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THE RELATIONSHIP OF INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILY
CHARACTERISTICS TO THE SEVERITY OF
THE INCESTUOUS OFFENSE IN
FATHER-DAUGHTER INCEST

A Thesis
Presented for the
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship of individual and family characteristics to the severity of the incestuous offense in father-daughter incest. The individual characteristics selected for the study were the father's history of being abused as a child, the mother's history of being abused as a child, the father's and mother's recent alcohol use. The family characteristics were control, independence, moral-religious orientation, and expressiveness.

Data collected at the Family Renewal Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota was used. Various questionnaires were completed at intake. For the purpose of this study, a questionnaire regarding family background and the Family Environment Scale were used.

Multiple regression analysis was used to analyze the data. The findings of this study indicated that the father's history of emotional abuse was related positively to his perception of the severity of offense and the mother's alcohol use was related inversely.

It was concluded that practitioners should focus on the family system as well as individual family members in the treatment of father-daughter incest. Both current family functioning and family-of-origin issues need to be addressed during the therapeutic process.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Over the past several decades there has been a growing awareness of the problem of sexual abuse of children. Previously, sexual abuse of children was thought to be a rare event, 1.9 per million population (Cavallin, 1966). However, recently researchers have discovered that it is much more prevalent than thought in the past. A recent estimate is that 1 out of every 5 female children and 1 out of every 11 male children are sexually victimized (Pagelow, 1984).

An alarming finding is that the offender is usually known to the child and frequently is a family member. Finkelhor (1979) found that 28% of the women and 23% of the men in his sample had been sexually involved with a family member during childhood. More recently Russell (1986) interviewed 930 women in San Francisco and found that 16% of the women had at least one incident of a sexual experience with a family member before the age of 18. Father-daughter sexual contact has been the most common form of incest reported (Adams-Tucker, 1982; Garbarino & Gilliam, 1980; Ledray, 1984; Mayhall & Norgard, 1983; Scherzer & Lala, 1980).

Statement of Problem

The dynamics surrounding intrafamilial sexual abuse are probably different from the dynamics surrounding extrafamilial sexual abuse. The focus of this study is on intrafamilial sexual abuse--incest. According to early definitions, incest referred only to sexual intercourse between family members too close for marriage. More recently incest has been extended to include various inappropriate sexual behaviors between nuclear family members. For the purpose of this study, incest refers to inappropriate sexual interaction ranging from verbal suggestions to actual rape between father and daughter.

Incest is not only prevalent but also causes harm to the social and emotional development of the victim. Several practitioners and researchers have presented in the literature various symptoms observed in victims of incest. The effects vary with the developmental level of the child. Preschool and latency-aged children who have experienced incest often exhibit developmental regression, academic problems, weight loss or gain, night terrors, bed wetting, fear attacks, social withdrawal, somatic complaints, low self-esteem, and pessimism (Goodwin & Owen, 1982; Herman, 1983; Ledray, 1984; Mayhall & Norgard, 1983; Sgroi, Blick, & Porter, 1982;

Woodling, 1981). Adolescent incest victims often run away, attempt suicide, abuse drugs and/or alcohol, and engage in promiscuous behavior. They also suffer from depression, anxiety attacks, sleep disturbances, eating disorders, and psychosomatic complaints (Adams-Tucker, 1982; Goodwin, 1982; Goodwin & Owen, 1982; Goodwin, Zouhar, & Bergman, 1982; Herman, 1983; Kaufman, Peck, & Tagiuri, 1954; Ledray, 1984; Mayhall & Norgard, 1983; Renvoize, 1982). The effects of the incest often continue into adulthood. Difficulties reported by adult incest victims include low self-esteem, sexual conflict, problems in interpersonal relationships, and repeated victimization (Cohen, 1983; Herman, 1983). The extent of disturbance experienced by the victim is influenced by the nature of relationship to the offender. Father-daughter incest is the most damaging to the victim because of the primacy of the parental relationship (Adams-Tucker, 1982; Elwell & Ephross, 1987; Herman, Russell, & Trocki, 1986; Mayhall & Norgard, 1983)

To offer effective treatment to incestuous families, it is important to understand the dynamics involved in the incestuous activity. Acquisition of knowledge concerning incestuous behavior has been slow. However, there has been some progress. Originally sexual abusers of children were perceived as being handicapped by severe

mental illness. Over time it was discovered that this is not true. The psychological profile of the majority of incest offenders appears to be very similar to that of the normal population (Butler, 1982).

Practitioners then began to address characteristics they thought were related to the occurrence of incest. The initial focus was on the pathology of the individuals involved. However, it soon became apparent that individual pathology was insufficient in explaining the occurrence of incestuous behavior. It was the interactions among the individual, the family system, and the environment that helped explain sexual offenses. The family system then became the focus of discussion and intervention.

Yet our understanding of incestuous behavior remains limited. There is very little empirical knowledge of how the factors are related to the incest. In addition, there is no evidence given in the literature as to how incest can vary so greatly in its form. In some families incest never goes beyond the point of fondling. In other families rape occurs, even of a very young child. It may be that varying degrees of severity can be explained by differences in the individual and familial factors related to incest.

In the current study the relationship between the severity of incest and the variables identified in the literature as being related to the occurrence of incest were analyzed. Both individual and family characteristics were included. The individual characteristics considered were the father's history of being abused as a child, the mother's history of being abused as a child, and the father's and the mother's recent rates of alcohol use. The family variables included were the father's and daughter's perceptions of control, independence, religion, and expressiveness within the family. The model that was tested is shown in Figure 1.

Conceptual Definitions

Dependent Variables

Level of incestuous offense is the most severe form of sexual activity to which the current incestuous behavior had progressed. Rate of incestuous offense is how often the current offender (father) and victim (daughter) engaged in sexual activity at its peak.

Independent Variables

Father's level of sexual abuse as a child is the most severe form of incestuous activity the father experienced with an adult when he was a child. Father's

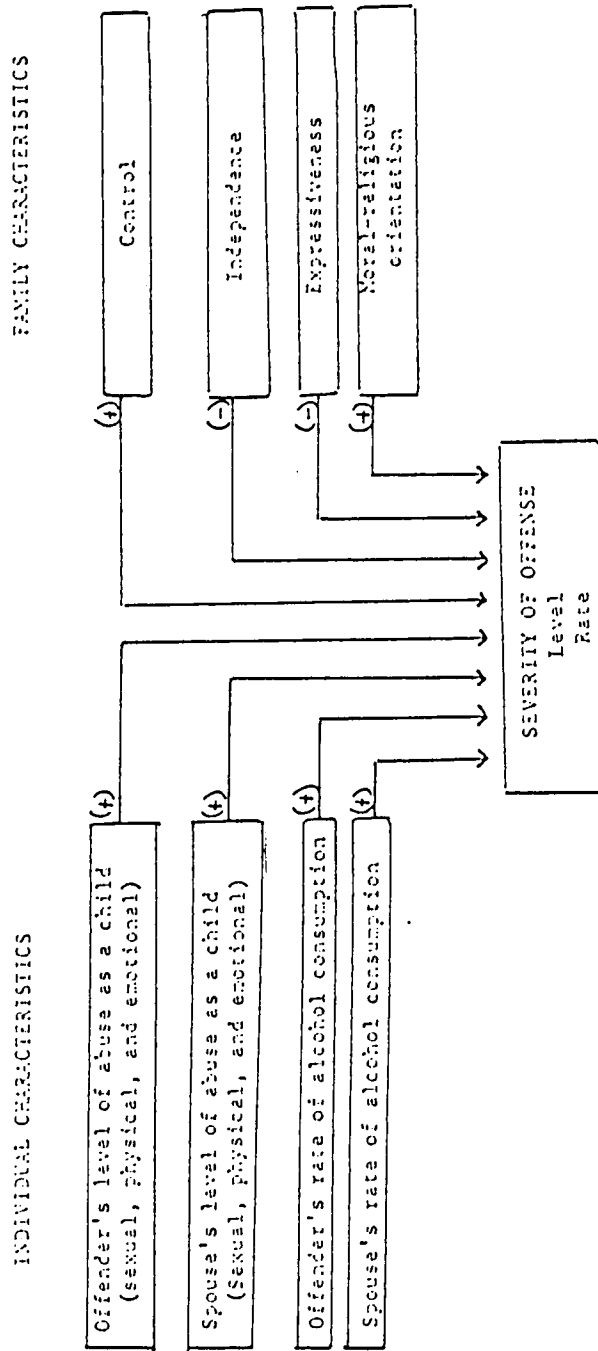


Figure 1. Model of the relationship of individual characteristics and family characteristics to the severity of the offense in father-daughter incest.

level of physical abuse as a child is the most severe form of physical punishment inflicted upon the father by a parent figure when he was a child. Father's level of emotional abuse as a child is the most severe form of parental interaction thought to create a disturbance in a child's sense of well-being that the father experienced from his parents when he was a child.

Mother's level of sexual abuse as a child is the most severe form of sexual activity the mother experienced with an adult when she was a child. Mother's level of physical abuse as a child is the most severe form of physical punishment inflicted upon the mother by a parent figure when she was a child. Mother's level of emotional abuse as a child is the most severe form of parental interaction thought to create a disturbance in a child's sense of well-being that the mother experienced from her parents when she was a child.

Father's recent alcohol use is the rate of alcohol consumption by the father in the last year. Mother's recent alcohol use is the rate of alcohol consumption by the mother in the last year.

Family control is "the extent to which the family is organized in a hierarchical manner, the rigidity of family rules and procedures and the extent to which

family members order each other around" (Moos, 1974, p. 4). Family independence is "the extent to which family members are encouraged to be assertive, self-sufficient, to make their own decisions and to think things out for themselves" (Moos, 1974, p. 4). Family expressiveness is "the extent to which family members are allowed and encouraged to act openly and to express their feelings directly" (Moos, 1974, p. 4). Family moral-religious orientation is "the extent to which the family actively discusses and emphasizes ethical and religious issues and values" (Moos, 1974, p. 4).

Objectives

The objective of the current study was to examine the relationship of factors related to the occurrence of incest and the severity of incest. Specifically, the following questions were examined:

1. How is a history of abuse in the background of an incestuous father related to the father's and daughter's perceptions of the severity of incestuous activity between him and his daughter?

2. How is a history of abuse in the childhood of an incestuous father's wife related to the father's and daughter's perceptions of the severity of the incestuous activity?

3. How is the recent alcohol use of an incestuous father related to the father's and daughter's perceptions of the severity of the incestuous activity?

4. How is the recent alcohol use of an incestuous father's wife related to the father's and daughter's perceptions of the severity of the incestuous activity between her husband and daughter?

5. In a father-daughter incestuous family, how are the father's and daughter's perceptions of the degree of control within the family system related to their perceptions of the severity of the incestuous activity?

6. In a father-daughter incestuous family, how are the father's and daughter's perceptions of degree of independence within the family system related to their perceptions of the severity of the incestuous activity?

7. In a father-daughter incestuous family, how are the father's and daughter's perceptions of the degree of moral-religious emphasis within the family system related to the severity of the incestuous activity?

8. In a father-daughter incestuous family, how are the father's and daughter's perceptions of the degree of expressiveness within the family system related to their perceptions of the severity of the incestuous activity?

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

With an increase in the awareness of the problems of sexual abuse of children, there has been an attempt to understand the dynamics involved. Because of the taboo surrounding incest, research studies are few. The research that has been conducted has been restricted to small samples and univariate, descriptive measures. However, the knowledge about incest has been growing.

Incest Severity

Conceptually, there are several dimensions to the severity of incest. In this study the focus is on the type of sexual act and the rate with which that activity was performed. Because of the lack of research, there is very little known about factors related to the levels of severity. Research that has been conducted on the severity of incest has been centered around the issues of harm and trauma to the incest victims. For example it seems that the severity of the form is related to trauma. More severe forms of incest have been related to greater and longer lasting effects (Elwell & Ephross, 1987; Herman et al., 1986). The frequency was not found to be

associated with trauma (Elwell & Ephross, 1987).

Documentation of the severity of incest also has been used to describe samples used in studies. The proportion of victims who have experienced various forms of incest has varied from study to study. The two forms most often reported have been intercourse and fondling (Anderson & Shaffer, 1979; Farber, Showers, Johnston, Joseph, & Oshins, 1984; Kroth, 1979; Maisch, 1973; VanderMey & Neff, 1984). Other forms of incest cited frequently have included masturbation, cunnilingus, and fellatio (Farber et al., 1984; Kroth, 1979; VanderMey & Neff, 1984).

The form of incest is thought to be related to the age of the victim. Incest often begins in a mild form and progresses to more severe forms as the child matures (Garbarino & Gilliam, 1980; Hoorwitz, 1983; Renvoize, 1982). However, it is important to note the variability of experiences; there are young children who are raped and there are adolescents who never experience more than fondling (Goodwin & Owen, 1982; Meiselman, 1978).

Individual Characteristics Influencing Severity of Incest

Several individual characteristics are thought to be related to incest. The following variables were included

in this study: father's history of abuse as a child, mother's history of abuse as a child, and mother's and father's recent alcohol use.

Father's History of Abuse

Both practitioners and members of the lay community share a common belief that abusive parents were abused as children. This applies to all areas of child abuse, including physical, sexual, and emotional abuse. Several researchers have documented physical abuse in the background of physically abusive parents (Behling, 1979; Galdston, 1965; Holter, Friedman, & Standford, 1968; Oliver, Cox, & Buchanan, 1978; Ryan, Davis, & Oates, 1977; Scott, 1980; Steele & Pollock, 1968). In the area of sexual abuse, support of this belief rests primarily on case histories (Raphling, Carpenter, Davis, & Topeka, 1967; Kasper, Baumann, & Alford, 1984). One study was conducted in which it was found that a significant number of incestuous fathers were sexually abused as children (Langevin, Handy, Russon, & Day, 1985).

One explanation for why abused children may grow up to be abusive parents is based on social learning theory. According to this theory, people model the parenting style of their parents and treat their children as they were treated. Kadushin and Martin (1981) quoted one of the physically abusive parents they interviewed: "It's just

that when they get me mad, I try to do the things my dad did to me, which I think now is wrong, but I was born and raised that way" (p. 232). People are even more likely to model their parents' behavior if they perceive that their parents behavior towards them had a beneficial effect.

Kadushin and Martin quoted another abusive parent:

It's been a long time but I am sure I wasn't too happy about what she [mother] was doing, that's for sure. It didn't make me happy, but you know, since I grew up I think I am kind of happy that she did some things she did, you know. Because you know what to do and what not to do, you know. (p. 234)

Although some physically abusive parents were similarly abused as children, this is not the case for the majority of the abusive parents (Steele & Pollock, 1968). What seems to be characteristic of most abusive parents is a general background of emotional abuse and deprivation (Behling, 1979; Steele & Pollock, 1968; Zueller & Repos, 1983).

A background of emotional loss and conflict also has been reported as occurring in the background of incestuous fathers (Lustig, Dresser, Spellman, & Murray, 1966; Meiselman, 1978; Thorman, 1983). In addition, it has been found that many incestuous fathers have a history of physical abuse (Julian & Mohr, 1979; VanderMey & Neff,

1984). It is unknown how these figures compare to ones for the general population. However, in one study it was found that incestuous fathers and pedophiles described their mothers as more strict and less affectionate when compared to a control group (Langevin et al., 1985). Thus, there seems to be a pattern of abusiveness across generations. However, the form of the abuse may vary.

Therefore, it appears that modeling parental behavior is insufficient in explaining the phenomenon of child abuse. Another explanation offered in the literature is that abused children enter adulthood with numerous unmet needs and the abuse is an attempt to get those needs met. This has been applied to both physical abuse (Justice & Justice, 1976) and incest (Gentry, 1978; Groth, 1982; Herman & Hirschman, 1981; Justice & Justice, 1979; Lustig et al., 1966; Peters, 1976; Sanford, 1980; Sarles, 1975; Taylor, 1984). Justice and Justice (1976) have explained how this applies to physical abuse. According to them, the parents enter marriage with unmet needs and turn to the children to meet those needs. When the children fail, the parents act out in anger. Physical abuse is the result.

In the case of incest, the father, because of his deprived childhood, has very strong needs for closeness and warmth. The father does not know how to get his needs

met in a nonphysical way and attempts to satisfy them in a sexual manner (Thorman, 1983). Renvoize (1982) quoted an incestuous father:

I was feeling really low about myself by then, and I badly needed to have somebody to love me and to be able to love back. I began to depend on Karen [his 8-year-old daughter] for this kind of nurturing and I felt she had the same needs because her mother was away such a lot of time. (p. 20)

It is out of his need for affection that he introduced his daughter to sex.

Carnes (1983) offered further support for the notion that incestuous fathers come from deprived, abusive backgrounds in his theory of sexual addiction. According to Carnes, sexual addicts come from nonsupportive backgrounds and feel that no one will meet their needs. Their thinking becomes impaired and they begin to believe that sex is their most important need. Their life is then caught in the cycle of meeting that need.

A third factor important in explaining the occurrence of abusive behavior is the presence of stress. According to Kempe and Kempe (1978), when a child is abused, "it is always at a point of crisis" (p. 21). Several theorists include stress or crisis as a factor in their model (Gelles, 1979; Kempe & Kempe, 1978).

The crisis may take many forms. According to Justice and Justice (1982), it is constant change rather than mere difficulties that lead to stress. In their interview of 35 abusive and 35 nonabusive mothers, they found that the abusive mothers had experienced more life changes in the 12 months prior to the abuse than the nonabusive mothers. The abusive mothers barely had time to recover from one change before facing another change.

Faller (1981) discussed situational and chronic stressors that often lead to child abuse. Situational stressors are events that recently have occurred causing the family to have to make changes. Faller used the example of changes in the economic situation, marital status, or family composition. Chronic stressors are conditions that are longstanding problems with which the family must learn to deal (e.g., illness, poverty, or parenthood).

It is the interaction of stress with a background of abuse that creates the likelihood of abusive behavior (Faller, 1981; Gelles, 1979; Justice & Justice, 1982; Kempe & Kempe, 1978). Gelles (1979) commented that a parent under stress relies on patterns of coping learned as a child from his or her parents. So it appears that abuse is often the result of a parent with many unmet

needs dealing with a life of stress in the only way he or she has learned to cope.

Mother's History of Abuse

As part of the incestuous family, the mother plays a role in the initiation and maintenance of incestuous activity. Some authors have referred to the mother as a colluding partner, acting in such a manner as to bring about the incest (Koch, 1980). This may include refusing sex to the husband (Cohen, 1983; Justice & Justice, 1979; Kroth, 1979; Lustig et al., 1966; Sarles, 1975; Renvoize, 1982) or making the daughter's bedroom more accessible to the father (Machotaka, Pittman, & Kalman, 1967). According to Faller (1981), some of the mothers refuse sex to their husbands because they themselves were incest victims in childhood. As already stated, sexual dysfunction is a problem some adult incest victims experience.

Several speculations have been made about why the mother acts as a colluding partner in the abuse of her own children. Most speculations are focused on the mother's childhood experiences. Similar to the father, the mother may enter the marriage with numerous unmet needs and may attempt to get those needs met through her children (Sarles, 1975; Zueller & Reposal, 1983). She accomplishes this by reversing roles with her daughter.

The mother becomes the child and the daughter is set up as the wife/mother figure (Cohen, 1983; Finkelhor, 1979; Sgroi et al., 1982; Zueler & Repos, 1983). As this role reversal continues into the sexual sphere of the marriage, the mother feels great relief (Guthrie & Avery, 1977).

There is very little empirical evidence that mothers of incest victims were abused as children. Meiselman (1978) interviewed adult victims and found one case in which the mother was known to be sexually abused. Additional support was found in one study in which incestuous experiences in the childhood of mothers of abused children were considered. Mothers of sexually and physically abused children were eight times more likely than mothers in a control group to have had an incestuous experience before the age of 18 (Goodwin, McCarty, & DiVasto, 1982). This area needs additional research.

Father's Recent Alcohol Use

As early as 1940, incestuous fathers were often considered alcoholic (Riemer, 1940). Since that time, practitioners have linked incest with alcohol abuse (Hoorwitz, 1983; Justice & Justice, 1979; Renshaw, 1982; Sgroi et al., 1982; Spencer, 1978). According to Renvoize (1982), "in at least a third of incest cases, alcohol is consumed in excess" (p. 79).

The relationship between alcohol use and incest has been explained by the disinhibition theory (Faller & Ziefert, 1981). According to this theory, self-control is lowered by the use of alcohol and behaviors that would ordinarily be suppressed are acted on. Finkelhor (1979) supported this theory. He has constructed a model to explain the occurrence of incest. One of the factors in his four-factor model is disinhibition. He claimed that something needs to be acting as a disinhibitor in order for incest to occur. Alcohol is included in his discussion.

It has been found in studies conducted with abusive families that a substantial proportion of the offenders abused alcohol. The proportion varies greatly from study to study based on the definition of alcohol abuse and the sample used. Reports of the proportion of physically abusive parents who have a drinking problem have ranged from 9% to 69% (Behling, 1979; Oliver et al., 1978). For incestuous offenders, the proportion ranged from 8% to 57% (Apfleberg, Sugar, & Pfeffer, 1944; Cavallin, 1966; Gebhard, Gagnon, Pomeroy, & Christenson, 1965; Maisch, 1973; Meiselman, 1978). However, not all offenders abuse alcohol. Rather, alcohol and incest are two behaviors that often occur together.

Carnes (1983) has paralleled alcohol addiction to sexual addiction. He claimed that a person caught in the addictive system may exhibit more than one type of addictive behavior. Therefore, alcohol abuse and incest often occur together.

Several authors have noted the similarities in alcoholic and incestuous families (Barnard, 1983; Taylor, 1984; Yearly, 1982). Barnard (1983) identified several characteristics common to both incestuous and alcoholic families, including blurred generational boundaries, muffled family affect, denial, family isolation, excessive togetherness or separateness, and problems with trust. According to Shapiro (1982), both alcohol and family violence may be used to maintain stability within the family.

Mother's Recent Alcohol Use

The mothers' use of alcohol has not been the focus of researchers or practitioners working with incestuous families. In reporting one study, the researchers did state that 26% of the mothers in their sample abused alcohol (Anderson & Shafer, 1979).

Family Characteristics Influencing Severity of Incest

Even with a growing concern about the family environment, there is little empirical evidence about the

relationship of family characteristics to incest. What is known about family characteristics comes primarily from the descriptions given by practitioners who work with incestuous families and case studies presented in the literature. The following variables were included in the present study because of their frequency of appearing in the clinical literature on incest: control, independence, moral-religious emphasis, and expressiveness.

Control

Control is a very important issue in studying incestuous families because they have been characterized by extreme dominance (Hoorwitz, 1983; Maisch, 1973; Thorman, 1983; Zueler & Reposa, 1983). The father, based on his feelings of inadequacy, sets himself up as a rigid authoritarian (Faller, 1981; Groth, 1982, Taylor, 1986). He expects strict obedience from his family, especially his children. Many incestuous fathers are physically abusive in order to maintain their control (Meiselman, 1978; Sgroi et al., 1982).

According to Herman and Hirschman (1981), the patriarchal society makes it easy for incestuous fathers to abuse members of their families. A father is considered to be the head of household and is given rights over his children and wife, especially the children. Herman and Hirschman also have discussed how the father

even is given rights over the sexual activity of his children as long as he does not use the children for himself.

It appears that it is the unequal distribution of power that allows overt incest to occur. When the father is the sole authority, there is no one capable of stopping the abuse. Herman and Hirschman (1981) compared women who were overtly abused to women who had seductive fathers. It was found that women who came from the overtly incestuous families were more likely to come from families who were characterized by unequal power distributions than the women who had fathers who were seductive but not overtly incestuous.

Independence

Members in incestuous families are especially threatened by independence because of their fear of abandonment (Lustig et al., 1966; Taylor, 1986; Zueler & Reposa, 1983). This fear is thought to come about because of abandonment in the history of the parents (Renvoize, 1982). In order to protect themselves from abandonment, the family becomes enmeshed. All forms of differentiation and individuation seems to be discouraged (Gutheril & Avery, 1977; Renvoize, 1982).

Alexander (1985) presented a case of extreme enmeshment within which family members shared most of

their possessions, even a single toothbrush. Also the family did not teach the children to think for themselves. When placed in a foster home, the two sisters were not able to think for themselves and answered for one another. Even in their interaction with the foster mother, they could not think for themselves but looked to the foster mother to tell them what they wanted.

Religious Emphasis

Religion was mentioned in several discussions on incestuous families (Herman & Hirschman, 1981; Hoorwitz, 1983; Spencer, 1978). It is not the affiliation that is important but rather the devoutness (Herman & Hirschman, 1981; Meiselman, 1978). Spencer (1978), in his observations of incest cases in the court system, noted that religious fanaticism was common. Saltman and Solomon (1982) and Renvoize (1982) also noted religious fanaticism among incestuous families.

Expressiveness

Lack of expressiveness within incestuous families has been noted by a number of scholars (Renvoize, 1982; Sgroi, 1982; Sgroi et al. 1982). According to these authors, individuals within the family do not feel comfortable expressing themselves. This is no wonder considering the secrets that are hidden and the discouragement of individuation. Typically, family members deny their own

feelings (Mayhall & Norgard, 1983; Sgroi et al., 1982) and use indirect methods of communication (Taylor, 1984).

Summary

In sum, both individual and family characteristics may help explain the severity of abuse in incestuous families better. Important individual characteristics include father's history of abuse, mother's history of abuse, and father's and mother's offender's level of alcohol consumption. Important family characteristics include religion, independence, control, and communication.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The data used to examine the severity of sexual offense in incest families were from the data archives at Family Renewal Center (FRC) in Minneapolis, Minnesota. At the time of data collection, FRC was an outpatient clinic that offered family-based treatment for incest, chemical dependency, and food issues. Families entered the Family Sexual Abuse Program (FSAP) either voluntarily or as a result of adjudication for criminal sexual offense. In many cases, convicted offenders were given a choice of jail or family-based treatment.

Families attended an orientation before beginning treatment. During orientation, family members completed a series of self-report questionnaires that included information about the family's background, the abuse history of each member, individual psychological profiles, and family organization. The intake counselor conducted the orientation and collected the data. The administration of assessments by one staff person facilitated the standardization of data collection.

At intake the client signed a waiver form stating that the data could be used for the purposes of research.

It was not necessary to get additional permission for use of the data in the present study because the data did not contain the names of the clients.

Hypotheses

Based on the review of literature and the availability of specific measures, 14 propositions were developed for this study. These included propositions about both the level and rate of incestuous offense. Because severity was measured from both the father's and daughter's perspectives, 28 hypotheses were tested (2 hypotheses for each proposition).

Level of Incestuous Offense

1. The father's self-reported levels of sexual abuse, physical abuse, and emotional abuse are positively related to the father's and daughter's perceptions of the level of the current incestuous offense.

2. The mother's self-reported levels of sexual abuse, physical abuse, and emotional abuse are positively related to the father's and daughter's perceptions of the level of the current incestuous offense.

3. The father's and mother's self-reports of alcohol use are positively related to the father's and daughter's perceptions of the level of the current incestuous offense.

4. Father's and daughter's perceptions of family control are positively related to the level of the current incestuous offense.

5. Father's and daughter's perceptions of family moral-religious orientation are positively related to the level of the current incestuous offense.

6. Father's and daughter's perceptions of family expressiveness are inversely related to the level of the current incestuous offense.

7. Father's and daughter's perceptions of family independence are inversely related to the level of the current incestuous offense.

Rate of Incestuous Offense

1. The father's self-reported levels of sexual abuse, physical abuse, and emotional abuse are positively related to the father's and daughter's perception of the rate of the current incestuous offense.

2. The mother's self-reported levels of sexual abuse, physical abuse, and emotional abuse are positively related to the father's and daughter's perception of the rate of the current incestuous offense.

3. The father's and mother's self-reports of alcohol use are positively related to the rate of the current incestuous offense.

4. Father's and daughter's perceptions of family control are positively related to the rate of the current incestuous offense.

5. Father's and daughter's perceptions of family moral-religious orientation are positively related to the rate of the of current incestuous offense.

6. Father's and daughter's perceptions of family expressiveness are inversely related to the rate of the current incestuous offense.

7. Father's and daughter's perceptions of family independence are inversely related to the rate of the current incestuous offense.

Sample

Selection

The original data set included 91 families with 368 individuals. In 72 of the families, the offender reported that the victim was either his daughter or stepdaughter. Of these families, 10 were dropped because of insufficient data, leaving 62 families. An additional 2 families were dropped because the mothers indicated on the questionnaires that they had sexually abused their children. Thus, the final sample consisted of 60 families.

To prevent nonindependence of family data, only the report from one of the victims in a family was used. The

eldest daughter was selected on the basis that the abuse of subsequent daughters would be influenced by the abuse occurring with the eldest daughter. Several of the daughters selected for the study reported that they had been sexually abused by more than one offender.

Description

Almost half of the families were court referred. Other referral sources included social worker (20%), child protection agency (15%), self (2%), and other (20%). Of the offenders, 82% were prosecuted for the incestuous offense(s).

The socioeconomic characteristics of the families are presented in Table 1. These include family income, education, and occupational status.

The families' annual income ranged from less than \$5,000 to greater than \$40,000 (see Table 1). The majority of the families' income was between \$20,001 and \$25,000.

As can be seen, many of the fathers did not complete high school (42%). Of these fathers, 5% did not go beyond grade school. Over half of the fathers completed high school, with several of them continuing on with college education (20%). The majority of the mothers completed high school (77%), with some continuing on with college education (14%).

Table 1

Socioeconomic Characteristics of Families

Characteristics	% of respondents	
	Fathers' reports	Mothers' reports
Annual gross income ^a		
Less than \$5,000	8	-
\$5,001-10,000	6	-
\$10,001-12,000	6	-
\$12,001-14,000	8	-
\$14,001-16,000	6	-
\$16,001-18,000	6	-
\$18,001-20,000	6	-
\$20,001-25,000	34	-
\$25,001-30,000	9	-
\$30,001-35,000	8	-
\$35,001-40,000	2	-
Greater than \$40,000	4	-
Education ^b		
Grade school	5	2
Junior high	37	21
High school	37	63
Some college	17	9
College (baccalaureate level)	3	-
Graduate or professional school	-	5

(table continues)

Table 1 (Continued)

Characteristics	% of respondents	
	Fathers' reports	Mothers' reports
Occupational status		
Executive	7	5
Managerial	12	9
Sales/clerical	3	25
Skilled labor	40	7
Semi-skilled labor	14	9
Unskilled labor	16	9
Not employed (over 17)	9	36

Note. N = 60.

^aFathers' reports only.

^bHighest level completed.

The occupational status varied. The most common occupational status for fathers was skilled labor (40%) and for mothers was sales/clerical (25%).

In Table 2 the distribution of the family members' ages are displayed. Fathers' ages ranged from 26 to 60 years, with a mean age of 39. Mothers' ages ranged from 26 to 55 years, with a mean age of 37. The age of the daughters included in the study ranged from 7 to 27 years (see Table 2). The majority were adolescents between 13 and 18 years old (73%).

Measurement

Family Environment Scale (FES)

This questionnaire was constructed by Moos, Insel, and Humphrey (1974) to assess the social climate of the family according to the perceptions of the family members. Theoretically, three dimensions are evaluated: relationships, personal growth, and system maintenance. Empirically, there are 10 subscales. Each subscale contains 9 true-false questions, making a total of 90 true-false questions.

Four of the subscales were used in this study. These included Expressiveness from the Relationship Dimension, Independence and Moral-Religious Emphasis from the Personal Growth Dimension, and Control from the System Maintenance Dimension (see Appendix A for specific

Table 2

Age Distribution of Fathers, Mothers, and Daughters

Age (in years)	%
Fathers	
26-30	3
31-35	30
36-40	37
41-45	13
46-50	8
51-55	7
Mothers	
26-30	10
31-35	30
36-40	40
41-45	13
46-50	3
51-55	3
Daughters	
7-9	7
10-12	15
13-15	38
16-18	35
19-21	-
22-24	3

Note. N = 60. Percentages are rounded.

items). The nine items in each subscale were summed to arrive at a total subscale score with a potential range of 1 to 9. The FES was completed by both fathers and daughters.

Moos et al. (1974) reported internal consistencies ranging from .64 to .79 (Expressiveness = .71, Independence = .64, Moral-Religious Emphasis = .79, and Control = .70). Roosa and Beals (1987) reported internal consistency of .47 for control and .46 for expressiveness. They did not report coefficients for the other subscales used in this study. Bloom (1985) also reported reliability of the subscales, with Cronbach alphas as follows: Expressiveness = .65, Independence = .48, Moral-Religious Emphasis = .81, and Control = .76.

Abuse Questionnaire

Fathers and mothers completed the adult form of the abuse questionnaire, which included questions about abuse in his or her family of origin, current abuse in the family, rate of chemical use within the past year, and sociodemographic characteristics (see Appendix B). Daughters completed the children's form of the abuse questionnaire, which included questions about the current abuse in her family (in addition to other questions not used in this study). The following measures of abuse and alcohol use were selected from these abuse questionnaires.

Level of incestuous offense is a 10-point ordinal scale ranging from sexual suggestions (1) to forceful or violent intercourse (10). Both father's and daughter's reports were used. Rate of incestuous offense is a 5-point ordinal scale ranging from less than monthly (1) to daily (5). Both father's and daughter's reports were used.

Father's level of sexual abuse as a child is a 10-point ordinal scale ranging from sexual suggestions (1) to forceful or violent intercourse (10), using father's report was used. Father's level of physical abuse as a child is a 10-point ordinal scale ranging from slapping or shoving (1) to permanent injury (10), using father's report was used. Father's level of emotional abuse as a child is a 10-point ordinal scale ranging from overall lack of nurtures (1) to refusal to obtain appropriate health care (10), using father's report was used.

Mother's level of sexual abuse as a child is a 10-point ordinal scale ranging from suggestions (1) to forceful or violent intercourse (10), using mother's report was used. Mother's level of physical abuse as a child is a 10-point ordinal scale ranging from slapping or shoving (1) to permanent injury (10), using mother's report was used. Mother's level of emotional abuse as a child is a 10-point scale ranging from overall lack of

nurtures (1) to refusal to obtain appropriate health care (10), using mother's report.

Father's alcohol use is a 5-point ordinal scale ranging from occasionally (1) to daily (5), using the father's report. Mother's alcohol use is a 5-point ordinal scale ranging from occasionally (1) to daily (5), using mother's reports.

Analyses

Multiple regression was used to determine the relationship of the individual and family characteristics to the severity of the incestuous offense. The model was divided into four equations. Each equation was tested for fathers' and daughters' reports separately. In the first equation, the level of offense was entered as the dependent variable with the following variables as independent variables: father's abuse history, mother's abuse history, father's alcohol use, and mother's alcohol use. In the second equation, the rate of offense was entered as the dependent variable with the same independent variables as for the first equation. For the third equation, the level of offense was entered as the dependent variable with the family characteristics (control, independence, moral-religious orientation, and expressiveness) entered as the independent variables.

Finally, in the fourth equation, rate of offense was entered as the dependent variable with the same family characteristics as in the third equation entered as the independent variables. Age of victim was entered as a control variable for all four equation. The significance criterion was set at .05.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to increase understanding of the relationship between variables related to the occurrence of father-daughter incest and the severity of the offense. The first objective in this study was to describe father's and daughter's perceptions of the severity of current incestuous offenses, father's and mother's self-reported abuse histories, mother's and father's self-reported alcohol use, and the father's and daughter's perceptions of the family environment. The second objective was to identify variables that help explain the father's and daughter's perceptions of the severity of incest.

Descriptive Measures

The fathers' and daughters' reports of the severity of the current incestuous offense were similar. This applies to both the level and the rate of the offense. The mean level of offense was 6.83 (SD = 2.43) as reported by fathers and 7.10 (SD = 2.41) as reported by daughters (see Table 3).

Table 3

Means and Standard Deviations for Dependent and Independent Variables

Variables	Fathers' reports		Mothers' reports		Daughters' reports	
	<u>M</u>	<u>(SD)</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>(SD)</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>(SD)</u>
Severity of offense						
Level	6.83	(2.43)	-		7.10	(2.41)
Rate	2.09	(1.00)	-		2.57	(1.15)
Abuse history						
Sexual	1.17	(2.68)	2.08	(3.67)	-	
Physical	2.22	(2.47)	1.03	(2.19)	-	
Emotional	2.83	(3.60)	2.55	(3.51)	-	
Alcohol use	1.85	(1.82)	1.02	(1.49)	-	
Family environment						
Control	5.20	(1.95)	-		5.72	(2.05)
Independence	5.17	(1.64)	-		5.56	(1.69)
Moral-religious	5.55	(2.04)	-		5.14	(1.82)
Expressiveness	3.83	(1.73)	-		3.64	(1.85)

Note. N = 60.

According to the frequency distribution, similarities and differences are noted (see Table 4). The fathers' responses ranged from inappropriate holds and kisses to rape, and the daughters' responses ranged from fondling the breast to rape. Fondling of the genitals and intercourse were the most frequent forms of incest reported by both fathers and daughters. Fathers also reported more masturbation of child and fellatio and less masturbation of adult and rape than did daughters.

The mean rate of offense was 2.09 ($SD = 1.00$) as reported by fathers and 2.57 ($SD = 1.15$) as reported by daughters (see Table 4). The daughters reported a higher rate than the fathers; 24% of the daughters but only 9% of the fathers reported the offense as occurring at least two or three times a week (see Table 4).

The majority of the fathers and mothers reported no abuse history (see Table 5). This was especially true for sexual abuse; 80% of the fathers and 70% of the mothers reported never having been sexually abused as a child. Mothers also reported a low incidence of physical abuse; 70% of the mothers reported no physical abuse as a child. This was not true for the fathers; fewer than half (45%) of the fathers reported never having been physically abused as a child. For emotional abuse, a

Table 4

Frequency Distribution of the Severity of Current Offense

Current offense	% of respondents	
	Fathers' reports	Daughters' reports
Level ^a		
Suggestions/hints	-	-
Inappropriate holds		
and kisses	3	-
Fondling breast	5	8
Fondling genitals	18	17
Masturbation of child	10	3
Masturbation of adult	5	12
Cunnilingus	5	8
Fellatio	15	7
Sexual intercourse	30	30
Rape	8	15
Rate ^b		
Less than monthly	36	24
Monthly	28	22
Weekly	28	30
2-3 times weekly	9	22
Daily	-	2

Notes. Percentages are rounded up. The highest level of behavior was reported.

^aN = 60 for fathers' and daughters' reports.

^bn = 47 for fathers' report and n = 46 for daughters' reports.

Table 5

Frequency Distribution of Independent Variables

Variable	% of respondents	
	Fathers' reports	Mothers' reports
Abuse history ^a		
Sexual		
No abuse	80	70
Suggestions/hints	2	3
Inappropriate holds		
and kisses	2	-
Fondling breast	2	3
Fondling genitals	3	2
Masturbation of child	-	2
Masturbation of adult	2	2
Cunnilingus	2	2
Fellatio	5	2
Sexual intercourse	2	5
Rape	2	10
Physical		
No abuse	45	72
Slaps/shoves	3	10
Kicks/punches	10	2
Scratches/bruises	3	2
Use of implements	27	8

(table continues)

Table 5 (Continued)

Variable	% of respondents	
	Fathers' reports	Mothers' reports
Cuts/wounds	2	-
Burns	3	2
Injury leading to doctor's care	2	2
Injury leading to hospital care	3	-
Fractures	3	-
Permanent injury	2	3
Emotional		
No abuse	55	60
Lack of nurturance	7	3
Overprotection	-	-
Verbal insults	-	2
Exploits	-	2
Unrealistic restrictions	5	3
Verbal assaults	8	15
Unfair punishments	8	-
Violent threats	8	7
Cruel confinement	7	3
Refusal to seek help	2	5

(table continues)

Table 5 (Continued)

Variable	% of respondents	
	Fathers' reports	Mothers' reports
Alcohol use ^b		
No use	37	52
Less than monthly	17	25
Monthly	5	10
Weekly	20	5
2-3 times weekly	10	2
Daily	12	2

Note. Percentages are rounded. The highest level of behavior was reported.

^aN = 60.

^bN = 60 for fathers' reports and n = 59 for mothers' reports.

little over half of the fathers and mothers reported no abuse.

Alcohol use was more common among fathers than mothers (see Table 5). About one-third of the fathers reported no use compared to a little over half of the mothers. However, 42% of the fathers reported using alcohol at least weekly, compared to only 12% of the mothers.

Fathers' and daughters' scores were very similar on the Family Environment Scale subscales (see Table 3). The mean score for the fathers on Independence, Moral-religious orientation, and Control were 5.17 (SD = 1.64), 5.55 (SD = 2.04), and 5.20 (SD = 1.95), respectively. For the daughters, the mean score for Independence, Moral-religious orientation, and Control were 5.56 (SD = 1.69), 5.14 (SD = 1.82), and 5.72 (SD = 2.05), respectively. Both fathers and daughters scored lower on Expressiveness than on the other subscales. The fathers' mean score was 3.83 (SD = 1.73) compared to the daughters' mean score of 3.64 (SD = 1.85).

Zero-Order Correlations

Before regression analysis was conducted, zero-order correlations were calculated. First, correlation coefficients between the two dependent variables were

calculated. There was a low correlation between the father's perception of level and rate of current incestuous offense ($r = .24$, $n = 47$). However, there was no correlation between the daughter's perception of level and rate of current incestuous offense ($r = .08$, $n = 46$).

Next, correlations between the dependent and independent variables were calculated (see Table 10, Appendix C). Three variables were moderately correlated with the father's report of level of incest--father's level of emotional abuse history ($r = .40$, $N = 60$), father's level of sexual abuse history ($r = .37$, $N = 60$), and mother's rate of alcohol use ($r = -.43$, $n = 59$). There was a fairly low correlation between the father's report of the level of incest and father's physical abuse history ($r = .26$, $N = 60$). Level of incest from daughter's report and mother's rate of alcohol use also was correlated ($r = -.34$, $n = .59$). The correlation between daughter's report of level of incest and father's physical abuse history was moderately correlated ($r = .32$, $N = 60$). In addition several, variables had a fairly low correlation to the daughter's report of level of incest--father's sexual abuse history ($r = .22$, $N = 60$), father's emotional abuse history ($r = .26$, $N = 60$), and mother's sexual abuse history ($r = .24$, $N = 60$).

The age of the daughter was the only variable that was significantly correlated with the father's report of the rate of incestuous offenses ($r = .34$, $n = 47$). Three variables were moderately correlated to the daughter's report of the rate of incest--father's alcohol use ($r = -.27$, $n = 46$), mother's rate of alcohol use ($r = -.25$, $n = 46$), and the age of the daughter ($r = .25$, $n = 46$).

Correlations among the independent variables also were calculated (see Table 11, Appendix C). Emotional abuse history and physical abuse history were highly correlated for both the fathers ($r = .54$, $N = 60$) and the mothers ($r = .51$, $N = 60$). Moderate correlations were found between father's emotional abuse history and mother's physical abuse history ($r = .36$, $N = 60$), father's physical abuse and mother's physical abuse ($r = .33$, $N = 60$), and mother's sexual abuse with mother's physical abuse ($r = .33$, $N = 60$).

Regression Analyses

Finally, regression equations were calculated to determine the relationship of the individual and family characteristics to the severity of the current incestuous offense. Fathers' and daughters' reports were tested separately for level and rate of incest, first with

individual characteristics and then with family characteristics.

First, father's report of level of current offense was entered as the dependent variable with father's and mother's abuse histories and father's and mother's alcohol use entered as independent variables. Age of daughter was entered as a control variable. The independent variables explained 41% of variance in the father's report of the level of current offense, $F(9, 50) = 3.89$, $p < .01$ (see Table 6). A positive relationship between father's level of sexual, physical, and emotional abuse as a child and his report of level of current offense was hypothesized. This was partially supported. Emotional abuse of the father was significant ($\beta = .31$, $p < .05$). Sexual and physical abuse history of the father and the mother's abuse history were not related to the father's reports of his level of offense.

A positive relationship between father's and mother's alcohol use and the level of current offense also was hypothesized. Father's alcohol use was not related to his report of the level of the current offense. The mothers' rate of alcohol use was inversely related ($\beta = -.37$, $p < .01$) to the father's report of the level of current offense. The hypothesis predicting a positive relationship between the father's report of

Table 6

Regression Analysis of Level of Incestuous Offense and Individual Characteristics

Characteristics	Father's report of level	Mother's report of level
Age of victim	.19	.18
Abuse history		
Father's history		
Sexual abuse	.20	.02
Physical abuse	-.03	.14
Emotional abuse	.31*	.09
Mother's history		
Sexual abuse	.13	.19
Physical abuse	-.10	.10
Emotional abuse	.15	.07
Alcohol use		
Father's use	.11	.07
Mother's use	-.37**	-.27*
F (df)	3.89 (9, 50)**	2.07 (9, 50)*
R ²	.41	.27

Note. N = 60. The numbers in the table are Beta coefficients with the exception of the last 2 rows of numbers.

*p < .05. **p < .01.

level of offense and father's and mother's alcohol use was not supported.

This model also was tested replacing the father's report of offense with the daughter's report. The independent variables explained 27% of the variance in the daughter's report of level of offense, $F(9, 50) = 2.07$, $p < .05$. Only one variable was significant in explaining the variance--mothers' alcohol use ($\beta = -.27$, $p < .05$) (see Table 6).

Next, father's report of rate of current offense was entered as the dependent variable with father's and mother's abuse history and father's and mother's alcohol use entered as the independent variables. Again the age of the daughter was entered as a control variable. The model was nonsignificant (see Table 7). Father's report of the rate of offense was replaced with the daughter's report of the rate of offense. Again, the model was nonsignificant (see Table 7).

Finally, the relationships between father's and daughter's perception of family environment and father's and daughter's report of level and rate of offense were tested. The models were nonsignificant (see Tables 8 and 9).

Table 7

Regression Analysis of Rate of Incestuous Offense and Individual Characteristics

Characteristics	Father's report of rate	Daughter's report of rate
Age of victim	.29*	.23
Abuse history		
Father's history		
Sexual abuse	.04	-.13
Physical abuse	.23	-.06
Emotional abuse	-.09	-.14
Mother's history		
Sexual abuse	.18	.10
Physical abuse	-.34*	.02
Emotional abuse	.28	.11
Alcohol use		
Father's use	.03	-.16
Mother's use	.14	.20
<u>F</u> (<u>df</u>)	1.68 (9, 50)	1.17 (9, 50)
<u>R</u> ²	.23	.17

Note. N = 60. The numbers in the table are Beta coefficients with the exception of the last 2 rows of numbers.

*p < .05. **p < .01.

Table 8

Regression Analysis of Level of Incestuous Offense and Family Characteristics

Characteristics	Father's report of level	Daughter's report of level
Age of victim	.19	.18
Family characteristics		
Father's perception		
Control	.23	-
Independence	.02	-
Moral-religious emphasis	.01	-
Expressiveness	.08	-
Daughter's perception		
Control	-	-.05
Independence	-	-.14
Moral-religious emphasis	-	.07
Expressiveness	-	.07
<u>F (df)</u>	1.11 (5, 54)	.70 (5, 54)
<u>R²</u>	.09	.06

Note. N = 60. The numbers in the table are Beta coefficients with the exception of the last 2 rows of numbers.

*p < .05. **p < .01.

Table 9

Regression Analysis of Rate of Incestuous Offense and
Family Characteristics

Characteristics	Father's report of rate	Daughter's report of rate
Age of victim	.29*	.23
Family characteristics		
Father's perception		
Control	.08	-
Independence	.07	-
Moral-religious emphasis	-.10	-
Expressiveness	.03	-
Daughter's perception		
Control	-	.01
Independence	-	-.04
Moral-religious emphasis	-	.19
Expressiveness	-	.01
<u>F (df)</u>	1.17 (5, 54)	1.19 (5, 54)
<u>R²</u>	.10	.10

Note. N = 60. The numbers in the table are Beta coefficients with the exception of the last 2 rows of numbers.

*p < .05. **p < .01.

Summary

For this sample, the individual characteristics were better predictors of father's and daughter's reports of the severity of the current offense than the family environment variables. Father's abuse history and mother's alcohol use were predictive of the father's report of level of offense, and mother's alcohol use was predictive of the daughter's report of level of offense. These individual characteristics explained more variance in father's and daughter's reports of the level of offense than the father's and daughter's reports of the rate of offense.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

In this study, the severity of incestuous offense was examined with regard to several individual and family characteristics. Individual characteristics were found to be significant. Just two indicators--father's emotional abuse history and mother's alcohol use--explained 41% of the variance in the father's report of the level of offense. As expected, the father's emotional abuse history was positively related to his report of the level of incestuous offense. However, the mother's alcohol use was inversely related to the father's report of level of incestuous offense, opposite of the predicted relationship.

Father's perception of family environment, as measured in this study, was not significant in explaining father's report of the level of the offense. Neither was the daughter's perception of family environment significant in explaining the daughter's report of the level of offense. Individual characteristics and the father's perception of family environment were not predictive of father's report of rate of offense. In addition, individual characteristics and the daughter's

perception of family environment were not predictive of daughter's report of rate of offense.

This study adds to the knowledge base of incestuous behavior. Whereas in most studies, the focus has been on identifying factors related to the occurrence of incest, the focus of this study was on the relationship between those important factors and the severity of incest.

In addition, the type of statistical analysis used in this study differed from that used in past research. Most scholars have relied primarily on percentages and simple correlations. In the present study, unique variance that each variable contributed to the severity of the incest was calculated by using a multivariate analysis. In addition, the results supported the contention that incest severity is a multidimensional construct because independent variables differentially explained the level and rate of offense. This gives a more complete and accurate perspective than that given by a univariate analysis.

Another contribution of this study is the opportunity to view how both father's and daughter's views of the level and rate of offense are related to individual and family characteristics. It was found in the study that the factors predictive of the father's perspective of the severity of incest was different from

the factors predicting the daughter's perspective of the severity of incest. Therefore, it is important to take into account whose perspective is being predicted when looking at the severity of incest.

As already stated, the literature on severity of incest is limited. When included in studies, severity of incest has been used primarily as a descriptor of the sample. Throughout the literature, two forms of incest have been noted as occurring most frequently, fondling and intercourse (Anderson & Shafer, 1979; Farber et al., 1984; Kroth, 1979; Maisch, 1973; VanderMey & Neff, 1984). The same was found for this sample. Intercourse was the most frequent form, closely followed by fondling.

There was an unexpected finding concerning the age of the victim. In the literature, incest has been described as progressing from mild forms to more severe forms. It was assumed, therefore, that the age of the daughter would be related to the level of the offense. This was not found. It appears the severity of incest is complex, and the notion of the severity of incest increasing from mild to severe forms as the child matures is too simplistic.

It is a widely held notion that abused children grow up to be abusive parents. Two explanations were given in the literature. One explanation has been that abusive

behavior is learned; therefore, parents treat their children in the same manner in which they were treated (Kadushin & Martin, 1981). The second explanation has been that abusive parents come from generally deprived and/or abusive backgrounds, leaving them with numerous unmet needs (Justice & Justice, 1976). The abusive behavior has been described as an attempt to meet various needs.

The current study lends support to the latter explanation in that only 20% of the fathers in the sample reported that they were sexually abused as children. A greater number of them reported a history of physical and emotional abuse.

However, it appears that the etiology goes even deeper than unmet needs. The level of the emotional abuse in the childhood of the father was a significant predictor of father's report of the level of the current offense, but it was not a significant predictor of the rate of the current offense. It is unrealistic to assume that an incestuous father can better meet emotional needs by a single incidence of a severe form of incest rather than by daily performances of a milder form.

Just as incestuous fathers are thought to have abusive, deprived backgrounds, their wives also are thought to have abusive, deprived backgrounds (Justice &

Justice, 1979; Sarles, 1975; Zueller & Reposa, 1983).

There is very little research on the background of the mothers. In this study a number of mothers reported a background of abuse. Emotional abuse was the most common type reported. Thus, the thought that mothers of incest victims come from a background of emotional abuse and deprivation was supported in this study.

In the literature, incestuous fathers frequently have been described as having a problem with alcohol (Hoorwitz, 1983; Justice & Justice, 1979; Renshaw, 1982; Sgroi et al., 1982; Spencer, 1978). It is claimed that alcohol use decreases inhibition, making incest more likely. A number of the fathers in this study reported frequent alcohol abuse. Daily consumption of alcohol was reported by 12% of the fathers; 42% reported that they consumed alcohol at least weekly.

The findings in this study discount the disinhibition theory. If alcohol use frees the person of inhibition, making incest more likely, then the father's rate of alcohol use should have been predictive of the father's and daughter's report of the rate of incestuous offense. However, no such relationship was not found in this study. Neither was father's rate of alcohol use predictive of father's or daughter's report of the level

of offense. Perhaps a relationship would have been found if a group of nonincestuous fathers had been included in the study.

Research is totally lacking in the area of the mother's alcohol use. It could be assumed that more frequent use of alcohol by the mother would make the mother less available to the child, creating an atmosphere for more frequent and severe incestuous activity. However, an opposite relationship was found. The mother's frequency of alcohol use was inversely related to both the father's and daughter's report of the level of the incestuous offense. Further research is needed to interpret this finding.

Increasingly, incest has been described as being a family's attempt to bring equilibrium to the family system (Garbarino & Gilliam, 1980; Lustig et al., 1966). Several family characteristics have been identified as being related to the occurrence of incest. In this study, the focus was on the relationship of family characteristics to the severity of incest. No relationship was found for either father's or daughter's perception. It may be that family variables are predictors of the occurrence of incest, but individual characteristics are more important to the form that the behavior takes. However, the reliability of the Family Environment Scale is questionable (Roosa & Beals, 1987).

Therefore future research should be conducted before concluding that family variables are not related to the severity of incest.

The findings of this study are restricted to father-daughter incest. A different set of factors may be operating in other forms of child abuse and therefore should be considered separately. In addition, the findings in this study should be applied cautiously to families in which the father was not prosecuted. The fathers in this study had been prosecuted for the incestuous offense. It is unknown how families where the father was prosecuted differ from incestuous families where the father was not prosecuted.

This research is only a beginning step in providing an understanding of the variables related to the varying degrees of the severity of incestuous behavior. Additional research needs to be conducted to further knowledge. Specifically, future research is needed to identify other variables that are related to severity of incest. Only 41% of the variance of the father's report on level of offense was explained by the variables in the study, leaving 59% of the variance unexplained. And only 27% of the variance of daughter's report on the level of offense was explained, leaving 73% of the variance unexplained.

In addition, closer examinations is needed of the variables found significant in this study. As already stated, there is very little known about how the mother's use of alcohol relates to her daughter's incestuous experience, especially the severity of the incestuous experience. In view of the unexpected finding in this study, additional information is needed.

For professionals working with incestuous families, the importance of treating the whole family was supported. The characteristics of the incestuous father are not necessarily the most significant indicators of the severity of incest. This shows the importance of including the mother in treatment.

For maximum effectiveness, professionals also need to focus on the whole person in their work with incestuous fathers. As shown in this study, incest is not only a sexual problem. It is an issue of emotional needs. If there is a response to the emotional needs of the incestuous father as well as the sexual behaviors displayed, there may be more chance of influencing the underlying causes of the incestuous behavior.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

FAMILY ENVIRONMENT SCALE ITEMS

Control

1. Family members are rarely ordered around.
2. There are very few rules to follow in our family.
3. There is one family member who makes most of the decisions.
4. There are set ways of doing things at home.
5. There is a strong emphasis on following rules in our family.
6. Everyone has an equal say in family decisions.
7. We can do whatever we want to in our family.
8. Rules are pretty inflexible in our household.
9. You can't get away with much in our family.

Independence

1. We don't do things on our own very often in our family.
2. In our family, we are strongly encouraged to be independent.
3. We think things out for ourselves in our family.
4. We come and go as we want to in our family.
5. There is very little privacy in our family.
6. Family members almost always rely on themselves when a problem comes up.
7. Family members strongly encourage each other to stand up for their rights.
8. It's hard to be by yourself without hurting someone's feelings in our household.
9. We are not really encouraged to speak up for ourselves in our family

Moral-Religious Emphasis

1. Family members attend church, synagogue, or Sunday School fairly often
2. We don't say prayers in our family.
3. We often talk about the religious meaning of Christmas, Passover, or other holidays.
4. We don't believe in heaven or hell.
5. Family members have strict ideas about what is right and wrong.
6. We believe there are some things you just have to take on faith.
7. In our family each person has different ideas about what is right and wrong.
8. The Bible is a very important book in our home.
9. Family members believe that if you sin you will be punished.

Expressiveness

1. Family members often keep their feelings to themselves.
2. We say anything we want to around home.
3. It's hard to "blow off steam" at home without upsetting somebody.
4. We tell each other about our personal problems.
5. If we feel like doing something on the spur of the moment we often just pick up and go.
6. Someone usually gets upset if you complain in our family.
7. Money and paying bills is openly talked about in our family.
8. We are usually careful about what we say to each other.
9. There are a lot of spontaneous discussions in our family.

Note. From "Family Environment and Preliminary Manual" by R. Moos, 1974, Palo, CA: Consulting Psychologist Press.

APPENDIX B
INTAKE QUESTIONNAIRE

FAMILY SEXUAL ABUSE PROGRAM
FAMILY RENEWAL CENTER
FAIRVIEW SOUTHDALDE HOSPITAL

Please fill out this form and answer all the questions as best you can. The information you give is confidential and will not be given out or shared with anyone else besides you and your treatment team. Honest answers will allow us to have a better understanding of your problem and therefore plan treatment best suited to resolve it. Feel free to ask your counselor if you need help with any part of the form.

Name _____ Chart Number _____
Address _____ Phone: home _____
(Number) (Street) work _____

(City) (State) (Zip)

Gender (sex) _____ Age _____ Grade _____

Religious Preference (please check one)

Catholic _____ Jewish _____
Muslim _____ None _____
Protestant (please list denomination) _____
Other (please list) _____

Ethnic Background (please check one)

Black _____ Caucasian _____
Native American _____ Oriental _____
Hispanic (Spanish surnamed) _____
Other (please list) _____

Referral Source (Who or which agency referred you to FSAP? Please give name of person or agency.)

Clergy _____ Courts _____
Physician (doctor) _____ Police _____
School _____ Self-referred _____
Child Protection Service _____ Social Worker _____
Other (please name agency or person by profession) _____

Have you ever been involved in the criminal Justice system (like having been booked by the police)? (please check one) Yes _____ No _____
If yes, please describe briefly how it happened. _____

Are you being prosecuted for the abusive behavior? (please check)

Yes _____ No _____

If yes, have you been found guilty _____, innocent _____, or is the case being continued (no decision has been handed down)? _____

We like to know something about your family so that we can work with you as a group to solve problems which may involve you or your family members.

Marital Status: (please check one)

Divorced _____ Married _____ Living together without being married _____
Remarried _____ Single _____ Separated _____
Widowed _____ Other (please describe) _____

Source of family income: (please check as many as needed)

1) You working _____ 2) Your spouse working _____
3) Both you and your spouse working _____ 4) Government Assistance _____
5) Other (please explain) _____

Highest educational level you attained (achieved). (please check one)

1) Grade school graduate _____ 2) Junior high graduate _____
3) High school graduate _____ 4) Some college _____
5) College graduate _____ 6) Graduate or professional school _____

If you are working for pay, please check one of the following categories which best describes your job:

Executive-Professional _____ Managerial-Teaching _____
Sales-clerical _____ Skilled labor _____
Semi-skilled labor _____ Unskilled labor _____

Approximate yearly family income. (please check one)

less than \$ 5,000 _____ \$ 5,001 to \$10,000 _____ \$10,001 to \$12,000 _____
\$12,001 to \$14,000 _____ \$14,001 to \$16,000 _____ \$16,001 to \$18,000 _____
\$18,001 to \$20,000 _____ \$20,001 to \$25,000 _____ \$25,001 to \$30,000 _____
\$30,001 to \$35,000 _____ \$35,001 to \$40,000 _____ over \$40,000 _____

Please tell us something about your physical health. Feel free to add anything which concerns you but we have not covered.

Are you in good physical condition?

Yes _____ No _____

Are you handicapped in any way?

If handicapped, what is the handicap? _____

Do you consider yourself attractive?

Please describe briefly other health concerns that have not been covered.

Concerning your physical self (body), do you consider yourself

- a. about normal in weight? _____
 slightly overweight (5-10 lbs.)? _____
 overweight (10-20 lbs.)? _____
 very overweight (over 20 lbs.)? _____
 grossly overweight (threatens your health)? _____
- b. keeping a normal diet? _____
 keeping a strict weightloss diet? _____
 being on and off weightloss diets constantly? _____

The following sections deal with physical, sexual and emotional abuse, both abuse you may have received and abuse you may have inflicted on others. The questions and lists cover the same things. The left hand column is for abuse you have received; the right hand column is for when you have been the abuser. Please check entries which apply.

PHYSICAL ABUSE

- A. Please read the following ten (10) descriptions and see if any or how many situations you have experienced. Check as many as apply under either the left or right column, or both columns and continue with sections B, C and D.

If some abuse has occurred that is not listed among the ten descriptions, please list it right below 10 and check the appropriate columns.

	Check this column when someone hurt you	Check this column when you hurt someone
1. slapping and shoving	_____	_____
2. kicking and punching	_____	_____
3. scratches and bruises	_____	_____
4. use of implements like cord, belt, or switch	_____	_____
5. cuts and wounds by sharp instruments	_____	_____
6. burns	_____	_____
7. injury requiring a doctor's care	_____	_____
8. injury requiring hospital care	_____	_____
9. broken bones or fractures	_____	_____
10. permanent injury	_____	_____

- B. When was the first time you can remember it happening?

Before the start of Kindergarten	_____	_____
During grades K-3	_____	_____
During grades 4-6	_____	_____
During grades 7-9	_____	_____
During grades 10-12	_____	_____
In adulthood	_____	_____

Check this column
when someone hurt you

Check this column
when you hurt someone

C. Person(s) involved in the abuse
(check as many as apply)

father	_____	_____
stepfather	_____	_____
mother	_____	_____
stepmother	_____	_____
adult male relative	_____	_____
adult female relative	_____	_____
adult male friend	_____	_____
adult female friend	_____	_____
brother(s)	_____	_____
sister(s)	_____	_____
friends	_____	_____
strangers	_____	_____
son(s)	_____	_____
daughter(s)	_____	_____
stepson(s)	_____	_____
stepdaughter(s)	_____	_____
relative(s) under 18	_____	_____
spouse	_____	_____

D. Check the entry which tells how often
the abuse occurred when it was at its
peak (when it happened most often)

daily	_____	_____
two to three times week	_____	_____
weekly	_____	_____
monthly	_____	_____
less than monthly	_____	_____

Is abuse still occurring?

Yes _____ No _____ Yes _____ No _____

SEXUAL ABUSE

- A. Please read the following ten (10) descriptions and see if any or how many situations you have experienced. Check as many as apply under either the left or right column, or both columns and continue with sections B, C and D.

If some abuse has occurred that is not listed among the ten descriptions, please list it right below 10 and check the appropriate columns.

Check this column
when someone took
advantage of you

Check this column
when you took ad-
vantage of someone

1. covert suggestions, hinting,
propositioning
2. holding inappropriately, French
kissing

_____	_____
_____	_____

	<u>Check this column when someone took advantage of you</u>	<u>Check this column when you took ad- vantage of someone</u>
3. caressing (fondling) breasts	_____	_____
4. caressing (fondling) genitals (penis, vagina)	_____	_____
5. person masturbating (jacking you off) you	_____	_____
6. you masturbating (jacking the other person off) other	_____	_____
7. person performing oral sex on you (kissing and sucking your vagina/ penis)	_____	_____
8. you performing oral sex on other person (kissing and sucking other person's penis or vagina)	_____	_____
9. sexual intercourse (putting penis into vagina)	_____	_____
10. forceful or violent sexual inter- course (using force or threat to put penis into vagina)	_____	_____
B. When was the first time you can remember it happening?		
Before the start of Kindergarten _____	_____	_____
During grades K-3	_____	_____
During grades 4-6	_____	_____
During grades 7-9	_____	_____
During grades 10-12	_____	_____
In adulthood	_____	_____
C. Person(s) involved in the abuse (check as many as apply)		
father	_____	_____
stepfather	_____	_____
mother	_____	_____
stepmother	_____	_____
adult male relative	_____	_____
adult female relative	_____	_____
adult male friend	_____	_____
adult female friend	_____	_____
brother(s)	_____	_____
sister(s)	_____	_____
friends	_____	_____
strangers	_____	_____
son(s)	_____	_____
daughter(s)	_____	_____
stepson(s)	_____	_____
stepdaughter(s)	_____	_____
relative(s) under 18	_____	_____
spouse	_____	_____

Check this column
when someone took
advantage of you

Check this column
when you took ad-
vantage of someone

- D. Check the entry which tells how often the abuse occurred when it was at its peak (when it happened most often)

daily
two to three times a week
weekly
monthly
less than monthly

Is abuse still occurring

Yes _____ No _____

Yes _____ No _____

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

- A. Please read the following ten (10) descriptions and see if any or how many situations you have experienced. Check as many as apply under either the left or right column, or both columns and continue with sections B, C and D.

If some abuse has occurred that is not listed among the ten descriptions, please list it right below 10 and check the appropriate columns.

Check this column
when someone hurt you

Check this column
when you hurt someone

1. overall lack of nurturance and support
2. overly protective, does not allow one to develop as an individual
3. putdowns, teasing, harassment
4. exploitation by asking you (him/her) to take care of house and siblings
5. unreasonable restrictions like forcing one not to socialize with friends
6. verbal assault, screaming
7. unfair punishment
8. threats of violence or dire consequences
9. cruel confinement
10. refuse to obtain physical, mental or psychological health care

- B. When was the first time you can remember it happening?

Before the start of Kindergarten _____
During grades K-3 _____
During grades 4-6 _____
During grades 7-9 _____
During grades 10-12 _____
In adulthood _____

Check this column
when someone hurt you

Check this column
when you hurt someone

C. Person(s) involved in the abuse
(check as many as apply)

father	_____	_____
stepfather	_____	_____
mother	_____	_____
stepmother	_____	_____
adult male relative	_____	_____
adult female relative	_____	_____
adult male friend	_____	_____
adult female friend	_____	_____
brother(s)	_____	_____
sister(s)	_____	_____
friends	_____	_____
strangers	_____	_____
son(s)	_____	_____
daughter(s)	_____	_____
stepson(s)	_____	_____
stepdaughter(s)	_____	_____
relative(s) under 18	_____	_____
spouse	_____	_____

D. Check the entry which tells how often
the abuse occurred when it was at its
peak (when it happened most often)

daily	_____	_____
two to three times a week	_____	_____
weekly	_____	_____
monthly	_____	_____
less than monthly	_____	_____

Is abuse still occurring?

Yes _____ No _____

Yes _____ No _____

Who knew the abuse before the agency or professional referred you to FSAP? (check
as many as apply)

No one _____ wife _____ husband _____ parents _____ other children _____
other _____

Chemical Use: Please complete the following if you have used chemicals in the past year. Check the chemical(s) you have used and check how often you used the chemical(s).

	<u>Daily</u>	<u>2-3 times/wk</u>	<u>Weekly</u>	<u>Monthly</u>	<u>Only on special occasions</u>
Alcohol	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Cocaine	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Marijuana/grass	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Pop pills	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Sleeping pills	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Tranquilizers	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Acid, angel dust	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Others	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Is your chemical use a problem to you now?

Yes _____ No _____

Has your chemical use ever been a problem to you?

Yes _____ No _____

Has anyone told you your chemical use is a problem to you?

Yes _____ No _____

Had anyone told you that your chemical use was a problem?

Yes _____ No _____

Thank you very much for your cooperation. The information you gave is going to be very helpful to both you and us in our effort to help you and your family.

APPENDIX C
ZERO-ORDER CORRELATION TABLES

Table 10

Correlations Among Control, Dependent, and Independent Variables

Variables	Father's report		Daughter's report	
	Level	Rate	Level	Rate
Father's history				
Sexual abuse	.37**	.09	.22**	-.09
Physical abuse	.26*	.12	.32*	-.06
Emotional abuse	.40**	-.02	.26*	-.15
Mother's history				
Sexual abuse	.17	.18	.24*	.09
Physical abuse	.12	-.11	.24*	.01
Emotional abuse	.20	.11	.19	.04
Alcohol use				
Father's	-.01	.06	-.09	-.27*
Mother's	-.43**	.03	-.34**	-.25*
Father's perception of family				
Control	.05	.02	-	-
Independence	.01	.07	-	-
Moral-religious emphasis	.08	-.06	-	-
Expressiveness	.21	.03	-	-
Daughter's perception of family				
Control	-	-	.08	-.01
Independence	-	-	-.09	-.06
Moral-religious emphasis	-	-	.06	.21
Expressiveness	-	-	.03	.11
Age of Daughter	.19	.34	.18	.25

Note. $N = 60$ for father's and daughter's reports of level, $n = 47$ for father's report of rate, and $n = 46$ for daughter's report of rate.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Table 11

Correlations Among Control and Independent Variables

Variable	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)
Father's history																	
Sexual abuse	(1) 1.00																
Physical abuse	(2) .18	1.00															
Emotional abuse	(3) .27	.54	1.00														
Mother's history																	
Sexual abuse	(4) .29	.12	.08	1.00													
Physical abuse	(5) .24	.33	.36	.33	1.00												
Emotional abuse	(6) -.00	.26	.42	.29	.51	1.00											
Alcohol use																	
Father's use	(7) .03	-.13	-.10	-.14	-.18	-.09	1.00										
Mother's use	(8) -.12	-.25	-.13	.05	.06	.04	.25	1.00									
Father's perception of family environment																	
Control	(9) .42	-.04	.03	.32	.23	.11	-.29	-.11	1.00								
Independence	(10) -.35	-.10	-.11	-.25	-.18	-.01	-.12	.05	-.18	1.00							
Moral-religious emphasis	(11) -.06	-.17	-.03	-.05	-.05	-.11	-.22	-.08	.21	.18	1.00						
Expressiveness	(12) -.14	.03	-.02	-.19	-.05	-.14	-.05	-.15	-.12	.23	.16	1.00					
Daughter's perception of family environment																	
Control	(13) .11	.10	.18	.01	.18	.22	-.30	-.05	-	-	-	-	1.00				
Independence	(14) -.13	-.21	-.27	-.01	-.14	-.35	.27	.11	-	-	-	-	-.45	1.00			
Moral-religious emphasis	(15) -.11	-.38	-.12	.08	-.03	.09	-.18	.04	-	-	-	-	.22	-.29	1.00		
Expressiveness	(16) .11	-.09	.02	.13	.00	-.01	.19	-.05	-	-	-	-	-.22	.06	-.11	1.00	
Age of Daughter	(17) .19	-.06	-.13	-.03	-.06	-.22	.00	-.19	-.06	.06	.04	-.04	.03	.21	-.17	.06	1.00

Note. $N = 60$. $p < .05$ when $r > .22$ and $p < .01$ when $r > .30$.

APPENDIX D

LETTER TO FAMILY RENEWAL CENTER

November 15, 1987

Dave Walsh Ph.D.
Family Renewal Center
6401 France Avenue
Edina, Minnesota 55435

Dear Mr. Walsh,

I am a graduate student at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville, working under Cheryl Buchler. The topic of incest is of special interest to me. I greatly appreciate your willingness to allow me access to the data collected at the Family Renewal Center. The title of my thesis is "The Relationship of Family and Individual Characteristics to the Severity of the Offense in Father-daughter incest". It should be completed by December 10, 1987. At that time, I will send you a copy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susanne Coleman". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Susanne Coleman

VITA

Susanne Michelle Coleman was born in Lubbock, Texas, on December 7, 1955. At the age of 12, she moved to Bellingham, Washington, with her family. There she attended junior high school and then high school. She graduated from Bellingham High School in June 1974. Then going on to a community college, she worked for an Associate Arts degree in Early Childhood Education. In the fall of 1979, she entered Western Washington University, and in June 1982 she received a Bachelor of Science degree in Family and Community Services. At that time, she entered the graduate program at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and worked toward a Master of Science degree in Child and Family Studies. Requirements for the degree were completed December, 1987.

The author has worked with children for several years. From December 1976 to August 1984 she worked in various daycare centers and preschools. While in graduate school, she was a graduate assistant in The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Child Development Laboratories. In October 1984, she became the social worker at Columbus Home, an emergency shelter for abused children and is currently employed there.