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FINAL REPORT

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF WOMEN WHO  
SEXUALLY ABUSE CHILDREN

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
ABSTRACT.....	iii
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
OVER-ESTIMATION OF THE STRENGTH OF THE INCEST TABOO.....	2
OVER-EXTENSION OF FEMINIST EXPLANATIONS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE.....	5
OVER-GENERALIZATION OF THE EMPIRICAL OBSERVATION THAT FEMALE CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE IS RARE.....	12
Assuming That Reports Accurately Reflect Rates....	12
Assuming That Low Relative Rates Means Low	
Absolute Rates.....	19
CONCLUSION.....	22
Purpose of Study.....	26
II. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH.....	27
Sample.....	27
Male offenders.....	27
Female offenders.....	29
Data Gathering.....	32
Interview Protocol.....	33
Demographics.....	33
Substance abuse and antisocial behavior.....	33
Family background and relationships.....	33
Child sexual abuse patterns and perceptions..	35
Investigation.....	38
Analysis.....	38
III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION.....	39
Demographics.....	39
Age.....	39
Education.....	40
Income.....	40
Occupation.....	41
Employment status.....	42

Place of residence.....	44
Religious affiliation.....	45
Ethnicity.....	46
Substance Abuse and Antisocial Behavior.....	47
Substance abuse.....	47
Antisocial behavior.....	48
Family Background and Relationships.....	49
Parent's marital stability.....	49
Parent-child interaction.....	51
Physical abuse of offenders by parents.....	52
Family structure.....	55
Stability of marital/live-in relationships of of offenders.....	56
Family satisfaction.....	57
Satisfaction with sexual relationships.....	59
Number of different sexual partners.....	60
Emotional/interactional and sexual intimacy needs.....	61
Spouse/partner physical abuse.....	62
Child Sexual Abuse Patterns and Perceptions.....	65
Relationship of offenders to their victims...	65
Severity and relationship locus of child sexual abuse perpetrated.....	68
Gender relationships of offenders and their victims.....	70
Relationship of offenders to persons who sexually abused them.....	72
Severity and relationship locus of child sexual abuse experienced.....	75
Gender relationships of offenders with their abusers.....	77
Acknowledgement of guilt.....	78
Sexual abuse recognition thresholds.....	79
Gender identity.....	81
Penalties suggested for the sexual abuse of children.....	81
Likelihood that child sexual abusers can change their behavior.....	82
Consequences of the Investigation.....	84
Initial reactions.....	84
Legal consequences following the investigation.....	86

Summary.....	88
IV. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS.....	89
Summary.....	89
Conclusions.....	96
TABLES.....	100
REFERENCES.....	138

## ABSTRACT

Although a few studies of child sexual abuse were performed in the late 1960s and early 1970s, only in the last decade has widespread attention been focused on this issue. Currently, efforts are being made at local, regional, and national levels in behalf of victims of child sexual abuse and their families in attempts to reduce the scope of the problem.

Efforts to guide professionals in their attempts to help the victims are still their earlier stages, and information is still being gathered and consolidated about the causes, conduct, and consequences of child sexual abuse. Even less information is available about the offenders. However, consensus in the literature seems to be that the perpetration of child sexual abuse is a male-centered problem, and research and theoretical perspectives developed to explain child sexual abuse have argued that because of psychosexual predispositions and socialization experiences only men will commit such acts.

Unfortunately, such perspectives present professionals with a difficult dilemma. If the perpetration of child sexual abuse is exclusively limited to males, how then is the behavior explained of those females who sexually abuse children? A substantial number of instances of female-perpetrated child sexual abuse reports are beginning to appear

in the literature, and therapists and practitioners are beginning to ask how to work with female offenders.

For instance, should female perpetrators be treated in the same fashion as male perpetrators, or with different strategies? Are their perpetration patterns similar. How do their own victimization experiences, when they themselves were children, compare? Essentially, what factors differentiate women who sexually abuse children from men who sexually abuse children. In what ways are they similar, and in what ways do they differ?

This project was designed to help answer some of these questions by providing a comparative profile of female and male child sexual abusers across several domains that may be associated with child sexual abuse. Questions and indexes included in the study were designed to gather information about demographics, substance abuse and antisocial behavior, family background and relationships, child sexual abuse patterns and perceptions, and the investigation experience and consequences.

Data for the project were obtained through interviews with 65 female child sexual abusers and 75 male child sexual abusers. These individuals had previously been substantiated by state child protective services agencies for acts of child sexual abuse they had committed, and whose names were on state child abuse registries. Male offenders in the sample were

obtained from the Iowa Child Abuse Registries, and female offenders were obtained from both the Iowa and Missouri Registries. An additional 8 female offenders were obtained from referrals from therapists in Minnesota.

The findings of this study suggest that although female and male child sexual abusers are similar in many ways, there are important differences. Female offenders in may have lower incomes and occupational statuses than male offenders. They are more likely to be unemployed or engaged in part-time only than male offenders, and they are more residentially unstable. They are also younger than male offenders. They may be less likely than male offenders to exhibit aggressive, confrontive forms of antisocial behavior and more inclined toward more passive forms of antisocial behavior and deviance.

Female offenders may experience harsher childhoods, including more physical abuse, and more emotional abuse and criticism from their parents than male offenders. Marital relationships of the parents of female offenders may be more unstable as well. However, little difference was found between the family of origin structure of the offenders; both groups of offenders reported that their families of origin were relatively closed.

In present family relationships female offenders may differ little from male offenders in marital instability, although they may be less satisfied with their marital



partners. However, they may be more active sexually, with greater numbers of partners than male offenders. Female offenders may also have higher needs for both emotional need fulfillment and sexual need fulfillment than males. They may also experience harsher spousal relationships than male offenders. In this study female offenders experienced, and committed, more acts of spousal physical violence at almost every level of severity than male offenders.

Female offenders may also be more sexually victimized as children than male offenders, although for both the majority of victimization occurs within the immediate and extended family setting. Both as victims and as perpetrators, opposite gender relationships are the most frequently encountered pairings, that is, as victims be abused by males, and as perpetrators abuse males.

Findings of this study also suggest that female offenders are much more reluctant to admit acts of sexual abuse, and consequently, it is difficult to determine if as perpetrators female offenders may commit fewer and less severe forms of sexual violence on children, or if this a reflection of their noticeably greater inclination to deny their actions. They may have higher recognition thresholds for sexual abuse than male offenders, and may perceive child sexual abuse as a greater social deviance as well. They may also be less inclined to think child sexual abusers can change their

behavior. Furthermore, female offenders may be more resistant and uncooperative in the investigation procedures, and experience greater anger and sense of injustice from the system than male offenders. Finally, though findings in this study suggested that in some ways the system may treat female offenders the same as male offenders, in other ways there may be differences, such as greater propensity to remove children from their homes.

This study is merely a first step in the examination of differences and similarities among female and male child sexual abusers, a point emphasized by the fact that one of the major contributions of the study has been to simply obtain a sample of female offenders in the first place. Further research is required so that differences and similarities between female and male perpetrators can be identified in the development of sexually abusive tendencies, the sexual abuse processes of the two groups of offenders, their experience in the system, and the consequences of perceptions and biases of professionals who work with them. Other research is required which focuses on differences and similarities in needs of victims of the two types of offenders, and appropriate treatment strategies which can assist them.

At the very least, it is hoped that this study will contribute to the recognition and acknowledgement among professionals of the existence and reality of female child

sexual abuse, and of the need for professionals to become prepared to assist not only the perpetrators and victims of male child sexual abuse, but the perpetrators and victims of female child sexual abuse as well.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The beginning of the 1980s was marked by an "explosion" of literature on child sexual abuse (Conte, 1982), and the pace has continued throughout the decade that has followed. Contributing to this explosion were results from major research efforts conducted during the latter half of the 1970s (e.g., Finkelhor, 1979) which broke through deep-seated cultural denial about the scope of the occurrence of intra-familial sexual abuse. Few beliefs about the family had been held so universally as the belief that parents did not commit sexual acts with their children.

This belief is now recognized, of course, to be a myth for many families. Unfortunately, some of the secondary beliefs associated with the incest myth have continued on into the 1980s. The most powerful of these has been the assumption that only males are the perpetrators of child sexual abuse. Only recently has this belief begun to be seriously questioned (Alford, Grey, and Kasper, 1988; Condy, Templer, Brown, and Veaco, 1987; Faller, 1987; Fehrenbach and Monastersky, 1988; Johnson and Shrier, 1987; Knopp and Lackey, 1989; McCarty, 1986; Masters, 1986; Mathews, Matthews, and Speltz, 1989; National Adolescent Perpetrator Network, 1988:41-42 Scavo, 1989; Vander May, 1988).

Why has recognition of the sexual abuse of children by women developed so slowly? Part of the answer is that it has seldomly been reported. But perhaps an even more important part of the answer has been the unacceptability of such behavior, for few deviate as far from cultural norms and deep-seated beliefs as do those committed by female child sexual abusers. These observations and beliefs may intertwine to produce barriers which may prevent the recognition of female child sexual abuse. These barriers will be the focus of the discussion which follows.

#### OVER-ESTIMATION OF THE STRENGTH OF THE INCEST TABOO

A major barrier to the recognition of female child sexual abuse has been the over-estimation of the strength of the incest taboo, considered by anthropologists "to be the foundation of all kinship structures", its purpose "the preservation of the human social order" (Herman and Hirschman, 1977). Freud incorporated these beliefs about the incest taboo into his own works, but not before a fascinating reversal of his position. As Kendrick (1988) notes, in an earlier lecture on the development of hysteria Freud had reported what he considered unequivocal findings: when they

were younger, all eighteen of his patients had been sexually abused by an adult or an older sibling.

However, by the time his monumentally influential work on psychoanalysis was published a year later, Freud had completely altered his position (Kendrick, 1988:178-179). He then denied the possibility that the reports of incest by his patients could have been correct. In what became one of the most critical decisions ever made about incest, Freud decided instead to consider these reports as merely sexual fantasies, and to use sexual fantasy and the incest taboo as cornerstones of his psychoanalytic theory (Arkin, 1984).

As psychoanalytic theory continued to develop, men's and women's roles were differentiated substantially. Men were considered to be sexual predators and women docile recipients, qualities inherent in the psychogenetic makeup of each sex. As Arkin notes:

"Freud's hypothesis considers the taboo against incest as originating solely from the strife between the males of the family in the course of their competition for the sexual favors of the females. The role of the females is depicted as essentially passive. They stand by and merely grant themselves to the victors." [1984:375-376]

A breach of the incest taboo by a female, consequently, is viewed as a far greater deviation than incest committed by males (Barry and Johnson, 1958; Lieske, 1981; Messer, 1969; Nakashima and Zakus, 1979; Raphling, Carpenter, and Davis, 1967).

These theories, and the beliefs about incest upon which they were built, profoundly influenced professional attitudes in the decades that followed Freud's original formulations (Arkin, 1984; Herman and Hirschman, 1977). As a first consequence, the sexual abuse of children by women was essentially ignored. Its occurrence, expected to be an extremely rare aberration, was taken only as bona fide evidence of the severity of the psychotic disturbance, mental retardation, and/or organic brain damage which impaired the woman's impulse control and her ability to comply with social norms (e.g., Mathis, 1972:135).

Second, these beliefs have contributed to substantial bias on the part of professionals against the possibility that females could sexually abuse children. For example, Mathis dismisses female child sexual abuse because it is "of little significance", commenting that our society "never becomes very excited" about female sexual deviations (1972:53-54). He noted that females were considered sexually harmless, and that it is difficult to accept the idea that a woman could have active sexual impulses and drives. To him, the idea that a woman could sexually abuse a child seems to be an affront to common sense:

"That she might seduce a helpless child into sexplay is unthinkable, and even if she did so, what harm can be done without a penis?" [1972:54]

The possibility that sexual abuse may not require a penis is not considered. Unfortunately, this line of thinking still continues to exert a powerful influence. For example, West recently commented:

"...sexual deviations are much commoner in men than in women, arguably because men are more imaginative and venturesome!" [1987:30]

Such presumptions of psychogenetically inherent differences in the sexuality of men and women, especially when coupled with absolutist beliefs about the incest taboo, may continue to lead professionals to make unwarranted assumptions about female child sexual abuse. Friedman (1988:346) states that generalizations about incestuous behavior or its absence tend to be slanted towards gender-specific perspectives, and that professionals may look with greater scrutiny for the potential sexual misbehavior of fathers while discounting or ignoring that of mothers. He suggests that these factors and the theoretical perspectives underlying them may contribute to underreporting of female sexual abuse.

#### OVER-EXTENSION OF FEMINIST EXPLANATIONS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

A second barrier to the recognition of sexual abuse of children by women has been the over-extension of feminist explanations of child sexual abuse. In these perspectives



(e.g., Finkelhor and Russell, 1984; Herman, 1981; Russell and Finkelhor, 1984) child sexual abuse is considered to be a direct result of culturally-based socialization processes which lead to male dominance and promote the sexual exploitation of women and children. Briefly stated, males are socialized to be sexually aggressive and to seek younger, more innocent and powerless sex partners, while women are socialized to be recipients of sexual encounters, at least initially, and to be attracted to older, more powerful companions. These patterns, condoned and even encouraged by the male sub-culture, foster the sexual abuse of children by males while inhibiting such behavior by females. Women are socialized to be the victims of child sexual abuse, not the perpetrators.

The barriers to the recognition of female sexual abuse do not stem directly from the basic theoretical premises of these perspectives. Male dominance, differential socialization and sexual exploitation in fact may help to explain a substantial portion of child sexual abuse. Rather, barriers to the recognition of female perpetration develop when feminist perspectives are presented as the only viable explanations for child sexual abuse, and female sexual abuse consequently considered nonsignificant.

The influence of these barriers in turning attention away from the recognition of female perpetrators is subtle, but

powerful. Explaining child sexual abuse solely in terms of male dominance and aggression makes it difficult to explain the behavior of female perpetrators, especially those who sexually abuse children without the involvement of a male partner. However, no explanations are required if the perspectives also portray instances of female child sexual abuse as unusual, isolated, and insignificant events. And if instances of female sexual abuse are insignificant, professionals need not concern themselves much about them.

These barriers to the recognition of female child sexual abuse developed as a strong and surprising reaction to a straightforward empirical generalization that began to appear in the literature near the beginning of the 1980s, a generalization formed as a logical extension of the "discovery" of incest:

"If child sexual abuse occurs much more frequently than psychoanalytic theories and their derivatives have indicated, then female-perpetrated child sexual abuse might also occur much more frequently as well."

Several researchers, accepting the generalization as plausible, began to do some theory-building. Perhaps it was not the incest taboo that was explaining the scarcity of female offenders. Rather, professionals simply may not have been seeing the female-perpetrated child sexual abuse which was "out there" because of their biases against its

occurrence. And they offered several alternative hypotheses to explain why it had not been seen.

One possibility was that female abuse might be easier to hide and/or mask as role-appropriate behavior (Goodwin and DiVasto, 1979; Gordon, 1976:43-44; Groth and Birnbaum, 1979:192; Justice and Justice, 1979:61; Plummer 1981:228). Another explanation was that females might be more likely to abuse boys, but boys might be less likely to report the abuse (Groth and Birnbaum, 1979:192; Nasjleti, 1980). Still another suggestion was that female sexual abuse of children might occur more often as incest, and thus less likely be reported (Groth and Birnbaum, 1979:192; Groth, 1982:230).

Almost immediately these views were challenged by two prominent sociologists, Diana Russell and David Finkelhor. Both took issue with these alternative theories because they seemed to under-emphasize or diminish the importance of the "traditional view of child molestation as a primarily male deviation" (Russell and Finkelhor, 1984:228). After presenting powerful theoretical arguments in support of their contention that women rarely sexually abuse children, Russell and Finkelhor insisted that:

"The explanation of male preponderance is significant to virtually every theory of child sexual abuse....Every theory of child molestation must explain not just why adults become sexually interested in children, but why that explanation applies primarily to males and not females."  
[1984:228]

Thus, no other explanations were to be considered. Surprisingly, the need for comparative studies of female and male abusers to test the validity of the male dominance theory was not suggested. Rather, available data on female and male child sexual abuse was reviewed by Russell and Finkelhor solely to demonstrate that "child sexual abuse is primarily perpetrated by males", and to hint at their surprise that "so many experts in the field [were] arguing that the number of female perpetrators ha[d] been seriously underestimated." In their conclusion, the possibility that female child sexual abuse had been underreported was dismissed as a "wave of speculation", resulting from increased awareness of all types of sexual abuse cases and from "defensiveness in those who oppose feminist thinking" (Finkelhor and Russell, 1984:184-185; Russell and Finkelhor, 1984:230-231).

Thus, professionals were being misled and defensive if they focused on female sexual abuse. Such attention would only distract them from the real issue: the sexual exploitation of children by males. However, in a more recent publication one of the proponents of this perspective appears to have modified his position somewhat. In his Sourcebook On Child Sexual Abuse Finkelhor states that:

"Theories of why adults become sexually interested in and involved with children have come primarily from psychoanalytic theory and, more recently, from sources such as social learning theory and feminism. What most of these sources tend to share is that

they are 'single-factor theories.' They identify one or, at the most, a couple of mechanisms to explain sexual interest in children. Not surprisingly, they have been inadequate to explain the full range and diversity of pedophilic behavior." [Araji and Finkelhor, 1986:91-92]

He notes further that attempts "to explain all child molesting with single-factor theories" are "a serious problem" in child abuse studies. Research instead "has shown that no single factor can begin to explain fully all sexual abuse" (Finkelhor, 1986:119).

These statements seem to indicate that Finkelhor has shifted his theoretical stance considerably from the strong feminist position he espoused a few years earlier. He now argues that multi-factor models developed from a variety of perspectives are the most effective strategies to explain child sexual abuse. He sums up his new perspective by stating that:

"...researchers need to caution against all single-factor theories and quick explanations in general, because they can lead easily to misinformed public attitudes and short-sighted public policy." [Finkelhor, 1986:124]

Unfortunately, theories about the occurrence of female child sexual abuse do not seem to be included in this cautionary statement. Although Finkelhor softened his position about the approach to be used in explaining child sexual abuse, he did not soften his position about what they were to explain:

"...every theory of pedophilia [still] needs to explain not just why adults become sexually interested in children, but why that explanation applies primarily to males and not to females."  
[Finkelhor, 1986:126]

Although a multi-factor model now replaces the single-factor feminist perspective, the purpose is still the same: to validate a "men-do-and-women-don't" gender-dichotomy theory of child sexual abuse. Finkelhor continues to insist that "practically no evidence" supports the notion that sexual abuse of children by women might be underreported (1986:126).. A review of the research shows that female child sexual abuse comprises "a distinct minority of child sexual abuse cases," occurring in only "some fraction of child abuse cases." Women rarely sexually abuse children. (Finkelhor and Russell, 1984; Russell and Finkelhor, 1984).

Thus, underneath the arguments about which theoretical explanation of child sexual abuse is or is not appropriate lies a deeper issue. The empirical generalization discussed previously, which suggests that if male-perpetrated abuse of children occurs much more frequently than psychoanalytic theory has predicted then so might female-perpetrated abuse, is simply not acceptable. The core issue is empirical, not theoretical. Although theoretical perspective may replace theoretical perspective, the empirical "fact" upon which they are all based remains the same: the sexual abuse of children occurs infrequently. Unfortunately, conclusions drawn from

this "fact" may form a third barrier to the recognition of female sexual abuse.

OVER-GENERALIZATION OF THE EMPIRICAL OBSERVATION  
THAT FEMALE CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE IS RARE

This third barrier is over-generalization of the empirical observation that female sexual abuse of children is rare. This barrier develops when observations of the low relative frequency of female child sexual abuse become entangled with distorted or mistaken interpretations and lead professionals to conclude that female sexual abuse is a much greater rarity than it actually may be. Two types of misinterpretations leading to such conclusions about female sexual abuse of children are (1) assuming that reports in the literature accurately reflect rates of female perpetration and (2) assuming that low rates of occurrence means low absolute numbers of instances.

Assuming That Reports  
Accurately Reflect Rates

With respect to the first type of misinterpretation, until recently reports of female perpetrated child sexual abuse were seldomly encountered in the literature. Most which appeared were psychoanalytic case studies of one or two instances of mother-son incest, and invariably the

psychopathology of the female offender and/or the victim were highlighted (e.g., Barry and Johnson, 1958; Forward and Buck, 1979; Hammer, 1968; Lidz and Lidz, 1969; Lukianowicz, 1972; Margolis, 1977; Mathis, 1972; Raphling, Carpenter, and Davis, 1967; Yorukoglu and Kempf, 1980; Wahl, 1960; Weinberg, 1955). Authors wrote in isolation from one another, and few were aware of any other reports of maternal incest besides their own.

These few case studies conveyed the impression that female sexual abuse of children was so rare that it was almost unique in its occurrence. Because of the widespread acceptance of this empirically based conclusion, female child sexual abuse was virtually ignored or totally discounted in the literature, as these statements demonstrate:

"Since pedophilia either does not exist at all in women, or is extremely rare, only men were included in the study." [Freund, Heasman, Racansky, and Glancy, 1984:193]

"Mother-son incest...is so rare and the taboo so great that when it occurs one or both of the partners may be assumed to be severely disturbed or psychotic." [Sarles, 1975:634]

"...reported cases of female pedophilia are so uncommon as to be of little significance." [Mathis, 1972:54]

However, there is another possibility: that the beliefs and attitudes these professionals held against the occurrence of female child sexual abuse may have actually prepared them



to not see it. Edwards (1988) notes that the treatment of female offenders is greatly dependent upon the degree to which (1) traditional sex role and gender behavior attributions are imposed upon them by professionals, and (2) the degree to which these women are perceived conforming to these attributions. Women "are generally regarded as being 'out of place' in the criminal justice system," a factor which helps them "negotiate the various escape routes within it." Men, aggressive and dominant, are expected to be criminals. Women, stereotyped to be gentle, passive, and domestic, are anomalies in the system.

Various processes work, Edwards (1988) continues, to bring anomalous female behavior into congruence with the traditional sex role and gender expectations professionals may hold about women. If these processes are successful, if professionals can perceptually "reframe" the deviant behavior of women so that it is congruent with sex role and behavior expectations which are attributed to them, women may be given special consideration and more lenient treatment than men. For example, women convicted of shoplifting or petty fraud who are poor and conform to the "appropriate domestic stereotype of good wife and mother" may be treated more sympathetically so that they can continue to care for the family. On the other hand, if congruence between female offender's behavior and the attributions of professionals is not achieved, female

offenders may be given harsher, more severe treatment than men even when behaviors are the same, and labeled more often as "sick" or "disturbed." The strength of the attributions imposed by professionals on female offenders is directly related to the strength of the beliefs about women which drive them.

Edwards (1988) narrowed the context of her discussion to professionals in the legal system and violent female offenders. However, her arguments about the attributions of female behavior by professionals on the one hand and actual behavior of female offenders on the other may apply equally well to female child sexual abusers and professionals in the child abuse "system." Strong theoretical, cultural, or idiosyncratic beliefs which state that female sexual abuse does not occur may prevent professionals from observing it.

As Kempe and Helfer observe:

"Society tends to be more concerned with fathers sleeping with or genitally manipulating daughters or sons than mothers doing the same things to sons, or very rarely, daughters. This double standard is most likely based on the belief that the sheltering mother is simply prolonging, perhaps unusually but not criminally, her previous nurturing role... Intervention is very difficult because mothers are given an enormous leeway in their actions, while fathers and brothers are not." [1980:207]

In another reported instance, a district judge recently dropped charges brought against a mother for sexually abusing her children in a case which had been carefully prepared by

a child protective services worker, a police detective and the county attorney. He gave the following justification for his decision. To paraphrase:

"Women don't do those kinds of things, especially in this community. Besides, the children need their mother."

Only when such behavior could not be perceptually "reframed" and made congruent with their beliefs against women being sexual abusers would it reach the professionals' recognition threshold. And if such beliefs were very powerful, only the most deviant, "sick" and "disturbed" women would be noticed.

The effect of such attribution processes would be greatly magnified if they were shared by professionals at multiple points within the system. For instance, if their beliefs and expectations are that women do not sexually abuse children, informants may be less likely to report occurrences of female sexual abuse, investigators less diligent in conducting inquiries, county attorneys less likely to prosecute, and judges more likely to dismiss or reduce charges. At each "gate" along the way women could drop out of the system. By the time they got referred to the therapist, only those women whose behaviors were so deviant that they could not be brought into congruence with the expectations of each of the successive "gate-keepers" would remain.

The influence of such "gate-keeping" processes in winnowing female child sexual abusers out of the system would depend on the strength of the attributions which drove them. The winnowing process might be even more effective than where beliefs of professionals against female child sexual abuse were stronger. Among the most powerful beliefs and attributions have been those espoused and imposed by followers of Freud and his psychoanalytic tradition.

Yet, rather than being suspicious of possible "gate-keeping" processes operating in the psychoanalytic literature, processes which may have winnowed out all but the most deviant of female child sexual abusers, most professionals have assumed without question that the few reported case studies accurately reflect the extent of female child sexual abuse. Even Herman, one of Freud's arch-antagonists, accepts these cases without question as she builds her case against female child sexual abuse:

"Incest between mother and son is so extraordinary that a single case is considered worthy of publication, and we have been able to find a grand total of only twenty-two documented cases in the entire literature. [1981:18]

"Almost all the cases involve marked social deviance and severe psychopathology in either the son, the mother, or both....Apparently the taboo against mother-son incest is breached only in bizarre instances. [1981:20]

Russell, basing her own conclusion on Herman's interpretation of the data, hints strongly that researchers would be better served if they turned their efforts elsewhere:

"The attention given to mother-son incest appears to be way out of proportion to its significance"  
[1984:197]

However, the cases of maternal incest reported in these studies did not seem anticipated nor sought out. Many were accidental discoveries which occurred during the course of therapeutic experiences. They had appeared in spite of theoretically shaped attitudes and expectations which precluded their existence. Mother and/or son were invariably described as pathologically disturbed.

Assuming without question that the frequency with which case reports of female child sexual abuse appear in the literature is a good indication of the frequency of its actual occurrence may be a questionable strategy at best. This is particularly so when the possibility exists that attributions of traditional sex role and gender behaviors may have prevented all but the most deviant, pathological cases to surface to the attention of professionals.

As Finkelhor and Russell (1984:179) state, though it is "extremely implausible" for children not to notice the sexual activities of women, it is possible for such behavior to go unnoticed by others. Marvasti (1986) observed that mothers he studied in five cases of maternal incest had not been

involved in the criminal justice system, were not psychotic, nor was their abuse centered around themes of "power" and "authority", patterns attributed to father/daughter incest. Interestingly, he noted that it was the mothers themselves who had reported the sexual abuse, not their victims, and this disclosure occurred only after several months of individual and group psychotherapy. Marvasti (1986) concluded by suggesting that unless mothers and sons are psychotic and lack the necessary resources to keep the incest secret, they may escape the attention of professionals. And perceptual processes which work to keep professional belief structures intact, belief structures which are against the possibility that women sexually abuse children, will only make it more difficult for female sexual abuse to be recognized, regardless of its actual frequency of occurrence.

Assuming That Low Relative  
Rates Means Low Absolute Rates

The second type of misinterpretation which may lead professionals to conclude that female child sexual abuse happens even less frequently than it does in reality occurs when low relative rates of its occurrence are assumed to be equivalent to low absolute rates. For instance, Finkelhor (1986:126) states rather emphatically that "practically no evidence" supports the idea that female child sexual abuse

might be underreported. At most 10 percent of offenders among reported cases are women, and among general population surveys only 5 percent of adult sexual contact with girls and 20 percent of adult sexual contact with boys are made by women.

However, these percentages bear closer scrutiny. When Finkelhor's rates are coupled with percentages cited for rates of female and male victimization, and with percentages cited for rates of prevalence and incidence, they lead to surprising estimates about absolute rates of female child sexual abuse.

With respect to rates of female and male sexual victimization, Finkelhor and Baron (1986:61-62) presented two sex-of-victim ratios. One was derived from two national studies of reported cases of child sexual abuse. The other was computed as the mean ratio for eight random sample community studies in which both men and women were interviewed. The estimated ratio for the agency studies was 5 female victims for every male victim, and for the survey studies a ratio of 2.5 female victims for each male victim.

Lack of consensus among professionals makes estimates of prevalence rates a little more difficult to find. In their review of the prevalence of child sexual abuse, Peters, Wyatt, and Finkelhor (1986) simply list the prevalence rates obtained in each of the nineteen prevalence studies they reviewed. These range from 8 to 62 percent for females. The mean prevalence rate for female victimization in these studies is

23 percent, which will serve as a rough estimate of prevalence for discussion purposes.

One additional set of figures is needed so that estimates of the relative occurrence of female child sexual abuse can be converted into absolute numbers. These are total population estimates. For the United States as of July 1, 1988, these estimates are 126,000,000 females and 120,000,000 males (Spencer, 1988).

With total population figures, prevalence rate estimates, and estimates of the relative frequencies of female and male child sexual abuse, estimates of absolute rates of female child sexual abuse can be calculated. First, an estimate of the absolute number of females who have been sexually abused will be determined. Taking 23 percent of the 126 million women in the United States, the percentage of women which prevalence studies suggest have been sexually abused as children, produces an estimate of 29 million female victims. And if this estimate is multiplied by 5 percent, the proportion estimated by Russell and Finkelhor (1984) to have been sexually abused as children by adult females, the result is 1.5 million females sexually abused by females.

Finkelhor and Baron's (1986) victimization ratio of 5 females for every male, a figure they derived from agency studies, converts to a prevalence rate of 4.5 percent for male sexual victimization. Multiplying the 120 million American



males by a 4.5 percent victimization rate produces an estimate of 5.4 million male victims of child abuse. If this estimate in turn is multiplied by 20 percent, the proportion estimated by Russell and Finkelhor to have been sexually abused by females, the result is close to 1.1 million males abused by females. If Finkelhor and Barons' (1986) survey-based victimization ratio of 2.5 females for each male is used, which they consider a more accurate, the estimate of the number of males sexually abused by females doubles to 2.2 million. Combining estimates for female and male victims results in a figure of 3.7 million victims of female child sexual abuse!

These figures hardly seem to justify the conclusion that children are seldomly sexually abused by females. Even if relative rates of female child sexual abuse were only a tenth as large as Russell and Finkelhor's (1984) suggest, they would still result in an estimate of 370,000 female child sexual abuse victims, a number vastly larger than reports scattered throughout the literature, and conclusions based on them, have seemed to suggest.

#### CONCLUSION

The purpose of the preceding discussion about the barriers preventing female child sexual abuse from being recognized has not been to suggest that rates of female sexual

abuse of children are equal to rates for males, or that these rates are even close. Substantial evidence gathered from self-report studies in the last 10 years indicates that rates are quite disproportionate. Rather, the purpose of the discussion has been to suggest that adherence to beliefs that women do not sexually abuse children may lead to distorted perceptions about the occurrence of such behavior, and underreporting of even the relatively low levels of female sexual abuse which actually occur.

Currently, increasing recognition of female sexual abuse is coming from four areas: male victimization studies (e.g., Nielsen, 1983; Vander May, 1988), adolescent sex offender studies (e.g., Fehrenbach and Monastersky, 1986; National Adolescent Perpetrator Network, 1988), studies of adult sex offenders (e.g., Alford, Grey, and Kasper, 1988; Condy, Templer, Brown, and Veaco, 1987), and recent clinical studies (e.g., Faller, 1987; Marvasti, 1986, Mathews, Matthews, and Spelz, 1989; McCarty, 1986). A clearinghouse on female child sexual abuse research and information has recently been established by Faye Honey Knopp and the Safer Society Program of Vermont. And anecdotal information about female child sexual abuse is appearing more frequently from therapists, social workers, police detectives and others who work closely with families.

Theoretical perspectives should also keep pace. Focusing only on the low relative rates of female child sexual abuse may lead to deceptive conclusions in terms of absolute numbers. Gender dichotomy theories which caste perpetration into "men do/women don't" categories have difficulty explaining the behavior of women who do, especially women who initiate sexual activities. More helpful would be theories which incorporate gender and socialization patterns to explain both the disproportionate rates of female and male perpetrated child sexual abuse and the behavior of self-initiating females.

Processes which minimize female child sexual abuse when it appears also need to be avoided. Freeman-Longo (1987) noted that over 40 percent of rapists he has worked with reported having been sexually abused as children by females, and "none of them reported it to be a pleasant experience." Discounting samples in which unusually high rates of female child sexual abuse is reported, such those obtained in Groth's male rapist sample (cited in Russell and Finkelhor, 1984:232), may draw attention away from critical patterns which might help explain relationships between female child sexual abuse and other factors. such as the role negative experiences stemming from having been sexually abused as a child by a female might play in the development and unfolding of rapists' behavior.

Most importantly, it may not really matter to a victim of female sexual abuse that his or hers was a low probability event. It has happened, and the traumas that victims suffer in the aftermath of such abuse may be his or hers as well. They may experience further stigmatization when even the professionals themselves are disbelieving. The need of all victims of child sexual abuse need to be considered, whether the abuser is female or male. In this respect, comments from the National Task Force on Juvenile Offending are pertinent:

"Gender expectations and socialization factors may account for differences in male/female perpetration but the potential for harm to the victim is the same. Mandated reporters and investigators must be educated to not minimize the seriousness of female offending and move toward accountability." [National Adolescent Perpetrator Network, 1988:42]

As aspects of female child sexual abuse become more clearly sorted out, questions of professionals who work with the victims and perpetrators of both female and male child sexual abuse can be answered and more efficient procedures can be developed. However, before these and other important questions can be answered, basic information about the antecedents, process, and consequences of female and male child sexual abusers must first be gathered, which is the purpose of this project.

### Purpose of Study

The major purpose of this project is to develop a comparative profile of female and male child sexual abusers, in which factors differentiating female offenders from male offenders are identified, as well as factors common to both types of perpetrators. For instance, how are their perpetration patterns similar or different? How do their own victimization experiences, when they themselves were children, compare? What commonalities and dissimilarities exist in their family backgrounds and present relationships, personal attitudes about child sexual abuse, experiences in the social service and criminal justice systems?

Due to the lack of information in the literature about female child sexual abusers, this study by necessity is exploratory in nature. The information gathered will assist therapists and other professionals who work with female and male child sexual abusers to develop more efficient procedures, and suggest directions for researchers and theorists to follow as they refine their approaches and develop more powerful explanations of the causes, courses, and consequences of the sexual abuse of children.

## 2. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The data for this study were gathered from in-depth personal interviews administered to a comparative sample of female and male child sexual abusers. Data analysis procedures consist of descriptive statistics.

### Sample

The sample in this study consists of 75 adult male offenders and 65 adult female offenders who were reported to and substantiated by midwestern state social services departments for committing acts of sexual abuse with children. As such, it is a caretaker sample of child sexual abusers, females and males who sexually abused children in their roles as caretakers.

Male offenders. An initial list containing the names, but no addresses, of approximately 1650 male offenders was provided by the Iowa Department of Human Services in cooperation with the Iowa Attorney General's Office. These offenders had been substantiated by Iowa child protective services personnel between January 1, 1984 and December 31, 1986. Their addresses were located in the case reports submitted by the child protective services personnel, which were filed by victim names in the Iowa state registry offices. In order to obtain these addresses, project personnel cross-

referenced the perpetrators to the victims on a second state office computer system, and from these obtained the case report numbers.

Case records were then pulled and read to locate the perpetrator addresses for the first 750 perpetrators on the original state-provided offender list. This sampling frame was derived by the Iowa State University Statistical Laboratory, the estimated number of male offenders who would need to be contacted in order to obtain the project sample target of 75 male perpetrator. This estimate took into account potential moves, wrong addresses, and refusals among the male offenders.

Once identified, 575 of these male offenders were sent letters from the Iowa Department of Human Services which explained the project, requested their participation, and offered them a \$50 stipend for their time. The letter also made clear that their participation was anonymous and that information they provided would be strictly confidential and would not be accessible to the Iowa Department of Human Services or anyone else.

Because of lost addresses, 407 male offenders actually ended up being contacted, of which 79 agreed to to participate in the project. Due to failure to meet appointments, complete interviews, or other disqualifications, the final sample of consisted of 75 male offenders.

Female offenders. Of the 65 female offenders in the sample 32 were obtained from Iowa, 25 from Missouri, and 8 from Minnesota. Many fewer female child sexual abusers than male child sexual abusers have been identified by state child protective services. Consequently, the entire population of of approximately 145 female offenders on the Iowa Child Abuse Registry and approximately 280 female offenders on the Missouri Child Abuse Registry served as the sampling frame for the project. The additional female offenders from Minnesota were referred to the project by therapists in the Minneapolis area.

Initially, only Iowa female offenders were to be included in the study. As the sampling of female offenders began, procedures similar to those described above used to obtain the male offenders sample were followed. Iowa Child Abuse Registry records indicated that approximately 450 female offenders were on record, estimated to be a sufficient number to provide the project target of 70 female offenders.

However, case reports revealed that only about a third of these were active offenders, that is, those that actually committed some form of sexual abuse with a child. Over two-thirds of the female offenders on the Iowa Child Abuse Registry were passive offenders, placed there for failing to report or take action to prevent the sexual abuse of a child under their care. After the passive female offenders were



removed the female offender sampling frame for Iowa was narrowed to approximately 145 female perpetrators.

Letters explaining the project and requesting their participation were sent to the entire Iowa female offender sampling frame. A \$50 stipend was offered for their time. Extensive efforts were made to contact all the Iowa female perpetrators, including the few incarcerated in the Iowa state women's prison. Letters returned with addresses unknown were cross-referenced with other state agency records, such as motor vehicle registrations and AFDC files, to obtain the most current addresses. Post offices were also contacted and letters remailed to forwarding addresses. Followup letters were sent to those for whom there was no response. Because of lost addresses, the actual number of female offenders contacted was 113.

These efforts resulted in a sample of 30 Iowa females who participated in the interview. Over the course of the project 2 additional Iowa female offenders were added from updated registry records, bringing the total number of Iowa female offenders in the project to 32.

To supplement the sample of female offenders the sampling frame was expanded to adjacent midwest states. In cooperation with the Missouri Department of Social Services and the Missouri Attorney General's Office, the entire population of

female offenders on the Missouri Child Abuse Registry was added to the project sampling frame.

Because of differences in state laws and registry record-keeping differences, Missouri Department of Social Services personnel located names and addresses of the female offenders. Project staff had no control over this phase of the sampling, in contrast to their role with the Iowa female offenders. However, also in contrast to Iowa procedures, Missouri registry procedures separate active female offenders from passive female offenders, allowing them to provide us a clean list of approximately 280 active female perpetrators.

The Missouri female offenders in the sampling frame were sent letters by the Missouri Department of Social Services, soliciting their participation. The Missouri Department of Corrections was also contacted to gain access to the few female offenders incarcerated in their system. Because of difficulties entailed in working at a distance with the Missouri female offenders, extensive followup procedures to locate address unknowns or non-respondents were not entailed. The total number of female offenders obtained from Missouri was 25.

Finally, a small additional female offender sample supplement was obtained from therapists working with female child sexual abusers in the Minneapolis, Minnesota metropolitan. These provided the names of 8 additional female

offenders who were currently or had been in treatment who were willing to participate in the project. Together with the Iowa and Missouri female offenders this brought the total number of female offenders in the project to 65.

### Data Gathering

All respondents were administered a structured face-to-face interview by professionally trained interviewers from the Iowa State University Statistical Laboratory Survey Research Division. This interview, designed with assistance from the Statistical Laboratory, focused on offender characteristics and behavior. Included in the interview were questions and indexes designed to gather information about demographics, substance abuse and antisocial behavior, family background and relationships, sexual behavior patterns and history of sexual experiences, perceptions and definitions of child sexual abuse, and the investigation experience and consequences.

Each interview took approximately 2 hours to complete, and was conducted at the respondent's place of residence, or at a nearby mutually agreed upon location such as a library room, county extension office, school, etc. The distance interviewers travelled to meet with the offenders varied from just a few miles to overnight trips of several hundred miles. Almost all of the questions were read by the interviewer, who

recorded the respondent's answers, probing and clarifying where required. The respondent was asked, however, to fill out privately in paper-and pencil format a few of the more personal sections of the interview, such as the sexual behavior history.

### Interview Protocol

Demographics. A series of open-ended questions were asked of the respondents to gather demographic information about the offenders. Included in the interview were questions about age of offenders, highest education level, income, employment status and occupational status. Also asked were questions about place of residence, religious affiliation, and ethnic background.

Substance abuse and antisocial behavior. Several items were included in the interview schedule to assess social orthodoxy of the offenders. Among these were questions about the anti-social perpetrators' experiences as adolescents, such as running away from home, stealing, being arrested and/or appearing in juvenile court. Other questions focused on alcohol and drug abuse patterns.

Family background and relationships. The items and indexes tapping family background and relationships comprised one of the largest sections of the interview, and were divided

into two sub-sections: childhood and present family relationships.

With respect to childhood, several survey questions tapped aspects of the offenders' relationships with their parents. Included among these were questions about the marital relationships of their mothers and fathers. Also included were questions about the parenting styles of their mothers and fathers, including items focusing on levels of parental criticism, broken promises, and devaluing/diminution of the offenders as they were growing up.

Patterns of physical abuse experienced by the offenders during their adolescent years were measured by a modified form of the parent-to-child version of Straus' (1979) Conflict Tactics Scale. This index taps both severity and frequency of a broad range of abuse behavior, and has widely established validity and reliability (Straus and Gelles, 1990).

Other measures focused on family structure and patterns. Among these was included a Kantor and Lehr (1975) based index of family structure, which assessed the degree to which offenders' family of origin were characterized as close, open and/or random. The index used in this study was a modified version of a 22-item exploratory measure of family structure developed by Cox (1982).

With respect to more recent and current family experiences of the offenders items were included which focused

on the marriages and relationships of the offenders. Two of the three questions of Schumm's Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (Schumm, Paff-Fergen, Hatch, Obiorah, Copelan, Meens, and Bugaighis, 1986) were included, tapping marital satisfaction and satisfaction with the children of the offenders. Also included was a short form of Hoskin's (1987) Partner Relationship Inventory (Form II) which consists of two subscales. The interactional/emotional needs subscale consists of 27 items and assesses degree of interactional/emotional need fulfillment in an individual's relationship with partner. The sexual needs subscale taps degree of sexual need fulfillment in relationships. Questions were also asked about degree of sexual satisfaction in relationships with current partner or spouse, and degree of sexual involvement with other partners. Additionally, questions were included about promiscuity and prostitution.

Both a partner/spouse-to-respondent and a respondent-to-spouse/partner version of the Straus Conflict Tactics Scale were utilized to assess degree of physical abuse in marital relationships. These versions included 11 items which tapped both frequency and severity of physical violence received by the offenders' spouses or partners, as well as violence they committed on their spouses or partners.

Child sexual abuse patterns and perceptions. This portion of the questionnaire was developed for the project and

contained the most sensitive portion of the interview. The offenders were asked to fill out this paper-and-pencil section privately, although they were free to ask the interviewer for any help if they chose.

First, to gather information about the sexual victimization experiences of the offenders when the offenders were children, respondents were asked to think back to the time before they were 18 years old and consider a variety of sexual activities that others may have initiated with them. These activities ranged from exhibitionism and voyeurism to touching/fondling to sexual intercourse, anal intercourse, and sexual activities with animals (bestiality). For each category of sexual activity offenders were instructed to respond to a series of questions. Included were questions which gathered information about whether someone had initiated this activity with them before they were 18, who the first person to initiate this behavior was and what was this person's relationship to the offender, how old both the respondent and the initiator of this activity were when it occurred for the first time, how many others had initiated this activity with the respondent while the respondent was under 18 years of age, and what were the relationships of these other individuals to the respondent.

Then, for information about the offenders' perpetration of child sexual abuse, a parallel set of questions was asked

to gather information from the offenders about sexual activities they had initiated with individuals under 18 years of age. Among questions included were those which asked about whether the offenders had initiated any of a variety of sexual activities with an individual under 18 years of age, who this person was and how they were related to the offender, how old this person and the offender were when the offender first initiated this activity, what other individuals under age 18 the offender had initiated the particular sexual activity with, and the relationship of the offender to these other individuals.

In this section of the interview are also contained questions which tapped the offenders' willingness to acknowledge the child sexual abuse which the state had established they had committed and for which they had been placed on state child abuse registries. A Guttman-type scale, developed for this study, tapped the sexual abuse recognition threshold of the offenders. This was accomplished by posing a series of short-phrase vignettes, each of which represented a more severe level of sexual abuse than levels preceding, and having the offenders select the vignette level they first recognized as an instance of sexual abuse. Other questions tap the offenders' perceptions of the potential for rehabilitation of child sexual abusers, and penalties they



suggest for those who perpetrate such actions against children.

Included in this section as well is the short form of the Bem Sex-Role Inventory (Bem 1975, 1981). This 30-item index measures femininity and masculinity as two independent dimensions rather than as opposite ends of a single continuum. The short form, with high levels of internal consistency, has been reported to be psychometrically superior to the original Bem Sex-Role Inventory (Payne, 1985).

Investigation. A series of questions in the interview protocol focus on the offenders' experience of the investigation. Included are questions identifying various types of reactions the offenders may have experienced during the initiating investigation, such as anger, fear, shame, and other reactions. The legal consequences the offenders experienced as a result of their actions were also identified.

### Analysis

Due to the exploratory nature of the study, and the focus on developing a comparative profile of female and male child sexual abusers, data analysis techniques are primarily descriptive. Frequencies, percentages, and means are reported in both tabular and bar chart format, and t-test statistics are reported where appropriate.

### III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this exploratory study is to develop a comparative profile of female and male child sexual abusers. In keeping with this objective, findings from the study will be presented in this section to highlight differences and similarities between the two groups of offenders. Included in the comparisons is information about demographics, substance abuse and antisocial behavior, family background and relationships, child sexual abuse patterns and perceptions, and the investigation experience and consequences.

#### Demographics

Age. Table 1 shows the age distribution for the female and male offenders in the study. With the exception of one female offender aged 62, ages range from 18 to 49 for female offenders, but range much more broadly for male offenders, from 21 to 76 years of age. On the average, female offenders are almost 10 years younger than the male offenders, with means of 32.8 and 41.5, respectively ( $t = 5.24, p > .001$ ). Almost 80 percent of the females fall between 20 and 39 years of age, while nearly 70 percent of the males fall between 30 and 49 years of age.

One possible explanation for these age differences is that indeed female child sexual abusers tend to be younger

than male offenders. However, another equally tenable explanation is that the system may be more prone to identify younger women or less inclined to identify older women as perpetrators of child sexual abuse, if they are going to be identified at all. Perhaps both explanations may be true in part. Careful examination of perpetrator age in registry data across several states may provide useful information in this regard.

Education. In contrast to comparisons with age, differences in educational levels of female and male offenders, shown in Table 2, are very slight. Although education of male offenders, ranging from 4th grade to doctorate, is somewhat more dispersed than education of female offenders, which ranges from 7th grade to masters degree, mean education levels are almost identical (12.0 and 12.1, respectively). The largest single category is high school graduate, containing approximately 40 percent of the offenders for both females and males.

Thus, with respect to education, female and male offenders are very similar. Education for the largest majority of them ranges from some high school to high school graduation to some college or vocational training. Very few of them are college graduates.

Income. Table 3 shows a great difference between the average annual incomes of female and male offenders in the

study sample. Mean annual income (current to time of project interview) for females is approximately \$7250. Over 75 percent of the female offenders report incomes of less than \$10,000. Approximately 50 percent report less than \$5,000 annual income. Only two report annual incomes of more than \$30,000, and none report \$50,000 or more.

For male offenders, on the other hand, mean annual income is approximately \$18,700. However, even though a substantial number report earning between \$25,000 and \$50,000, a third of the male offenders report their income to be less than \$10,000 per year. Nearly 20 percent report their income as less than \$5,000 per year.

Although these income patterns reflect gender differences between men and women on a larger scale, they indicate that both the female and male child sexual abusers in this sample have lower incomes in general.

Occupation. Occupational status of the female and male child sexual abusers is shown in Table 4. Female offenders' occupational patterns tend to reflect traditional women's occupation roles, with the majority of the female offenders identifying themselves as service workers (47 percent), clerical (14 percent), laborers (13 percent), and homemakers (6 percent).

A most surprising finding is that almost 10 percent of the female offenders fit into professional categories. This

is about 3 1/2 times the proportion of male offenders who fit into professional categories. These female professionals include a clinical psychologist, nurses, nurse supervisors, lab technicians, etc., occupations which may provide adults with opportunities to be with children.

The predominant occupational categories of male offenders are craftsmen (29 percent) and operatives (19 percent), followed by service workers (13 percent) and laborers (12 percent). Nearly equal numbers fall into managerial occupations (9 percent) and farming (8 percent).

These findings indicate that the female and male offenders in this sample are for the most part in traditional, blue collar occupational categories. The question needing further exploration is the degree to which the occupational distribution of offenders on state child abuse registries reflects occupational distributions of offenders in general. Are they indeed representative, or do state registries tend to be over-represented by the lower occupational statuses?

Again, the most unexpected finding with respect to occupation is the striking proportion of female offenders in professional occupations which provide opportunity to interact with children.

Employment status. Almost the same number of female offenders report they are unemployed (43 percent) as report they are employed (45 percent). However, only 30 percent of

the employed female offenders are working full time. Furthermore, half of those reporting unemployment (21 percent) were not looking for employment at the time of the interview. Interestingly, about 10 percent of the female offenders report themselves as disabled.

Over 70 percent of male offenders, on the other hand, are fully employed, with an additional 5 percent working part-time. About 13 percent are unemployed, but only 4 percent of these are not looking for work. An additional 10 percent of the male offenders are disabled or retired.

If those offenders who are students, retired, or disabled are dropped from labor pool calculations, the discrepancies between employment status of female and male offenders are even greater. Almost 80 percent of the male offenders in this reduced pool are fully employed, 6 percent employed part time, and 10 percent unemployed but looking for work.

The contrast with female offenders is quite striking. Within the reduced pool of potential workers, 35 percent of female offenders are fully employed and 16 percent working part-time. However, nearly 1 in 4 (24 percent) of the female offenders are unemployed but looking for work.

These findings suggest that employment may be a less stable experience for female offenders than for male offenders. In fact, the proportions of male offenders with full-time employment and male offenders unemployed but looking

for work is not dramatically different from employment patterns among men in general. This pattern runs counter to the myth still held by many that child sexual abusers are characterized by high degrees of unemployment. The findings of this study suggest that this may be true of female offenders, but not necessarily true for male offenders, at least caretaker offenders.

Place of residence. At time of interview over 70 percent of the male offenders lived in single family dwellings, in contrast to the 46 percent reported by female offenders. (See Table 6). Twice as many female offenders (32 percent) live in apartments as male offenders (16 percent). Furthermore, over 45 percent of male offenders report they own their place of dwelling compared to just 15 percent for female offenders. A little over 15 percent of female offenders were incarcerated for child sexual abuse at the time of interview, compared to slightly more than 5 percent for males.

These findings indicate that the female offenders may be more geographically mobile than male offenders, at least in the sense that it would be much less difficult for the female offenders to move than for the males. This notion is supported anecdotally by the experience of the interviewers on the project, who reported that the female offenders were more difficult to track down for an interview than the male offenders, even after initial contact had been made to set up

an interview. Several of the female offenders had no single specific place where they lived. Instead they lived in three or four places almost simultaneously, moving back and forth and around almost randomly in the course of a few weeks' time.

Religious affiliation. Religious affiliation of the female and male child sexual abusers is reported in Table 7, which provides some very interesting information about differences between female and male child sexual abusers within affiliation. The most noticeable difference occurs within the Baptist affiliation. Almost 1 in 4 of the female offenders (24 percent) list Baptist as their religious preference, which is twice the proportion of male offenders who list Baptist as their preference (12 percent). Just the opposite occurs for the Lutheran and Methodist affiliations. Almost 19 percent of male offenders list Lutheran as their preference, in contrast to the 8 percent of female offenders who list Lutheran. The contrast is even greater for the Methodist affiliation, which is listed by less than 5 percent of female offenders but by more than 13 percent of male offenders.

The contrast between female and male offenders in the other religious affiliation categories noted is not nearly so great, although female offenders are more likely to list none or other/non-denominational categories than men. The



proportions of female and male offenders listing Catholic and Pentecostal is nearly identical.

Several explanations could be offered to explain the patterns in Table 7. Their could be some sampling "bounce" because of the number of religious affiliation categories present relative to the sample size. However, this alone would not be a completely viable explanation for the large differences between proportions of female and male offenders in the most frequently listed affiliation categories.

Another possibility suggested by the patterns in Table 7 is that different religious perspectives may differentially contribute to belief/behavior patterns held by women and men, patterns that might be in some indirect way associated with child sexual abuse perpetration. Recent studies are noting that sex offenders are among the most religious groups in prison (Alford, Grey, and Kasper, 1988). Also, it may not be religious affiliation per se, but religious commitment to a set of beliefs or consequences of such commitment that would be the more important factor to study (Brutz and Allen, 1986). Unfortunately, though the data are suggestive, researching such possibilities is beyond the confines of this present exploratory study.

Ethnicity. Table 8 reports the ethnic background of the female and male offenders of the study. Over 92 percent of the females and 95 percent of the males are white, non-

Hispanic. Two each of the female and male offenders are American Indian, three female and one male offender are black, and one male offender is hispanic. In essence, the sample is a very homogeneous and midwestern sample of white female and male offenders.

### Substance Abuse and Antisocial Behavior

Substance abuse. Alcohol and substance abuse are frequently reported associated with the sexual abuse of children. In this study respondents were asked during the interview if they were alcoholics, and if they had ever used drugs. About 17 percent of the female offenders and 21 percent of the male offenders indicated they were alcoholics. Although the proportion of male offenders so responding (1 in 5) is higher than the proportion of female offenders (1 in 6), these differences are slight.

With respect to ever having used drugs, 26 percent of female offenders and 24 percent of male offenders indicated that they had used drugs. The proportions are almost identical (1 in 4 for both female and male offenders).

These findings would indicate that the majority of both female and male child sexual abusers who are substantiated for caretaker abuse are not substance abusers. About 80 percent of both female and male offenders do not consider themselves

alcoholics, and about 75 percent report never having used drugs.

Antisocial behavior. Deviant social behavior is another area often mentioned in discussions of the perpetration of child sexual abuse. Table 10 shows selected indicators of antisocial behavior for the female and male child sexual abusers in the study. The first of these selected indicators, traffic tickets ever, refers to the offenders' driving history to date of interview. The other three selected indicators, theft, running away, and arrest/juvenile court appearances, focus on antisocial behavior of the offenders during their adolescence.

The greatest discrepancy between female and male offenders is with number of traffic tickets, the least socially deviant behavior identified in Table 10. Mean number of tickets is approximately 5 for male offenders, 2 for female offenders ( $t = 5.20$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Almost 50 percent of females report never having received a ticket, compared to only 7 percent for males.

For more serious deviations, differences between female and male offenders are much less. Mean number of thefts during adolescence is only slightly higher for males (2.9) than for females (2.6), as is mean number of times arrested or appeared in juvenile court (0.9 and 0.5, respectively).

However, mean number of times run away from home is

higher for female offenders (1.8) than for male offenders (1.2), a reflection of the fact that 43 percent of female offenders report they ran away from home as adolescents (43 percent) compared to only 23 percent for male offenders ( $z = 4.56, p < .001$ ).

These findings tend to support the notion that female and male offenders may enact antisocial behavior along more traditional gender lines. Male offenders may choose more aggressive modes of deviant behavior than female offenders. The higher proportion of female offenders who report running away from home as adolescents may also indicate that female offenders have even more difficult experiences in their families of orientation than male offenders. Family background and relationships will be discussed in the next section.

#### Family Background and Relationships

In this section selected characteristics of the family of orientation of the respondents, and aspects of the relationships of the offenders to their parents, will be discussed first. Following will be a discussion of aspects of the female and male offenders present family relationships.

Parent's marital stability. In Table 11 is noted the number of spouses or live-in partners of the mothers of the offenders. The majority of female and male offenders report

their fathers and mothers had only one spouse/partner. These proportions, however, are noticeably less for female offenders (51 percent) than for male offenders (64 percent). With respect to the offenders' mothers, approximately 26 percent of female offenders report their mothers had two partners and 11 percent three or more, while 9 percent did not know. For male offenders, on the other hand, only 16 percent of their mothers had two partners, 9 percent 3 or more, and only 4 percent did not know.

Similar figures are obtained for the fathers of the offenders (see Table 12). Again, fathers with one partner only is reported by the majority of both female and male offenders. Again though, this proportion is higher for male offenders (69 percent) than for female offenders (55 percent). About 23 percent of female offenders reported their fathers had two partners, 17 percent three or more, and 5 percent did not know. In comparison, only 12 percent of male offenders reported that their fathers had two partners, 15 percent three or more, and 3 percent didn't know.

The finding that for both female and male offenders the majority of their parents had only one spouse or partner, particularly so for the male offenders, is counter to the prevailing notion that offenders typically come from broken homes. Perhaps non-caretaker offenders have different patterns, but at least for the sample in this study monogamous

parental relationships were the mode. However, it is interesting that female offenders were more likely to have parents who have been part of multiple spousal/live-in relationships than male offenders. These findings suggest that female offenders may be more likely to come from broken homes and unstable parental relationships than male offenders.

Parent-child interaction. Six questions were asked of each respondent about the parenting style of their parents. These questions focused on the degree of criticism, devaluation and failure to keep commitments of the offenders' mothers and fathers.

In Table 13 are results for the three indicators of mother's parenting style. Mean levels for mother's criticism are 2.7 and 2.3 for female and male offenders, respectively ( $t = 2.71, p < .01$ ). For mother's devaluation means are 2.4 and 1.8, respectively ( $t = 3.11, p < .005$ ), and for mother's breaking of commitments 1.8 and 1.3, respectively ( $t = 3.68, p < .001$ ). For each indicator, female offenders report significantly higher levels of negative aspect of their interaction with their mothers than do male offenders.

Differences are not as great for female and male child sexual abusers' reports of father's parenting style. Mean levels of father's criticism is almost identical for female and male offenders (2.4 and 2.5, respectively). Although not statistically significant, female offenders report higher

levels of father's devaluation than male offenders. Only with respect to father's breaking promises are differences significant ( $t = 2.02$ ,  $p < .05$ ), with the mean for female offenders (1.8) again higher than that for male offenders (1.5).

Interestingly, comparison of Tables 13 and 14 also show that for female offenders, negative interaction levels were higher with mothers than with fathers. For male offenders, the opposite pattern is true. For males, negative interaction levels are higher with fathers than with mothers.

These patterns show that female offenders report higher levels of negative interaction with their parents than male offenders, particularly with their mothers. They also suggest that higher levels of negative interaction between the child sexual abusers and their parents may occur with the offender and parent of the same gender.

Physical abuse of offenders by parents. Research has suggested that a critical period of physical abuse by parents is during the children's adolescence. It is abuse during the teenage years which may be more closely associated with later spouse and child abuse, after the teenager becomes an adult (Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz, 1980). In Table 15 are comparisons of various forms of physical abuse received by female and male child sexual abusers when they were in junior or senior high school from their parents.

For female offenders, proportions reporting physical abuse from their parents during adolescents are highest for being slapped (55 percent) and being hit with an object (45 percent), followed by being spanked (42 percent) and pushed, grabbed, or shoved (40 percent). The same percentages of female offenders report having had an object thrown at them, having been kicked, bitten or hit with fist, and having been beatup (22 percent). For the most severe forms of physical violence, 3 percent of female offenders report having been burned or scalded by their parents during adolescence, threatened with a knife or gun (5 percent) or having had a knife or gun used on them (2 percent).

As was the case for female offenders, for male offenders the highest category reported is also being slapped by parents (33 percent). This was followed with slightly smaller of male offenders proportions reporting having been pushed, grabbed or shoved (31 percent), or spanked (31 percent). Next were proportions of male offenders reporting being hit with an object (21 percent), kicked, bitten, or hit with fist (17 percent), having something thrown at them (12 percent), and being beaten up (11 percent). Of the most severe forms of violence, only being threatened with a knife or gun was reported (1 percent). No male offenders reported having been burned/scalded, or having experienced a parent using a knife or gun on them.



The most noticeable pattern in Table 15 is that female child sexual abusers report higher levels of parental physical violence during their adolescence than male child sexual abusers. This is true for each type of physical violence, from having something thrown at them to having had a knife or gun used on them. These differences are greatest for reports of being slapped ( $t = 2.66$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and being hit with an object ( $t = 2.97$ ,  $p < .01$ ), with female offenders much more likely to report these experiences than male offenders. With respect to other levels of abuse, though differences do not reach statistical significance, reports for female offenders are higher by 10 percent or more than reports for male offenders for the following: having had something thrown at them, having been pushed, grabbed, or shoved, spanked, or beaten up. Furthermore, only female offenders report having been burned or scalded, or having had a parent use a knife or gun on them.

These findings show that the female and male child sexual abusers experienced high levels of physical violence during their adolescence. The findings suggest that, with respect to parental violence experienced, life in the family of origin for the female offender when she was an adolescent was a much more violent experience than it may have been for male offenders.

Family structure. Family structure has also been suggested as a possible key influence in the perpetration of child sexual abuse. To tap family structure, in this study was an exploratory family structure measure based on Kantor and Lehr's closed, open, and random family structure dimensions. In closed families, family togetherness and conformity are emphasized. In the extreme, this emphasis may become quite rigid, even to the point of suppressing and denying individual growth and autonomy needs of family members.

The open family is not so rigid and set. The growth and stability needs of both the family and individual family members are mutually emphasized. The open family structure is more fluid, flexibly changing and adapting so that these dual needs can be met. Last, in random families individual needs predominate over the needs of the family as a whole. Family structure tends to be sporadic and possibly chaotic. Among family members family boundaries, with their concurrent sense of "we"-ness and belonging, may be weak to non-existent.

Among characteristics of sexually abusive families which have been identified in the literature are social isolation of the family, patriarchal control and dominance, and inhibition of family member individuation. These characteristics are quite similar to those identified by Kantor and Lehr as components of the closed family structure.

In Table 16 are mean levels of closedness, openness, and randomness in the families of origins as reported by female and male child sexual abusers. Differences between female and male offenders are almost negligible across all three family structure characteristics. Both groups of offenders report their families of origin highest on closedness, next highest on openness, and least on randomness.

These patterns support the idea that sexual abuse may occur more often in closed families than in other types. Though typically this hypothesis is stated with victims of child sexual abuse in mind, these findings suggest that the pattern may also be true in the family background of perpetrators as well. Future research is needed to test this hypothesis. Most important for this study, however, is the finding that family structure may be very similar for both female and male child sexual abusers.

Stability of marital/live-in relationships of offenders.

Table 17 shows the pattern for number of spouses/partners reported by female and male child sexual abusers. Mean number of spouses/partners for female offenders is 2.1, and for male offenders, 2.3. For both groups of offenders number of spouses/partners range from 0 to 7, although one male reported 20 partners. Furthermore, female and male child sexual offenders have almost identical profiles. Very few

Satisfaction with sexual relationships. Table 19 shows that 83 percent of female offenders, and 70 percent are moderately to extremely satisfied with their spouse/partner. At the other end of the range 8 percent of the female offenders and 20 percent of the male offenders report being moderately to extremely unsatisfied with their partner.

Thus, the pattern of sexual satisfaction is offset to higher levels of satisfaction with partner for female child sexual abusers than for male child sexual abusers. Though the differences are not statistically significant, men are less satisfied in their sexual relationships with their spouses/partners than females. Upon first glance, these findings may support, indirectly, the idea that child sexual abusers turn to children if their sexual need fulfillment is unmet or blocked in their relationships with their spouses. spouses/partners. However, the findings seem to provide much less support for this hypothesis for female offenders than for male offenders.

Table 20 shows distributions for female and male child sexual abusers' perceptions of how satisfied their spouse/partners are with their sexual relationship with respondent. Patterns are very similar to those shown in Table 19 for offenders' satisfaction with sexual relationship with partner. The proportions of offenders who are satisfied or dissatisfied with their sexual relationship with their partner

are the same as the proportions for perceptions of how satisfied the partners are perceived as being with their sexual relationships with the offenders.

Number of different sexual partners. Table 21 shows number of different sexual partners within the last five years for female and male child sexual abusers. Mean number of partners for female offenders is 3.6 and for males, 2.7, a difference approaching statistical significance ( $t = 1.73$ ,  $p < .09$ ). Almost half of the male offenders (47 percent) report only one sexual partner in the last five years compared to only one quarter of the female offenders (26 percent). At the other extreme, 9 percent of the female offenders report more than 10 partners, compared to only 1 percent for the male offenders.

On the basis of these findings, it may be that female child sexual abusers are more sexually active than male child sexual abusers. If so, such a pattern might run against commonly held beliefs, in which men are considered more sexually active than women, particularly male child sexual abusers.

Paid sex. In Table 22 are figures for percentages of female and male perpetrators reporting paid sex. The table includes percentages both for offenders who were paid by others to have sex with them, as well as for offenders who paid others to have sex. Slightly more than 15 percent of the

female offenders were paid by others for sex, with 12 percent of these by more than 2 to 10 or more different people. Slightly more than 5 percent of the male offenders also reported being paid by others for sex, 3 percent by 2 to more than 10 different people. On the other hand, none of the female offenders paid others for sex, compared to 21 percent of the male offenders.

These findings indicate that a moderate proportion of female offenders may also be or have been prostitutes. To a lesser degree this may be true of male offenders as well. If so, these findings, which are based on a sample of perpetrators who abused children who were considered under their care, may indicate that children of prostitutes, female or male, may be at higher risk of child sexual abuse than others.

Emotional/interactional and sexual intimacy needs. An idea suggested in the literature is that intimacy needs of females and males may differentiate along gender lines. In intimate relationships men may be more focused on having their sexual needs met while women may be more likely to seek satisfaction for their needs for love and affection. The implications of this possibility is that the goals of women and men in intimate relationships may also be manifest in differences between female and male child sexual abusers.

Data in Table 23 do not support this hypotheses. As predicted, mean levels of emotional/intimacy needs reported by female offenders (49.3) are significantly higher ( $t = 3.25$ ,  $p < .01$ ) than means for male offenders (35.1). However, so are mean levels of sexual needs. Mean level of sexual need for females is 39.9, and for males, 26.5 ( $t = 2.88$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

Patterns in Table 21 indicate that female offenders report more need for both emotional/interactional intimacy and sexual intimacy than do male offenders. Just as interesting is the finding that male offenders have higher needs for emotional/interactional intimacy than needs for sexual intimacy, a finding which runs counter to conceptions held by many professionals. Although female offenders express higher need overall, the pattern, in which sexual need fulfillment is not as preeminent as emotional/interactional need fulfillment, is the same for both groups of offenders.

Spouse/partner physical abuse. Table 24 shows proportions of female and male child sexual abusers who report ever having physically abused their spouse/partner. For both female and male child sexual abusers, the three least severe acts of violence, pushing, grabbing and shoving; slapping; and throwing something at spouse are the most frequently perpetrated acts of violence.

Interestingly, female offenders are higher than male offenders in seven out of the nine categories of respondent-

for female offenders and 10 percent for male offenders. And again, only female offenders report experiencing being burned or scalded by their spouse/partner (5 percent) or having their spouse/partner use a knife or gun on them (3 percent).

The levels of physical marital violence reported by female and male offenders, both committed and received, are very high. These levels of violence suggest that the proportion of conflicted spousal relationships among offenders, more so with female offenders than with male offenders, may be quite high, along with the potential for serious injury to both partners. Particularly for female offenders, the image these findings convey especially when coupled with levels of marital satisfaction reported (see Table 18) is of troubled and not overly-satisfying unions.

### Child Sexual Abuse Patterns and Perceptions

In this section are reported findings about the child sexual abuse committed by the female and male offenders, and the child sexual abuse victimization the offenders themselves experienced when they were children. Also reported are findings about the attitudes and perceptions held by the female and male offenders pertaining to child sexual abuse.

Relationship of offenders to their victims. In the sexual behavior history portion of the interview respondents



were asked to list their relationship to children with whom they had initiated sexual activities. These activities range in severity from exhibitionism and voyeurism to touching and fondling to oral intercourse, sexual intercourse, anal intercourse and sexual activities with animals (bestiality). Sexual abuse is identified as a sexual activity initiated by the perpetrator a) with a relative who is a minor, or b) with a non-relative who is a minor, at least three years younger than the perpetrator, and not identified as husband, wife, boyfriend, or girlfriend. The relationships of perpetrators to the children with whom they committed these acts are noted in Table 26.

One of the first patterns noticed in Table 26 is that there are more than three times as many reports of sexual victimization of children by male offenders (82) than victimization of children by female offenders (27). Even so, for both groups of offenders these figures are underestimates, especially for female offenders. If all female perpetrators had reported at least the substantiated sexual abuse of the child for which child protective services had placed them on the state registry, at minimum there should be 65 instances of child sexual abuse.

Of those child sexual abusers who self-report abuse, both female and male offenders are more likely to report victimizing a child of the opposite sex than a child of the

same sex. For female perpetrators, 63 percent of the reported victims are males compared to 27 percent for female victims, and for male perpetrators, 88 percent of their reported victims are female compared to 12 percent for male victims.

The victims of the female and male offenders are listed in Table 26 according to the closeness of the relationship. The largest category of sexually abusive relationships reported are with the natural, step, adopted or foster children of the offenders, with almost identical percentages reported for female offenders (56 percent) and male offenders (45 percent). Step, half, and natural brothers and sisters are the reported victims for 11 percent of the female offenders and 11 percent of the male offenders. No female offenders report abusing grandchildren, although abuse of natural or step-granddaughters is reported by 7 percent of the male offenders.

A surprising percentage of sexual victimization occurred with other members of the extended families of the offenders, including natural and step-uncles, niece and nephews, male and female cousins, and even a sister-in-law. These extended family victims are reported by 11 percent of female offenders but by 22 percent of male offenders. For male offenders, the reports of sexual abuse of other extended family members are three times those reported for the abuse of grandchildren.

Almost all the remainder of the victims are acquaintances or known by the offenders, including children and siblings of boyfriends and girlfriends, friends of siblings, baby-sitters, and schoolmates. However this category represents only a small proportion of the victims of the offenders, 7 percent for female offenders and 12 percent for male offenders. Last, only 7 percent of female offenders report sexually abusing a child who is a stranger, and only 1 percent of male offenders.

In summary, findings in Table 26 indicate that males may be more willing self-report child sexual abuse they commit than female offenders. Findings also indicate that victims of perpetrators tend to be of the opposite sex more often than of the same sex, though this seems to be much more the case with male offenders than female offenders. Additionally, the victims are primarily members of the immediate or/and the extended family, particularly relationships with more collateral relatives. Noticeably smaller proportions of victims reported by the female and male child sexual abusers are non-relative acquaintances and strangers. These patterns may reflect the composition of the sample, comprised of perpetrators who sexually abused children while in caretaker roles.

Severity and relationship locus of child sexual abuse perpetrated. In Table 27 child sexual abuse perpetration by

the female and male offenders is broken down by severity of the abuse perpetrated, and relationship locus of the abuse along an immediate family-stranger continuum. More than one abuse relationship can be reported.

The most frequently reported types of abuse for both female and male child sexual abusers are touching and fondling, followed closely by exhibitionism and voyeurism. Less frequently reported are oral and sexual intercourse, and only one instance each of anal intercourse or bestiality is reported by female and male offenders. Thus, contrary to thought popular with many, child sexual abuse does not require sexual, or even oral or anal intercourse. For both groups of offenders, the most frequent forms may be the mildest forms.

Data in Table 27 also indicate that the locus of perpetrated child sexual abuse is primarily within the family for both offender groups, across all levels of sexual abuse severity. However, for every level of severity male offenders are noticeably more likely than female offenders to report sexually abusing children in the extended family.

Interestingly, though male offenders are more likely to report sexually abusing children in the extended family, it is female offenders who are more likely sexually abuse children who are strangers. They, not the male offenders, report having exposed themselves or secretly watched children with whom they are not acquainted, having touched or fondled

them, and having had sexual intercourse with them. This finding runs seems to run counter to commonly held notions about sexuality of women and men, in that men are supposedly more venturesome and more likely to seek varied types of sexual relationships.

Gender relationships of offenders and their victims.

Table 28 highlights the relationships of female and male offender gender to gender of their sexually abused child victim, by level of severity of the abuse. The male offender/female victim is the most frequently reported relationship. This ranges from 47 percent for oral intercourse to 57 percent for exposing/voyeurism to 62 percent for the touching/fondling category. (The category labelled other, with only two instances reported is not included in these comparisons.) Least frequently reported is the male offender/male victim relationship, which ranges from 7 percent for touching/fondling to 9 percent for exposing/voyeurism to 20 percent for oral intercourse.

Proportions for female offenders fall in between. Female offender/male victims is the second most frequently reported relationship, though at substantially lower levels than male offender/female victim relationships. Approximately 23 percent of reported exposing/voyeurism occurs with female offender/male victim relationships, 18 percent for

touching/fondling, and 13 percent for oral intercourse. Female offender/female victim relationships, the third most frequently reported relationship, range from 11 percent for exposing voyeurism to 13 percent for touching/fondling to 20 percent for oral intercourse.

Only two offender gender/victim gender relationships are possible for sexual intercourse, male/female and female/male. Table 28 shows that for this category, 60 percent of the sexual intercourse was between male offenders and female victims, and 40 percent was between female offenders and male victims.

Interestingly, with respect to the less severe sexual abuse categories of exposing/voyeurism and touching/fondling, for male offenders female victims were much more frequently reported than male victims. Differences between male offender/female victim and male offender/male victim proportions for oral intercourse were much less, though male perpetrator/female victim proportions were still higher.

In contrast, differences in proportions of female and male victims were much less for female offenders. Although more female offenders reported male victims than female victims for exposing/voyeurism, similar proportions were reported for touching and fondling, and with respect to oral intercourse, female offenders reported more female victims than male victims.

These findings suggest that, although more male offenders report sexually abusing children than female offenders, female offenders may be less discriminating about the gender of their sexual abuse victims than male offenders. However, male offenders are much less discriminating about victim gender with oral intercourse, compared to figures for exposing/voyeurism and touching/fondling. Last, these findings suggest that for both female and male child sexual abusers the less severe acts of child sexual abuse are the most frequently occurring.

Relationship of offenders to persons who sexually abused them. In table 29 are reported relationships of the female and male child sexual abusers to individuals who sexually abused the offenders when the offenders themselves were children. This table parallels Table 26, though in this table the offenders are seen as the victims, rather than the perpetrators, of child sexual abuse.

Many more relationships are reported for the victimization of the respondents than are reported for them as perpetrators. Furthermore, 73 percent of the victimization relationships are reported by female offenders and only 27 percent by male offenders. This pattern is just opposite that observed for reports of perpetration (see Table 26), where males reported perpetrating more than females. However, it is consistent, for in both tables the most reported

relationship was that of male perpetrator/female victim. However, it is interesting that while female offenders report substantially more victimization experiences than perpetration experiences, patterns for male offenders are just opposite. Male offenders report more perpetration experiences than victimization experiences.

The findings in Table 29 also show that opposite gender pairings are the sexually abusive relationships more likely to be reported. Male perpetrator/female victim relationships comprise 57 percent of the total reported relationships, and female offender/male victim comprise another 18 percent. However, the male perpetrator/male offender proportion is also 19 percent of the total. The female perpetrator/female offender proportion is the smallest, 6 percent.

With respect to gender, the proportions of female offenders abused by male and female perpetrators, respectively, is 91 percent and 9 percent. For male offenders, corresponding percentages are 51 and 49 percent respectively. That is, male offenders are almost equally likely to report they were abused by female perpetrators when they were children as by male perpetrators.

For female offenders, natural, step and foster fathers and mothers were their abusers in 24 percent of the reports, compared to only 10 percent for male offenders. Natural and half brothers and sisters accounted for only 4 percent of the



victimization of female offenders, but 29 percent for of the victimization of the male offenders. Grandfathers only account for only 4 percent of the sexual victimization relationships reported by female offenders, and none of the sexual abuse of the male offenders.

The extended family also accounts for a sizeable proportion of the offenders' reports of sexual abuse when they were children. For females, this includes step and natural uncles, aunts, step-nephews and step-nieces, and cousins, accounting for 18 percent of the reports. The corresponding proportion for males is much higher, 31 percent.

Acquaintances and individuals known to the offenders who sexually abused them when they were children are reported in higher proportions than the offenders themselves reported victimizing. These include boyfriends and girlfriends, friends of parents and siblings, baby-sitters, classmates, neighbors, teachers, ministers, and others. The proportion of female offenders reporting sexual abuse from acquaintances and individuals known is 28 percent, higher than the male offenders equivalent proportion of 20 percent.

Last, strangers comprise a much higher proportion of the offenders victimization experiences than they reported sexually abusing themselves (see Table 26). This is more the case for female than male offenders. About 24 percent of female offenders report having been sexually abused by

strangers when they (the offenders) were children, compared to only 10 percent for male offenders.

Several possibilities are suggested for these findings. Perhaps individuals are even more reluctant to talk about their sexual abuse perpetration experiences than their sexual abuse victimization. The pattern that female offenders report more victimization than perpetration experiences whereas male offenders report more perpetration than victimization experiences is intriguing, and bears further exploration to determine the dynamics of the interplay between gender and child sexual abuse perpetration and victimization. These findings also suggest that extended family members may play a more significant role in the sexual abuse of children than has been considered previously.

Severity and relationship locus of child sexual abuse experienced. In Table 30 are reported findings for relationship locus across levels of severity of sexual abuse for childhood sexual abuse experienced by female and male offenders. Patterns are similar to those in Table 27, where the least severe exhibitionism/voyeurism and touching/fondling categories were most frequently reported, and where male offenders were more likely report experiences with extended family members than female offenders.

With the exception of the exhibitionism/voyeurism category, both groups of offenders report the highest

proportions of victimization relationships with members of the immediate and extended family. Proportions for female and male offenders for touching/fondling are 71 percent and 73 percent, respectively; for oral intercourse 77 percent and 71 percent, respectively; for sexual intercourse 53 percent and 78 percent respectively, and for anal intercourse or bestiality 50 percent and 100 percent respectively. For exhibitionism/voyeurism only 45 percent of female offenders compared to 65 percent of male offenders report victimization experiences within the immediate and extended family, the lowest proportions of any of the severity categories.

On the other hand, female offenders report almost half of their exhibitionism/voyeurism victimization experiences occurred with strangers (48 percent) compared to one-quarter for male offenders (25 percent). Particularly noticeable is the percentage for sexual intercourse victimization by strangers, 42 percent for female offenders and none for male offenders. Though not as high, percentages for victimization experiences with strangers in other categories of child sexual abuse are still higher than corresponding perpetration experiences reported by the offenders in Table 27.

In sum, the dispersion of reported child sexual abuse across the relationship locus is wider for victimization experiences than for perpetration experiences. The difference is also more noticeable for female offenders than for males.

Again, as was the case with reported perpetration experiences though the pattern is not as strong, male offenders more than female offenders report that their sexual abuse experiences occurred within the immediate and extended family.

Gender relationships of offenders with their abusers.

In Table 31 are percentages for relationships of offenders to the abusers who sexually victimized them when the offenders were children. These are shown by gender of offender across levels of severity of sexual abuse.

The most frequently reported relationship between offenders and their abusers is female offender/male abusers, accounting for 56 percent of exposing/voyeurism reports, 53 percent of touching/fondling, 50 percent of oral intercourse, 68 percent of sexual intercourse, and 40 percent of anal intercourse/bestiality.

Interestingly, percentages for males reporting male abusers and male reporting female abusers, the next most frequently reported relationship, are about the same. For male offender/male abuser percentages are 15 percent for exposing/voyeurism, 25 percent for touching/fondling, 36 percent for oral intercourse, and percent for anal intercourse/bestiality. (Sexual intercourse is not a category for male offender/male abuser.) For male offenders/female abusers, percentages are 28 percent for exposing/voyeurism,

20 percent for touching/fondling, 15 percent for oral intercourse, and 32 percent for sexual intercourse.

These reports of male offenders being sexually abused when they were children by females are an important finding of this study. Reports of sexual abuse by females in studies of adult male survivors, and of rapists, suggest that researchers should begin to pay more attention to the role of female child sexual abuse in the development of male perpetrators, whether in incestuous relationships or with non-family members. One hypothesis is that some who sexually abuse women may be displacing anger at having been sexually abused as a child by a female, such as a mother, aunt, older sister, etc., onto other women whom they victimize.

Acknowledgement of guilt. An important set of findings is contained in Table 32, which reports the proportions of female and male child sexual abusers who acknowledge their sexual abuse or maintain their innocence. These offenders have all been substantiated by state authorities for child sexual abuse, yet during the interview their acknowledgement of this fact varied from sorrowful agreement to hot denial.

There is a large difference between the percentage of female offenders who acknowledge their guilt (27 percent) and male offenders who acknowledge their guilt (48 percent,  $t = 2.64$ ,  $p < .01$ ). One possible explanation is that the sexual abuse of a child is experienced as being a more deviant act for

a women than for a man, and therefore more difficult to acknowledge. Another explanation is that the social services have less experience with female offenders, since child protective services personnel typically are not perceptually, normatively, and experientially trained to anticipate female child sexual abusers. As a consequence, CPS workers may be more at risk for a false substantiation in the investigation of reported female offenders than with reported male offenders. Other studies will be needed to explore these and other possible explanations for the disparity in guilt acknowledgement more thoroughly.

Sexual abuse recognition thresholds. Included in the interview was a Guttman-type scale consisting of five item-length vignettes which were designed to assess the threshold at which female and male child sexual abusers perceptually recognized an activity as sexual abuse. Respondents were asked to suppose that a man and a women were engaged, and that the women had decided that she wished to wait until after they were married before engaging in sexual relations. Respondents were then read a series of item-vignettes representing possible responses of her partner. These item-vignettes were arranged in order of increasing severity. After each item, respondents were asked if this (the response in the item-vignette) was sexual abuse. Responses were coded for the first item which the female and male offenders considered an

instance of abuse. (The item-vignette response categories are noted in Table 33.)

Surprisingly, female offenders have higher mean sexual abuse recognition thresholds (3.6) than male offenders (3.2,  $t = 2.26$ ,  $p < .03$ ). Only 14 percent of female offenders reached their sexual abuse recognition threshold with the unwanted sexual activity suggested or sexual jokes and remarks made categories, compared to 27 percent of the female offenders. Further, for 20 percent of the female offenders the recognition threshold was not reached until the highest category, sexual relations forced, compared to only 7 percent of male offenders whose threshold was not reached till this level. One female did not consider even forced sexual relations by the partner of the engaged woman an act of sexual abuse.

These findings run counter to notions about the sensitivity of women and men to perception and definitions of sexual abuse. They suggest that male offenders are more sensitive to the sexual abuse of women than are female offenders themselves. Perhaps this lack of sensitivity on the part of female offenders to sexual abuse thresholds is part of a larger lack of sensitivity to normative bounds which surround appropriate and inappropriate sexual relationships (such as those with children). The determination of why male

offenders are more sensitive than female offenders is puzzling, however.

Gender identity. Scores for female and male child sexual abusers on the short form of the BEM Sex-Role Inventory are reported in Table 34, scaled to range from 0 to 100. Differences between the two groups of offenders fall in traditional directions. Male offenders have higher mean scores on masculinity (64.3) than female offenders (59.0,  $t = 1.94$ ,  $p < .06$ ), and female offenders have mean higher scores on femininity (83.0) than male offenders (76.7,  $t = 2.81$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

However, the interesting finding is that males score higher on the femininity scale than they score on the masculinity scale. Male offender gender score patterns are quite similar to female offender gender score patterns. These findings suggest that male child sexual abusers, at least those identified and substantiated by state child protective services, may be more characterized by affectionate, sensitive, supportive, and gentle attributes typical of the female gender identity stereotype than by aggressive, assertive, forceful, and independent attributes of the male gender identity stereotype.

Penalties suggested for the sexual abuse of children.

In Table 35 are reported the penalties suggested by female and male offenders which should be given to those who sexually



abuse children. The highest proportions of both female and male offenders, 43 percent and 65 percent, respectively, suggest probation and mandated treatment for such acts. The next highest proportion are towards the other end of the continuum. Ten years to life in prison is chosen by 22 percent of the female offenders and 9 percent of the male offenders, while another 15 percent of the female offenders and 5 percent of the male offenders suggest 2 to 10 years in prison. Least frequently suggested, and this by only by 1 percent of the male offenders, was probation, no mandated treatment.

Another interesting pattern manifests itself in Table 35, however. Female offenders choose harsher penalties for child sexual abusers than male offenders. More male offenders than female offenders recommend the three least severe consequences, but more female offenders than male offenders recommend each of the four most severe categories.

Again, this pattern may be an indication that female offenders consider child sexual abuse a greater deviation than males. And, coupled with their lower rates of acknowledgement of their own sexual abuse of children (Table 32), may reflect a greater level of denial of sexual abuse of children than that manifest by male child sexual abusers.

Likelihood that child sexual abusers can change their behavior. The proportions of female and male offenders who

consider it likely that child sexual abusers can change their behavior is shown in Table 36. For both groups of offenders, the large majority state that it is somewhat or very likely that perpetrators of child sexual abuse can change their behavior. However, there are differences between female and male offenders with respect to the degree to which they perceive this is possible.

While approximately 20 percent of both female and male offenders are not sure if child sexual abusers can change their behavior, less female offenders (60 percent) than male offenders (71 percent) report change to be very likely or somewhat likely. At the other end of the continuum more female offenders (20 percent) than male offenders (10 percent) report change in child sexual abuser behavior to be somewhat or very unlikely.

These data suggest that female offenders may be more skeptical of the likelihood of improved behavior on the part of child sexual abusers than male offenders. These data provide added support to the possibility, suggested previously, that females consider the sexual abuse of children a greater deviance from the norm than do males. Thus, they might be more prone to deny their own behavior in order to bring it into congruence with their normative stance about child sexual abuse.

### Consequences of the Investigation

In this section are findings which reflect the experiences of the female and male child sexual abusers as a result of the report of child sexual abuse which was filed against them, investigated, and substantiated.

Initial reactions. A checklist of possible reactions to the initial investigation was included in the questionnaire. These included being shocked, frightened, feeling wrongly accused, embarrassed, angry with informant, angry with investigator, angry with self, sorrow for actions, guilty, relief, and gratitude. Responses of the female and male offenders are shown in Table 37.

The most frequently reported reactions to the initial investigation were shock, feeling frightened, and embarrassed.

These reactions, with little differences between female and male offenders, were experienced by over 70-80 percent of the respondents. However, differences between female and male offenders exist with many of the other reactions noted.

More female offenders than male offenders reported feeling wrongly accused (73 percent and 55 percent, respectively;  $t = 2.27, p < .03$ ), anger with the informant (68 percent and 49 percent, respectively;  $t = 2.25, p < .03$ ), and anger with the investigator (67 percent and 37 percent, respectively). On the other hand, more male offenders than female offenders experienced sorrow for their actions (57

percent and 49 percent, respectively), guilt (55 percent and 43 percent, respectively), relieved (44 percent and 25 percent, respectively;  $t = 2.33$ ,  $p < .03$ ), and grateful (33 percent and 14 percent, respectively;  $t = 2.70$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Both groups reported equal levels of anger towards self (51 percent of females, 52 percent of males).

These patterns may indicate that female offenders felt more injustice than did male offenders at the accusations and investigations for child sexual abuse to which they were subjected, suggested by the high proportion who felt wrongly accused. Supporting this possibility are the high levels of anger experienced by female offenders toward the informant and particularly toward the investigator relative to levels for male offenders, as well as lower levels of guilt.

Male offenders seem more ready to acknowledge their actions, a substantial proportion expressing relief and gratitude that the hiding of their behavior was over. Fewer male offenders felt wrongly accused, anger towards the informant, or anger toward the investigator than female offenders.

Awareness of these differences between initial reactions of female and male offenders may assist professionals who investigate child sexual abuse, helping them tailor their approaches to more appropriately fit the stance of female or male offenders. These differences between female and male

offenders need to be explored further. The sensitivity of the investigator to the needs and potential response of the perpetrator may determine to a great degree the level of cooperation and resistance, not only the perpetrator but the perpetrator's entire family, to actions which may follow as a consequence of the investigative findings. Thus, it may behoove investigators who wish to be effective in their efforts to become sensitive to the differences in the attitudes, perceptions, and possible reactions that female and male child sexual abusers may manifest as the investigation for purported abuse gets under way.

Legal consequences following the investigation. A variety of consequences can be experienced by a perpetrator following an investigation and substantiation of a report of child sexual abuse. Charges can be brought against the offender, later dropped. They can be put in jail, on probation, or removed from home. Their children can be removed from home and they can receive treatment to help them change their patterns. Table 38 shows the consequences that occurred to the female and male offenders of this study.

The most visible pattern is that consequences were much the same for both groups of offenders. Similar proportions of female and male offenders had charges pressed against them (54 percent and 55 percent, respectively), were removed from their homes (32 percent for both groups), and/or received some

form of therapy (52 percent and 55 percent, respectively). More female offenders (30 percent) were put in jail than male offenders (25 percent). More female offenders (27 percent) than male offenders (22 percent) also reported charges were dropped. Fewer female offenders reported probation than male offenders (27 percent).

The greatest differences between female and male offenders occurred with respect to removal of children from the home and being placed on medication. Almost 58 percent of the female offenders said that their children were removed from their home, compared to only 21 percent of the male offenders. And, 14 percent of the female offenders were placed on medication, but only 3 percent of the male offenders.

These findings may indicate that in some ways female and male offenders are treated differently by the system. It may be possible that professionals in the network may be perceptually biased to consider female child sexual abuse even more deviant than male child sexual abuse, and that children may be at more risk with a sexually abusive mother or female caretaker than a sexually abusive father. Female offenders may be perceived as being more psychosomatically vulnerable than male offenders, thus the need for medication. Although only suggestive, the pattern of female abusers more likely to be put in jail, and paradoxically, more likely to

have charges dropped, supports the idea that the system may have more difficulty dealing with the female offender. She may does fit as "nicely" into the expected pattern and norms and guidelines for professionals are less clear and ambiguous.

However, these are only suppositions, and more sophisticated analyses are required to control for possible confounding, extraneous factors which may be operating as well.

### Summary

In this chapter focus has been on the comparison of female and male offenders across several areas, including demographics, substance abuse and antisocial behavior, family background and relationships, child sexual abuse patterns and perceptions, and the investigation experience and consequences. A review and summary of these findings will be the focus of the next chapter.

#### IV. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

##### Summary

The major purpose of this project has been to develop a comparative profile of female and male child sexual abusers. In the review of the literature which provides the background for this project, three reasons are suggested to explain why female child sexual abusers have not been considered until recently. First, professionals have over-estimated the strength of the incest taboo, particularly adherents of psychoanalytic traditions which tend explain differences between women and men on the basis of innate, psychogenic characteristics. These characteristics, according to more orthodox psychoanalytic theory, contribute to keeping women passive and docile, without sexual needs. Thus they are incapable of sexually abusing children. Men, on the other hand, naturally aggressive, dominant and with powerful sexual drives, are logical candidates for child sexual abuse.

A second reason is over-extension of feminist explanations of child sexual abuse, similar to the psychoanalytic explanation in postulating that only men sexually abuse children and women do not. However, the feminist explanation is based on differences in socialization patterns experienced by women and men, not on psychodynamic theory.



A third reason is over-generalization of the empirical observation that female child sexual abuse is rare. This occurs when professionals assume that if female child sexual abuse is not reported in the literature it is not occurring, and when professionals assume that the low proportions of female child sexual abuse that is reported indicates low levels in absolute figures.

Each of these perspectives has difficulty explaining the female perpetrated child sexual abuse that does occur, and that is becoming more frequently reported by researchers and practitioners in the field. Regardless of the reason, the result has been till recently denial among professionals of the possibility that children are also being sexually abused by women.

Recent studies are now confirming the existence of female child sexual abuse. This study goes beyond debates about whether female child sexual abuse exists or not, and instead, focuses on comparing female and male child sexual abusers across several areas.

The sample for the study consists of 75 male offenders randomly drawn from the Iowa Child Abuse Registry, and 65 females offenders, obtained by contacting the entire population of female offenders on both the Iowa and Missouri Child Abuse Registries. Of the female offenders, 32 are from

Iowa, 25 from Missouri, and 8 from treatment programs for sexually abusive women in the Minneapolis, Minnesota area. These offenders were given a two-hour, face-to-face interview in which they were asked a series of questions covering demographics, substance abuse and antisocial behavior, family background and relationships, child sexual abuse patterns and perceptions, and the investigation experience and consequences.

With respect to demographics, findings indicate that educational levels of female and male offenders are quite similar, with high school graduation the average. The sample is homogeneous, a white midwestern sample for both groups of offenders. Income and occupational levels are lower for the female offenders, and more of the female offenders are working part-time or unemployed. Residence is more stable for the male offenders, and fewer of the males are currently imprisoned. The majority of female offenders list Baptist, Catholic or none as their religious affiliation; male offenders list Lutheran, Methodist, Catholic or none.

With respect to substance abuse and antisocial behavior, higher levels of alcoholism are reported by male offenders than by female offenders, but slightly higher levels of drug abuse are reported by female offenders than male offenders. For both types of abuse, proportions for the offenders range from 15 to 25 percent. Male offenders report higher levels

of traffic ticketing, as well as thefts and arrests and/or juvenile court appearances when they were adolescents; female offenders report higher levels of running away from home when adolescents.

Family background and relationships is a major focus of comparison in this study. With respect to the offenders' family of orientation, the marital relationships of the parents of female offenders, measured by number of marriages/live-in relationships, are more unstable than those of male offenders' parents. Female offenders report experiencing more criticism, devaluation and broken commitments from both parents than male offenders. Females also report higher levels of parental physical abuse during adolescence than male offenders. There are essentially no differences between female and male offenders, however, on the degree of closedness, openness, and randomness in the structure of their families of origin.

With respect to the female and male offenders' present family relationships, there are no differences in the distribution of number of spouses/live-in partners. However, for both groups of offenders marital relationships are noticeably more unstable than for either their mothers or fathers. Female offenders also report less satisfaction with their partner than male offenders, but more satisfaction with their children.

Paradoxically, female offenders report they are more satisfied with the sexual relationships they have with their spouses/partners than male offenders, and view their partners as being more satisfied in these relationships than partners of male offenders. Female offenders report having had more sexual partners than male offenders, with twice as many male offenders reporting just one sexual partner in the preceding five year period than female offenders. Nine times as many females report having more than 10 partners during this period of time than male offenders. Furthermore, three times as many female offenders report being paid for sex than male offenders, though only male offenders report paying for sex.

Female offenders report significantly higher need for both emotional/interactional need fulfillment and sexual need fulfillment than male offenders. For both groups of offenders, surprisingly so for male offenders, need for emotional/interaction fulfillment is higher than need for sexual fulfillment. Female offenders also report higher levels of physical abuse by their spouses/partners, at every level of severity, than male offenders. They also report committing more acts of physical violence on their spouses/partners, especially at more severe levels of violence, than do male offenders.

With respect to the sexual abuse of children, female offenders report committing sexual activities with children

much less frequently than male offenders. However, they report substantially more sexual victimization of themselves as children than do male offenders. The majority of sexual abuse committed by the female and male perpetrators occurred within the immediate and extended family, though male offenders are more likely than female offenders to sexually abuse extended family members. However, females are more likely to report perpetrating acts of sexual abuse with strangers than male offenders.

The largest category of offender/victim relationships reported are male offender/female victim, and next most frequent is female offender/male victim, indicating that the majority of abuse occurs with victims of the opposite sex from the perpetrator. However, this pattern was noticeably weaker for female offenders, who were much more likely to report same sex victims than male offenders.

The types of abuse perpetrated follow similar patterns for both groups of offenders. The least severe forms of child sexual abuse, exhibitionism/voyeurism and touching/fondling, are reported much more frequently than sexual, oral and anal intercourse. This is also true of the sexual abuse the offenders experienced as children. Interestingly, male offenders are equally likely to be abused by females as by males when they themselves were children.

With respect to perceptions and attitudes, female offenders are much less likely to acknowledge their guilt than male offenders. They also have significantly higher recognition thresholds for acts of sexual abuse; male offenders are noticeably more sensitive. Female offenders recommend more severe penalties for child sexual abuse than male offenders. They also consider it less likely that child sexual abusers can change their behavior.

With respect to gender identity, male offenders score higher on masculinity than female offenders, and female offenders higher on femininity than male offenders. A surprising finding, though, is that male offenders also score higher on femininity than they do on masculinity. In fact, the gender identity patterns of male offenders are quite similar to those of female offenders.

With respect to the consequences experienced by the offenders as a result of the report of child sexual abuse, its investigation and substantiation, high levels of shock, fear, and embarrassment are reported by both female and male child sexual abusers. However, higher proportions of female offenders report feeling wrongly accused, and anger at the informant and the investigator. Fewer female offenders felt sorrow for their actions, guilt, relief, or gratitude than male offenders.

### Conclusions

In conclusion, although similar in many respects, the findings of this study suggest that there are important differences between female and male child sexual abusers. Female offenders in this study have lower incomes and occupational statuses than male offenders. They are more likely to be unemployed or engaged in part-time only than male offenders, and they are more residentially unstable. They are also younger than male offenders. They may be less likely than male offenders to exhibit aggressive, confrontive forms of antisocial behavior and more inclined toward more passive forms of antisocial behavior and deviance.

Female offenders may experience harsher childhoods, including more physical abuse, and more emotional abuse and criticism from their parents than male offenders. Marital relationships of the parents of female offenders may be more unstable as well. However, little difference was found between the family of origin structure of the offenders; both groups of offenders reported that their families of origin were relatively closed.

In present family relationships female offenders may differ little from male offenders in marital instability, although they may be less satisfied with their marital partners. However, they may be more active sexually, with greater numbers of partners than male offenders. Female

offenders may also have higher needs for both emotional need fulfillment and sexual need fulfillment than males. They may also experience harsher spousal relationships than male offenders. In this study female offenders experienced, and committed, more acts of spousal physical violence at almost every level of severity than male offenders.

Female offenders may also be more sexually victimized as children than male offenders, although for both the majority of victimization occurs within the immediate and extended family setting. Both as victims and as perpetrators, opposite gender relationships are the most frequently encountered pairings, that is, as victims be abused by males, and as perpetrators abuse males.

Findings of this study also suggest that female offenders are much more reluctant to admit acts of sexual abuse, and consequently, it is difficult to determine if as perpetrators female offenders may commit fewer and less severe forms of sexual violence on children, or if this a reflection of their noticeably greater inclination to deny their actions. They may have higher recognition thresholds for sexual abuse than male offenders, and may perceive child sexual abuse as a greater social deviance as well. They may also be less inclined to think child sexual abusers can change their behavior. Furthermore, female offenders may be more resistant and uncooperative in the investigation procedures, and



experience greater anger and sense of injustice from the system than male offenders. Finally, though findings in this study suggested that in some ways the system may treat female offenders the same as male offenders, in other ways there may be differences, such as greater propensity to remove children from their homes.

This study is merely a first step in the examination of differences and similarities among female and male child sexual abusers, a point emphasized by the fact that one of the major contributions of the study has been to simply obtain a sample of female offenders in the first place. Further research is required so that differences and similarities between female and male perpetrators can be identified in the development of sexually abusive tendencies, the sexual abuse processes of the two groups of offenders, their experience in the system, and the consequences of perceptions and biases of professionals who work with them. Other research is required which focuses on differences and similarities in needs of victims of the two types of offenders, and appropriate treatment strategies which can assist them.

At the very least, it is hoped that this study will contribute to the recognition and acknowledgement among professionals of the existence and reality of female child sexual abuse, and of the need for professionals to become prepared to assist not only the perpetrators and victims of

male child sexual abuse, but the perpetrators and victims of male child sexual abuse as well.

Table 1: Ages of Female and Male Child Sexual Abusers

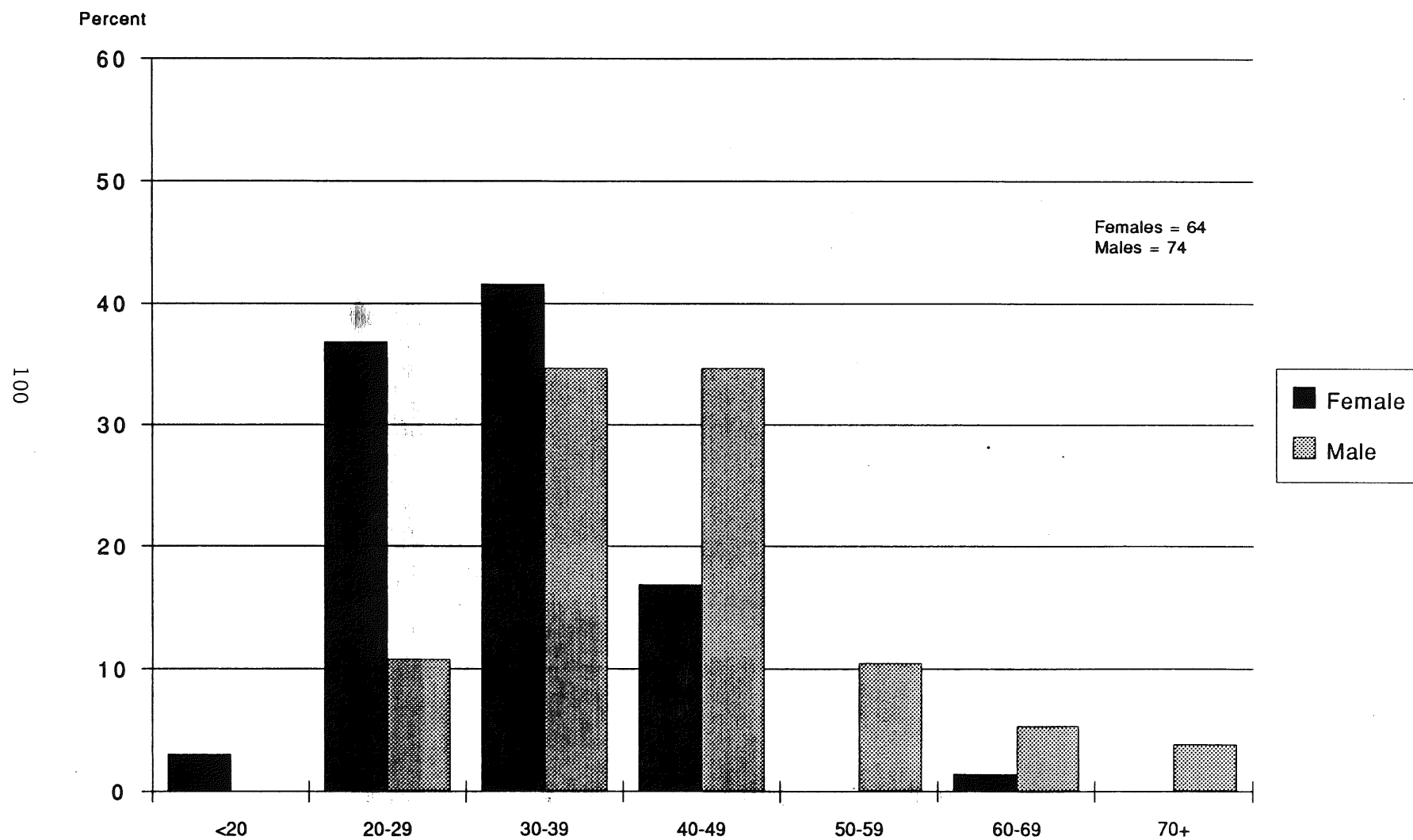


Table 2: Education Levels of Female and Male Child Sexual Abusers

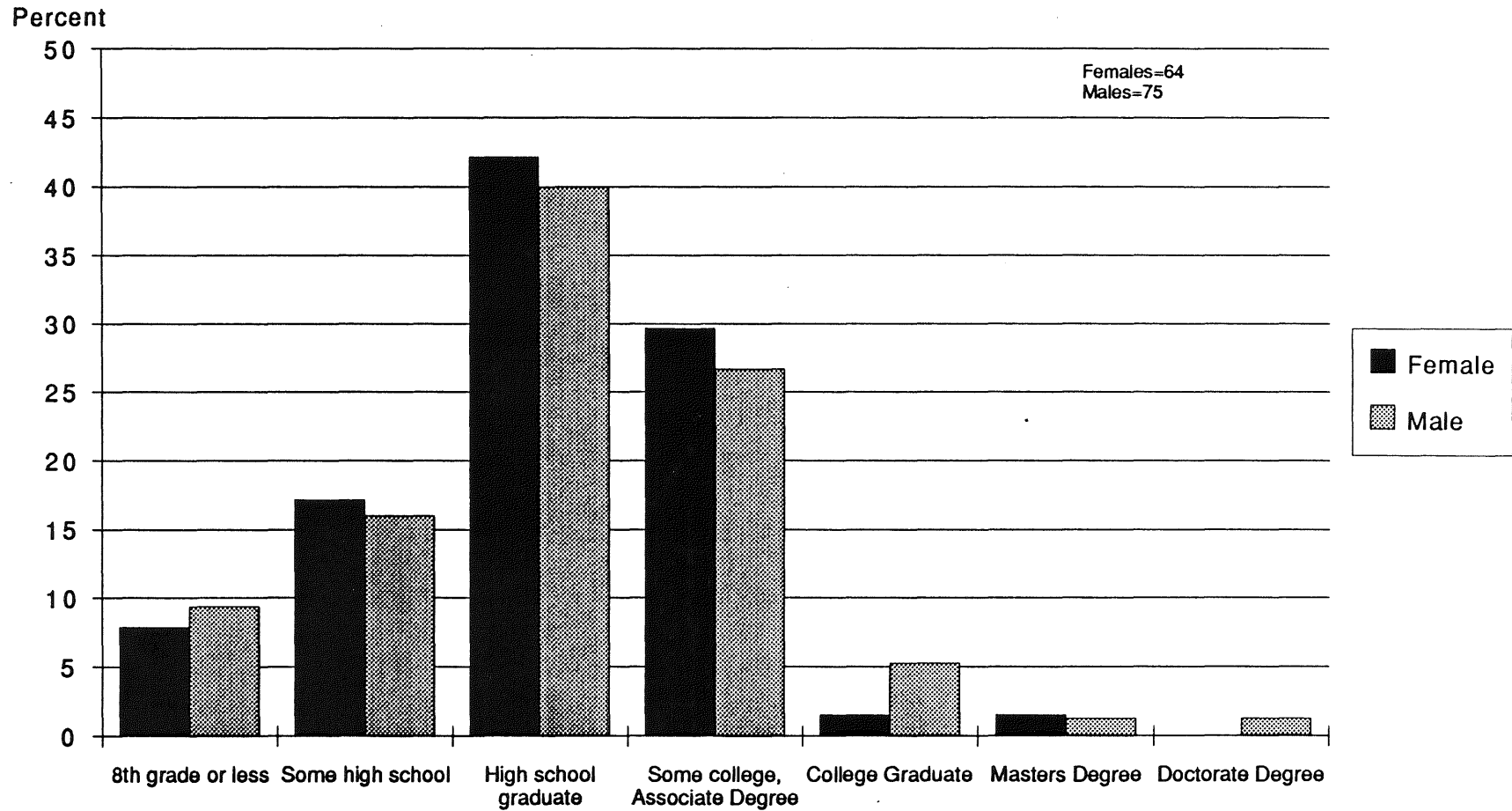


Table 3: Income Levels for Female and Male Child Sexual Abusers

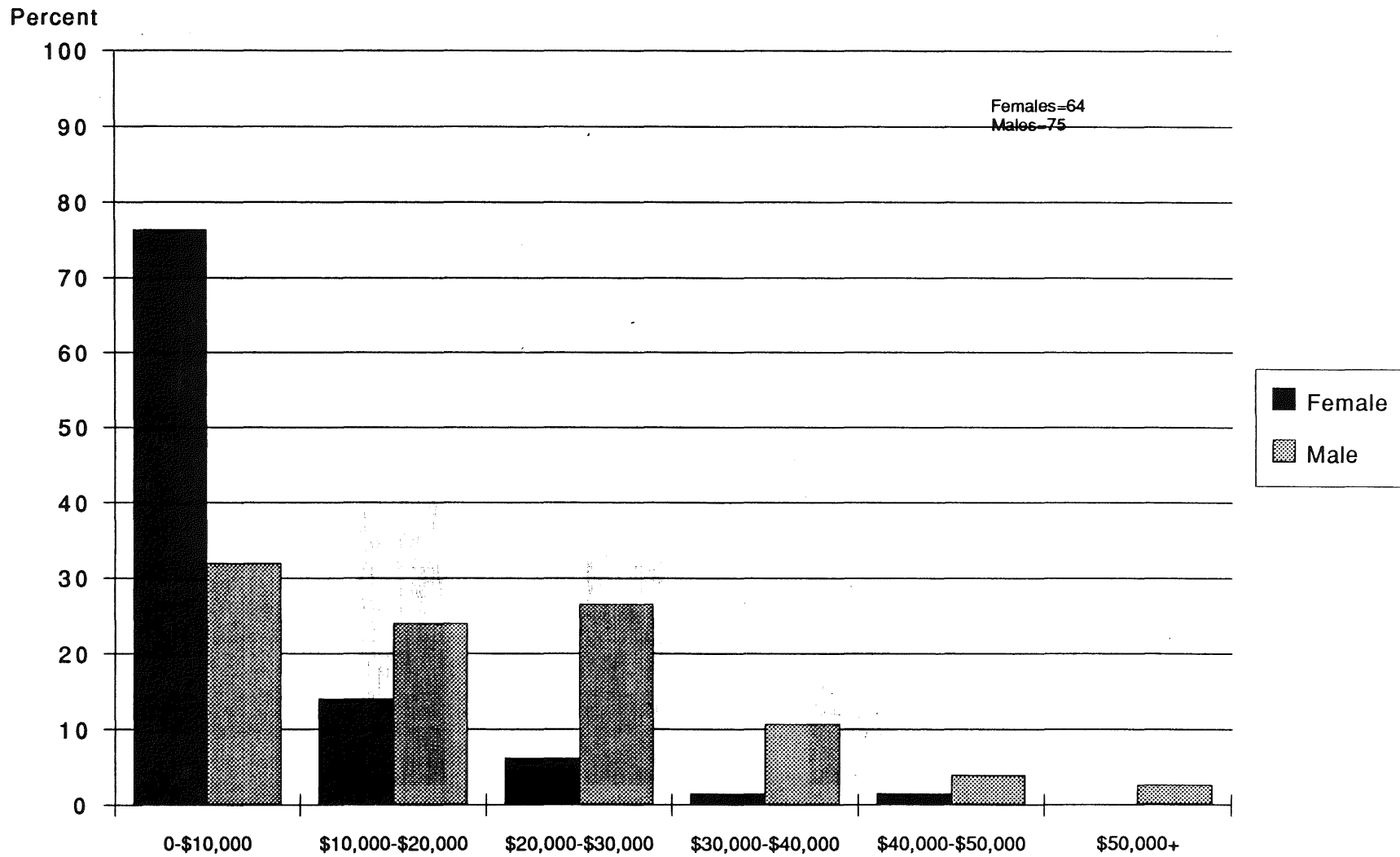


Table 4: Occupational Status of Female and Male Child Sexual Abusers

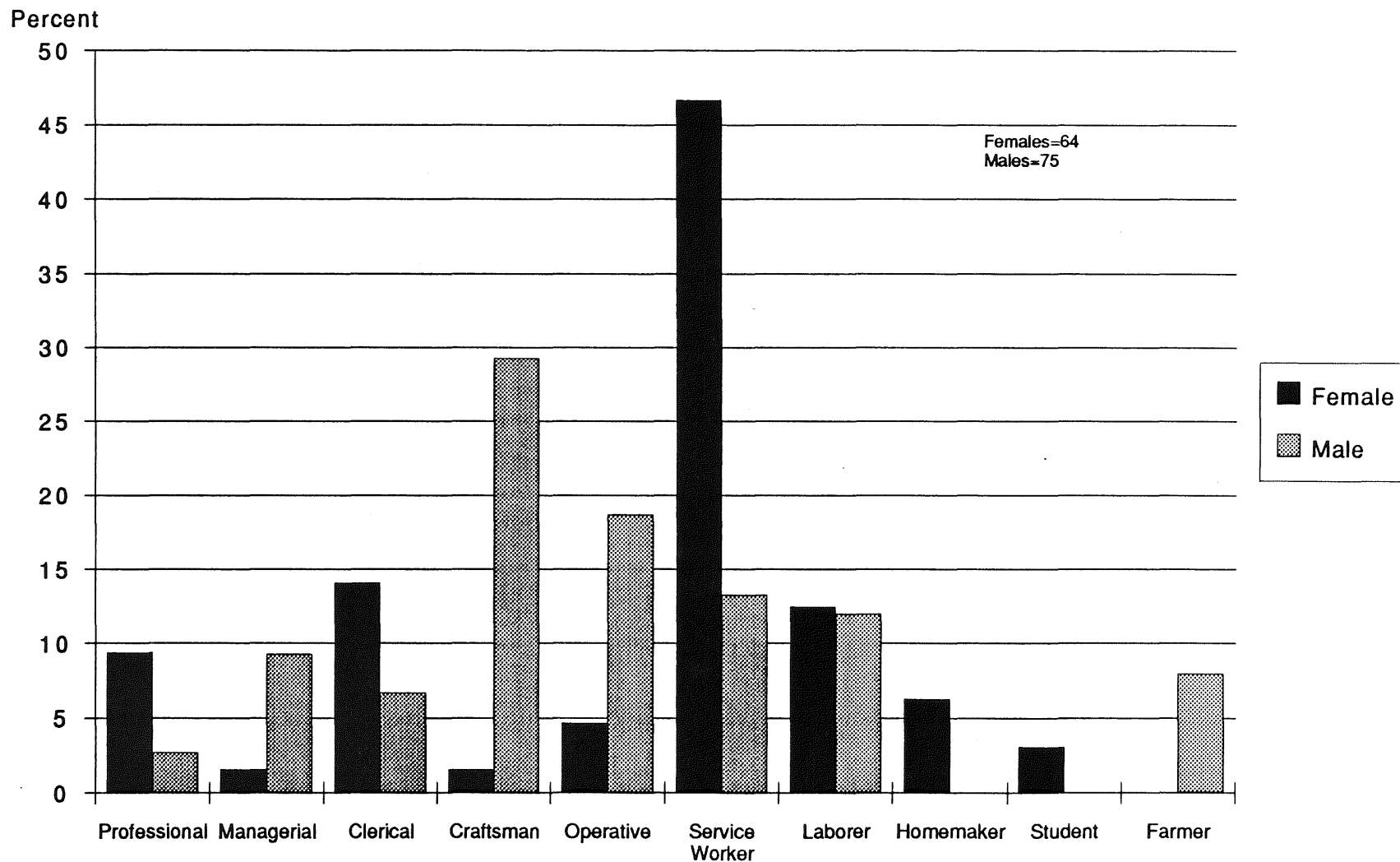


Table 5: Employment Status of Female and Male Child Sexual Abusers

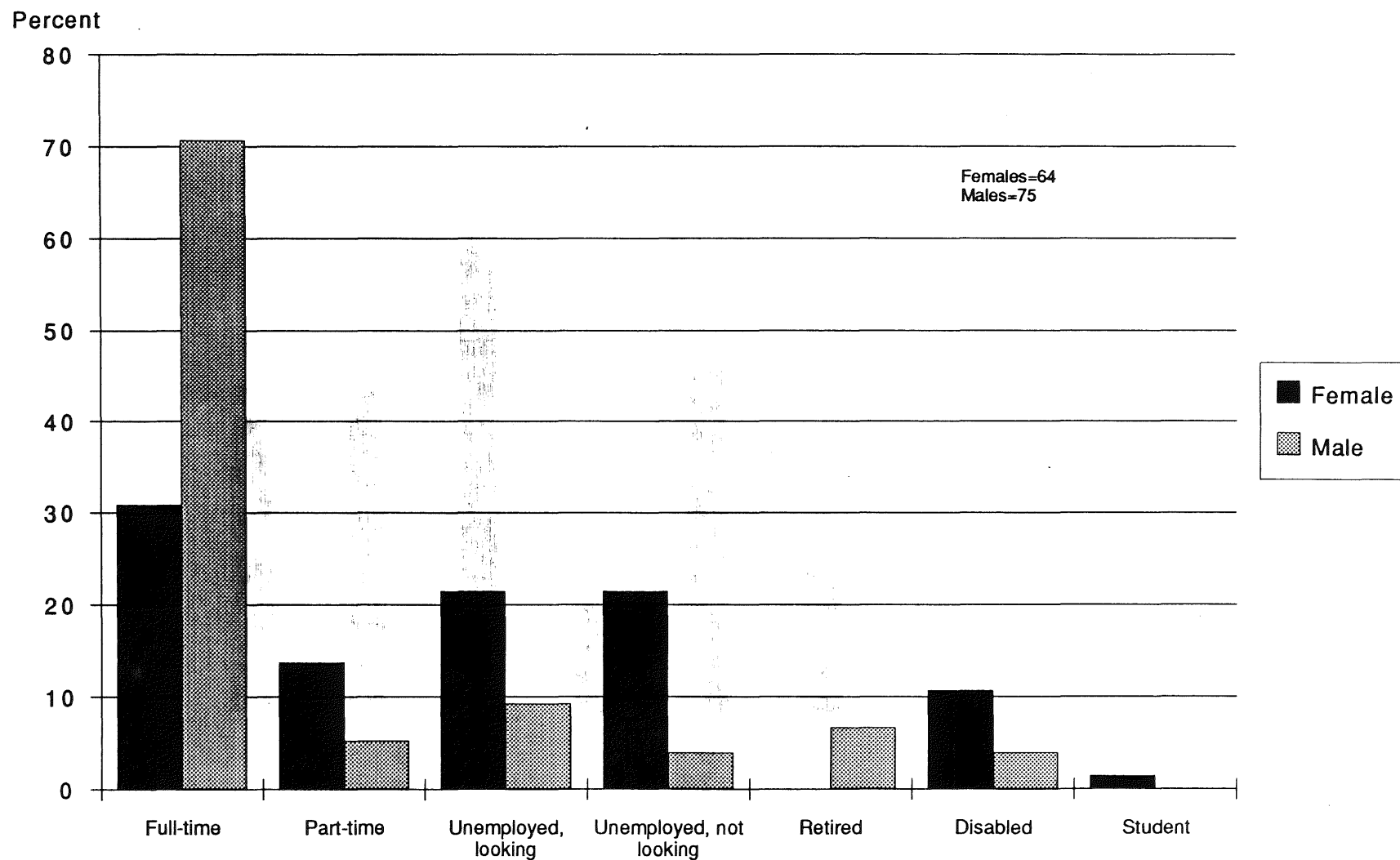


Table 6: Residence of Female and Male Child Sexual Abusers

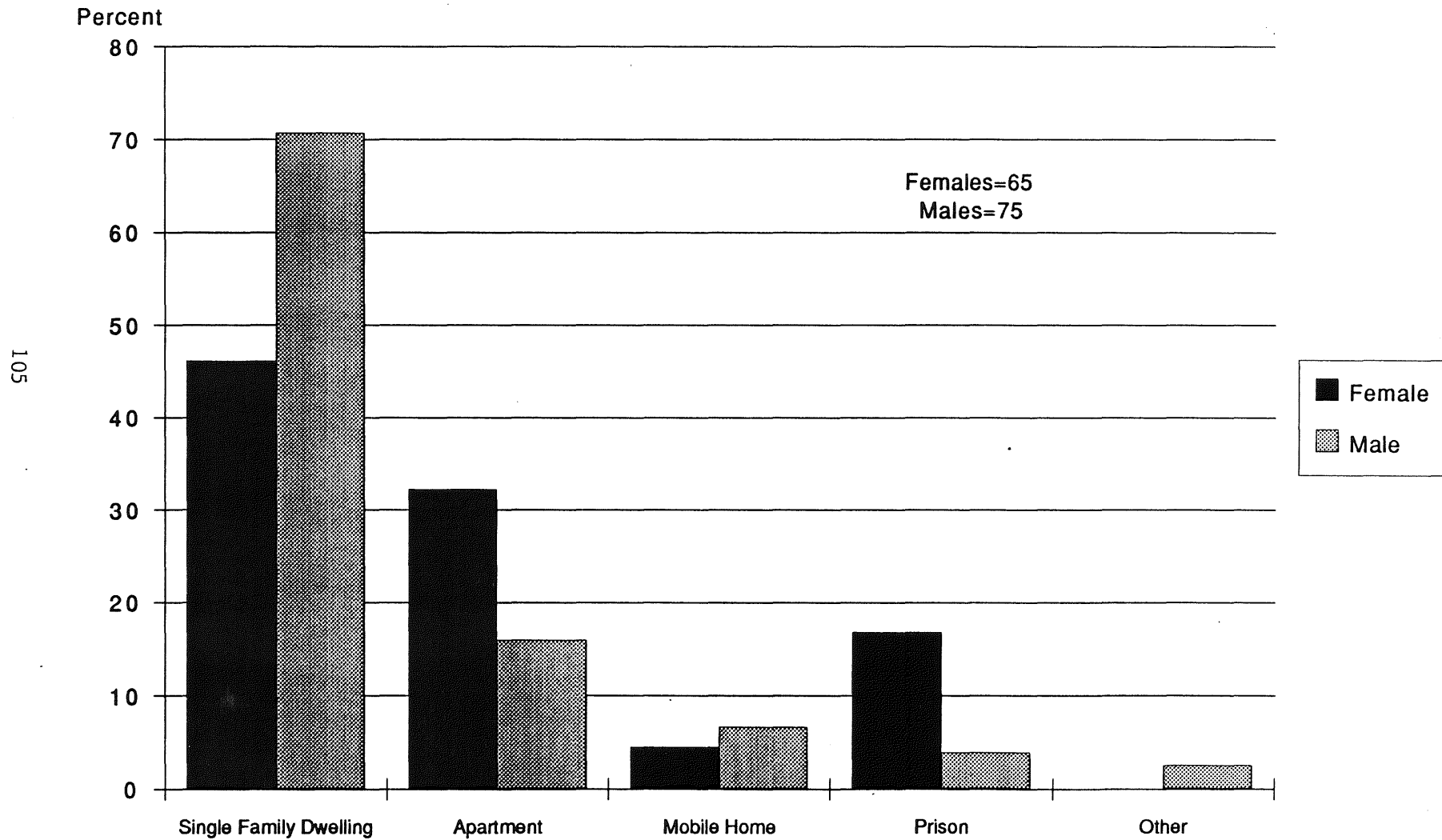




Table 7: Religious Affiliation of Female and Male Child Sexual Abusers

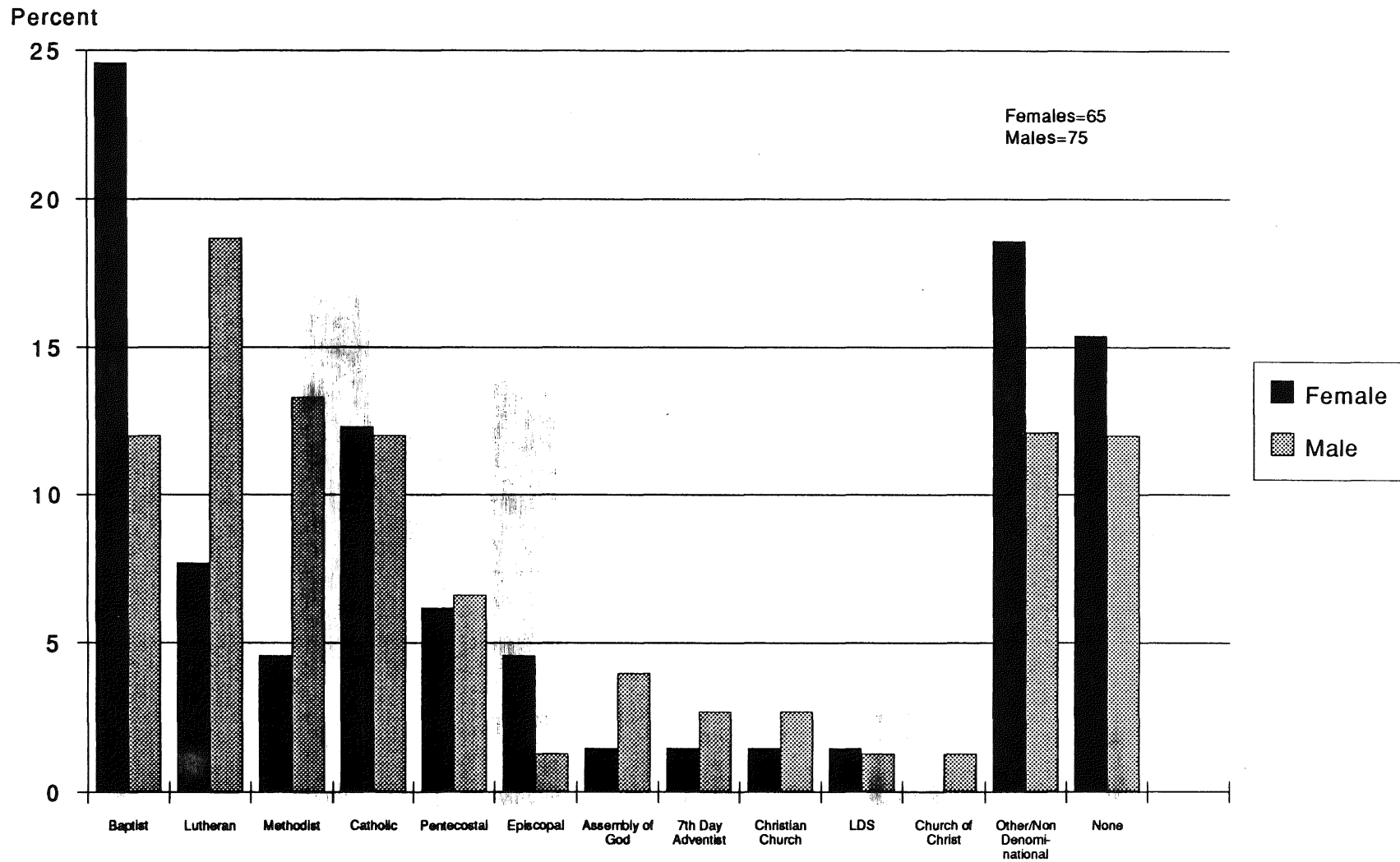
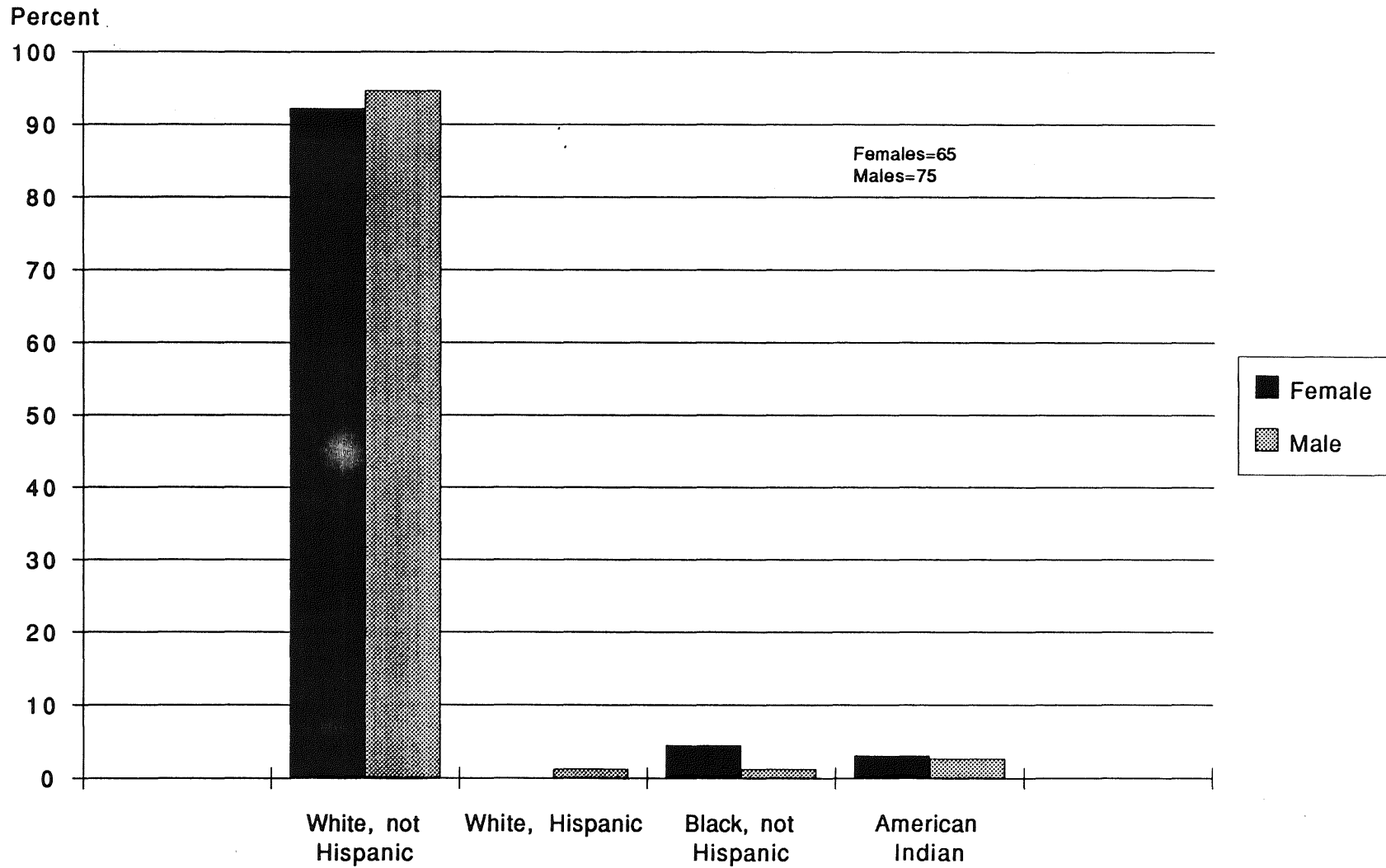


Table 8: Ethnic Background of Female and Male Child Sexual Abusers



**Table 9: Percentage of Female and Male Child Abusers Reporting Own Substance Abuse**

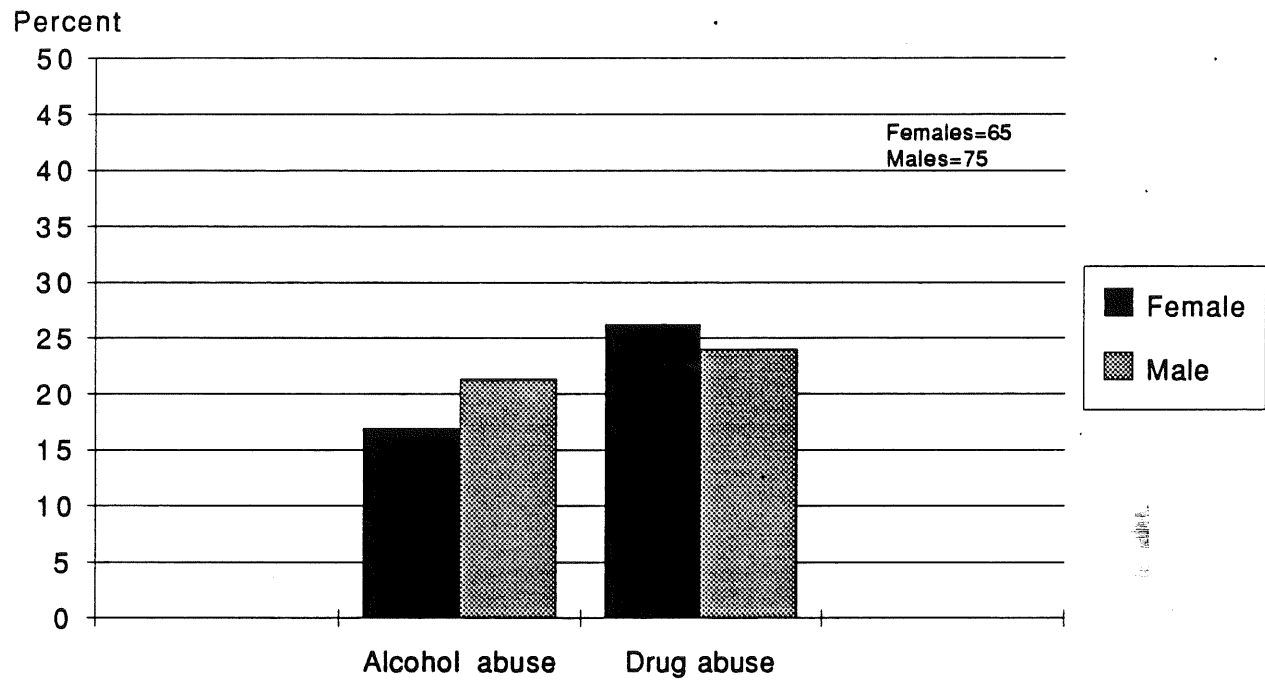
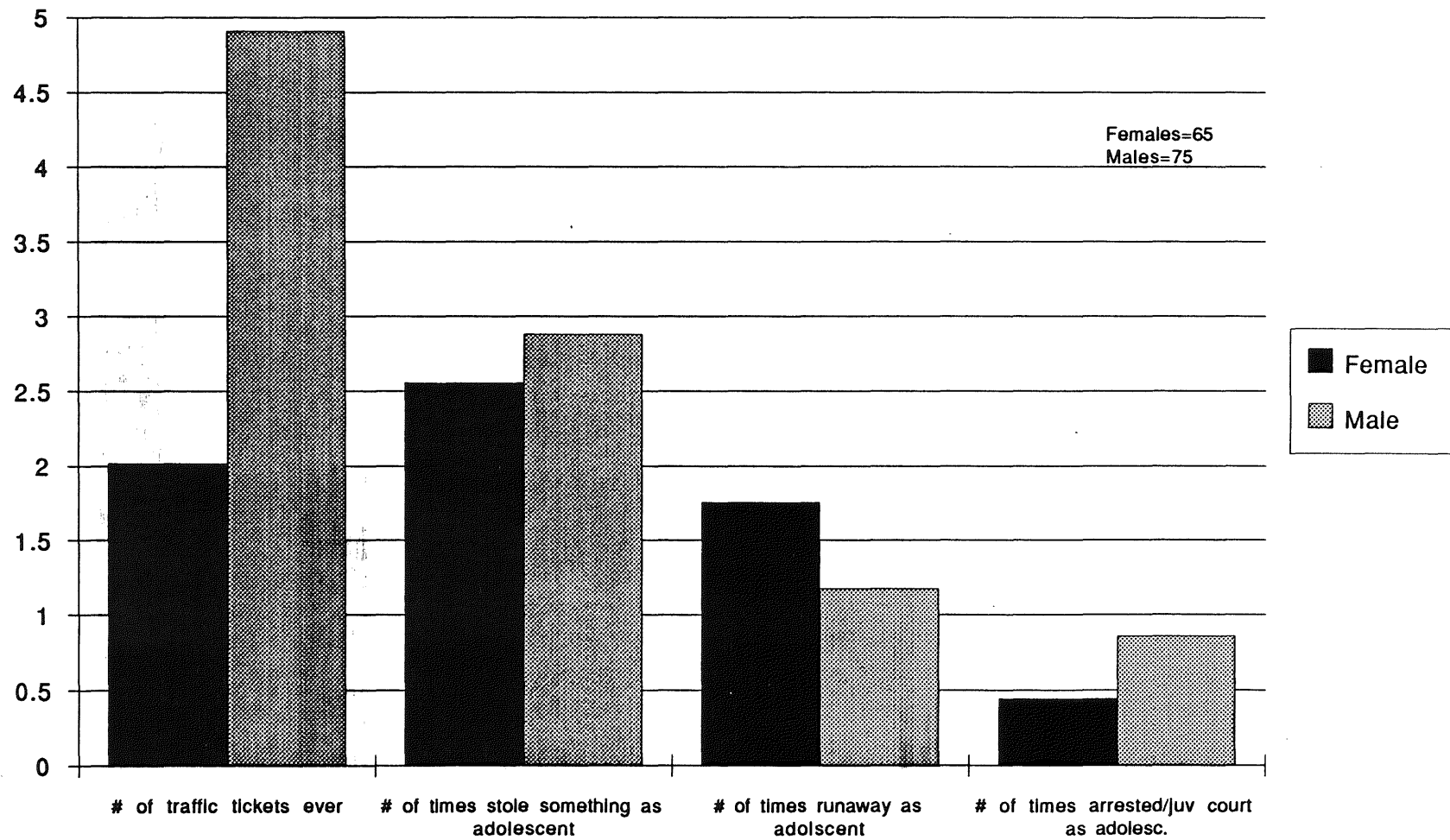


Table 10: Mean Levels for Selected Indicators of Anti-social Behavior of Female and Male Child Sexual Abusers



**Table 11: Percentages for Number of Mother's Marital Partners Reported by Female and Male Child Sexual Abusers**

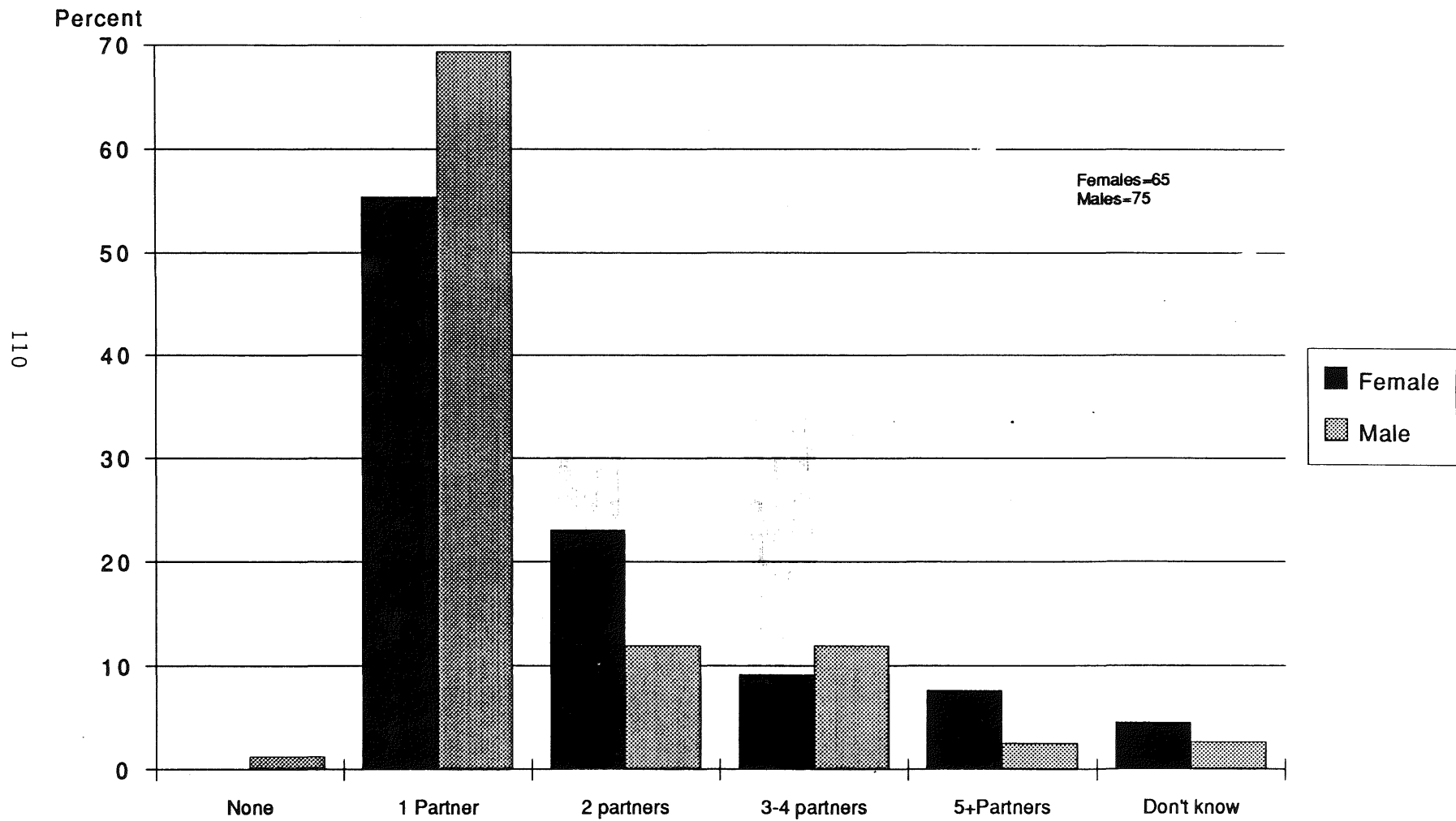
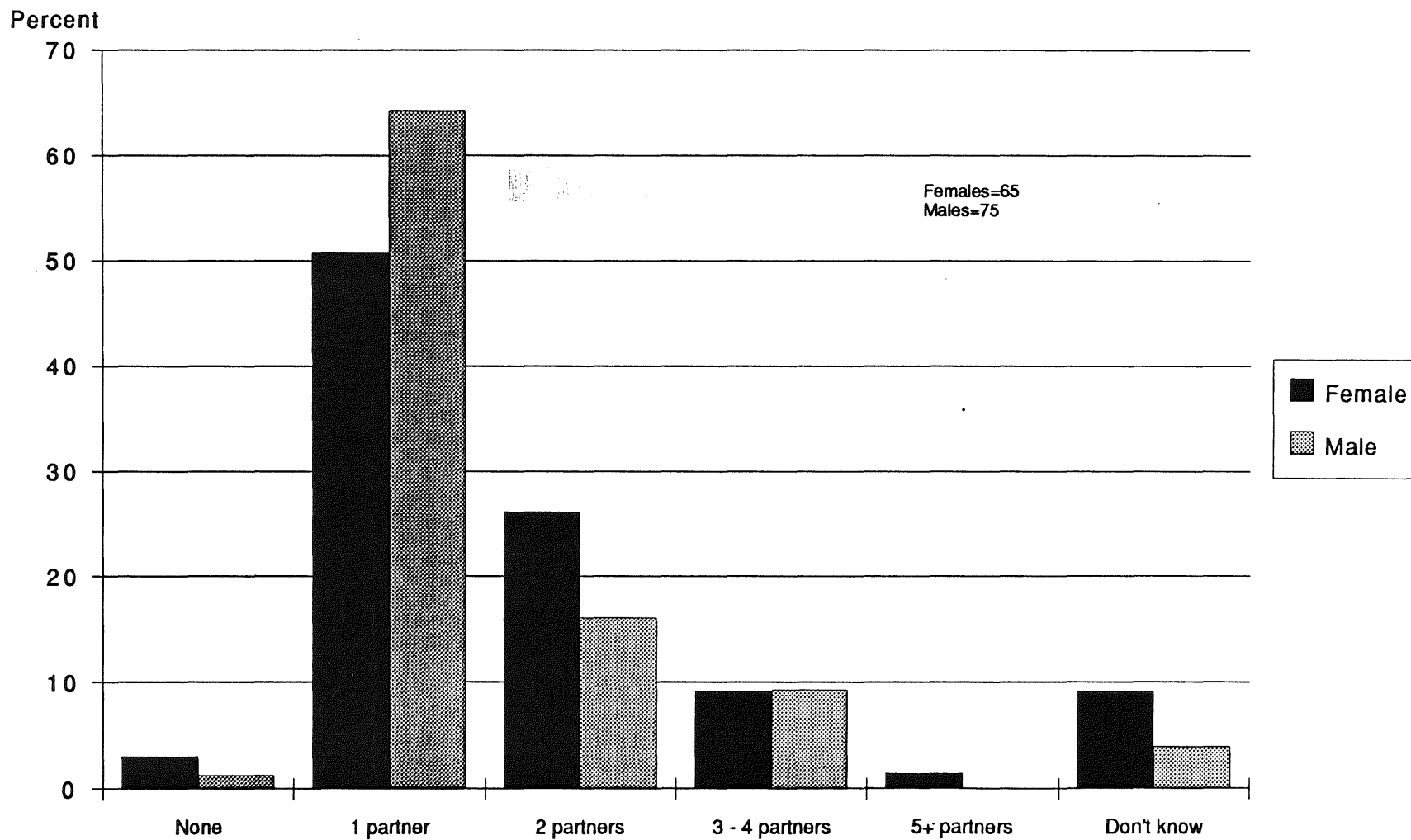
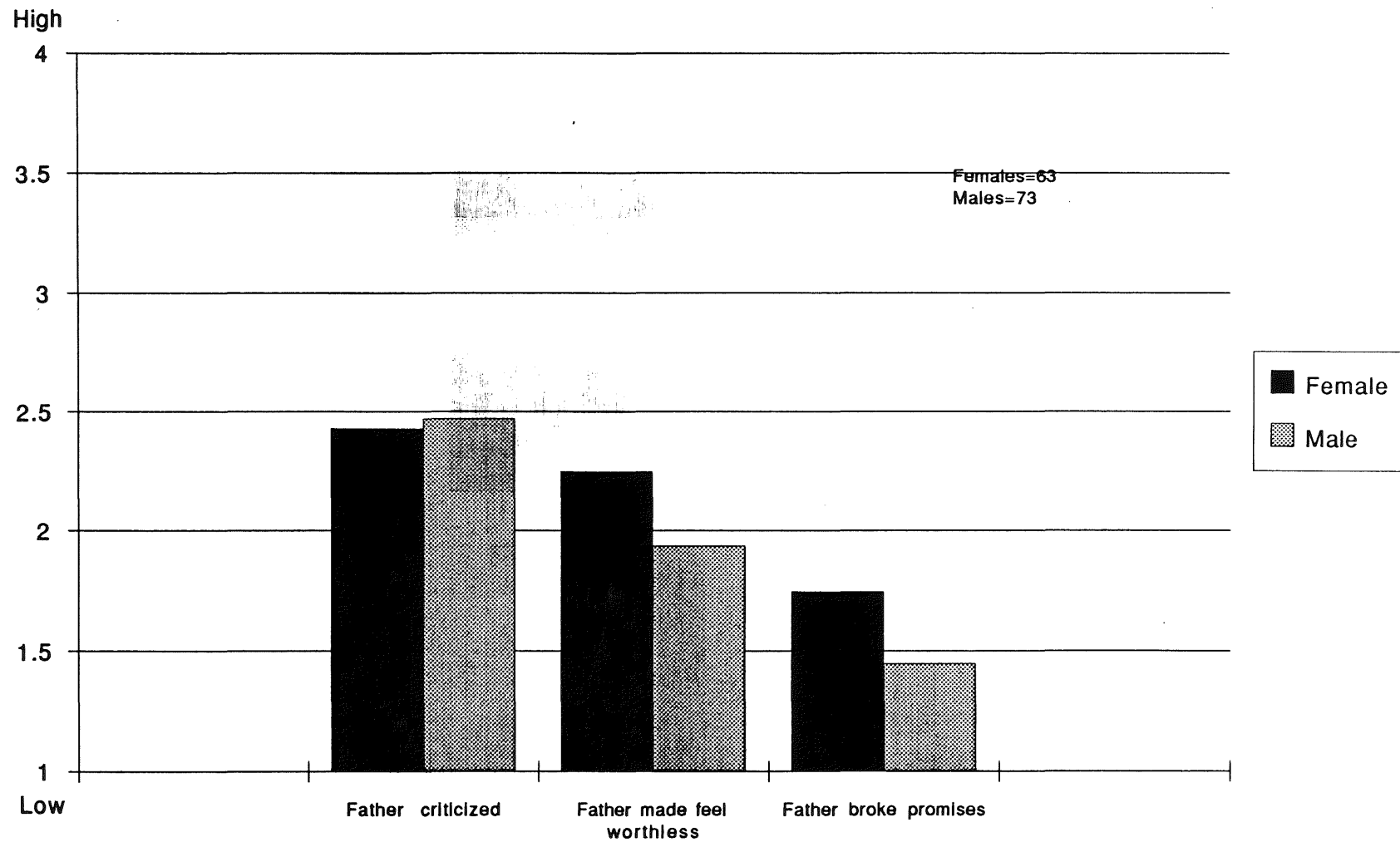


Table 12: Percentages for Number of Father's Marital Partners Reported by Female and Male Child Sexual Abusers



**Table 14: Mean Levels for Selected Indicators of Father's Parenting Style Experienced by Female and Male Child Sexual Abusers**



**Table 13: Mean Levels for Selected Indicators of Mother's Parenting Style Experienced by Female and Male Child Sexual Abusers**

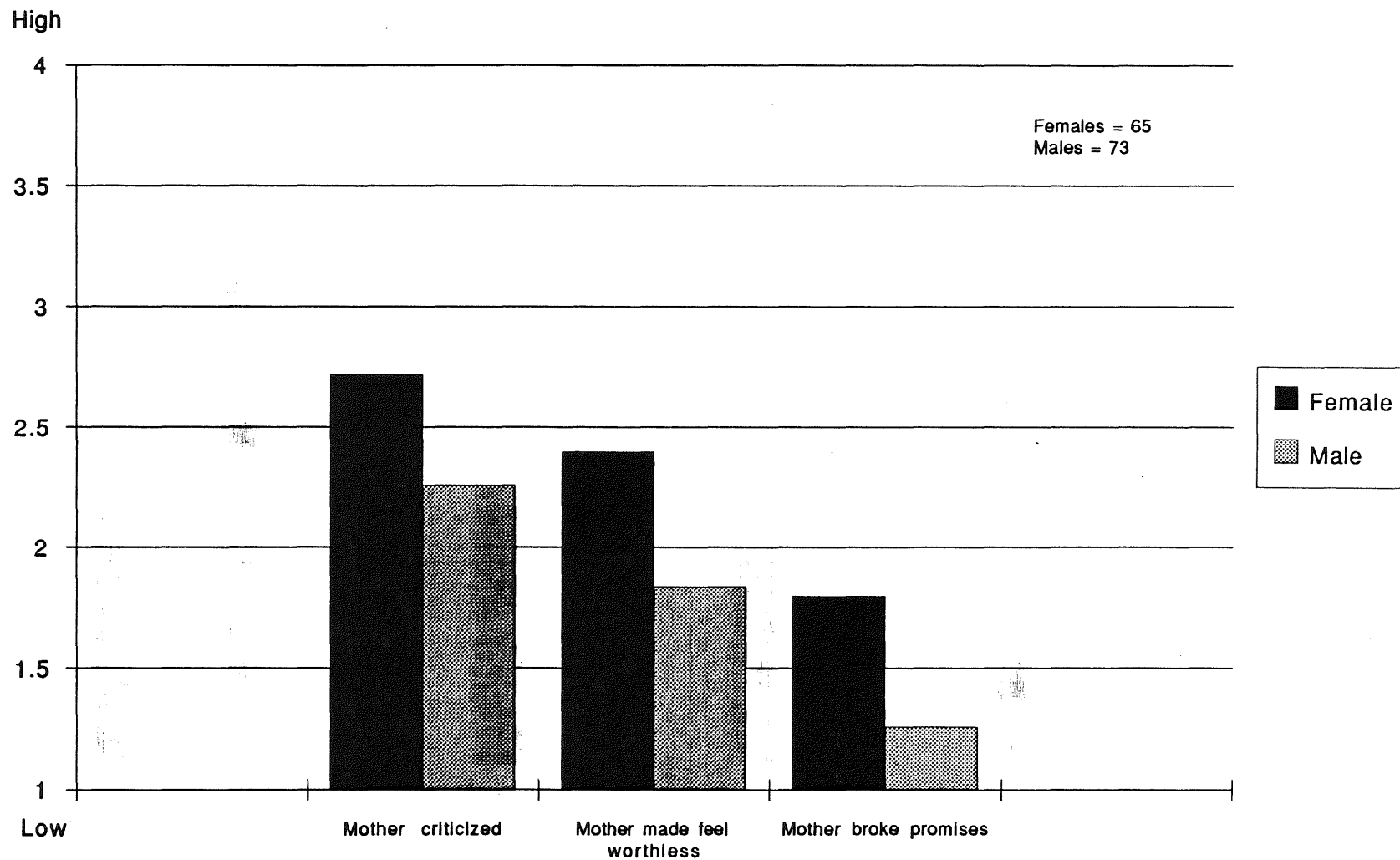




Table 15: Percentage of Female and Male Child Sexual Abusers Who Report Ever Having Been Physically Abused During Adolescence by Their Parents

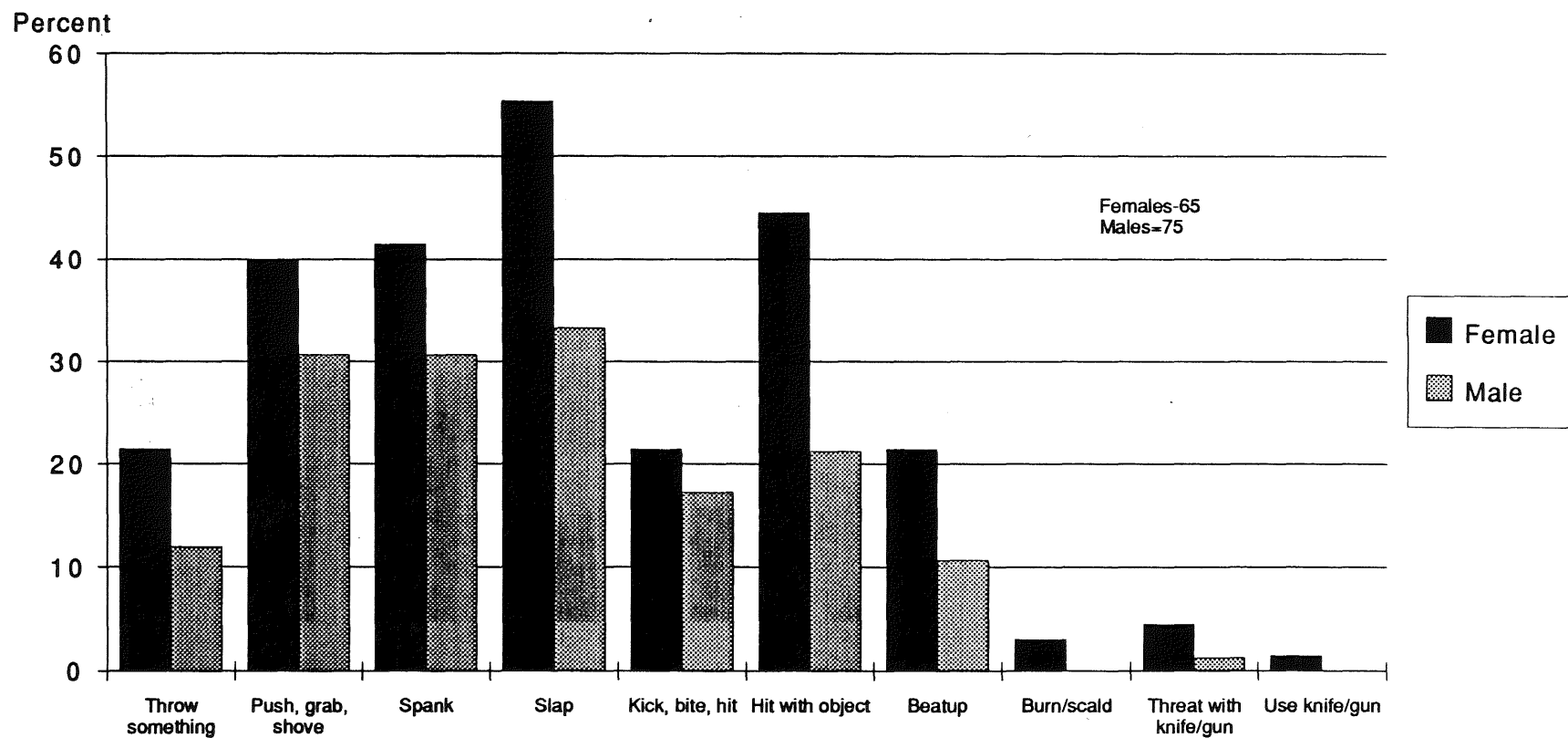


Table 16: Mean Levels of Openness, Closedness, and Randomness in Family of Origin of Female and Male Child Sexual Abusers

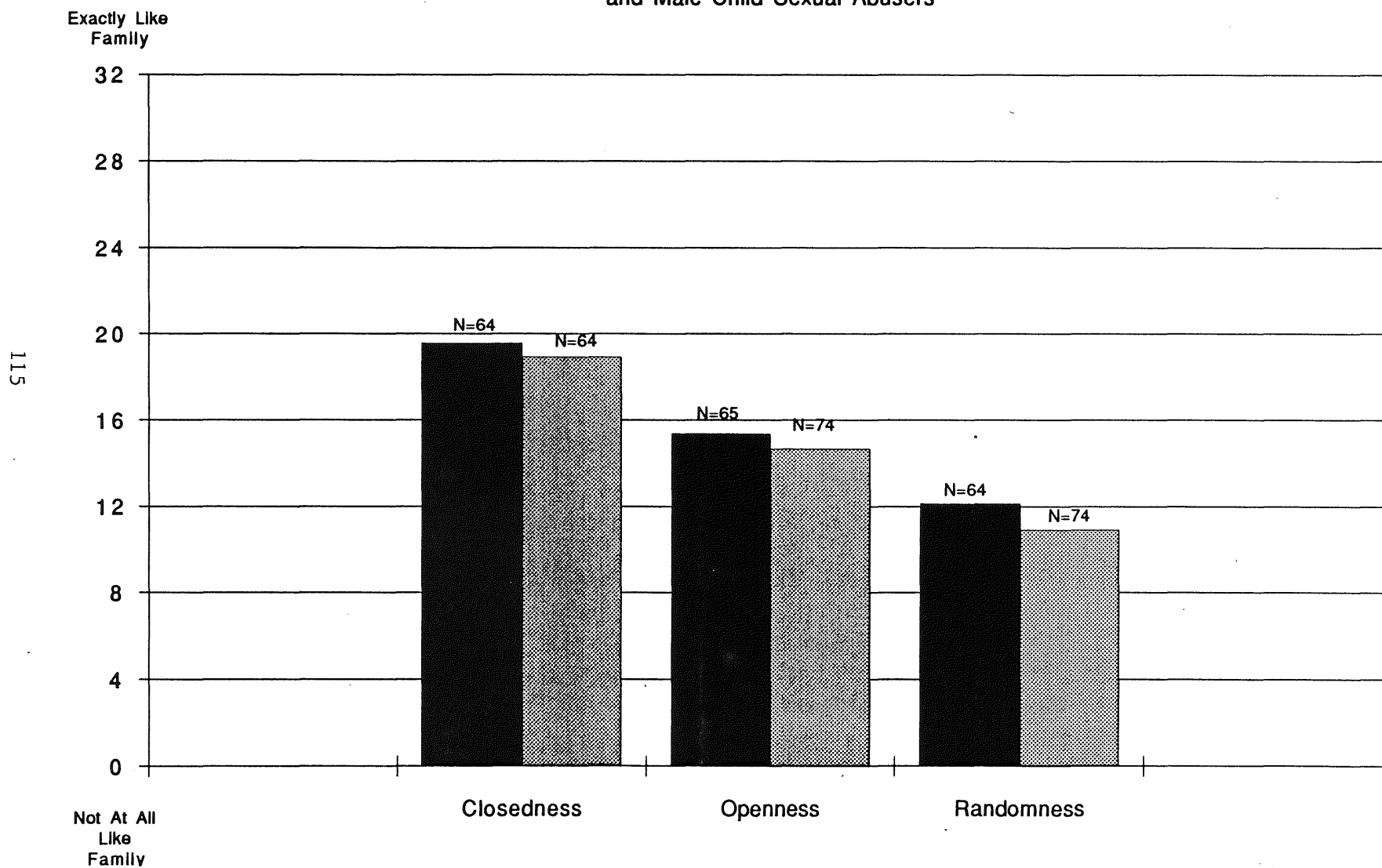
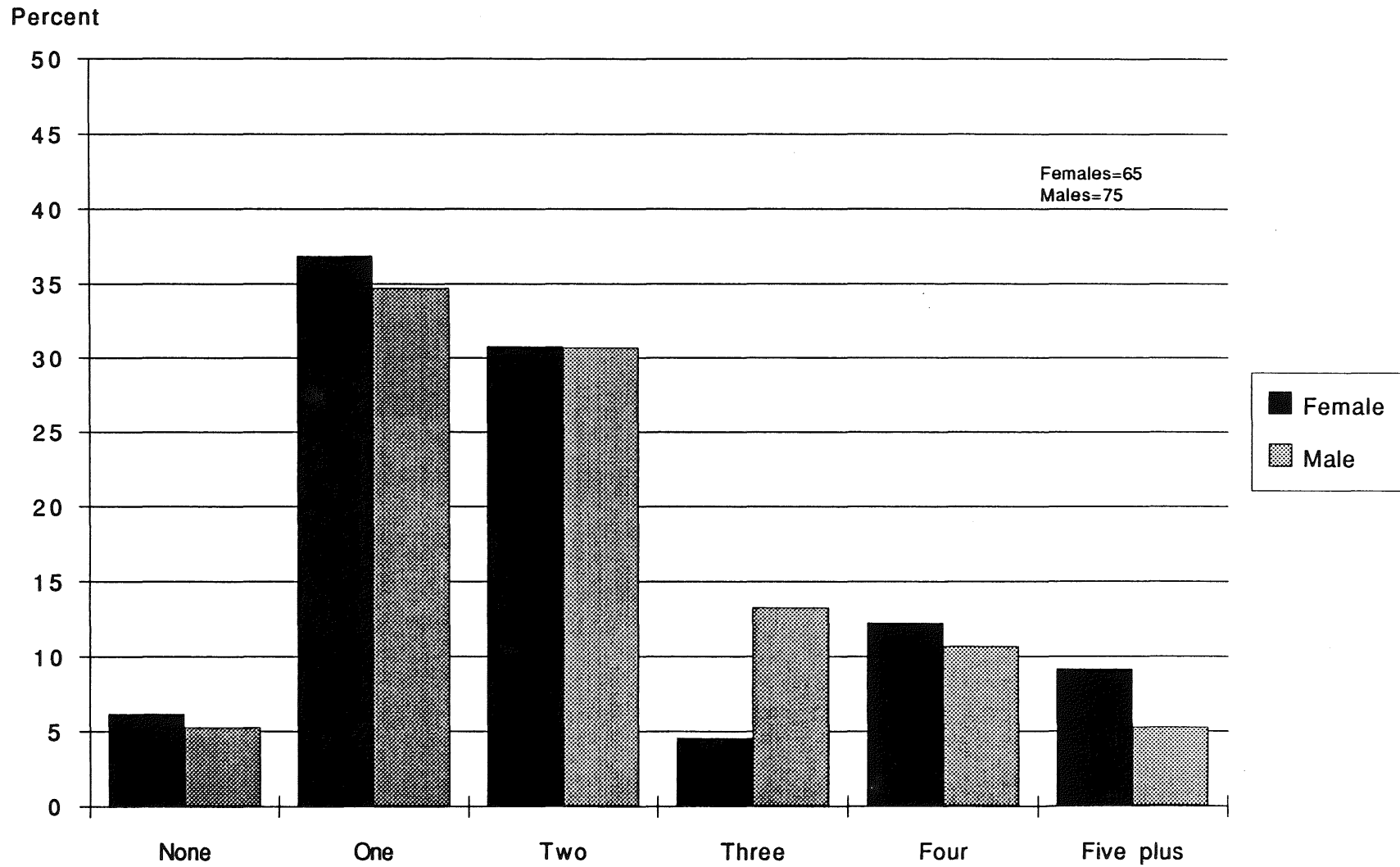


Table 17: Number of Marriages Reported by Female and Male Child Sexual Abusers



Very  
Satisfied

Table 18: Mean Levels of Current Family Satisfaction for Female and Male Child Sexual Abusers

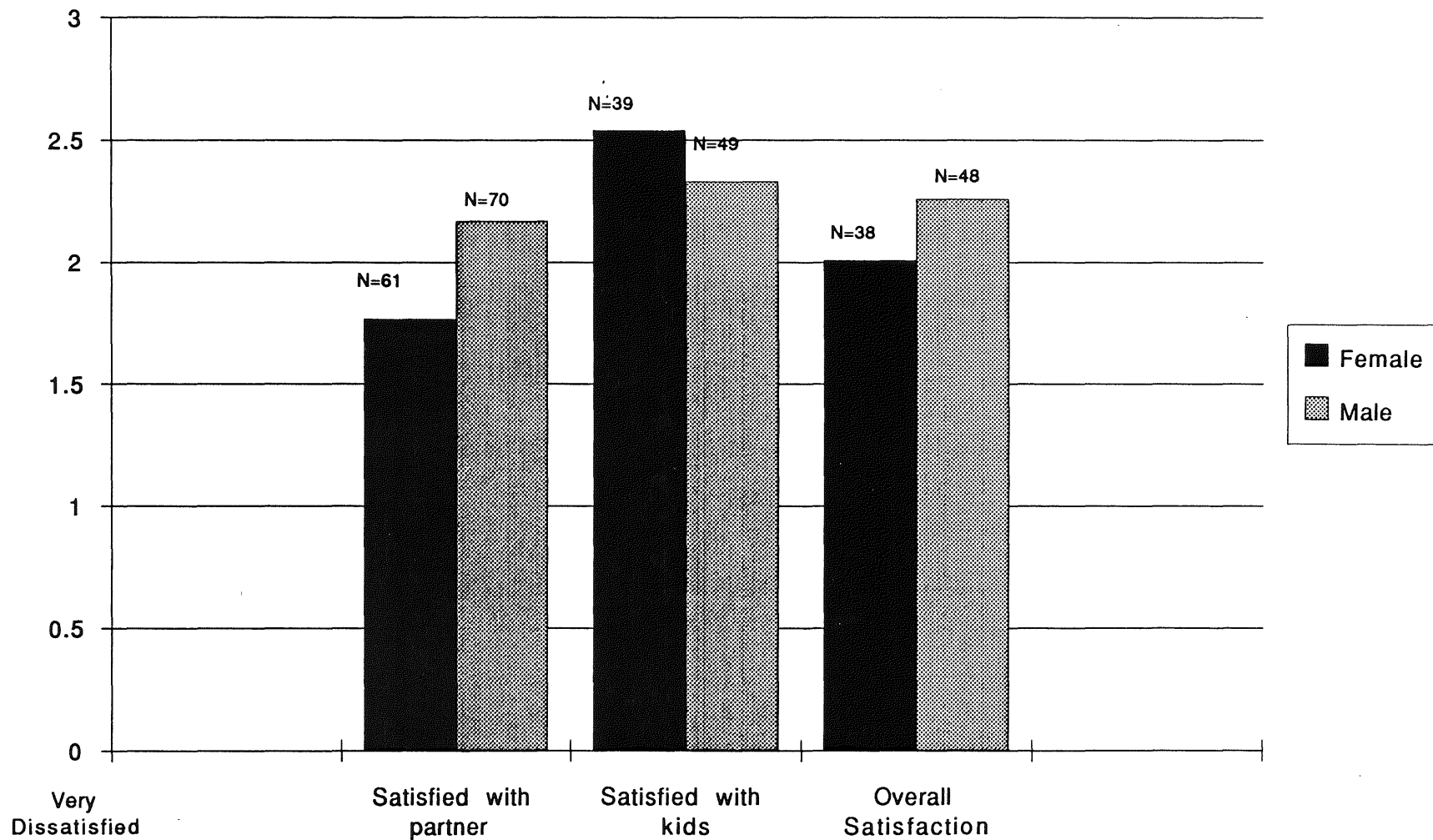


Table 19: Female and Male Child Sexual Abusers Satisfaction with Current Sexual Relationship with Spouse/Partner

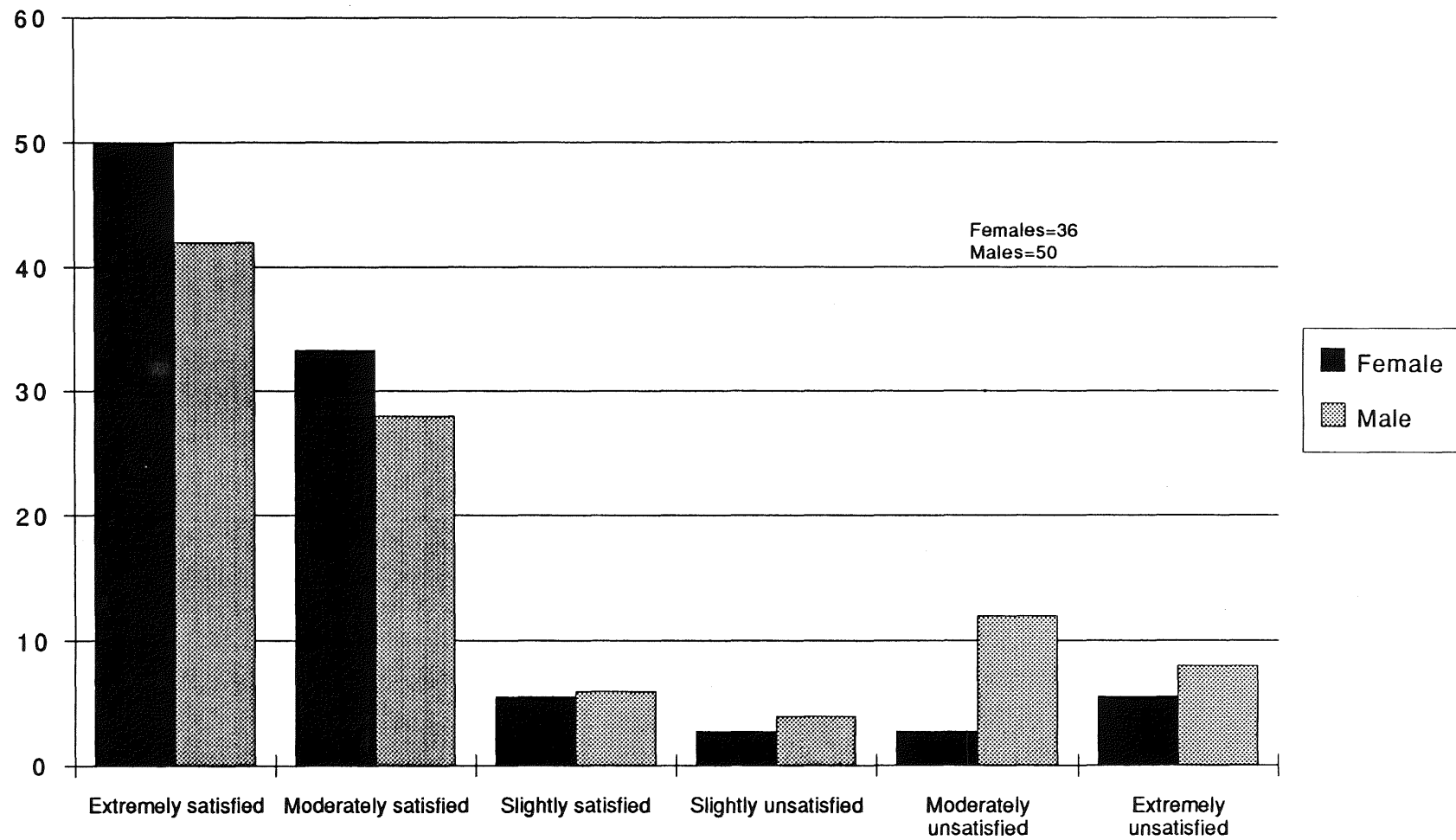
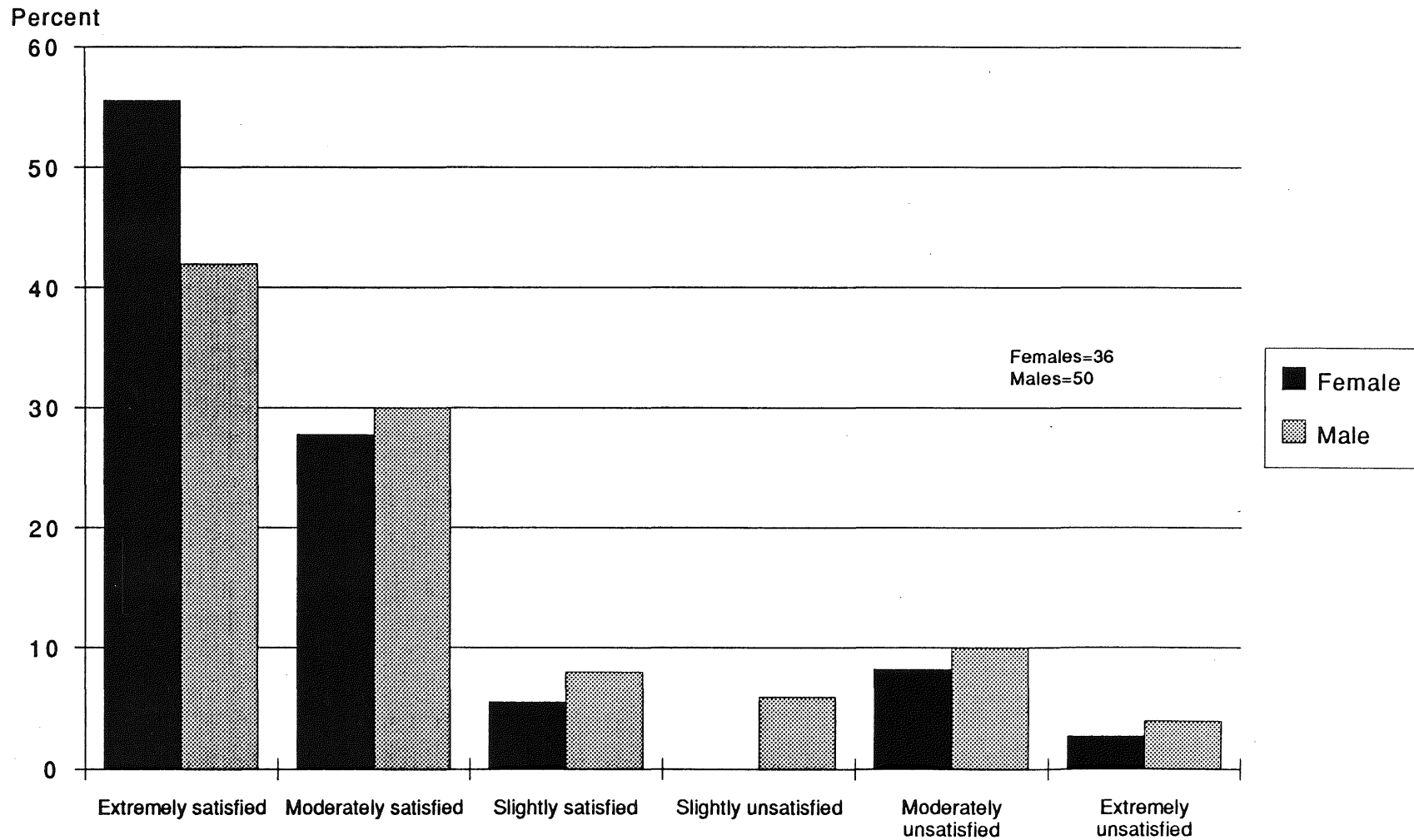


Table 20: Female and Male Child Sexual Abusers Perceptions of How Satisfied Current Spouse/Partner is With Sexual Relationship With Respondent



**Table 21: Number of Different Sexual Partners of Female and Male Child Sexual Abusers in the Past Five Years**

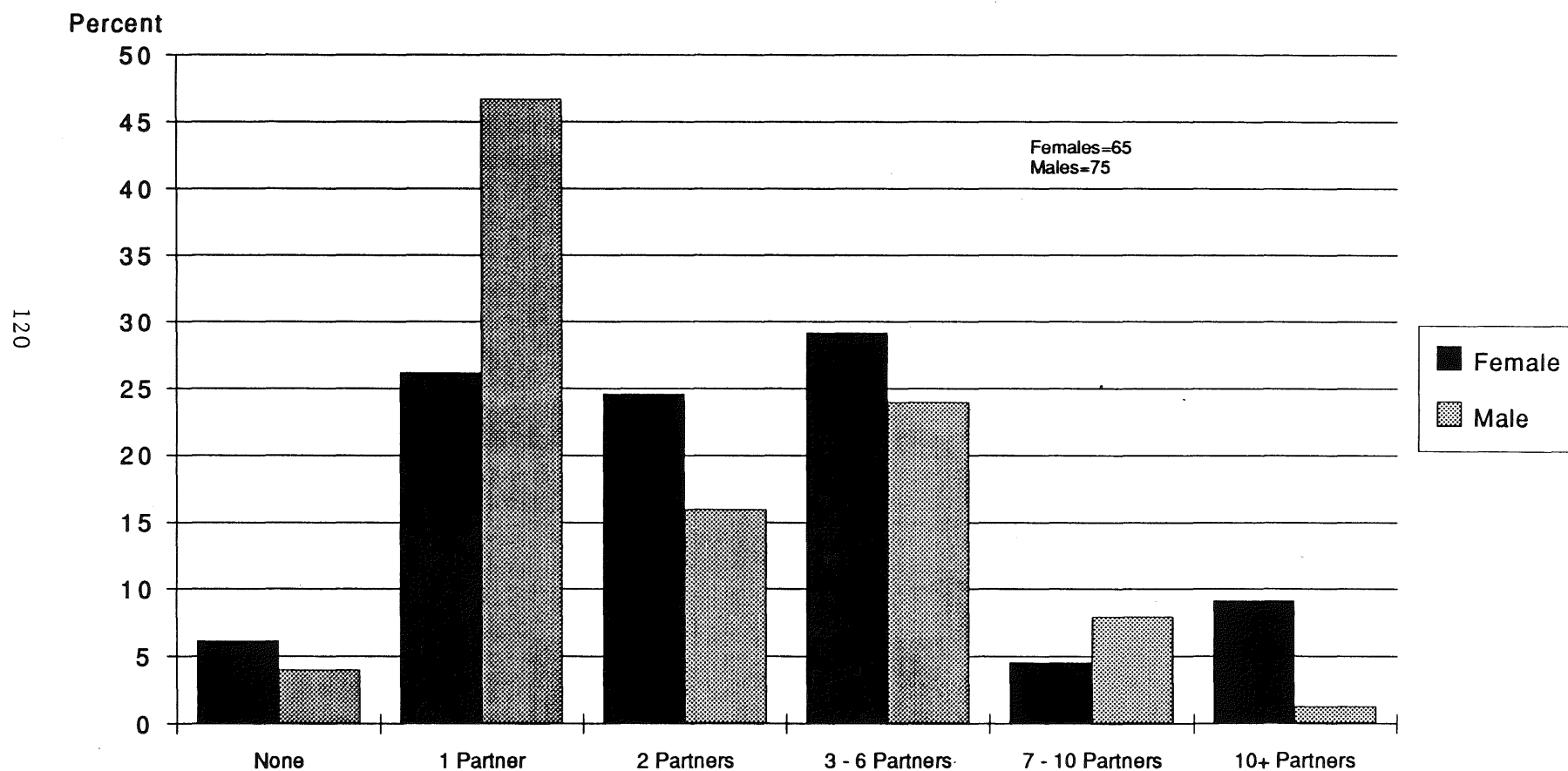
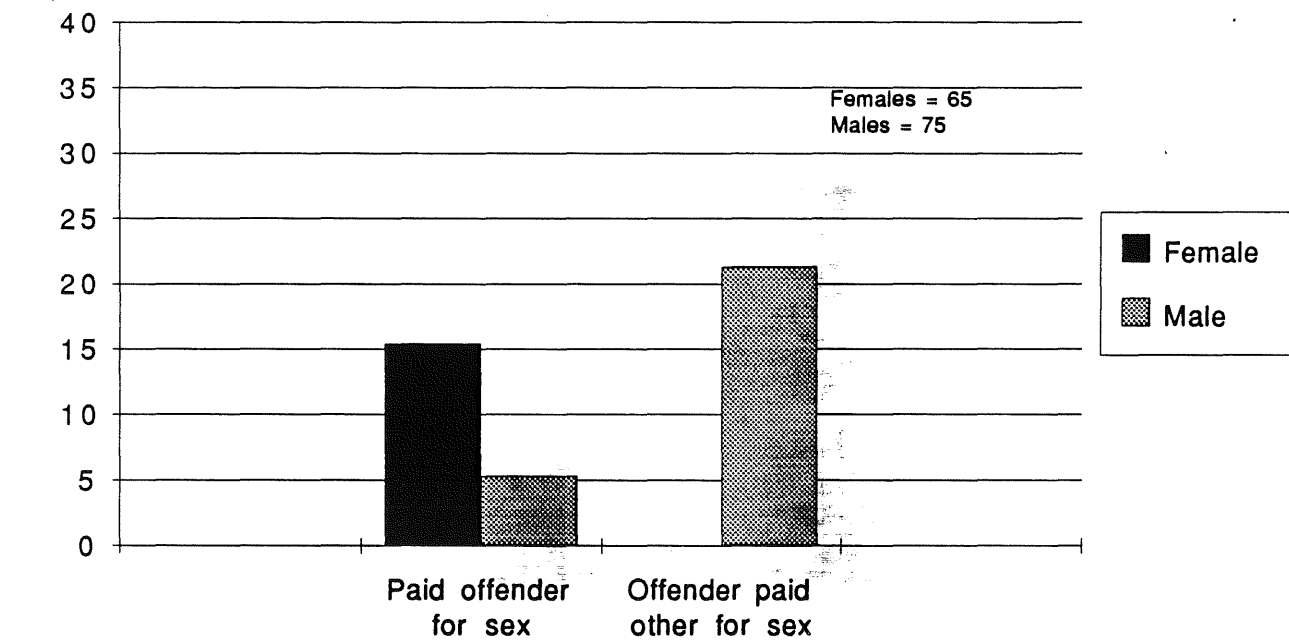


Table 22: Percentage of Female and Male Perpetrators Reporting Paid Sex





**Table 23: Mean Levels of Emotional/Interactional and Sexual Intimacy Needs of Female and Male Child Sexual Abusers**

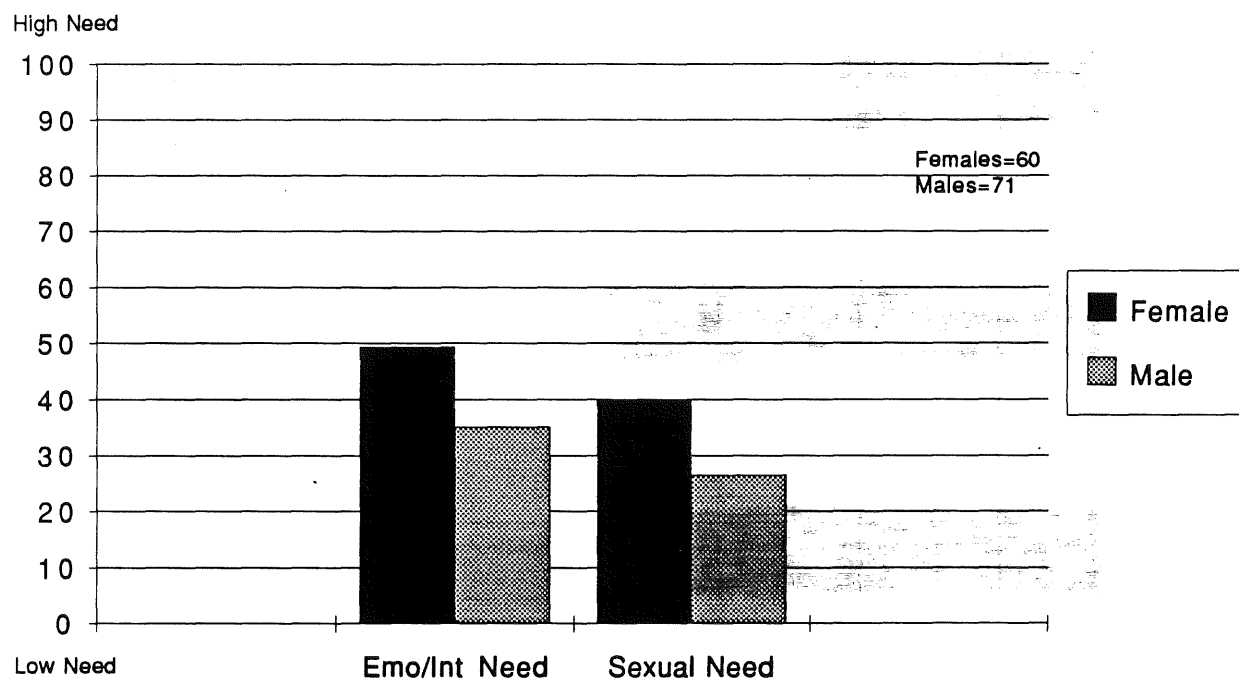


Table 25: Percentage of Female and Male Child Sexual Abusers Who Report Ever Having Been Physically Abused By Their Spouse/Partner

Percent Reporting

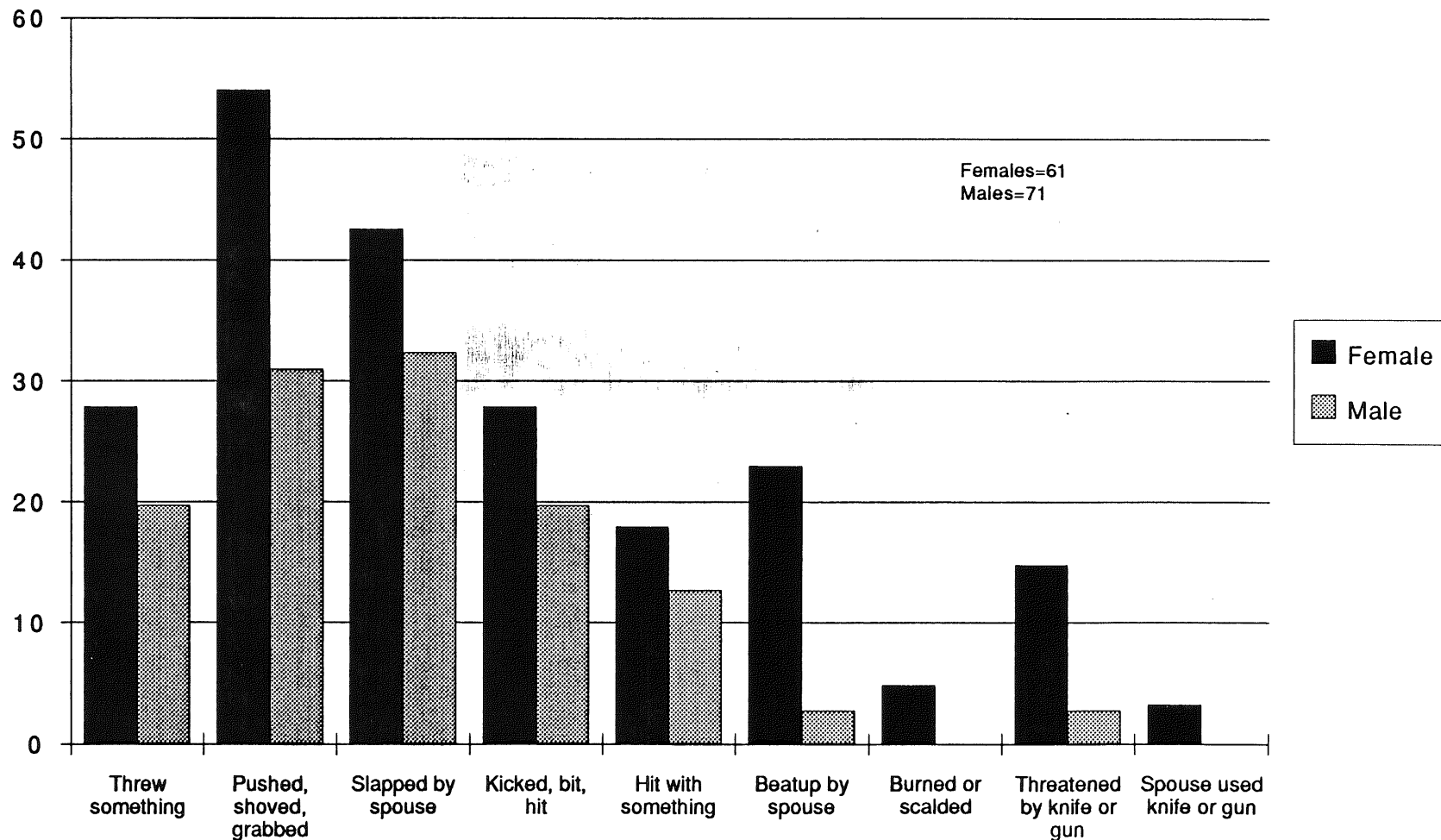


Table 24: Percentage of Female and Male Child Sexual Abusers Who Report Ever Physically Abusing Their Spouse/Partner

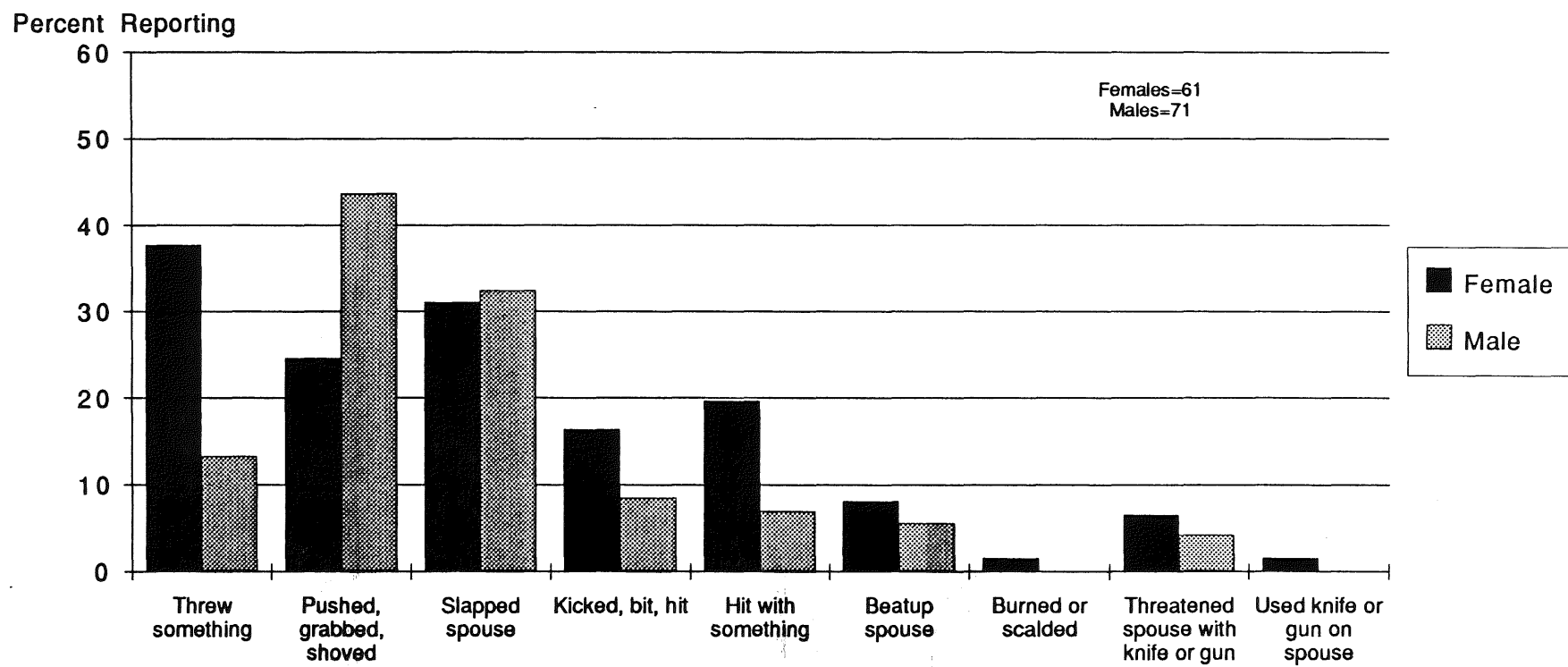


TABLE 26. Child Victims of Female and Male Sexual Abusers by Relationship of Victims and Offenders<sup>a,b</sup>

Male Victims	Female Offenders	Male Offenders	Female Victims	Female Offenders	Male Offenders
Son	9	1	Daughter	3	19
Step-son		2	Step-daughter		12
			Adopted daughter	2	4
Foster son	1				
Brother	1	1	Sister	2	5
			Half-sister		2
Step-brother		1			
			Granddaughter		3
			Step-granddaughter		3
Uncle		1			
Step-uncle		1			
Nephew	1		Niece		6
Male cousin	1	2	Female cousin	1	7
			Sister-in-law		1
			Girlfriend's daughter		4
Boyfriend's brother	1		Girlfriend's sister		1
			Female babysitter		3
			Girls on school bus		1
			Girls at school		1
Friends of brothers	1				
Male under 18	2	1			

<sup>a</sup> N=65 female offenders and 75 male offenders

<sup>b</sup> More than one victim relationship can be reported by an offender.

Table 27. Type and Locus of Child Sexual Abuse Perpetrated by Female and Male Offenders

Locus of Abuse	Type of Abuse Perpetrated									
	Exhibitionism/ Voyeurism		Touching/ Fondling		Oral Intercourse		Sexual Intercourse		Other <sup>a</sup>	
	F <sup>b</sup>	M <sup>c</sup>	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
Immediate	75.0%	82.6%	78.7%	71.0%	100.0%	90.0%	20.0%	50.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Family										
Relatives	8.3	17.4	7.1	25.8	-	10.0	20.0	33.3	-	-
Acquaintances	-	-	7.1	-	-	-	20.0	16.7	-	-
Strangers	16.7	-	7.1	3.2	-	-	40.0	-	-	-
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	(12)	(23)	(14)	(31)	(4)	(10)	(5)	(6)	(1)	(1)

<sup>a</sup> Anal intercourse, bestiality<sup>b</sup> Female offenders<sup>c</sup> Male offenders

Table 28. Gender Relationships of Offenders and Children They Sexually Abused

Gender of Offender	Gender of Victim	Type of Abuse Perpetrated				
		Exposing/ Voyeurism	Touching/ Fondling	Oral Inter.	Sexual Inter.	Other <sup>a</sup>
Female	Male	22.9%	17.8%	13.3%	40.0%	50.0%
	Female	11.4	13.3	20.0	-	-
Male	Male	8.6	6.7	20.0	-	50.0
	Female	57.1	62.2	46.7	60.0	-
Combined		100.0% (35)	100.0% (45)	100.0% (15)	100.0% (10)	100.0% (2)

<sup>a</sup>Anal intercourse, bestiality

Table 29 . Victimization of Female and Male Offenders When They Were Children, by Their Abusers.<sup>a,b,c</sup>

Male Abusers	Female Offenders	Male Offenders	Female Abusers	Female Offenders	Male Offenders
Father	10	1	Mother	3	4
Step-father	6				
Foster-father	1				
Brother	1	5	Sister		4
Half-brother	2		Half-sister		2
Grandfather	3				
Uncle	7	2	Aunt	1	1
Step-uncle		2			
Step-nephew	1		Step-niece	1	
Male cousin	4	4	Female cousin		6
Step-father's nephew	1				
Brother-in-law		1			
Mother's boyfriend	2				
Sister's male friend	1		Girlfriend's sister		1
Father's male friends	1				
Man with her in foster home	1				
Male babysitter	1		Female babysitter		1
Male friend	2				
Male classmates	1				
Teacher	1		Teacher's wife	1	
School janitor	1				
Male neighbor	10	3	Female neighbor	1	1
Male member of church		1			
Minister	1				
Male adult, casual acquaintance		1			
Male restaurant manager		1			
Males known about		1			
Male stranger	18	3	Female stranger	1	3
Male, sold to by mother	1		Prostitute		1

<sup>a</sup>In addition to abuse differentiated by gender of abuser, victimization by a teacher of unknown sex was reported by 1 female and 1 male offender; victimization by a friend of family of unknown sex was reported by 1 female and 1 male.

<sup>b</sup>N=65 female offender and 75 male offenders

<sup>c</sup>More than one abuser relationship can be reported by an offender.

Table 30. Type and Locus of Child Sexual Abuse Experienced by Female and Male Offenders When They Were Children

Locus of Abuse	Type of Abuse Experienced									
	Exhibitionism/Voyeurism		Touching/Fondling		Oral Intercourse		Sexual Intercourse		Other <sup>a</sup>	
	F <sup>b</sup>	M <sup>c</sup>	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
Immediate Family	33.9%	35.0%	42.8%	40.9%	53.8%	35.7%	42.1%	62.5%	25.0%	50.0%
Relatives	11.3	30.0	28.6	22.7	23.1	35.7	10.5	25.0	25.0	50.0
Acquaintances	7.4	10.0	3.6	4.5	7.7	7.1	5.3	12.5	25.0	-
Strangers	48.2	25.0	25.0	31.9	15.4	21.5	42.1	-	25.0	-
Totals	100.0% (27)	100.0% (20)	100.0% (28)	100.0% (22)	100.0% (13)	100.0% (14)	100.0% (19)	100.0% (8)	100.0% (4)	100.0% (6)

<sup>a</sup> Anal intercourse, bestiality

<sup>b</sup> Female offenders

<sup>c</sup> Male offenders



Table 31. Gender Relationships of Offenders With Individuals Who Abused Them When Offenders Were Children

Gender of Offender's Abuser	Gender of Offender	Type of Abuse Experienced				
		Exposing/Voyeurism	Touching/Fondling	Oral Inter.	Sexual Inter.	Other <sup>a</sup>
Female	Male	28.3%	20.4%	15.4%	32.0%	- %
	Female	-	2.0	-	-	-
Male	Male	15.2	24.5	34.6	-	60.0
	Female	56.5	53.1	50.0	68.0	40.0
Combined		100.0% (46)	100.0% (49)	100.0% (26)	100.0% (25)	100.0% (10)

<sup>a</sup> Anal intercourse, bestiality

Table 32: Percentage of Female and Male Child Sexual Abusers Who Acknowledge Their Guilt or Maintain Their Innocence

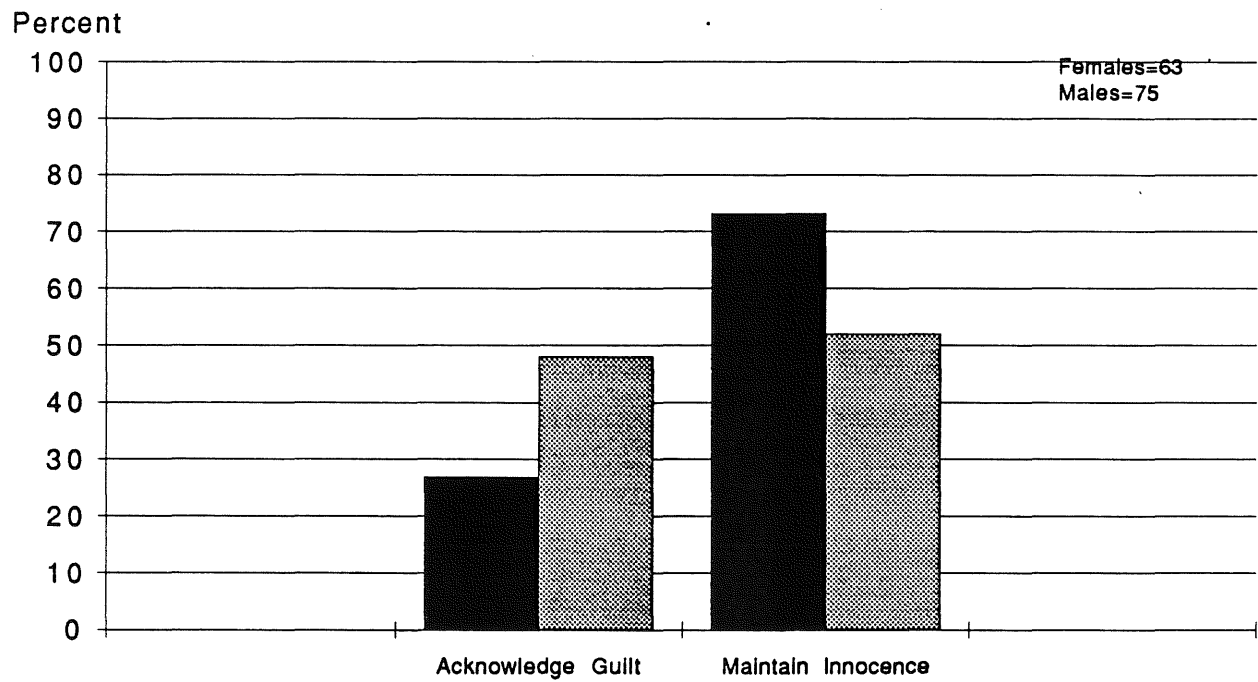


Table 33: Sexual Abuse Recognition Thresholds of Female and Male Child Sexual Abusers

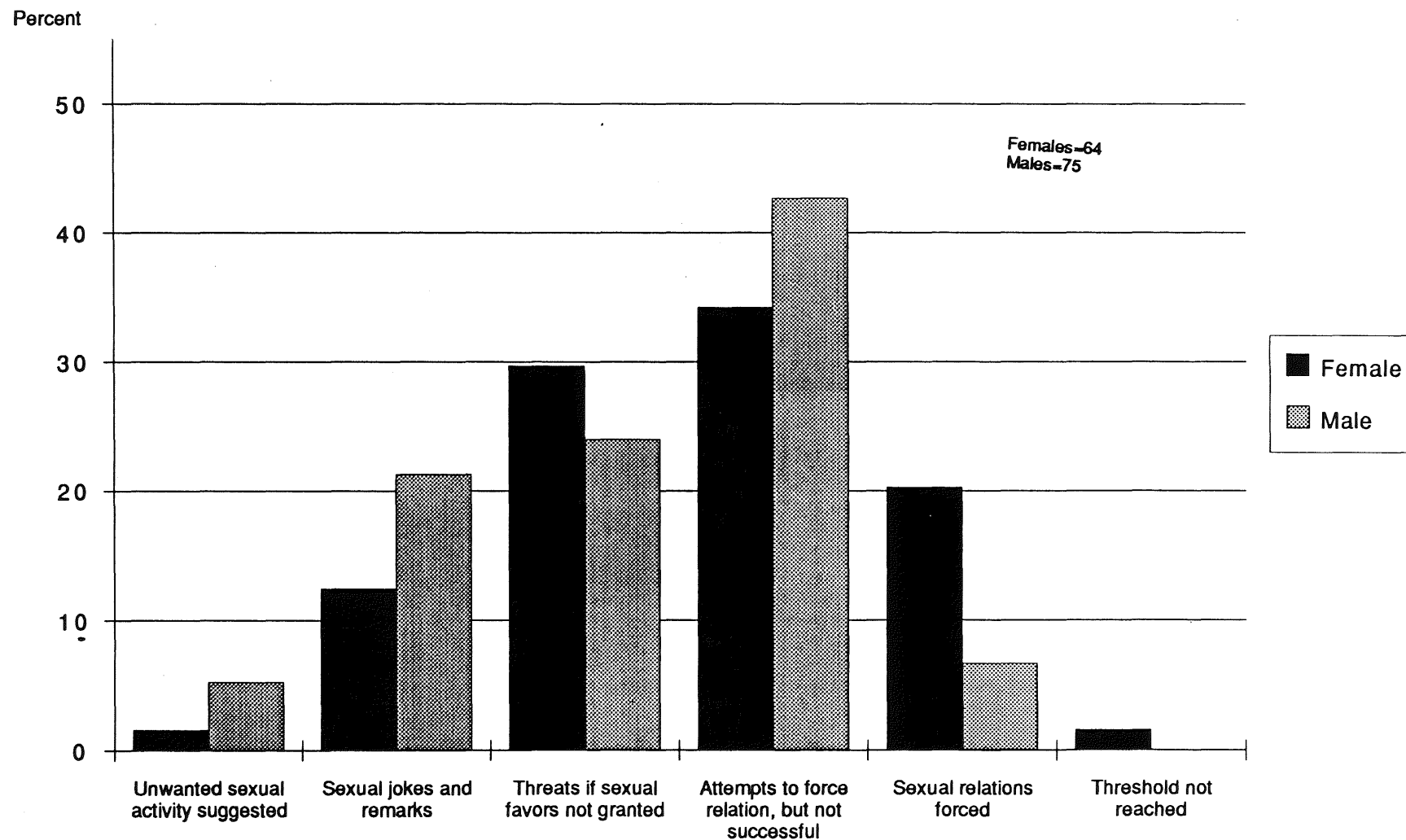


Table 34: Mean Levels of Masculinity and Femininity For Female and Male Child Sexual Abusers

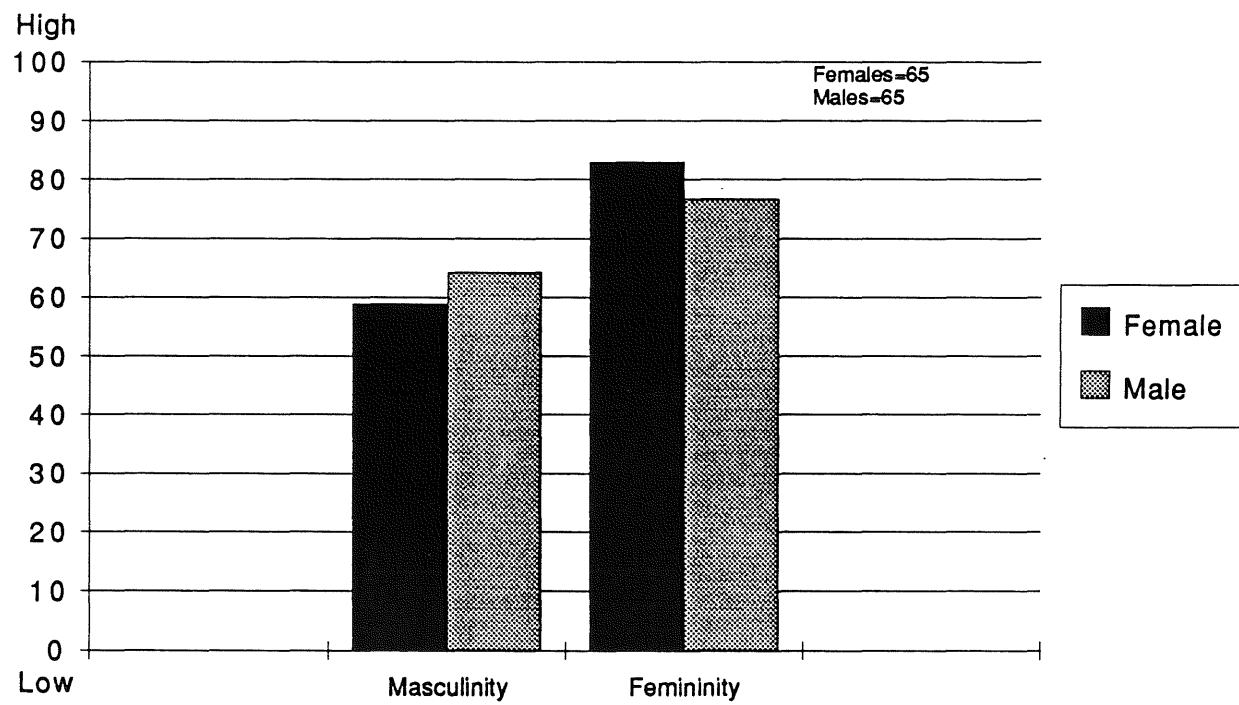


Table 35: Penalties for Child Sexual Abusers Suggested by Female and Male Offenders

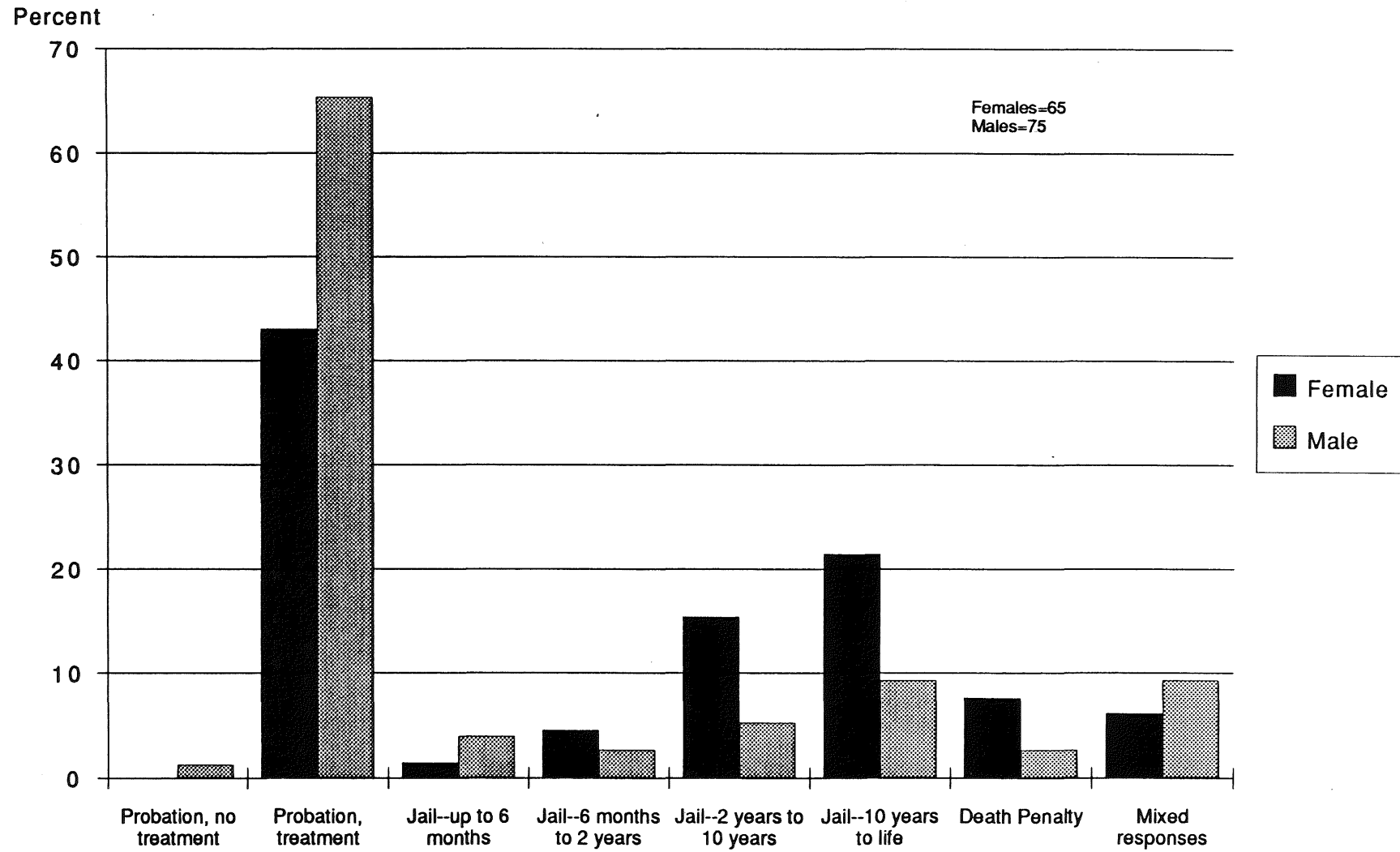


Table 36: Proportions of Female and Male Child Sexual Abusers Who Consider It Likely That a Child Sexual Abuser Can Change Behavior

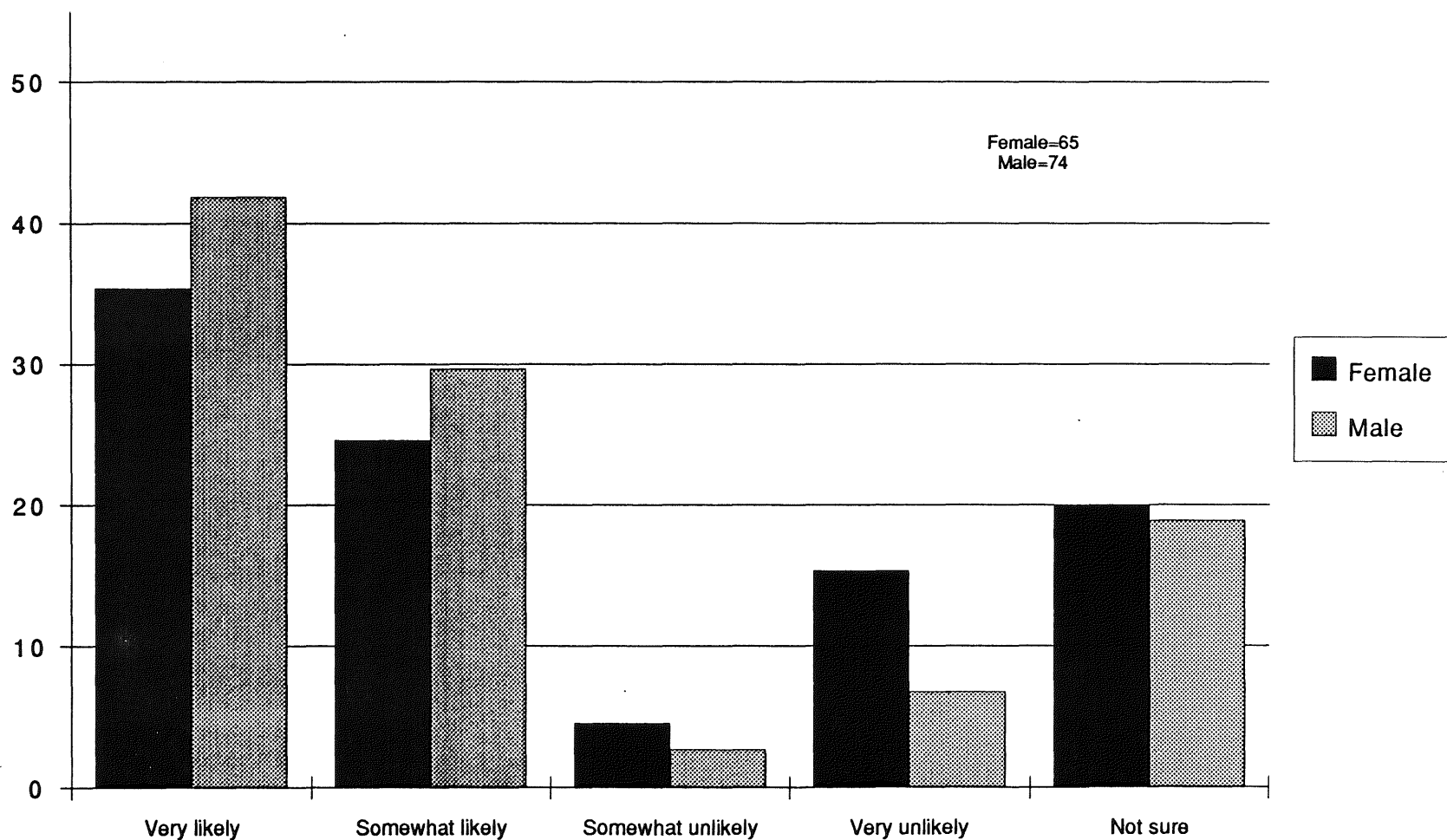


Table 37: Initial Reaction of Female and Male Offenders To Investigation

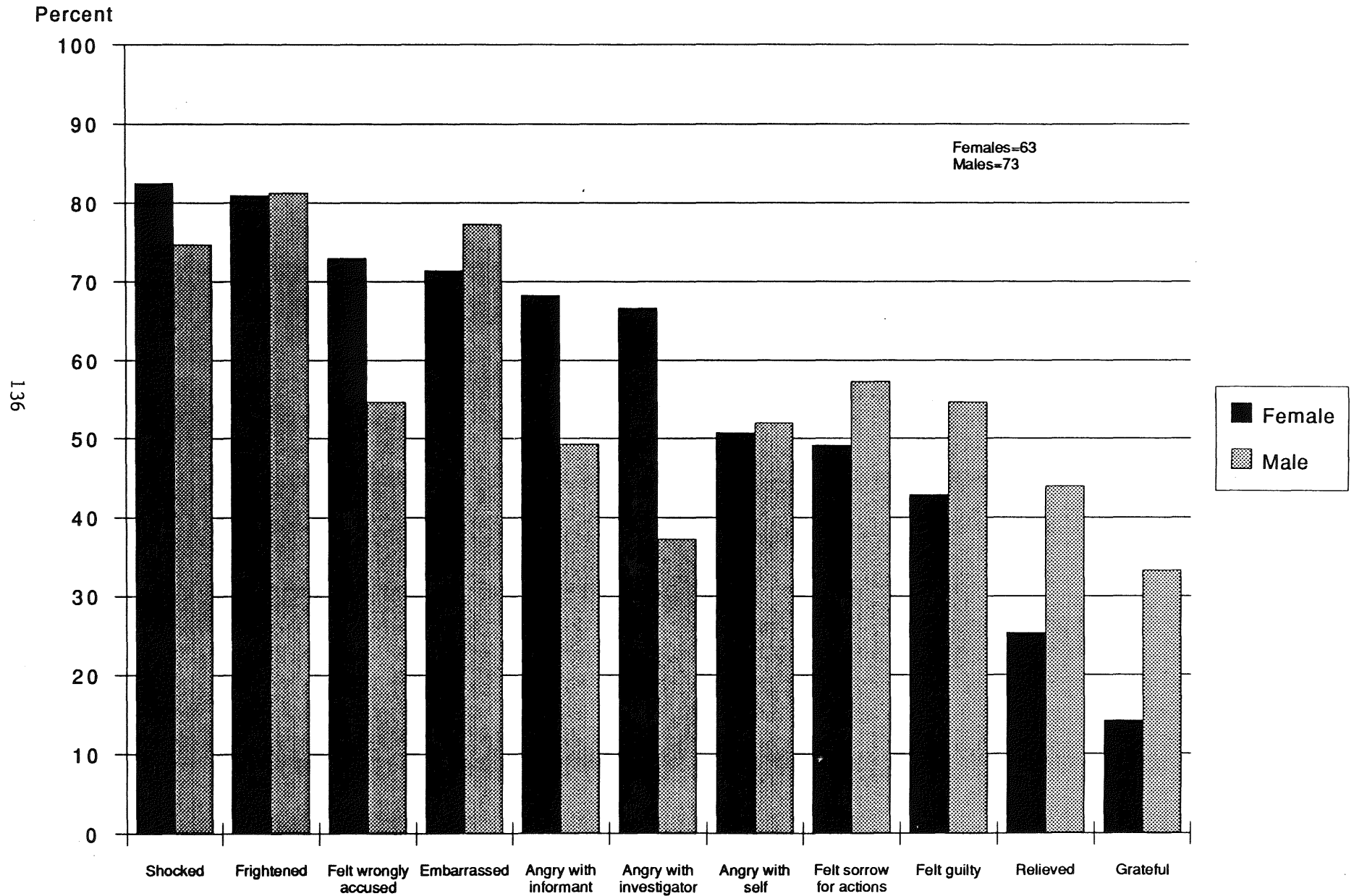
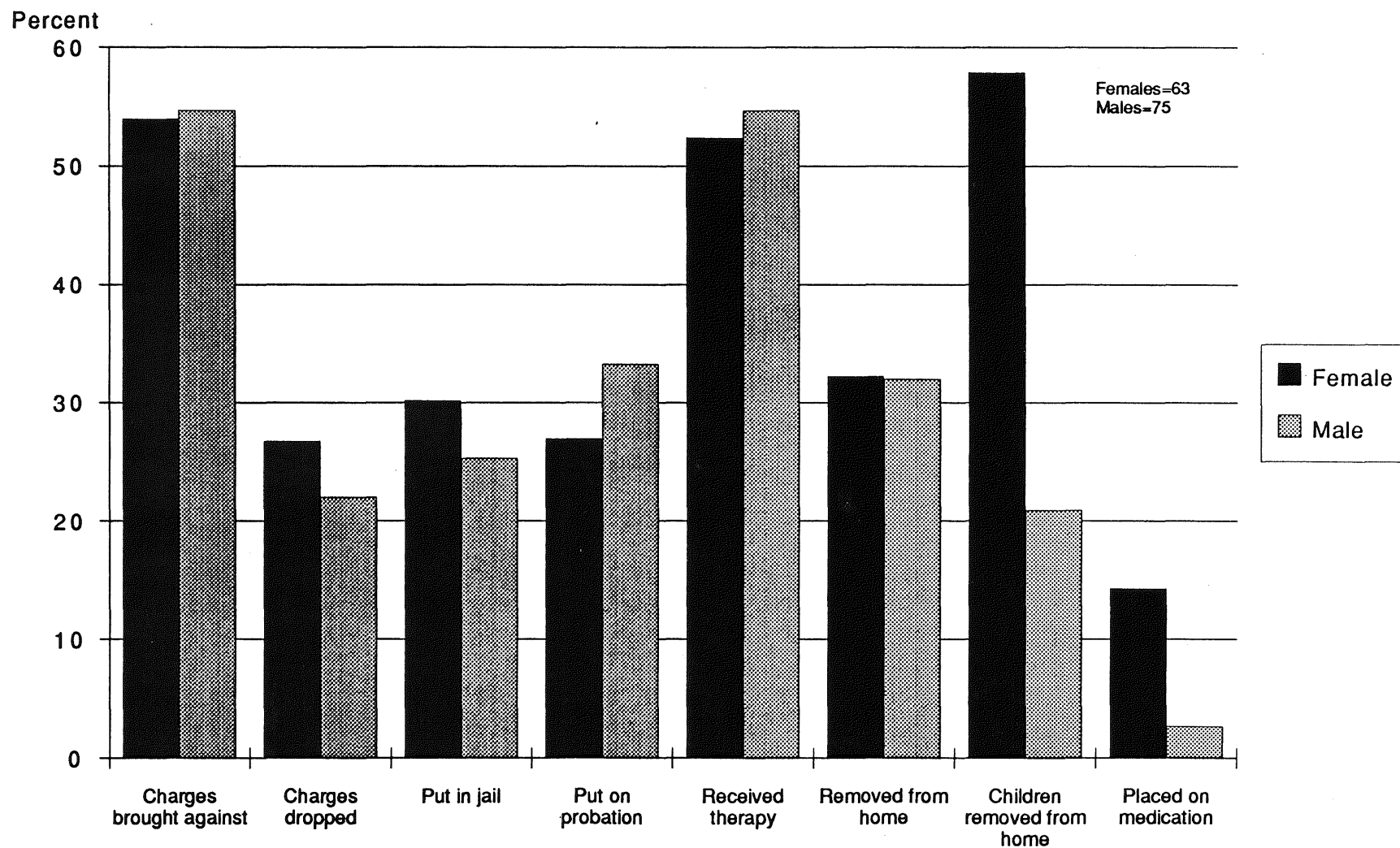


Table 38: Legal Consequences Experienced by Female and Male Child Sexual Abusers





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