BEHAVIOR THERAPY 10, 562–565 (1979)

BRIEF REPORTS

Sexual Preferences among Incestuous and Nonincestuous Child Molesters

VERNON L. QUINSEY, TERRY C. CHAPLIN, AND WAYNE F. CARRIGAN

Mental Health Centre

The sexual age preferences of incestuous and nonincestuous child molesters were examined using a circumferential measure of their penile responses to slides of persons varying in age and sex. Each incestuous child molester was matched with a nonincestuous child molester according to his age at testing and victim ages. Child molesters with daughter or stepdaughter victims ($N = 9$) showed more appropriate age preferences than control subjects with unrelated child victims. Child molesters with other female relatives as victims ($N = 7$) exhibited a nonsignificant trend toward more appropriate age preferences than their controls. Inappropriate sexual age preferences appear to be less important among men who choose daughter victims than men who choose unrelated victims.

Studies of the sexual preferences of nondeviant heterosexual men, using penile responses to slides of persons varying in age and sex as a measure of sexual arousal, have consistently indicated that, although these men respond most to adult females, they also show considerable arousal to pubescent and child females (Freund, McKnight, Langevin, & Cibiri, 1972; Quinsey, Steinman, Bergersen, & Holmes, 1975). The descriptive literature on child molesters consistently suggests that incestuous offenders are likely to be "situational" offenders. Based on a review of studies which have attempted to classify child molesters into various types, Quinsey (1977) hypothesized that: "incestuous child molesters are a special case of situational offenders whose offenses are related to family dynamics and opportunism rather than inappropriate sexual preferences." If this hypothesis is correct, then men who have committed sexual offenses against children who are related to them should show

This research was supported by Grants 754-78/80 and 727-76/78 from the Ontario Mental Health Foundation. We wish to thank M. Rice and M. Pruesse for their comments on an earlier draft of this paper and G. Varney for his help with the data analyses. Reprint requests should be sent to Dr. V. L. Quinsey, Director of Research, Mental Health Centre, Penetanguishene, Ontario, LOK 1PO, Canada.

0005-7894/79/040562-04$01.00/0

more appropriate sexual age preferences than men who have chosen unrelated children. The purpose of the present study was to test this hypothesis by examining the sexual preference profiles of incestuous and nonincestuous child molesters.

METHOD

Subjects. Nine men were identified who were referred to the maximum security Oak Ridge psychiatric institution for assessment because they had had sexual contact with a daughter or stepdaughter who was 14 years of age or younger. A further seven were identified whose victims were sisters (4), nieces (2), or cousins (1). These incestuous child molesters were each matched with a nonincestuous child molester as closely as possible according to the child molester's age at the time of testing and the age(s) of the victims. Victim age was the average age of all victims mentioned in the patient's file. As expected from the matching, there were no significant differences between the incestuous and nonincestuous subjects on their age at the time of assessment ($\bar{x}$ = 28.8 years, SD = 9.41), their average victim age ($\bar{x}$ = 10.2 yrs, SD = 3.23) or the number of months in Oak Ridge at the time of assessment ($\bar{x}$ = 2.8 months, SD = 6.29) (all ps for the two-tailed Wilcoxon Signed Ranks test > .10). Sixty-nine per cent of the incestuous subjects and 63% of the nonincestuous group were diagnosed as personality disordered.

Procedure. Each of the 32 subjects was given a standard test of sexual preference in which his penile circumference responses (PCRs) to slides of persons varying in age and sex were measured by a mercury-in-rubber stain gauge. The laboratory and general procedure have been described elsewhere (Quinsey et al., 1975). In brief, subjects were shown slides of adults (aged 18–30), pubescents (aged 11–13), children (aged 5–10), and children less than 5, of both sexes with two slides per category. There were also two neutral slides (e.g., a landscape) and two slides of adult heterosexual activity for a total of 20 slides.

Each slide was shown for 30 sec in a fixed irregular sequence in which no slide in a given category was allowed to immediately follow a slide from the same category. Slides were separated by a 60-sec interslide interval or a longer interval if the subjects' penile response did not return to baseline. Each penile response was measured as the difference between the Beckman Dynograph (R-511) reading at the time of slide onset and the maximum positive deflection in the 2- to 60-sec period following. Thus, each measurement interval was separated by a minimum of 32 sec and each slide by a minimum of 60 sec.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Preliminary Analyses

Several analyses were conducted on these data. First, an analysis of variance on the raw scores was computed in which the variables were group assignment, female stimulus category (adult and the average of the

child, pubescent, and children under 5 slides), and subjects. In order to achieve equal group Ns of 7, two dummy subjects were created for both the incest nondaughter groups and their controls by assigning these "subjects" the means for their groups and adjusting the degrees of freedom accordingly.

Second, each subject's responses were converted to Z scores according to the formula $(X\text{-}M)/SD$, where the M and SD were based on all the subjects' responses during his assessment. An analysis of variance was then performed as with the raw scores. We employed a Z score transformation of these data for the following reasons: (a) we have found Z scores to be superior to raw scores in differentiating normals from child molesters (Quinsey et al., 1975) and (b) Z scores, unlike percentage of full erection scores, can be calculated without asking subjects to masturbate to full erection which some subjects refuse or are unable to do.

Finally, because the analyses of variance described above ignored the fact that each incest subject was matched with a nonincest subject according to his age and his victim age(s), a difference score was computed between each subject's response (in Z score form) to the adult female category and his response to the child female category (or average of categories) on which he had been matched. The difference scores of the incest and nonincest groups were then compared using a Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test which reflected the fact that the subjects were matched.

Principal Analyses

The analyses of variance indicated a main effect of group assignment ($F(3,28) = 9.54$, $p < .001$ and 3.86, $p < .025$ for the raw and Z scores, respectively). As shown in Fig. 1, the nonincest nondaughter control group was the most responsive and the daughter incest group was the least responsive to the female slides. Not surprisingly, there was a main effect of stimulus category ($F(1,28) = 16.68$ and 16.78, both ps $< .001$, for the raw and Z scores, respectively) indicating greater arousal to adult than child slides. This result should not be interpreted, however, as indicating that individual child molesters prefer adults to all age categories of female children, because individual child molesters often prefer only one category of child to adults but when the three child categories are averaged over groups this fact is obscured.

The hypothesis that incestuous child molesters would show more appropriate sexual age preferences than nonincestuous offenders was evaluated using the difference scores and the Wilcoxon Signed Ranks procedure described above. The difference scores differentiated the incestuous from the nonincestuous child molesters (Wilcoxon Signed Ranks $N = 16$, $T = 28$, $p < .025$, one-tailed). The incestuous subjects with daughter or stepdaughter victims showed more appropriate age preferences than their matched controls ($N = 9$, $T = 7$, $p < .05$, one-tailed) but the difference between the remaining incestuous offenders and their controls was not significant ($N = 7$, $T = 7$, $p > .05$, one-tailed).

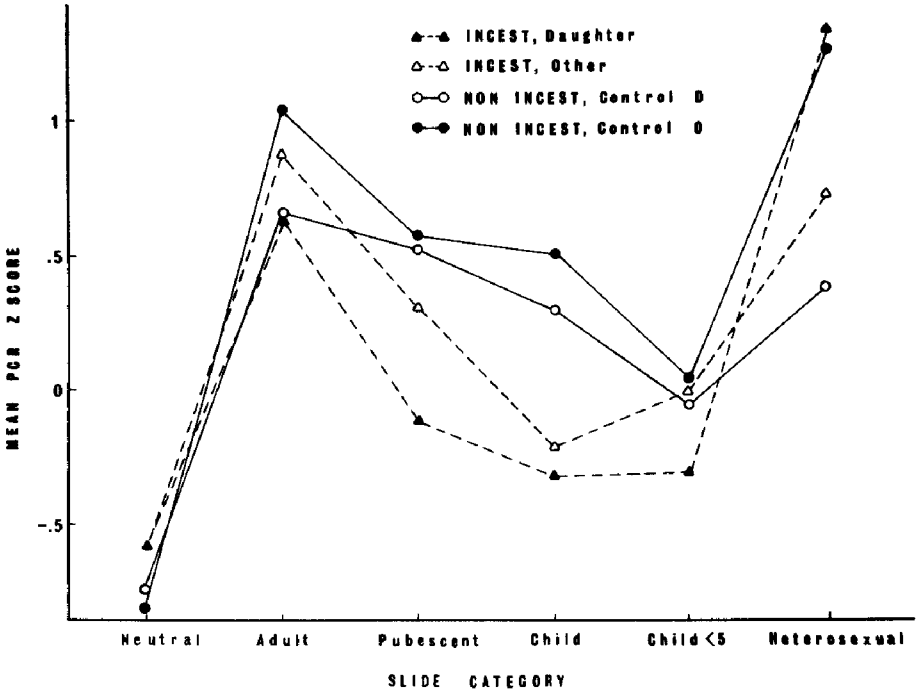

FIG. 1. Sexual age preferences of incestuous and nonincestuous child molesters.

The hypothesis that incestuous child molesters have more appropriate sexual age preferences than nonincestuous child molesters was supported and the difference in sexual age preferences between incestuous and nonincestuous child molesters appeared larger in the cases where the incest involved daughter victims. The implications of these findings for the treatment of incestuous child molesters remain to be explored, particularly with respect to programs designed to alter inappropriate sexual age preferences.

REFERENCES

Freund, K., McKnight, C. K., Langevin, R., & Cibiri, S. The female child as a surrogate object. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 1972, **2**, 119–133.

Quinsey, V. L. The assessment and treatment of child molesters: A review. *Canadian Psychological Review*, 1977, **18**, 204–220.

Quinsey, V. L., Steinman, C. M., Bergersen, S. G., & Holmes, T. F. Penile circumference, skin conductance and ranking responses of child molesters and "normals" to sexual and nonsexual visual stimuli. *Behavior Therapy*, 1975, **6**, 213–219.

RECEIVED: November 14, 1978; REVISED: March 26, 1979
FINAL ACCEPTANCE: March 29, 1979