

4.4 CHARACTERISTICS OF ACTS OF SEXUAL ABUSE BY CATHOLIC PRIESTS

Many efforts have been made to assess the abuse experiences of those who have been victims of child sexual abuse, from attempts at some national level data to small clinical studies done on a few survivors. These studies generally tend to chronicle the types of behaviors engaged in by child sexual abusers, and primarily report percentages of the sample that experienced each form of abuse (e.g., intercourse, oral sex, fondling, pornography). A number of studies have compared male and female victims, although most of the male victim samples have been too small to allow for broad generalizations.

Looking at Table 4.4.1, it is clear that many of the allegations of abuse include more than one type of sexual act. Several points are significant:

- The categories are not mutually exclusive. In other words, the abusers could have committed multiple types of abuses.
- Very few priests have allegations of only the least severe of the abuses. Only 148 priests (2.9%) allegedly committed act of verbal abuse and/or pornography offenses without more severe offenses. Only 395 priests (9.0%) allegedly committed offenses involving touching over the clothes only without also committing a more severe offense.
- Touching under the victim's clothes is the most common act alleged. However, only 695 (15.8%) priests committed that as the only or the most serious of their alleged offenses. This means that when this abuse was alleged, it usually included a more serious offense as well.

Table 4.4.1 ALLEGED ACTS OF ABUSE, BY GENDER

Behavior Alleged	GENDER		Combined
	Males	Females	Totals
Verbal (sexual talk)	880	215	1095
	11.5%	12.1%	12%
Shown Pornography	221	9	230
	2.9%	.5%	2.4%
Shown Porn videos	142	6	148
	1.9%	.3%	1.6%
Touch Over Cleric's Clothes	698	165	863
	9.1%	9.3%	9.2%
Touch Over Victim's Clothes	2834	685	3519
	37.1%	38.5%	37.3%
Touch Under Victim's Clothes	3249	696	3945
	42.5%	39.1%	41.8%
Cleric Disrobed	930	174	1104
	12.2%	9.8%	11.7%
Victim Disrobed	1095	302	1397
	14.3%	17.0%	14.8%
Photos of Victim	167	31	198
	2.2%	1.7%	2.1%
Sexual Games	50	5	55
	.7	.3	.6
Hugging & Kissing	322	175	497
	4.2%	9.8%	5.3%
Masturbation	662	71	773
	8.7	4.0	7.8
Mutual Masturbation	1047	29	1076
	13.7	1.6	11.4
Cleric Perform Oral Sex	1182	274	1456
	15.5	15.4	15.4
Victim Performed Oral Sex	79	115	910
	10.4	6.5	9.7
Manual Penetration	192	195	387
	2.5	10.9	4.1
Penetration with Object	61	26	87
	.8	1.5	.9
Penile Penetration	985	212	1197
	12.9	11.9	12.7
Group or Coerced Sex	47	3	50
	.6	.2	.5
Unspecified Sex Act	932	204	1136
	12.2	11.5	12.1
Other	487	87	574
	6.4	4.9	6.1
No Record	804	172	976

The category of "other" includes a wide array of behaviors, including voyeuristic and sadistic acts. Unspecified sex act refers to surveys that indicate sexual acts but do not identify particular acts.

The is a Multiple Response Table. The categories are not mutually exclusive.

The majority of allegations of sexual abuse are made against priests who allegedly committed abusive acts more than one time. Only slightly more than one quarter (29%) of the allegations involve only a single instance of abuse.

Table 4.4.2 NUMBER OF TIMES ABUSED, PER VICTIM

No. of times abused	Count	Percent
Once	2759	29%
More than once	1734	18.3%
Numerous times	4978	52.6%
Total	9469	100%

	100.0	100.0
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Child sexual abusers who plan their abusive acts indulge in what is termed "grooming" behavior. Grooming is a pre-meditated behavior intended to manipulate the potential victim into complying with the sexual abuse. Some methods by which child sexual abusers approach and initiate sexual activity with their victims include verbal and/or physical intimidation, seduction, emotional blackmail, and the use of enticements such as candy, money, or other gifts. The tactics used by offenders depend somewhat on the potential victim's response to the tactic. If an offender encounters little to no resistance from the potential victim, he will continue to use the same tactic repeatedly. If, however, some resistance is encountered, the offender may either change the tactic and/or become more forceful in his endeavor. Table 4.4.3 shows the number of priests who allegedly threatened those who accused them of abuse, while Table 4.4.4 shows this broken down by gender.

Table 4.4.3 THREATS BY VICTIM'S GENDER

Victim Threatened?	Row Totals		
	Male	Female	Total
Yes	619	208	827
	7.3	10.4	7.9
No	3842	1032	4875
	45.5	51.8	46.7
No Information	3982	754	4737
	47.2	37.8	45.4
Column Totals	8443	1994	10439

Table 4.4.5 TYPE OF THREATS BY VICTIM'S GENDER

Type of Threat	Count		Row Totals
	%		
	Male	Female	
Physical Threat With Weapon	30	13	43
	3.7	5.0	4.0
Physical Threat Without Weapon	74	21	95
	9.0	8.1	8.8
Verbal (Harm to Victim)	176	65	241
	21.5	25.0	22.3
Verbal (Harm to Cleric)	32	8	40
	3.9	3.1	3.7
Threatened Family	26	12	38
	3.2	4.6	3.5
Threatened Exposure	65	24	89
	7.9	9.2	8.2
Spiritual Manipulation	170	55	225
	20.7	21.2	20.8
Other	128	40	168
	15.6	15.4	15.6
All of the Above	119	22	141
	14.5	8.5	13.1
Column Totals	820	260	1080
	100.0	100.0	100.0

Gifts and enticements to participate in sexual behavior are common methods of grooming potential victims. Tables 4.4.6 and 4.4.7 show the extent of and types of gifts and enticements made to alleged victims.

Table 4.4.6

GIFTS TO VICTIM

Gifts to Victim	Count	Percent
Yes	837	8.2%
No	3769	36.8%
No Information	5633	55%
Column Totals	10239	100%

Table 4.4.7

ENTICEMENTS OFFERED BY PRIEST

Enticement Label	Count	% of Responses	% of Cases
Allowed to Stay Up	129	4.3%	7.1%
Allowed to Drive	148	5.0%	8.1%
Access to Pornography	150	5.0%	8.2%
Special Church Activities	85	2.9%	4.7%
Alcohol/Drugs	706	23.7%	38.6%
Take to Sports or Recreation	425	14.3%	23.3%
Stay Overnight with Cleric	558	18.8%	30.5%
Sports-Related	22	.7%	1.2%
Travel	63	2.1%	3.4%
Food	27	.9%	1.5%
Toys, Other Gifts	6	.2%	.3%
Money	376	12.6%	20.6%
Other	280	9.4%	15.3%

Note: Multiple Response Variables
8,760 Missing Cases; 1827 Valid Cases

Some sex offenders in the general population use alcohol or drugs as a disinhibitor, or as a way to reduce their inhibitions and allow them to offend with lower feelings of guilt and shame. Some sex offenders also offer drugs and/or alcohol to their victims to entice them to participate in sexual behavior. Tables 4.4.8 and 4.4.9 display drug use by alleged offenders and victims respectively.

Table 4.4.8 DRUG/ALCOHOL USE BY PRIEST

Priest Used Drugs/Alcohol	Count	%
Yes	984	9.3%
No	3578	33.8%
No Information	6019	56.9%
Column Totals	10581	100.0%

Table 4.4.9 DRUG USE BY VICTIM

Victim Used Drugs/Alcohol	Count	%
Yes	845	8.0%
No	4769	45.0%
No Information	4971	47.0%
Column Totals	10585	100.0%