

Effects of Interviewer Gender on Children's Reports

A Bibliography



November 2018

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Preferred citation: National Children's Advocacy Center. (2018). Effects of Interviewer Gender on Children's Reports: A Bibliography. Huntsville, AL: Author.

This project was supported by a grant awarded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. Points of view 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.

Scope

This bibliography covers issues related to the effect of gender of the interviewer on children's reports. This bibliography is not comprehensive.

Organization

This bibliography lists publications in date descending order.

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Foster, I., Wyman, J., Tong, D., Colwell, K., & Talwar, V. (2018). Does eyewitness and interviewer gender influence children's reports? An experimental analysis of eyewitness and interviewer gender on children's testimony. *Psychiatry, Psychology and Law*. Online ahead of print. DOI: 10.1080/13218719.2018.1507844

This study examines how children's age, gender and interviewer gender affected children's testimony after witnessing a theft. Children (N = 127, age = 6–11 years) witnessed an experimenter (E1) find money, which he/she may/may not have taken. E1 then asked the children to falsely deny that the theft occurred, falsely accuse E1 of taking the money, or tell the truth when interviewed by a second experimenter. Falsely denying or falsely accusing influenced children's forthcomingness and quality of their testimony. When accusing, boys were significantly more willing than girls to disclose about the theft earlier and without being asked directly. When truthfully accusing, children gave lengthier testimony to same-gendered adults. When denying, children were significantly more willing to disclose the theft earlier to male interviewers than to females. As children aged, they were significantly less likely to lie, more likely to disclose earlier when accusing, and give lengthier and more consistent testimony.

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.

A small qualitative study was undertaken with 14 children and young people, nine girls and five boys (aged 6–18 yrs) who had been interviewed as part of investigations into sexual victimization. They talked about all aspects of their interview and interviewers; most identified both positive and negative experiences. Things that helped children 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 help, 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. Unhelpful interviewer responses include 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 verses 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.

Two hundred sixty-four inner-city adolescent males 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 versus a female interviewer. Overall these adolescents were significantly more comfortable with a female interviewer, $p < .05$. Of the 135 nonabused subjects, 53% did not express a preference. However, those adolescents who themselves had been victims of sexual and/or physical abuse (49%) preferred a female interviewer, $p < .02$. Those individuals 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.