



## **Effects of Interviewer Gender on Disclosure**

### **A Bibliography**

**2009**

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## Scope

This bibliography pertains to the effect of gender of the interviewer on children's disclosure of abuse. It is a selected bibliography, not comprehensive.

## Organization

This bibliography is organized chronologically, from the most recent to the oldest publication date.

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# Effects of Interviewer Gender on Disclosure

## A Bibliography

Lamb, M. E., & Garretson, M. E. (2003). The Effects of interviewer gender and child gender on the informativeness of alleged child sexual abuse victims in forensic interviews. *Law and Human Behavior*, 27(2), 157-171.

Forensic investigators in 3 countries used either the NICHD structured interview protocol or local standard interview practices to interview 672 alleged victims who ranged in age from 4 to 14 yrs. Analyses of the interviews showed significant effects of gender on both the interviewers' behavior and the amount of information provided by children. Female interviewers asked boys more invitations, as well as absolutely and proportionally more suggestive questions, than they did girls, whereas male interviewers interviewed boys and girls similarly. Children's responses varied depending on their gender and age, the gender of the interviewer, and the type of question asked. Girls of all ages provided more information in response to directive questions posed by female rather than male interviewers whereas boys did not respond differently to male and female interviewers. The oldest girls provided more information in response to option-posing questions posed by male interviewers. More information was provided by the younger children in response to suggestive prompts from interviewers of the opposite gender. The gender-of-interviewer effects were attenuated in protocol-guided interviews.

Fry, R. P., Rozewicz, L. M., & Crisp, A. H. (1996). Interviewing for sexual abuse: Reliability and effect of interviewer gender. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 20(8), 725-729.

An interview to detect histories of sexual abuse was administered to consecutive attenders at a gynecology clinic on two occasions, on one occasion by a male interviewer and on the other by a female interviewer. Fifty-six subjects were assessed, and at least partial agreement was found in 70% between the two interviews. Approximately one-third of incidents were reported at only one of the interviews, with gender of interviewer making little apparent difference to this. Contrary to expectation, subjects appeared more forthcoming at the first interview. Reasons for this are discussed. Interviews for sexual abuse must be carried out in an appropriate context, and simple

routine screening questions may not be appropriate. Selection of interviewers on the basis of gender alone may not be helpful.

Westcott, H. L. (1995). Children's views on investigative interviews for suspected sexual abuse. *Issues in Criminological & Legal Psychology*, 22, 13-20.

Examined the views of 9 girls and 5 boys (aged 6–18 yrs) who had been interviewed as part of investigations into sexual victimization. The Ss talked about all aspects of their interview and interviewers; most identified both positive and negative experiences. Things that helped Ss in the interview include an explanation of what will happen, choice about who is present, and choice about the interviewer (e.g., gender). Certain interviewer behaviors also helped, such as provision of emotional support, a believing stance, and minimizing stress. Factors that do not appear to help young people include a lack of preparation, evidential requirements dictating the manner in which the interviewees describe their abuse, and unhelpful interviewer responses such as the use of age-inappropriate language, a disbelieving stance, and repeated questioning. These findings are discussed in the light of the Criminal Justice Act (1991), the Memorandum of Good Practice, and the tension between evidential vs children's needs in the investigative interview.

Kaplan, M. S., Becker, J. V., & Tenke, C. E. (1991). Influence of abuse history on male adolescent self-reported comfort with interviewer gender. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 6(1), 3-11.

264 inner-city adolescent males (aged 11-19 yrs) undergoing an evaluation in an outpatient clinic for sex offenders were questioned as to their preference and comfort in talking about sex with a male vs a female interviewer. Overall, these Ss were significantly more comfortable with a female interviewer. Of the 135 nonabused Ss, 53% did not express a preference. However, those Ss who themselves had been victims of sexual and/or physical abuse preferred a female interviewer. Those Ss victimized by males showed the greatest preference for female interviewers, although those abused by females also preferred a female interviewer. Results indicate that self-disclosure about sexual material may be facilitated when interviewers of both genders are available.

Frosh, S. (1988) No Man's Land?: The role of men working with sexually abused children.  
*British Journal of Guidance and Counseling*, 16(1), 1-10.

Most sexual abusers of children are men. It is argued that sexually abused children may be anxious about contacts with men, especially when these include discussions of sexuality or of their abusive experiences. The implications of this for the role of men working with sexually abused children are explored. It is suggested that disclosure interviews should not usually be carried out by men, but that men do have a role to play in the post-disclosure therapeutic process.

