ARTICLE:

SUMMARY:
Two recent meta-analyses have shown a child sexual abuse prevalence of 18-20% for women and 8% for men worldwide. They also found higher rates in Africa, and that boys experienced abuse more in low-resource countries than in high-resource countries, but no change in prevalence for women.

The purpose of this study was to summarize the prevalence of CSA worldwide using only the most current data – only publications after 2002 and reporting on data collected since 2000, and also only using studies with child and/or adolescent respondents to reduce recollection bias.

Method:
Using numerous literature databases (Embase, Medline, PsychInfo, and Psyndex), the researchers identified 4,827 potentially eligible studies. After following the inclusion criteria of studies using data collected since 2000 or later, samples of at least 1,000 participants, and accessibility to the publication without duplication of data, the researchers were left with 55 studies representing 24 countries.

Four categories of child sexual abuse were used to develop estimates for different events:
1. Non-Contact Abuse – inappropriate sexual solicitation, indecent exposure
2. Contact Abuse – touching/fondling, kissing
3. Forced Intercourse – oral, vagina, anal, attempted
4. Mixed Sexual Abuse – more than one of the above

Findings:
1. Origin of studies included in final sample:
   a. Asia – 16
   b. North America – 14
   c. Europe – 11
   d. Africa – 9
   e. Central & South America - 5
2. Most of the samples were recruited in schools and used self-report instruments.
3. Prevalence estimates for the four categories of child sexual abuse in girls ranged from 9-31%:
   a. Non-Contact Abuse – 31%
   b. Contact Abuse – 13%
   c. Forced Intercourse – 9%
d. Mixed Sexual Abuse – 15%

4. Prevalence estimates for the four categories of child sexual abuse in boys ranged from 3-17%:
   a. Non-Contact Abuse – 17%
   b. Contact Abuse – 6%
   c. Forced Intercourse – 3%
   d. Mixed Sexual Abuse – 8%

5. These findings suggest, that when compared to prior meta-analyses, it appears child sexual abuse is less common today than in earlier days.


This publication may be reproduced electronically or mechanically in its entirety and distributed without permission from the copyright holder.

Research to Practice Summaries was supported by Grant No. 2012-CI-FX-K006 awarded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. Points of views or opinions in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.