

Danish Youth 2002
A nationwide survey among 9th grade schoolchildren

**Presentation of the results concerning sexual experiences
and child sexual abuse**

Extracts from the report published August 2002

Karin Helweg-Larsen and Helmer B Larsen
National Institute of Public Health
Svanemollevej 25
2100 Copenhagen
Denmark
e-mail: khl@niph.dk

Summary

The following is extracted from the report that in Danish presents the results of a survey of the welfare of young people in Denmark. The survey was conducted during Spring 2002, and the report was published late August 2002.

The survey comprises 6,203 pupils in 9th grade corresponding to 11% of this age group in Denmark. It was carried out from February to May 2002.

Generally, young people are doing fine. A great majority, 87% of the boys and 82% of the girls perceived their health as very good or good, and only 1% of the boys and 2% of the girls as poor or very poor. 60% of the boys liked going to school really well or well, and 68% thought that they were doing really well or well in the various subjects. Among the girls the percentages were 70 and 73 respectively. The vast majority got along fine with classmates, 91% of the boys and 85% of the girls. 67% of the boys reported that they found talking to their father very easy or easy and 82% with their mother. Among the girls the percentages were 53 and 81 respectively.

Still, some have had a family background and experiences that may have a negative influence on their well-being. Earlier Danish studies among school children have described a number of risk factors to a favourable development of young people, but the impact of sexual and physical assault has not yet been uncovered.

The overall purpose of the survey reported here has therefore been to study how often sexual assaults on children occur; their nature; which children are being assaulted; who are the assailants; and how assaults may affect the development and the mental health of the abused young boy or girl. At the same time the survey has uncovered the young persons' experiences with physical violence and their views as to why sexual and physical assaults occur and how they may be avoided.

Before conducting this survey of young persons' experience with sexual and physical assault in childhood the ethical and practical problems involved had to be addressed. To do so we carried out a pilot study in 2001. The results of this study are briefly mentioned in this report.

The survey was made by means of an anonymous, self-administered, computer-based questionnaire method, the questions being asked simultaneously via headphones and on the screen. Enclosure 1 to this report is a description of the methodology and use of the method.

The background for the survey is a review made in 2000 by the cross-ministry working group on better measures against sexual abuse of children. This emphasized the need for actual data to clarify the full extent of sexual assault on children in Denmark. The review described the magnitude and nature of the problem based on a number of Danish data sources including reports concerning all cases of sexual assault on children under the age of 15 in 1998 reported to the police (Helweg-Larsen 2000). But based on international population surveys it had to be expected that the risk of being assaulted in childhood is far greater. Consequently a need was felt to collect information also about the "hidden" sexual assaults to form the basis for a knowledge-based intervention against sexual abuse of children in Denmark.

The pilot study was carried out in March 2001. It showed that it is indeed possible to carry out an anonymous survey among pupils in 9th grade and thus obtain a high degree of representation. Recently, we have described the ethical issues concerning the conducting of youth surveys on sensitive topics without active parental consent and the results of the pilot study (Helweg-Larsen & Larsen, 2003).

In the present survey 324 schools were selected for the survey, 183 of them participated. The most common excuse for not participating was lack of time, and regionally the non-participating schools did not differ from the participating schools. The survey was conducted during the second semester of the school year in order that the maximum number of the students was aged 15 years and older. The second semester is very busy for the students; this explains the high number of schools that refused to participate in the study. Only two schools did not want to participate due to the topics of the survey. We received no complaints from any parents, and the issue of none active parental consent did not raise any public debate or criticisms.

The number of 9th grade pupils in the participating schools was 7,241, 6,203 (85.7%) of whom were present in the classroom at the time of the survey. All the pupils present participated in the survey and 94% answered the questions about sexual experiences – a total of 5,829 respondents. The main part, 97%, of the pupils were between 15 and 16 years old, very few were younger than 15 and 1% were older than 16.

Inspired by a number of previous studies on child sexual abuse (CSA), primarily studies in New Zealand (Martin et al., 1993; Fergusson et al., 1996; Watson et al., 2000), we designed the questionnaire in a way that it enables us to describe the extent of sexual experiences in childhood of young people – up to 15 years of age – and to define the sexual experiences that

are regarded by law and perceived by the young persons as being sexual assault. The prevalence of sexual assault in childhood, i.e. how high a proportion of boys and girls have experienced sexual assault before the age of 15, reported here involves three definitions:

- The criminal definition of sexual assault on children and young people
- Criminal sexual assaults where the older person is at least 5 years older than the child/young girl or boy
- Criminal sexual assaults perceived by the girl or boy as an actual assault.

Danish criminal law specifies the sexual age of responsibility as younger than 15 years. That means that it is an offence – regardless of consent – to have a sexual relationship with a person under the age of 15. It is also considered an offence if a teacher, pedagogue, sports coach, step parent etc. have a sexual relationship with a person under 18 who is in their care.

This comprises criminal assault defined by the seriousness of the assault: sexual assault without physical contact such as flashing, sexual assault with physical contact, e.g. touching and attempt at and consummated intercourse.

Sexual relationships where the older person was less than 15 years old (age of criminal responsibility) are not comprised by the definition of sexual assault in the present survey.

Other population surveys distinguish between sexual assault with an age difference of less or more than five years between the child/young person and the older person. Therefore this criterion is incorporated in the description of the prevalence of sexual assault in childhood in this survey.

The prevalence of sexual assault of children in Denmark

A total of 657, 11.3% of the participants in the survey had been subjected to sexual experiences constituting criminal offences according to Danish law – 15.9% among girls and 6.7% among boys. This includes incidents with relatively modest age difference between the child and the older person.

In all 287, 4.9%, had been exposed to a criminal sexual assault where the older person was at least 5 years older, 7.9% girls and 2.0% boys.

A total of 165 participants perceived that the sexual assault had in fact been an assault, which corresponds to 2.8% of all respondents. This figure also includes cases where the respondent answered "maybe" to the question as to whether or not it had been perceived as a sexual assault. The prevalence was 4.5% among girls and 1.1% among boys. Among all 15-year-olds in Denmark this would correspond to a total number of 1,280 girls and 330 boys who consider themselves as having been sexually assaulted in childhood. If the prevalence comprised only cases where the girls or boys positively perceive to have been subjected to a sexual assault it is 2.7% among girls and 0.7% among boys.

Of the total 657 assaults 60 did not involve physical contact, 205 did involve physical contact, and 392 involved attempt at or consummated intercourse.

When looking at all criminal sexual assaults 85% of all first incidents happened when the child was 12-14 years old.

Who made the assaults?

When looking at all criminal sexual assaults the older person (the assailant) was typically a friend or mate, in 44% of 462 incidents among girls and 41% of 195 incidents among boys. In 11% of the cases it was a member of the family, a biological father/mother, grandfather, uncle/aunt, brother/sister or cousin.

In 9% of the sexual assaults among girls and 4% among boys the assailant was a person outside the family in whose care the assaulted child had been placed, e.g. a school teacher, pedagogue, sports coach or scout leader.

Relatively few reported incidents with unknown persons or strangers, in 13% of all sexual assaults among girls and in 14% among boys. These incidents were mainly assaults involving no physical contact, i.e. flashers etc. Contrary to what was the fact in this survey, such incidents constitute a large proportion of cases reported to the police, e.g. 40% of all sexual assaults of children reported to the police in 1998.

In a survey like the present there is a risk of underestimating sexual assaults within the family, as the young girl or boy may be afraid of the consequences, if they were to report the incident to the police, as long as she/he is still depending on the family. The method used here ensuring total anonymity may, however, have reduced this source of error, and judged from a number of control questions the young people seem to have answered the questions about

their sexual experiences with older persons honestly and to have described what seems important to themselves.

Compared to the prevalence of sexual assault within the family reported in a previous Danish population survey (Leth et al. 1988), the present results indicate that sexual assaults in the family occur less frequently than it did approx. 20 years ago. This may be due to a higher degree of public awareness and easier contact to other adults for children who risk being assaulted within the family.

Risk factors of sexual assault and unfavourable development conditions

One risk factor of early sexual experiences and sexual assaults may be growing up in unstable family relations. Thus there was a correlation between experiencing a sexual assault and an insecure family background such as:

- the parents do not live together
- the boy or girl has previously lived together with other adults than the parents
- the boy or girl has difficulty talking to his/her mother about problems
- the boy or girl has witnessed violence against his/her mother in the home
- the boy or girl has witnessed violence against his/her father in the home

But the great majority of those who have a background like this are not subjected to assault.

It may be that we are dealing with complex cause and effect relationships that increase the risk of experiencing sexual assaults in childhood. This survey cannot pinpoint individual factors that can predict children and young people to be in any particular danger of being exposed to sexual assault, but it can indicate what could contribute to the prevention of such assaults.

Development problems were frequently found among the young people who reported sexual assaults. This could be anxiety, depression, self-rated poor health and illness within the past 14 days. More of them drank alcohol on a daily or almost daily basis and more of them smoked cigarettes. Generally, unhealthy habits are more widespread in socially deprived population groups along with greater risk of early sexual experience or sexual assault such as assaults are defined in the present report.

There was a correlation between sexual assault and other unfortunate circumstances within the past year such as serious disease or death in the family.

Young peoples' development may also be impeded by violent experiences. Among all the respondents 9% of the girls and 12% of the boys had experienced violence directed against themselves within the past year. Physical violence against their mother had been witnessed by 9% of the girls and 6% of the boys, and 3% of the girls and 2% of the boys had witnessed violence against their father.

There was a correlation between experience of violence and sexual assault. Significantly more victims of sexual assault had also experienced violence against themselves or against parents than non-victims. Approx. half of all the participants in the survey had been exposed to bullying in school.

The young peoples' own views

It is important to listen to the young peoples' own views as to why grown-ups treat children badly, and what can be done to avoid grown-up assaulting children. This survey provided the possibility for the participants to give their opinion in their own words as to why grown-ups treat children badly and suggest means to avoid assaults on children. This information was achieved by two open questions, and the computer based questionnaire made it possible to give broad responses.

One common answer to these questions is that the responsibility lies with the grown-ups, who should respect the rights of children. Many of the young people suggest alcohol and drug abuse as the cause for physical and sexual assaults on children. They think that adults who lose their self-control often have other problems and very often may have experienced violence and abuse in their own childhood. They find that very often grown-ups do not respect children.

Almost 1/10 of the answers indicated that grown-ups and the children had a joint responsibility for assaults, and a little less said that the children had the main responsibility for grown-ups assaulting children, were physically violent or treated children badly in other respects.

The participants gave a number of suggestions as to how to avoid assaults on children by adults. The most common suggestions are: to discuss with other grown-ups one's problems with one's parents, when starting school to be made aware of children's rights and how to avoid sexual assault and violence, to have good relations to grown-ups, to learn self-defence, and to get good mates. Other suggestions are to remove violent parents from their children or to provide good foster parents for the children. They emphasize that other grown-ups should be alert to the children's signals and dare intervene.

Among 5,829 young boys and girls who answered all questions about sexual experiences with older persons a total of 657 – 462 girls and 195 boys – reported sexual experiences which are criminal offences according to Danish law, and which are therefore defined as sexual assaults.

- 15.9% of girls and 6.7% of boys have experienced sexual assault up to the age of 15
- 7.9% of girls and 2.0% of boys have experienced a sexual assault up to the age of 15, where the age difference between the older person and the child/young was at least 5 years.
- 2.7% of girls and 0.7% of boys have experienced an assault, which they positively regard as an assault – and if “maybe an assault” is included the prevalence is 4.5% among girls and 1.1% among boys.
- There is significant correlation between several difficult family circumstances, development problems and sexual assaults depending on the young person’s own perception of the assault.
- The lack of recognition by the young people of the significance of sexual assaults may be an obstacle to an effective and professional assistance.

The young people suggest that assaults can be avoided, if:

- Children are made better aware of their rights
- There is easy access to counselling and assistance
- Grown-ups would respond to the children’s signals
- Parents would take better care of their children.

Many people find it important to strengthen children's self-respect and give them more knowledge as to where they can turn to get help before an assault happens. It is also important - say the respondents - that the parents protect the children better for instance by keeping check on who they associate with and where they are in the evenings.

Most of those who had experienced a sexual assault had told it to one or more persons, most often a friend or mate. According to the respondents' own experiences only relatively few of the 657 criminal offences had been reported to the police or social authorities, a total of 30 corresponding to 5%. This emphasizes the fact that a survey among young people introduces other issues than those revealed by means of register data and police reports.

Conclusion

A considerable proportion of young people had sexual experiences which are punishable according to Danish criminal law. The prevalence is 15.9% among girls and 6.7% among boys. It also includes cases of intercourse between a 12-14-year-old and a 15-17-year-old not perceived as a sexual assault, and not as a negative experience. If the prevalence were to comprise only cases where the age difference between the child/young and the older person is at least 5 years, it would be 7.9% among girls and 2.0% among boys.

The survey presents a reliable picture of the sexual assaults remembered by the girl or boy, i.e. from approx. the age of 6. Parents and other grown-ups would be in a better position to report uncovered assaults of their children when they were younger than that. Such assaults will also be included in police reports, being most often reported by the parents or other adults caring for the children. The issue may therefore be more completely clarified by a combination of this survey and the study of police reports published earlier (Helweg-Larsen 2000).

2. The present study's definitions of CSA

The prevalence of sexual experiences, and of sexual abuse

The respondents have been classified according to the reported nature of their sexual experiences – defined as sexual assaults or not. We classified the reported sexual experiences in the different categories. These are shown in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1. Classification of answers concerning sexual experiences with older persons

A. No sexual experiences or experiences, which are not defined as punishable sexual assaults

Category 1	No sexual experiences with older persons.
Category 2	Inconsistent or incomplete answers, e.g. no information about age, relationship between child and older person.
Category 3	Not a punishable experience. The child > 15 years of age at the time of the sexual experience with an older person, which was not a caretaker: couch, parent, schoolteacher etc.
Category 4	The older person < 15 years of age, that is below age limit for criminal responsibility
Category 5	The child was 12-14 years, the older person 15-17 years, the experiences did not include attempted or accomplished intercourse, it was not perceived as a sexual assault by the respondent, and he/she had had no negative reactions, threats, violence or force had not been used.

B. Sexual assault punishable in accordance with Danish Criminal Law

Category 6	The respondent was 12-14 years, the older person was a friend aged 15-17 years. The experience comprised intercourse, but was not perceived by the respondent as a sexual assault, and was perceived as a positive experience.
Category 7	The respondent was < 15 years, the older person was 15-17 years. The respondent had perceived the experience negatively and/or as a sexual assault, had been threatened, forced or paid.
Category 8	The respondent was 12-14 years, and the older person 18 years or more
Category 9	The respondent was > 12 years, and the older person was 18 years or more.
Category 10	The respondent was 15 years, the older person was a caretaker: couch, scout leader, schoolteacher, pedagogue, and parent.

As described the questions about sexual experiences were answered by 5,829 pupils and this is 94% of the 6,203 pupils in the participating 9th grades. A total of 3,150 – 54% - had not had any sexual experiences with older persons corresponding to 64% of the boys and 44% of the girls.

Ten answers indicated that the questions had been misunderstood or they were not consistent, and in 371 cases the answers were insufficient to assess whether or not the sexual experience involved a sexual assault or not. In one third of these cases the age of the older person was missing, and in 85% of the cases there was no mention of who the older person was. Only few

had experienced that the incident in question was indeed or was maybe a sexual assault – at little less than 2%. Due to insufficient information and inconsistent answers these 381 responses – a total of 6.5% - were not classified as being assaults or not assaults. Although the question concerning sexual experiences made it clear that only experiences up to the age of 15 should be included 1,066 had reported sexual experiences at the age of 15, where the older person was not a father, schoolteacher, sports coach or other person taking care of the child – and no sexual experiences before the age of 15. This corresponds to 18% of all respondents, 24% among girls and 13% among boys.

The classification of the 5,829 responses is shown in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2
Classification of respondents according to sexual experiences*

Category	Boys N=2,910	Girls N=2,918	Total N=5,829
1. No sexual experiences with older persons	1,866 64.1%	1,284 43.9%	3,150 54.0
2. Left out due to inconsistent or incomplete answers	161 5.5%	220 7.4%	381 6.5%
3. Sexual experiences after age 15 – not punishable	371 12.8%	695 23.9%	1066 18.3%
4. The older person under age of criminal responsibility	221 7.6%	136 4.7%	357 6.1%
5. 12-14-year-old, the older person 15-17 year-old, not intercourse and not perceived as an assault, no negative experiences, no coercion or payment	96 3.3%	122 4.2%	218 3.7%
<i>Sexual experiences where the child was <15 years, not punishable, category 4 and 5</i>	<i>317</i> <i>10.9%</i>	<i>258</i> <i>8.9%</i>	<i>575</i> <i>9.9%</i>
6. 12-14-year-old, the older a 15-17-year-old friend, + intercourse, but not perceived as assault	33 1.1%	40 1.4%	73 1.3%
7. <15 years, the older person 15-17 + negative experiences	102 3.5%	201 6.9%	303 5.2%
8. 12-14-year-old, the older person >17 years	32 1.1%	174 6.0%	206 3.5%
9. < 12 years, the older person >17 years	14 0.5%	37 1.3%	51 0.9%
10. 15 year-olds, the older person in charge of the young-one	14 0.5%	10 0.3%	24 0.4%
Total punishable sexual abuse/assaults	195 6.7%	462 15.9%	657 11.3%

- This classification includes details of the most excessive sexual activity with an older person

Most of the not punishable sexual experiences up to the age of 15 concerned sexual experiences with a person who, though older than the respondent, was younger than 15 i.e. under the age of criminal responsibility.

There were 357 cases of this kind corresponding to a prevalence of 6.1%. Relatively more boys reported this type of sexual experience – 8% as opposed to 5% among girls.

The category not punishable sexual activity between a 12-14-year-old and a 15-17-year-old comprised 218 cases, i.e. a prevalence of 3.7%. 13 cases involved 12-14-year-old boys who had looked at pornographic magazines with a 15-17-year-old. 52 cases involved a 12–14-year-old boy or girl who had been kissed, touched or had themselves touched a 15-17-year-old friend/mate, but without actual intercourse and without perceiving this as a sexual assault or as a negative experience. This group comprised the same number of girls as boys.

Furthermore, 153 reported sexual experiences without intercourse with a 15-17-year-old who was not a close friend without reporting any negative experiences or perceiving the incident as a sexual assault. This corresponds to 2.6% of the respondents, 3.3% girls and 1.9% boys.

Sexual experiences defined as abuse/assaults

As described the sexual experiences with older persons have been classified as sexual assault based on the type of experience, the age of the child, the age of the older person, the child's own experience and the use of coercion, violence or payment/reward. The prevalence of sexual assault may be based on:

1. All cases punishable according to criminal law
2. Punishable cases where there is an age difference of at least 5 years between the child and the older person
3. Punishable cases perceived by the child/young as an assault

Prevalence of punishable sexual abuse/assault

Table 1.3 shows the prevalence of punishable sexual assaults where three definitions are applied: all punishable sexual assaults; assaults with at least 5 years' age difference between the child and the older person; assaults perceived by the child/young as assaults.

The prevalence of punishable sexual assaults in childhood in Denmark is 11.3% as 657 out of 5,829 respondents, 195 boys and 462 girls reported experiences falling under the categories of sexual assaults corresponding to 6.7% of the boys and 15.9% of the girls, see Table 1.1 and 1.2.

Table 1.3

Prevalence of sexual assault according to the definitions applied

	Boys N=2,910	Girls N=2,918	Total N=5,829
Punishable sexual relations	195 6.7%	462 15.9%	657 11.3%
Punishable sexual relations with age difference of at least 5 years between the child and the older person, and relations where a child of >15 years is in the care of the older person	57 2.0%	230 7.9%	287 4.9%
Punishable sexual relations, which the child found was a sexual assault	33 1.1%	132 4.5%	165 2.8%

A total of 287 reported experiences with a person at least 5 years older, 2.0% of the boys and 7.9% of the girls.

Among the boys 1.1% and among girls 4.5% perceived the incident as being a sexual assault. The total prevalence of sexual assaults also comprises 376 incidents where the older person was 15-17 years old, 6.5%. Among girls the proportion was 8.3% and among boys 4.6% corresponding to 52% and 69% respectively of the total prevalence of punishable sexual assaults on girls and boys.

73 incidents – well over 1/10 of the sexual assaults – involved intercourse between a 12-14-year-old and a friend aged 15-17 where the respondent did not perceive it to be an assault. The prevalence was 1.4% among girls and 1.1% among boys.

303 incidents involved a sexual assault where the older person was 15-17 years old and where the respondent perceived the incident as an assault and/or a negative experience. The prevalence was 6.9% among girls and 3.5% among boys.

257 incidents involved a person 18 years old or older, and in 24 of them the child/young was over 15 years old and in the care of the older person. This corresponds to a prevalence of 0.5% among boys and 0.3% among girls.

Prevalence of sexual assault where the age difference between the child and the older person is at least 5 years

A total of 287 incidents involved a person at least 5 years older than the child - in 57 the assaults were on boys and in 230 on girls. First and foremost these assaults involved children less than 15 years of age and persons 18 years old or older. 7.3% of the girls who had answered the questions concerning sexual experiences had experienced this and 1.6% of the boys.

This category also includes the 24 incidents of sexual experience after the age of 15 with a schoolteacher, coach or a close family member, i.e. sexual relations that are punishable up to the age of 18. The prevalence was highest among boys.

Prevalence of sexual assaults perceived as assaults by the child

Concerning children's sexual experiences with older persons questions were asked to clarify the child's perception as to whether or not it was a sexual assault then and now. The answers could be 'yes', 'no', 'maybe' and 'don't know'.

A total of 98 – 15% of the 657 respondents – answered yes, they perceive it as an assault today. 67 answered maybe. Totally 25% of the punishable sexual abuse/assaults were perceived by the respondents as assaults. Among boys it was 17.0% and among girls 29%. If only sexual assaults with at least 5 years' age difference perceived as assaults were included, the prevalence is 1.1% - 1.6% among girls and 0.6% among boys.

2. Types of sexual assaults

As described we arranged the reported sexual experiences in five categories to define child sexual abuse. The categories are related to the provisions of the criminal code whether or not the child/young has perceived the incident to be a sexual assault. These sexual activities which - according to the provisions of the criminal code constitute a sexual assault on a minor - were only perceived by the respondent as a sexual assault in one fourth of the cases.

Although one cannot determine which type of sexual assault is more damaging than another it is generally assumed that assaults where the assailant is not in physical contact with the victim, e.g. flashing or obscene phone calls, will normally be less damaging than assaults involving physical contact, e.g. touching and kissing, which again is considered less damaging than attempts at or consummated intercourse.

Accordingly the 657 responses concerning sexual assaults have been classified in three types depending on the extent of physical contact. This classification is shown in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1

Classification of type of sexual assault

1. *No assault (categories 1-5, see Table 8.1)*
2. *Assaults not involving physical contact between the young and the older person*
 - Invited to sexual activity
 - Photographed partly or totally nude
 - Watched a person masturbating
 - Looked at pornographic magazines or movies
3. *Assault involving physical contact between the young and the older person*
 - Kissed or caressed against his/her will
 - Touched in a sexual way on the breast or body – but through the clothes
 - Touched on the genitals
 - Have touched the older person's genitals – but through the clothes
 - Touched with attempts at undressing
 - The older person undressed in preparation for sexual contact
 - Touched and caressed naked
 - Have touched or caressed another person who was naked
4. *Assaults involving attempts at or consummated intercourse*
 - Attempts at intercourse
 - Consummated intercourse
 - Anal sex

Respondents who have not had any experiences with older persons or who have had experiences that are not defined as sexual assault, constitute the reference group 'no assault'. The answers to the different questions regarding sexual experiences concern the respondent's most extensive sexual experience. However, the respondent may often have experienced several types of sexual assault apart from the assault actually described as to extent and nature.

The assaults are divided into three groups based on the extent of physical contact (Table 2.1):

1. Assault with no physical contact between the child and the older person
2. Assault with physical contact but no attempt at intercourse or consummated intercourse
3. Attempt at or consummated intercourse

In 9% of the 657 sexual assaults there had been no physical contact, in 31% physical contact but no attempt at or consummated intercourse, and 60% involved intercourse or attempted intercourse.

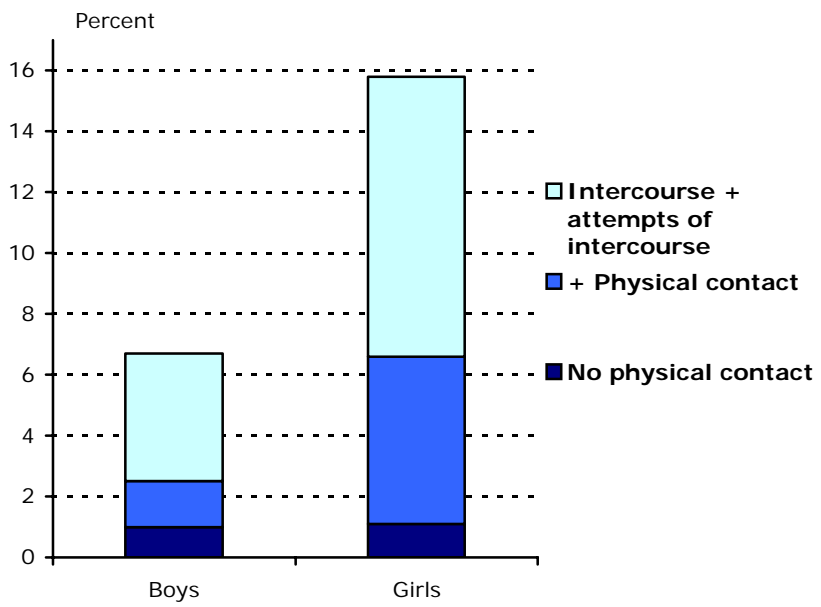
There were sex differences in the distribution of the three types of sexual assaults. The proportion of boys who reported intercourse was higher than among girls, and girls more frequently than boys reported assaults involving physical contact without intercourse (Table 2.2).

Table 2.2
Sexual assaults divided into type and sex. N=657

Type	Boys	Girls	Total
Assaults with no physical contact	28 14.4%	32 6.9%	60 9.1%
Assaults with physical contact, except intercourse	44 22.6%	161 34.8%	205 31.2%
Attempts/consumated intercourse	123 63.1%	269 58.2%	392 59.7%
All	195 100%	462 100%	657 100%

Figure 2.1 shows the prevalence of the individual types of assault among boys and girls. The prevalence of sexual assault with no physical contact is 1.0% - almost the same for both boys and girls. Sexual assault with no physical contact and no attempted or consummated intercourse accounted for 3.5% of all cases, 5.5% among girls and 1.5% among boys. The prevalence of attempted or consummated intercourse is 6.7%, highest among girls, 9.2%, and 4.2% among boys.

Figure 2.1
Prevalence of sexual intercourse among boys and girls according to type of assault. N=5,817



Most of the respondents who had been subjected to a sexual assault reported a number of other sexual experiences with older persons apart from the incident that counted in the actual number of sexual assaults.

Table 2.3 shows the extent to which the 657 respondents have reported the individual types of sexual activities with older persons.

Table 2.3
The extent of all types of sexual experiences with older persons. Reported by the 657 respondents, who had experienced a punishable sexual assault. According to type of experience and sex.

	Girls N=462 (%)	Boys (N=195) (%)	Total (N= 657) (%)
Invitations	61.7	35.3	54.0
Photographed naked	12.3	7.4	8.8
Had to watch someone masturbate	16.6	14.8	15.3
Had to watch pornographic movie or magazine	41.0	21.8	27.4
Kissed against his/her will	25.3	42.3	37.4
Touch in a sexual way through the cloths	62.1	77.7	73.2
Touched on the genitals through the cloths	62.1	65.7	64.6
Have touched older person through the cloths	49.5	44.0	45.6
Older person removed your cloths to touch you	37.9	48.0	45.1
Older person undressed to have sexual activity with you	45.8	39.9	41.6
Older person touched you while you were naked	42.6	46.3	45.2
You had to touch an older naked person	46.3	42.0	43.3
Older person attempted intercourse	54.0	52.3	52.8
Older person had consummated intercourse with you	51.0	43.3	45.6
Older person attempted/had anal sex with you	7.5	8.3	8.1

Among the 392 young people who had experienced attempted or consummated intercourse 36.9% had been exposed to attempted intercourse, consummated vaginal intercourse and attempted or consummated anal intercourse. A total of 225, 57.4%, reported both attempted and consummated vaginal intercourse and the rest, 33.4%, had only experienced attempted vaginal intercourse.

The 392 respondents who had experienced attempted or consummated intercourse had also had other sexual experiences with older persons. Almost 2/3 reported two or more sexual experiences without physical contact and a little more than half reported more than five different experiences with physical contact apart from attempted or consummated intercourse. Relatively few reported having been photographed naked or at have met a flasher (seen a person masturbate), among the 462 girls it was 16% and 12% respectively. Among the 195

boys 7% had been photographed naked. 15% of the boys had watched another person masturbate, this included flashers.

To be touched or having touched the older person through the clothes was the most frequent experience, which three out of four girls and two out of three boys had experienced.

A little less than half reported to have their genitals touched with or without their clothes on and a little more than half had experienced attempted intercourse.

Attempted or consummated anal intercourse was reported by 8% of the 462 girls and 7% of the 195 boys who had reported sexual assaults.

Well over 1/3 had only experienced the assault once, whereas for 6% it had been almost every day. 1/10 reported that the assault took place relatively many times, i.e. more than 10 times (Table 2.4).

Table 2.4
Number of times a sexual assault had been experienced by boys and girls. N=657

Number of times	Boys	Girls	All
Once	56 29.2%	172 37.3%	228 34.9%
A couple of times	47 24.5%	115 24.9%	162 24.8%
3-5 times	29 15.1%	54 11.7%	83 12.7%
Approx. 10 times, i.e. > 5 times	20 10.4%	49 10.6%	69 10.6%
Almost every day	20 10.4%	22 4.8%	42 6.4%
Do not remember	20 10.4%	49 10.6%	69 10.6%
Not answered	3 1.0%	1 0.2%	4 0.6%
Total	195	462	657

It is intercourse in particular that is reported to have taken place repeatedly, i.e. more than five times or almost daily. This was so for 28% of the reported cases of intercourse whereas it was nearly 4% in cases of assaults without physical contact and 12% of assaults involving physical contact

More girls than boys reported that the assault had happened once or a couple of times, and fewer girls reported daily assaults.

A total of 104 out of 657, 16%, stated that they still had a sexual relationship with the older person in question, i.e. the person who had been described as the assailant. A sexual relationship continued in half of the cases where the respondent had not perceived/do still not perceive the experience as a sexual assault. In most cases this involved a sexual relationship with a friend.

A continued sexual relationship was most often seen among the 392 respondents who reported intercourse, and more often among girls than among boys.

References

(list of all references included in the report, published August 2002)

- Anderson, J., Martin, J., Mullen, P., Romans, S. & Herbison, P. (1993) Prevalence of childhood sexual abuse experiences in a community sample of women. *J.Am.Acad.Child Adolesc.Psychiatry*, **32**, 911-919.
- Bagley, C., Bolitho, F. & Bertrand, L. (1995) Mental health profiles, suicidal behavior, and community sexual assault in 2112 Canadian adolescents. *Crisis*, **16**, 126-131.
- Baker, A. W. & Duncan, S. P. (1985) Child sexual abuse: a study of prevalence in Great Britain. *Child Abuse Negl.*, **9**, 457-467.
- Bergner, R. M., Delgado, L. K. & Graybill, D. (1994) Finkelhor's Risk Factor Checklist: a cross-validation study. *Child Abuse Negl.*, **18**, 331-340.
- Edgardh, K. & Ormstad, K. (2000) Prevalence and characteristics of sexual abuse in a national sample of Swedish seventeen-year-old boys and girls. *Acta Paediatr.*, **89**, 310-319.
- Erdman, H. P., Klein, M. H., Greist, J. H., Skare, S. S., Husted, J. J., Robins, L. N., Helzer, J. E., Goldring, E., Hamburger, M. & Miller, J. P. (1992) A comparison of two computer-administered versions of the NIMH Diagnostic Interview Schedule. *J.Psychiatr.Res.*, **26**, 85-95.
- Fergusson, D. M., Lynskey, M. T. & Horwood, L. J. (1996a) Childhood sexual abuse and psychiatric disorder in young adulthood: I. Prevalence of sexual abuse and factors associated with sexual abuse. *J.Am.Acad.Child Adolesc.Psychiatry*, **35**, 1355-1364.
- Fergusson D.M., Horwood L.J., Lynskey M.T. (1996b) Childhood sexual abuse and psychiatric disorder in young adulthood: II. Psychiatric outcomes of childhood sexual abuse. *J.Am.Acad.Child Adolesc.Psychiatry*, **35**, 1365-1374
- Finkelhor, D. (1979) What's wrong with sex between adults and children? Ethics and the problem of sexual abuse. *Am.J.Orthopsychiatry*, **49**, 692-697.
- Finkelhor, D. (1994) The international epidemiology of child sexual abuse. *Child Abuse Negl.*, **18**, 409-417.
- Finkelhor, D., Hotaling, G., Lewis, I. A. & Smith, C. (1990) Sexual abuse in a national survey of adult men and women: prevalence, characteristics, and risk factors. *Child Abuse Negl.*, **14**, 19-28.
- Finkelhor, D. & Hotaling, G. T. (1984) Sexual abuse in the National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect: an appraisal. *Child Abuse Negl.*, **8**, 23-32.
- Goodyer I.M. (1990a) Recent life events and psychiatric disorder in school age children. *J.Child.Psychol.Psychiatry* **31**:839-848
- Goodyer I.M. (1990a) Family relationships, life events and childhood psychopathology. *J.Child.Psychol.Psychiatry* **31**:161-192
- Gruber, K. J. & Jones, R. J. (1983) Identifying determinants of risk of sexual victimization of youth: a multivariate approach. *Child Abuse Negl.*, **7**, 17-24.
- Halperin, D. S., Bouvier, P., Jaffe, P. D., Mounoud, R. L., Pawlak, C. H., Laederach, J., Wicky, H. R. & Astie, F. (1996) Prevalence of child sexual abuse among adolescents in Geneva: results of a cross sectional survey. *BMJ*, **312**, 1326-1329.
- Helweg-Larsen K. (2002) Vold og seksuelle overgreb. Kjølner M and Rasmussen NK. 466-479. København, Statens Institut for Folkesundhed. Sundhed og sygelighed i Danmark 2000.
- Helweg-Larsen K (2000) Seksuelle overgreb mod børn i Danmark. Problemets omfang og karakter vurderet ud fra litteraturstudier og en række danske datakilder. Statens Institut for Folkesundhed. København.

- Kendall-Tackett K.A., Williams L.M., Finkelhor D. (1993). Impact of sexual abuse on children: a review and synthesis of recent empirical studies. *Psychol.Bull.* **113**, 1:164-180
- Lessler, J. T. & O'Reilly, J. M. (1997) Mode of interview and reporting of sensitive issues: design and implementation of audio computer-assisted self-interviewing. *NIDA Res.Monogr*, **167**, 366-382.
- Leth I, Stenvig B, Pedersen A. (1988). Seksuelle overgreb mod børn og unge. *Nordisk Psykologi* 40: 383-393
- Leventhal, J. M. (2000) Sexual abuse of children: continuing challenges for the new millennium [comment]. *Acta Paediatr.*, **89**, 268-271.
- Levine, S., Ancill, R. J. & Roberts, A. P. (1989) Assessment of suicide risk by computer-delivered self-rating questionnaire: preliminary findings. *Acta Psychiatr.Scand.*, **80**, 216-220.
- Martin, J., Anderson, J., Romans, S., Mullen, P. & O'Shea, M. (1993) Asking about child sexual abuse: methodological implications of a two stage survey. *Child Abuse Negl.*, **17**, 383-392.
- Moesgaard, K. & Sardemann, H. (1996) Forekomst af seksuelt misbrug hos børn henvist til en børneafdeling over en femårsperiode. *Ugeskr Læger*.**158**, 47-51
- Mullen, P. E., Martin, J. L., Anderson, J. C., Romans, S. E. & Herbison, G. P. (1993) Childhood sexual abuse and mental health in adult life. *Br.J.Psychiatry*, **163:721-32.**, 721-732.
- Mullen, P. E., Romans-Clarkson, S. E., Walton, V. A. & Herbison, G. P. (1988) Impact of sexual and physical abuse on women's mental health. *Lancet*, **1**, 841-845.
- Nielsen GA. Gymnasie- og HF-elevs Sundhedsvaner og livsstil 1996-97. SIF. 1998. Copenhagen.
- Normann, E. K., Tambs, K. & Magnus, P. (1992) [Sexual abuse of children--a public health problem?]. *Nord.Med.*, **107**, 326-330.
- Paperny, D. M., Aono, J. Y., Lehman, R. M., Hammar, S. L. & Risser, J. (1990) Computer-assisted detection and intervention in adolescent high-risk health behaviors. *J.Pediatr.*, **116**, 456-462.
- Peluso, E. & Putnam, N. (1996) Case study: sexual abuse of boys by females. *J.Am.Acad.Child Adolesc.Psychiatry*, **35**, 51-54.
- Petersen T, Nielsen A, Paludan M, Rasmussen S & Madsen M . (2001) Børns sundhed ved slutningen af skolealderen. En undersøgelse blandt elever i 8. og 9. klasse i 1996/97. Statens Institut for Folkesundhed. København.
- Riis, L., Bodelsen, H. & Knudsen, F. U. (1998) Incidencen af omsorgssvigt og misbrug I Københavns Amt. *Ugeskr Læger*, **160**, 5358-5362
- Sariola, H. & Uutela, A. (1994) The prevalence of child sexual abuse in Finland. *Child Abuse Negl.*, **18**, 827-835.
- Sariola, H. & Uutela, A. (1996) The prevalence and context of incest abuse in Finland. *Child Abuse Negl.*, **20**, 843-850.
- Schei, B. & Bakketeig, L. S. (1989) Gynaecological impact of sexual and physical abuse by spouse. A study of a random sample of Norwegian women [see comments]. *Br.J.Obstet.Gynaecol.*, **96**, 1379-1383.
- Schei, B., Muus, K. M. & Bendixen, M. (1994) [Occurrence of sexual abuse among students in Trondheim]. *Tidsskr.Nor.Laegeforen.*, **114**, 2491-2494.
- Stern, A. E., Lynch, D. L., Oates, R. K., O'Toole, B. I. & Cooney, G. (1995) Self esteem, depression, behaviour and family functioning in sexually abused children. *J.Child Psychol.Psychiatry*, **36**, 1077-1089.

Watkins, B. & Bentovim, A. (1992) The sexual abuse of male children and adolescents: a review of current research. *J.Child Psychol.Psychiatry*, **33**, 197-248.

Watson P et al. (2000). Personal communication.

Williams, M. L., Freeman, R. C., Bowen, A. M., Zhao, Z., Elwood, W. N., Gordon, C., Young, P., Rusek, R. & Signes, C. A. (2000) A comparison of the reliability of self-reported drug use and sexual behaviors using computer-assisted versus face-to-face interviewing. *AIDS Educ.Prev.*, **12**, 199-213.

Wyatt, G. E. & Peters, S. D. (1986) Methodological considerations in research on the prevalence of child sexual abuse. *Child Abuse Negl.*, **10**, 241-251.