This may perhaps be accounted for by the small sample size of the youth who report not witnessing domestic violence. Despite there being several non-significant results, findings do show a significant difference for general delinquency, property damage, alcohol use, and drug use, with those reporting being exposed to violence also reporting more crimes. These findings support results in previous literature which suggest a link between exposure to violence and subsequent substance use and delinquent behavior (Cohen et al., 2006; Wilson, 2006).

Results for exposure to domestic violence as reported by juvenile sexual offenders are similar to those of the non-sexually offending youth with those who report having witnessed violence also reporting significantly more victims, general delinquency, property damage, alcohol use, drug use, robbery, and felony theft. Findings are supportive of previous findings which suggest a link between exposure to intrafamilial violence and delinquent and sexually acting out behaviors (Cohen et al., 2006; Osofsky, 1999; Wilson, 2006).

Physical abuse is also associated with higher reported crime rates among both non-sexually offending and sexually offending youth. Juvenile non-sexual offending youth report significantly more general delinquency, property damage, felony theft,

public disorderly, alcohol use, drug use, felony assault, and selling drugs. For juvenile sexual offenders, results were similar with higher rates of general delinquency, property damage, felony theft, public disorderly, alcohol use, drug use, robbery, felony assault, and an increased number of both reported victims of sexual assault and a higher perpetration score among those reporting having been physically abused versus those denying the abuse. Results support Widom and White's (1997) findings that abused and neglected children are at an increased risk for being arrested for both non-violent and violent crimes and for comorbidity of substance abuse and non-violent crime.

Findings of experiencing multiple types of abuse (physical abuse and witnessing domestic violence) for both sexually and non-sexually offending youth support previous results within the literature which have shown that youth who experience multiple forms of maltreatment are at an increased risk for delinquent and aggressive behaviors.

For both the non-sexually offending youth (see Table 6) and the sexual abusers (see Table 7), having experienced at least one type of abuse led to more reported crime rates for almost all categories of the SRD scale. In addition, alcohol use is significantly higher for non-sexually offending youth when both abuses are present compared to those who report neither being hit/beaten nor having been exposed to violence in the home.

For the juvenile sexually aggressive youth, total number of victims, public disorderly, and alcohol and drug use are all significantly higher for youth reporting having experienced both abuses when compared to those who report not having experienced either abuse and those who report having experience one type of abuse. Findings are consistent with Spaccarelli's (1995) findings which suggest the odds of committing at least one serious act of violence doubles when either witnessing domestic

violence or being physically abused is included and quadruples when both risk factors are present. It is important to note that Spacarelli (1995) investigated domestic disputes involving weapons whereas this study defines domestic violence as witnessing “hitting, slapping or punching.”

Results of the study support Bandura’s (1986) social learning theory which states that children learn from observing the behaviors of others and later modeling those behaviors. In the sample of both juvenile sexually offending and juvenile non-sexually offending youth, higher reported crime rates were associated with either being physically abused or having witnessed domestic violence or having experienced both. Findings also support Mihalic and Elliott’s (1997) findings within the juvenile delinquency literature which describe children learning violence through role models and through learning what is appropriate behavior in relationships through observing their parents. Results are also consistent with literature on juvenile sexual offending with previous findings describing a link between sexually aggressive behavior and youth’s own victimization (Ryan, 1989) as well as sexually aggressive behaviors being learned through repeated exposure and reinforcement (Fagan & Wexler, 1988).

Strengths of this study include using two well used scales, the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire and the Self-Reported Delinquency scale, which both have good inter-item reliability. In addition, the sample size of the study was large (N = 502).

Despite the various strengths of this investigation, there are also several limitations. First of all, the data was not collected for the purposes of this study so questions needed to be geared toward the available data. Next, surveys were not anonymous. This may have impacted the responses in some way as participants were

cautioned that new information on sexual offenses would be shared with authorities. A third limitation, as mentioned previously, is that for the juvenile non-sexually offending youth the sample size of those who did not report witnessing domestic violence was too small (n between 21 – 22) to get an accurate depiction of how much of a difference in reported crimes was accounted for by having witnessed domestic violence. A final limitation of the study is that the youth surveyed were all in residential facilities and thus were serious offenders who most likely experienced more abuse and possibly more forms of abuse. Results may have been different for youth with less severe offending histories.

Clinical implications of the findings of this study include recognizing the importance of working with children and adolescents who are either exposed to violence within the home, who are physically abused or both. If these children can be helped through their traumatic experiences, perhaps their chances of going on to perpetrate crimes will be minimized. This study also speaks to the importance of asking children and adolescents who are reporting having been maltreated in some way or having witnessed violence whether they have experienced multiple types of abuse. Results indicate that most of the juvenile sexual abusers and the juvenile non-sexually offending youth have experienced more than one type of maltreatment and, because multiple types of maltreatment are linked, both in this study and in previous research, to increased rates of crime and more aggressive crimes, it seems crucial to work through every type of trauma reported.

Future research should expand on the findings here by further studying juvenile non-sexually offending youth who report having witnessed domestic violence versus those who do not report witnessing violence. Results here may have been skewed by the

small sample size of the group and thus future research may find more of a correlation between witnessing violence and various forms of delinquency, which is more in line with the current literature. In addition, it may be beneficial to investigate roles other types of abuse play in offending and whether having three or more types of abuse is linked to increased crime reports. It may also be important to investigate whether there is a difference in the effects of maltreatment and subsequent crime between racial and ethnic groups. While all groups of children could benefit from increased community and professional assistance, this would help identify which groups may need more support.

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Table 1

Abuse Reports for Sexually and Non-sexually Offending Youth (CTQ Scales)

Type of abuse	Population	<i>n</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>t</i>
Emotional neglect	Non-sex offenders	156	16.33 (8.41)	2.93*
	Juvenile sex offenders	324	18.89 (9.19)	
Physical neglect	Non-sex offenders	156	12.85 (5.27)	4.83*
	Juvenile sex offenders	325	15.55 (5.97)	
Emotional abuse	Non-sex offenders	154	6.66 (3.25)	9.33*
	Juvenile sex offenders	324	11.60 (6.18)	
Physical abuse	Non-sex offenders	156	7.17 (4.02)	8.57*
	Juvenile sex offenders	325	11.86 (6.25)	
Sexual abuse	Non-sex offenders	153	7.98 (2.72)	7.35*
	Juvenile sex offenders	325	12.03 (6.56)	

* Significant Independent Samples *t* Test at $p < .01$

Table 2

Violence and Crimes for Non- Sexually Offending Youth

Crime	Witnessed violence	<i>n</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>t</i>
General delinquency	No	107	2.68 (3.49)	2.67**
	Yes	21	5.05 (4.69)	
Property damage	No	112	.77 (1.68)	2.97**
	Yes	22	2.23 (3.59)	
Felony theft	No	111	3.42 (5.09)	.67
	Yes	21	4.24 (5.21)	
Public disorderly	No	112	.46 (1.40)	1.01
	Yes	22	.82 (2.13)	
Alcohol use	No	112	2.51 (3.57)	2.27*
	Yes	22	4.45 (4.15)	
Drug use	No	110	2.61 (3.27)	2.11*
	Yes	22	4.23 (3.32)	
Robbery	No	113	.65 (1.53)	1.33
	Yes	22	1.14 (1.83)	
Felony assault	No	110	1.05 (2.09)	1.68
	Yes	22	1.91 (2.58)	
Selling drugs	No	109	3.01 (4.39)	.85
	Yes	22	3.91 (5.31)	

* Significant Independent Samples *t* Test at $p < .05$ ** Significant Independent Samples *t* Test at $p < .01$

Table 3

Violence and Crimes for Sexually Offending Youth

Crime	Witnessed violence	<i>n</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>t</i>
Perpetration score	No	130	4.85 (1.89)	1.41
	Yes	135	5.18 (1.86)	
Number of victims	No	154	2.18 (3.26)	2.72*
	Yes	144	3.58 (5.44)	
General delinquency	No	141	4.96 (5.63)	5.22*
	Yes	135	9.11 (7.48)	
Property damage	No	153	2.04 (3.02)	4.54*
	Yes	135	4.17 (4.84)	
Felony theft	No	145	3.99 (6.03)	2.90*
	Yes	136	6.21 (6.74)	
Public disorderly	No	152	.83 (1.99)	4.01*
	Yes	134	2.16 (3.49)	
Alcohol use	No	149	2.72 (3.16)	3.19*
	Yes	134	4.15 (4.35)	
Drug use	No	146	2.65 (3.48)	3.59*
	Yes	132	4.41 (4.65)	
Robbery	No	150	.51 (1.34)	3.31*
	Yes	136	1.13 (1.83)	
Felony assault	No	149	1.39 (2.58)	3.43*
	Yes	137	2.62 (3.46)	
Selling drugs	No	148	2.26 (3.84)	1.94
	Yes	135	3.21 (4.46)	

* Significant Independent Samples *t* Test at $p < .01$

Table 4

Physical Abuse and Crimes for Non-Sexually Offending Youth

Crime	Hit or Beaten	<i>n</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>t</i>
General delinquency	No	91	2.16(3.09)	3.94 ^{**}
	Yes	38	4.87(4.48)	
Property damage	No	94	.67(1.82)	2.64 ^{**}
	Yes	40	1.73(2.69)	
Felony theft	No	93	2.77(4.33)	2.71 ^{**}
	Yes	40	5.33(6.26)	
Public disorderly	No	93	.32(1.24)	2.29 [*]
	Yes	41	.98(2.02)	
Alcohol use	No	93	2.03(3.21)	3.61 ^{**}
	Yes	41	4.39(4.04)	
Drug use	No	91	2.01(2.73)	4.66 ^{**}
	Yes	41	4.71(3.74)	
Robbery	No	94	.52(1.41)	1.87
	Yes	41	1.05(1.72)	
Felony assault	No	93	.76(1.59)	3.32 ^{**}
	Yes	40	2.08(2.95)	
Selling drugs	No	93	2.55(4.09)	2.15 [*]
	Yes	39	4.36(5.10)	

^{*} Significant Independent Samples *t* Test at $p < .05$

^{**} Significant Independent Samples *t* Test at $p < .01$

Table 5

Physical Abuse and Crimes for Sexually Offending Youth

Crime	Hit or beaten	<i>n</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>t</i>
Perpetration score	No	90	4.56(1.92)	2.73 ^{**}
	Yes	184	5.21(1.82)	
Number of victims	No	106	2.03(3.00)	2.38 [*]
	Yes	200	3.29(5.02)	
General delinquency	No	98	3.97(5.16)	5.39 ^{**}
	Yes	185	8.49(7.41)	
Property damage	No	106	1.75(3.15)	3.96 ^{**}
	Yes	192	3.67(4.41)	
Felony theft	No	100	3.64(5.99)	2.72 ^{**}
	Yes	189	5.83(6.75)	
Public disorderly	No	105	.94(2.28)	2.08 [*]
	Yes	187	1.64(2.99)	
Alcohol use	No	104	2.47(3.37)	2.92 ^{**}
	Yes	187	3.83(4.03)	
Drug use	No	102	2.21(3.18)	3.72 ^{**}
	Yes	185	4.08(4.49)	
Robbery	No	104	.52(1.32)	2.40 [*]
	Yes	190	1.01(1.82)	
Felony assault	No	106	1.45(2.94)	2.20 [*]
	Yes	189	2.28(3.18)	
Selling drugs	No	103	2.52(4.08)	.43
	Yes	188	2.74(4.19)	

^{*} Significant Independent Samples *t* Test at $p < .05$

^{**} Significant Independent Samples *t* Test at $p < .01$

Table 6

Domestic Violence, Physical Abuse, and Crimes for Non-Sexually Offending Youth

Crime	Neither beaten nor witnessed DV <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	Beaten or witnessed DV <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	Both beaten and witnessed DV <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	F
General delinquency ¹	2.14 (3.04)	4.32 (4.34)	5.92 (4.79)	8.65 ^{**}
Property damage ¹	.52 (1.38)	1.87 (2.88)	2.31 (3.45)	7.48 ^{**}
Felony theft ²	2.77 (4.36)	5.42 (6.37)	4.92 (5.74)	3.57 [*]
Public disorderly	.29 (1.19)	1.00 (1.87)	.92 (2.47)	2.96
Alcohol use ³	2.14 (3.32)	3.44 (3.91)	5.92 (3.71)	7.12 ^{**}
Drug use ¹	1.88 (2.67)	4.91 (3.70)	4.46 (3.62)	13.15 ^{**}
Robbery ²	.47 (1.37)	1.31 (1.93)	.77 (1.30)	3.59 [*]
Felony assault ²	.68 (1.51)	2.29 (2.97)	1.69 (2.72)	7.22 ^{**}
Selling drugs	2.54 (4.02)	4.57 (5.33)	3.85 (5.21)	2.44

* Significant one way ANOVA F test at $p < .05$

** Significant one way ANOVA F test at $p < .01$

¹ Groups 2 and 3 are significantly different than group 1

² Group 2 is significantly different than group 1

³ Group 3 is significantly different than group 1

Table 7

Domestic Violence, Physical Abuse, and Crimes for Sexually Offending Youth

Crime	Neither beaten nor witnessed DV <i>M (SD)</i>	Beaten or witnessed DV <i>M (SD)</i>	Both beaten and witnessed DV <i>M (SD)</i>	F
Perpetration Score	4.57 (1.95)	5.07 (1.82)	5.21 (1.86)	2.59
Total number of victims ¹	2.09 (3.31)	2.15 (2.94)	3.97 (5.89)	5.99*
General delinquency ²	3.45 (4.92)	6.59 (5.89)	9.44 (7.64)	19.35*
Property damage ³	1.32 (2.22)	3.05 (3.99)	4.23 (4.79)	12.82*
Felony theft ⁴	3.55 (5.88)	4.60 (6.33)	6.49 (6.75)	5.28*
Public disorderly ¹	.80 (2.09)	1.06 (2.21)	2.13 (3.44)	6.64*
Alcohol use ¹	2.44 (3.09)	3.01 (3.56)	4.32 (4.28)	6.48*
Drug use ¹	2.15 (2.99)	3.14 (3.92)	4.68 (4.74)	9.32*
Robbery ⁴	.41 (1.12)	.72 (1.67)	1.16 (1.83)	5.27*
Felony assault ¹	1.31 (2.64)	1.61 (2.96)	2.74 (3.35)	6.19*
Selling drugs	2.51 (4.02)	2.10 (3.77)	3.19 (4.42)	1.79

* Significant one way ANOVA F test at $p < .01$

¹ Group 3 is significantly different than groups 1 and 2

² All three groups are significantly different from each other

³ Groups 2 and 3 are significantly different than group 1

⁴ Group 3 is significantly different than group 1

Article III

The Connection of Parenting Practices and Attachment to Subsequent Juvenile
Delinquency and Juvenile Sexual Offending Behavior

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Abstract

This study examined the link between parental support and attachment versus alienation, inconsistency in parenting, and communication patterns and subsequent juvenile delinquent and juvenile sexually aggressive behaviors. Paper and pencil surveys were collected from 332 sexual abusers and 170 non-sexually offending youth at 6 residential facilities in a Midwestern state. Participants responded to questions regarding traumatic experiences in their childhood, perceived attachment to mother and father, parental inconsistency and warmth, communication patterns with parents, and sexually offending behavior. Results indicated there was no difference between the groups on reported communication patterns with parents, but juvenile sex offenders reported less attachment and warmth, more feelings of alienation, and more inconsistency in parenting than did non-sexually offending youth.

Introduction

Families can both be a source of resilience and a source of risk for children.

Families characterized by support (Bean, Barber, Crane, 2006; Marcotte, Marcotte, & Bouffard, 2002), positive communication styles (Krohn, Stern, Thornberry, & Jang, 1992), strong attachments (Kerr, Beck, Shattuck, Kattar, & Uriburu, 2003; Krohn et al., 1992), supervision (Bean et al., 2006; Kerr et al., 2003; Kosterman, Graham, Hawkins, Catalano, & Herrenkohl, 2001; Krohn et al., 1992), and adequate discipline (Bean et al., 2006; Kerr et al., 2003; Krohn et al., 1992) tend to protect children and adolescents from engaging in violence and drug use. However, when families are characterized by conflict (Williams & Borduin, 1997), inconsistent parenting including low levels of supervision and inappropriate discipline (Krohn et al., 1992; Quinn & Sutphen, 1994; Stanfield, 1966; Sullivan, 2006), and low levels of attachment (Donnelly, 1999; Krohn et al., 1992; Stanfield 1966; Sullivan, 2006) children and adolescents are much more likely to be influenced by peers and become involved in juvenile delinquency, drug use, and sexual aggression.

Protective Factors Associated with Families

Families are one of the primary socialization agents of children and can serve as a great source of protection against delinquency and other problem behaviors. Open communication between parents and children, along with positive parenting practices, allow parents to model and reinforce appropriate behavior (Krohn et al., 1992). Positive parenting refers to a parent's ability to communicate interest in and support for his or her child (Hanson, Henggeler, Haefele & Rodick, 1984; Krohn et al., 1992). It also involves parents expressing approval for their child's prosocial behaviors, whether it is verbally

through praise or nonverbally with gestures and facial expressions (Hanson et al., 1984; Krohn et al., 1992). In addition, parents should model behaviors which encourage academic, achievement, and social skills, all of which play a protective role against delinquency (Hanson et al., 1984; Krohn et al., 1992).

A family's ability to communicate clearly and effectively and to cope successfully with everyday problems also serves as a protective factor against delinquency (Krohn et al., 1992). Communication is seen as one of the most crucial aspects of interpersonal relationships and as a key to understanding family dynamics (Clark & Shields, 1997). Positive communication involves listening to the child's needs and wishes while providing healthy responses and showing warmth and compassion. Having open communication with either parent has been associated with much less serious forms of and much lower levels of delinquency (Clark & Shield, 1997).

Strong attachment to parents is also correlated with decreased risk for engagement in delinquent behavior (Kerr et al., 2003; Krohn et al., 1992) and with facilitating positive youth development (Kerr et al., 2003). Strong affective bonds between parents and children appear to deter children from becoming involved in risky behavior (Krohn et al., 1992) and nurturance from parents can have several positive impacts on children, including increasing self-esteem (Sefarbi, 1990).

Finally, family support has been defined as an individual's perception that their family is able to satisfy all of their information, feedback, and support needs (Procidano & Heller, 1983). More specifically, parental support has been defined as the level of warmth and acceptance parents express toward their children (Bean et al., 2006). Support has consistently been regarded as an essential feature in the normal development of both

children and adolescents (Bean et al., 2006). Strong familial support has been linked with a low probability of engaging in delinquent behavior (Marcotte et al., 2002) along with the development of prosocial behaviors such as high levels of self-esteem and academic achievement (Bean et al., 2006). It also appears that when children feel their parents or other caregivers are supportive and accepting, they are less likely to experience depression (Bean et al., 2006).

Positive family environments clearly have many positive effects on children and adolescents. They often foster resilience to early problem behaviors and delinquency (Sullivan, 2006), even when risk variables such as peer influence are included (Sullivan, 2006). In addition, they protect against depressive symptoms (Bean et al., 2006) and assist in the development of appropriate social behaviors (Bean et al., 2006; Kerr et al., 2003; Krohn et al., 1992).

Some differences between maternal and paternal influences on children's development have been identified. Feelings of being close to a maternal figure have been linked to lower levels of delinquency, alcohol consumption, and especially depressive symptoms (Cookston & Finlay, 2006). In addition, maternal involvement (Cookston & Finlay, 2006) and positive communication (Blaske, Borduin, Henggeler, & Mann, 1989) have been linked with a greatly decreased risk for engaging in delinquent behaviors.

Researchers have also suggested that maternal support can act as a buffer between paternal criminality and subsequent involvement in juvenile delinquency (McCord, 1999). Sons of criminal fathers who experience their mothers as affectionate and self-confident are much less likely to engage in the behaviors modeled by their fathers (McCord, 1999).

Paternal support has also been linked with lower levels of depression among adolescents (Bean et al., 2006). When youth experience their fathers as both accepting and supportive, they are much less likely to experience depressive symptoms regardless of nationality, ethnicity or other demographic differences (Bean et al., 2006). Close relationships with fathers have also proved to be protective factors against several externalizing behaviors including being linked with lower levels of delinquency regardless of gender, grade level, or socioeconomic status (Bean et al., 2006). In addition, a feeling of closeness to a paternal figure has been associated with lower levels of delinquency, alcohol use, and depressive symptoms and high levels of paternal involvement have been associated with a decreased risk for delinquency and depression (Cookston & Finlay, 2006).

Risk Factors Associated with Families

As shown, several factors associated with families are able to buffer against juvenile delinquency and other risky behaviors. However, some families have characteristics which seem to increase the likelihood for children and adolescents to display inappropriate behaviors and to engage in delinquency. Several theories suggest that family dysfunction contributes to problem behaviors (Loeber et al., 2000; Sullivan, 2006). Researchers have found that children who are born with a predisposition to addiction and delinquency are at an increased risk when growing up in a dysfunctional family (Cook, 2001). Coercive behaviors within families often sustain an ongoing pattern of antisocial behavior (Loeber, et al., 2000). Also, characteristics of family interactions can influence the types of antisocial behaviors displayed by adolescents (Loeber et al., 2000).

One of the factors associated with an increased risk for delinquency is a lack of communication between parents and children (Loeber et al., 2000). Communication has been linked with the type of delinquency in which the adolescents engage (Loeber et al., 2000). Juveniles who engage in more serious forms of delinquency tend to report higher levels of poor communication than do adolescents who engage in less serious forms of delinquency (Loeber et al., 2000). Poor communication has also been linked with the stability of both aggression and intelligence among children (Loeber et al., 2000).

Another risk factor associated with families is a low level of attachment (Borum & Verhaagen, 2006; Krohn et al., 1992; Sullivan, 2006). When children experience their parents as unaffectionate and rejecting, thereby making them feel alienated, they are at an increased risk for engaging in both delinquency and substance use (Krohn et al., 1992; Stanfield, 1966). In addition, when adolescents perceive that their families are neither cohesive nor supportive, they tend to display more depressive symptoms (Donnelly, 1999; Marcotte et al., 2002), delinquency, and both disorders concurrently (Marcotte et al., 2002).

As with protective factors associated with families, some differences have been found between maternal and paternal risk factors. Maternal acceptance or rejection often predicts children's subsequent conduct problems, including internalizing behaviors such as depression and anxiety and externalizing behaviors including aggression (Loeber et al., 2000). Paternal rejection leads adolescents to seek warmer interpersonal relationships among peers, increasing susceptibility to learning delinquent behaviors (Stanfield, 1966).

Families of juvenile delinquents have been shown to exhibit many of the risk factors associated with problem behaviors. Parents of delinquent youth have lower levels

of attachment to and are less involved in the lives of their children than do parents of well-adjusted children (Krohn et al., 1992) and their families have often been described as disengaged and rigid (Blaske et al., 1989). Researchers have also suggested that families of juvenile delinquents are characterized by low family adaptability, blurred boundaries (Quinn & Sutphen, 1994), and low rates of positive communication (Blaske et al., 1989).

Families of juvenile sex offenders are also characterized by many identified risk factors for delinquency and other problem behaviors. Frequently, these families are characterized by sexual (Barbaree & Langton, 2006; Duane, Carr, Cherry, McGrath, & O'Shea, 2003; Kelley, Lewis, & Sigal, 2004; Ryan, Miyoshi, Metzner, Krugman, & Fryer, 1996; van Wijk, Vermeiren, Loeber, Hart-Kerkhoffs, Doreleijers, & Bullens, 2006) and physical abuse (Barbaree & Langton, 2006; Duane et al., 2003; Kelley et al., 2004; Ryan et al., 1996), violence (Barbaree & Langton, 2006; Duane et al., 2003; Kelley et al., 2004), alcohol and other substance use (Duane et al., 2003; Kelley et al., 2004), neglect (Kelley et al., 2004; Ryan et al., 1996), and dysfunctional family relationships (Kelley et al., 2004). These families tend to be either rigid and enmeshed or chaotic with a great deal of role confusion (Bischof, Stith, & Whitney, 1995; Bischof, Stith, & Wilson, 1992; Ryan, 1997) and insecure attachments (Barbaree & Langton, 2006; Ryan, 1997). Parents of adolescent sex offenders tend to show more periods of indifference, rejection, and hostility toward their children (Kelley, Lewis, & Sigal, 2004) and report difficulties with family functioning and affective involvement (Duane et al., 2003; Ryan, 1997). In addition, families of adolescent sex offenders are described as unstable and are often characterized by parent-child conflict and a lack of positive involvement between parent

and child (Barbaree & Langton, 2006). Finally, adolescent sex offenders have often experienced the loss of a parental figure or of some other significant person leading to inconsistent parenting (Ryan et al., 1996; Ryan, 1997).

An interesting finding regarding adolescent sex offenders comes from a study which distinguished between families of juvenile sex offenders who admitted to the crime and of those who did not (Sefarbi, 1990). Families of youth who denied the offense often aided the adolescents in the denial, tended to be enmeshed, had diffuse boundaries, and expressed difficulty communicating about sexuality (Sefarbi, 1990). The families of the adolescents who admitted to the offense tended to be rigid and disengaged with periods of abandonment, first by their fathers and then by their mothers (Sefarbi, 1990). There also tended to be very low levels of communication, lack of clarity, and mixed messages about sexuality (Sefarbi, 1990).

As can be seen, the families of juvenile non sexually-offending delinquents and of juvenile sex offenders seem rather similar in many ways. Both juvenile non-sexually offending youth and juvenile sex offenders perceive their families as less cohesive (Bischof et al., 1995; Bischof et al., 1992), less expressive, and as having lower levels of encouraging independence than do other adolescents (Bischof et al., 1995). Both groups perceive their families as having closed internal boundaries, rigid generational boundaries, and a sense of separateness (Bischof et al., 1992). Finally, both groups are similar in terms of family adaptability which refers to the degree of flexibility among family roles (Symboluk, Cummings, & Leschied, 2001).

While the two groups have several similarities, researchers have also identified some differences among the groups. Sex offenders experience higher rates of sexual

and/or physical abuse (van Wijk, Loeber, Vermeiren, Pardini, Bullens, & Doreleijers, 2005) and tend to perceive higher levels of emotional bonding and cohesion among family members than do other delinquents, but still much lower levels than controls (Bischof et al., 1992).

As shown, the family environments of juvenile delinquents and juvenile sex offenders appear similar in many ways and yet different in several important areas for prosocial development. In analyzing results from a survey administered to adjudicated youth, this study seeks to examine both differences and similarities among the groups. This study will examine reported abuse rates between juvenile non-sexually offending youth and sexual abusers. Differences in communication, attachment, alienation, and inconsistency between parents and children among both groups will also be investigated. Finally, differences in reported number of victims for juvenile sexual offenders will be investigated for four parent types (both parents consistent, mother inconsistent and father consistent, mother consistent and father inconsistent, and both parents inconsistent).

Methods

After consents were obtained, confidential data were collected from youth with sexual and non-sexual offenses in 6 residential facilities in a Midwestern state. Multi-paged pencil and paper surveys were collected from 332 adjudicated juvenile sexual abusers and 170 non-sexually offending youth. The average age of the sexually offending sample ($N = 332$) was 16.70 years ($SD = 1.65$ years) with no difference between groups ($t(323) = 1.46, p = .145$). The average current grade level was 9th grade ($SD = 1.63$ grades), with no difference between groups on grade level ($t(319) = .986, p = .325$). The two groups differed in terms of racial composition ($\chi^2(4) = 5.7, p = .000$)

with 50% of the juvenile sexual offenders selecting Caucasian ($n = 156$), 29% selecting African American ($n = 90$), and 13% selecting Other ($n = 43$). In contrast, only 38% of non-sexually offending youth reported their race as Caucasian ($n = 60$), while 56% identified as African American ($n = 90$), and the remaining 4% as Other ($n = 7$).

Measures

The Childhood Trauma Questionnaire (CTQ) (Bernstein & Fink, 1998) was used to gather information regarding traumatic experiences in childhood. This 37-item measure asks participants to respond to various questions through a 5-point scale ranging from never true to very often true and provides a brief and relatively noninvasive screening of traumatic experiences. All of the subscales have acceptable inter-item reliability in this study. The subscales include: Sexual Abuse ($\alpha = .83$), Physical Abuse ($\alpha = .91$), Emotional Abuse ($\alpha = .90$) and Physical ($\alpha = .76$) and Emotional Neglect ($\alpha = .92$).

The Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA) (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987) was used to gather information regarding adolescents' perceptions of the positive and negative aspects of their relationships with their parents and their close friends. This 75-item scale asks participants to respond to various questions on attachment, trust, communication, and alienation through a 5-point scale ranging from almost never or never true to almost always or always true. All of the subscales have acceptable inter-item reliability. The subscales include: Mother Attachment ($\alpha = .87$), Father Attachment ($\alpha = .89$), and Peer Attachment ($\alpha = .92$). Only mother and father attachment were used for the purposes of this study.

Non-standardized questions about parental inconsistency and warmth, both measured on a 7-point scale ranging from not at all like my mother or father to very much like my mother or father, and number of victims were also used in the study.

Results

Based on the current literature, questions to be answered by data collected from the adjudicated youth are: How do reported rates of abuse and neglect compare among sexually offending and non-sexually offending youth? How does communication between family members compare among the two groups (sexual abusers versus non-sexually offending youth)? Are there differences between the two groups on reported attachment to caregivers? Do juvenile sexual offenders report higher rates of alienation from their parents than do non-sexually offending youth? Which of the two groups reports more inconsistency in parenting? Finally, are there differences in the number of victims reported by juvenile sexual offenders when both parents are consistent versus when one parent is consistent versus when both parents are inconsistent?

Abuse comparisons between the two groups of sexually offending and non-sexually offending youth reveal that sexual abusers report significantly more frequent abuse of all five CTQ scales (emotional neglect, physical neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse, and sexual abuse) than do non-sexually offending youth (see Table 1). In addition, while most youth within the entire sample report multiple forms of abuse, the sexually abusive youth have significantly more types of abuse than the non-sexually abusive youth ($t(497) = 12.74, p = .000$) with sexual abusers reporting an average of 1.92 ($SD = 1.44$) types of abuse and nonsexual delinquent youth reporting an average of .39 ($SD = .78$) types of abuse.

An independent samples *t* test was used to examine communication patterns between participants and each parent as reported by both non-sexually offending and sexually abusive youth. Results indicate that for both mother ($t(457) = 1.76, p = .078$) and father ($t(363) = 1.10, p = .271$) there is no significant difference between reported communication styles between groups with juvenile nonsexual abusers reporting an average of 33.96 ($SD = 8.94$) for mother and an average of 29.81 ($SD = 11.24$) for father and juvenile sexual abusers reporting an average of 32.32 ($SD = 9.46$) for mother and an average of 28.35 ($SD = 11.17$) for father.

Findings of an independent samples *t* test reveal the juvenile sexual abusers report significantly less attachment to mother ($t(416) = 2.42, p = .014$) and marginally significantly less attachment to father ($t(363) = 1.90, p = .057$) than do the non-sexually offending youth with juvenile non-sexually offending youth reporting an average of 97.43 ($SD = 24.66$) for mother and an average of 88.35 ($SD = 27.21$) for father and juvenile sexual offenders reporting an average of 91.32 ($SD = 25.06$) for mother and an average of 82.06 ($SD = 28.19$) for father. Juvenile sex offenders also report significantly more feelings of alienation from both their mother ($t(456) = 5.47, p = .000$) and their father ($t(363) = 2.75, p = .006$) with juvenile nonsexual abusers reporting an average of 11.09 ($SD = 4.74$) for mother and an average of 12.92 ($SD = 5.67$) for father and juvenile sexual abusers reporting an average of 14.11 ($SD = 5.83$) for mother and an average of 15.15 ($SD = 7.29$) for father. Juvenile sexual offenders describe experiencing both their mother ($t(466) = 3.10, p = .002$) and their father ($t(416) = 1.97, p = .050$) as significantly more cold and distant with juvenile non-sexually offending youth reporting an average of 1.59 ($SD = 1.49$) for mother and an average of 2.73 ($SD = 2.36$) for father and juvenile

sexually offending youth reporting an average of 2.12 ($SD = 1.87$) for mother and an average of 3.25 ($SD = 2.53$) for father whereas the non-sexually offending youth report significantly more warmth and responsiveness from their mothers ($t(465) = 3.64, p = .000$) with juvenile nonsexual abusers reporting an average of 5.95 ($SD = 1.65$) and sexually offending youth reporting an average of 5.26 ($SD = 2.05$). There is no difference between the two groups on reported warmth from fathers ($t(412) = .69, p = .489$) with juvenile non-sexual offenders reporting an average of 4.33 ($SD = 2.43$) and sexually offending youth reporting an average of 4.14 ($SD = 2.54$).

For both parents, offender type is associated with inconsistency with sexually offending youth reporting more inconsistency than non-sexually offending youth. For mother, 37.3% ($n = 103$) of the juvenile sexual abusers report inconsistency compared to 23.7% ($n = 33$) of the non-sexually offending delinquents ($\chi^2(1) = 7.73, p = .005$). For father, 38.2% ($n = 97$) of the juvenile sexual offenders report inconsistency compared to 27.6% ($n = 32$) of the non-sexually offending youth ($\chi^2(1) = 3.94, p = .047$).

While means appear different (see Table 2), results of a One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) show there is no significant difference between the four parent types and number of victims reported by juvenile sexual abusers ($F(3, 206) = 1.38, p = .248$). However, results of a Chi-Square Test reveal consistency by parent type is associated with type of youth (sexually offending versus non-sexually offending) ($\chi^2(3) = 9.60, p = .022$).

Discussion

The purpose of this investigation was to examine the link between parental support and attachment versus alienation, inconsistency in parenting, and communication

patterns and subsequent juvenile delinquent and juvenile sexually aggressive behaviors. Results indicate juvenile sexual offenders report significantly more abuse of all five types consistent with Symboluk et al.'s (2005) findings that juvenile sexual offenders report more sexual and physical abuse than do non-sexually offending youth.

Findings also show juvenile sexual offenders report less attachment to mother and marginally significantly less attachment to father than do non-sexually offending youth. These results are not consistent with Bischof et al.'s (1992) findings that juvenile sexual abusers tend to perceive higher levels of emotional bonding and cohesion among family members than do other delinquents. However, reported low levels of attachment among juvenile sexual offenders is consistent with findings of other researchers who have described these families as having insecure attachments and a lack of positive involvement with children (Barbaree & Langton, 2006; Ryan, 1997).

Results of analyses used to examine reported feelings of alienation indicate juvenile sexually offending youth report feeling more alienated from both of their parents than do non-sexually offending adolescents. This supports Kelley et al.'s (2004) findings that parents of juvenile sexual offenders tend to show more periods of indifference, rejection, and hostility toward their children.

Juvenile sexual abusers also report significantly more inconsistency in parenting by both mother and father than do juvenile non-sexually offending youth. Upon looking at the mean scores for each parent type (see Table 2) it appears there is a difference between the four types on the total number of victims reported. However, analyses reveal there is no significant difference in reported number of victims between juvenile sexual offenders who report having two consistent parents, those who report having one

consistent parent, and those who report having two inconsistent parents. These results may be attributable to a low sample size for each type which could have skewed results.

Strengths of this study include using two well used scales, the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire and the Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment, which both have good inter-item reliability. In addition, the sample size of the study was large (N = 502).

Despite the various strengths of this investigation, there are also several limitations. First of all, the data was not collected for the purposes of this study so questions needed to be geared toward the available data. Next, surveys were not anonymous as participants were asked to write both their first and last names. This may have impacted the responses in some way as participants were cautioned that new information on sexual offenses would be shared with authorities. A final limitation of the study is that the youth surveyed were all in residential facilities and thus were serious offenders who most likely experienced worse family situations than the typical offender. Results may have been different for youth with less severe offending histories and for those more closely tied to their families and communities.

Clinical implications of the findings of this study include the importance of strengthening attachment and support within families and providing support for families where these bonds already exist. Findings of this study also speak to the crucial role of families in the lives of children and to our need, as professionals, to work with parents in order to teach and strengthen parenting skills and practices to increase prosocial behaviors among children, while in turn decreasing the likelihood of engaging in delinquent ones. And, for those adolescents already engaged in the behaviors, it seems important to get parents involved with treatment in order to increase positive outcomes.

Finally, if encouraging family support and involvement is not possible due to estrangement, out of home placement or for some other reason, it's important to consider getting clients involve with other positive sources they can trust and confide in while, in turn, learning prosocial behaviors.

Future research should examine reported communication patterns more closely as results of this study are not consistent with the findings of previous results in the literature. It would also be useful to investigate the four parent types more closely using a larger sample size because, as previously mentioned, mean scores appear different, but significant differences were not found. Perhaps if the sample size were larger, different results would have been obtained. Finally, future research should investigate whether there are differences when other positive adults, such as extended family members and teachers, are present and whether this helps minimize the negative impact of poor attachment between children and parents and inconsistent parenting. It would also be useful to study the impact of closeness to siblings and peers.

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Table 1

Abuse Reports for Sexually and Non-sexually Offending Youth (CTQ Scales)

Type of abuse	Population	<i>n</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>t</i>
Emotional neglect	Non-sex offenders	156	16.33 (8.41)	2.93*
	Juvenile sex offenders	324	18.89 (9.19)	
Physical neglect	Non-sex offenders	156	12.85 (5.27)	4.83*
	Juvenile sex offenders	325	15.55 (5.97)	
Emotional abuse	Non-sex offenders	154	6.66 (3.25)	9.33*
	Juvenile sex offenders	324	11.60 (6.18)	
Physical abuse	Non-sex offenders	156	7.17 (4.02)	8.57*
	Juvenile sex offenders	325	11.86 (6.25)	
Sexual abuse	Non-sex offenders	153	7.98 (2.72)	7.35*
	Juvenile sex offenders	325	12.03 (6.56)	

* Significant Independent Samples *t* Test at $p < .01$

Table 2

Total Number of Victims Reported by Sexually Offending Youth by Parent Type

Parent type	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Both parents consistent	92	2.82	5.78
Mother inconsistent, father consistent	35	2.89	2.29
Mother consistent, father inconsistent	40	1.80	2.19
Both parents inconsistent	43	3.91	5.25