

Sexual abuse and sexual risk behavior: beyond the impact of psychiatric problems.

Houck CD, Nugent NR, Lescano CM, Peters A, Brown LK.

J Pediatr Psychol. 2010 Jun;35(5):473-83.

Pubmed Abstract

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19966316>

OBJECTIVE:

This study examined the association between sexual abuse (SA) and sex risk in girls and boys placed in alternative and therapeutic school settings while controlling for psychiatric problems.

METHOD:

Adolescents were recruited from alternative and therapeutic schools. Youth completed audio computer-assisted self-interviews assessing childhood abuse, sexual behaviors, sexual attitudes, and psychiatric symptoms.

RESULTS:

Of the 162 youth with available data, 23% reported a moderate or severe SA history. After controlling for gender and the presence of a psychiatric diagnosis, youth with a SA history were significantly more likely to have engaged in sex, had sex in the last 90 days, and engaged in unprotected sex. Adolescents with a history of SA also endorsed fewer advantages of using condoms.

CONCLUSIONS:

SA is uniquely associated with sexual behavior and attitudes even when adjusting for the presence of a psychiatric diagnosis. These data have implications for interventions for those with SA histories.