

A STUDY OF VICTIMIZED DAUGHTERS'
PERCEPTIONS OF MOTHER-DAUGHTER DYADS
IN INCESTUOUS FAMILIES IN ST. JOHN'S
NEWFOUNDLAND

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A STUDY OF VICTIMIZED DAUGHTERS' PERCEPTIONS
OF MOTHER-DAUGHTER DYADS IN INCESTUOUS FAMILIES.

By



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A Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
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Abstract

This qualitative-descriptive study reports data regarding the nature of mother-daughter relationships in seven incestuous families. The sample of seven girls ($n=7$) had all been confirmed victims of father-daughter incest. The sample were all involved in eight group psychotherapy sessions prior to exploration of the mother-daughter relationships. All of the sample were interviewed individually at the Department of Social Services, St. John's, Newfoundland during November to December, 1981. The interview consisted of a questionnaire addressing four specific areas of the mother-daughter relationships: 1) affection between mother and daughter, 2) communication between mother and daughter, 3) conflict between mother and daughter and 4) mother's reaction to incest disclosure. The questionnaire was a non-standardized measure with both open-ended and closed questions.

Analyses indicated that all seven girls were of adolescent age and most had been involved in lengthy and frequent sexual contact with their fathers. All of the families were dysfunctional and socially disruptive factors such as alcoholism, violence and promiscuity were frequent occurrences. Following incest disclosure, four of the daughters were placed in foster homes while four of the parental couples remained living together.

Examination of the mother-daughter dyads revealed that there was general dissatisfaction among the daughters in their interactions with their mothers in the areas of com-

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munication, conflict and mother's reaction to incest disclosure.

The study findings may have relevance to clinical intervention and treatment. The study indicated that more investigations of incestuous families are necessary in order to assess the nature of the mother-daughter relationship.

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A STUDY OF VICTIMIZED DAUGHTERS' PERCEPTIONS OF
MOTHER-DAUGHTER DYADS IN INCESTUOUS FAMILIES

Roxanne Power Nugent

Throughout history, incest has been taboo in most cultures and civilizations. Historically, there have been some early exceptions to this taboo. For instance, in ancient Greece and Rome, royalty often married close relatives in an effort to maintain the purity of their blood lines and retain familial wealth and power. In retrospect, the topic of incest in this era was referred to in several classical plays and poems. For example, the Greek tragedies of both Oedipus and Electra mention incestuous unions in their central themes.

In both ancient times and present day, incest has been considered taboo for two main reasons. First, certain physical and mental problems may accrue in the offspring of incestuous unions. For example, Carter (1967) reported findings which indicated that the risks of death, serious illness, or mental subnormality were four times greater in father-daughter or brother-sister offspring, than those of first cousin offspring.

Second, there is speculation that the incest taboo maintains family equilibrium and role delineation. Weinberg (1955) stated that the taboo gave rise to the need for interfamilial extension and reciprocal exchanges between non-relatives which provided for continued maintenance of a family without intrafamilial rivalry. Thus, forbidden sexual intimacy among kin helped to ensure that father and

son would not become rivals for the affection of female family members. According to Eist and Manuel (1968), the absence of the incest taboo could lead to erosion of the family unit because of intrafamilial sexual competition.

In current literature, incest is frequently termed a "broken taboo". Social service agencies, family courts, hospitals and schools are frequently confronted with reports of incest related problems. This increased reporting of incestuous incidents often coincides with the introduction of revised legislation regarding children's rights, as well as the escalating emphasis on the individual's moral and legal responsibility to report suspected child abuse.

Statistics which support these notions are escalating each year. Justice and Justice (1979) found that the number of actual cases reported to child welfare authorities in the state of Texas in 1974 was 214. This figure rose to 1,153 in 1977 - an increase of over 500%. These same authors noted that the Santa Clara County Program for the treatment of child sexual abuse in California received 36 referrals in its pioneer year of 1971 and over 600 referrals in 1977 - an increase of approximately 1500%. Both of these alarming findings, when further analysed, revealed that the majority of the reported sexual abuses were committed by a family member.

In addition to legislative changes, a number of reasons may account for the current dramatic increase in documented incest cases. For example, community exposure to the existence of new and specialized sexual abuse treatment

programs generally increases the number of referrals. Further, as various professionals become more familiar with the dynamics of incest, they also become more adept at identifying families who engage in this illicit behaviour.

The secretive nature of incest implies that it often remains undetected; however, recent research suggests that it is more widespread than commonly acknowledged. There is generally a lack of research in this area and the nature of the available studies make it difficult to attribute cause and effect relationships or readily generalize about the findings or methods used in these investigations.

This study explores mother-daughter relationships in incestuous families and attempts to identify some of the dysfunctional aspects of the mother-daughter dyad which may allow initiation and continuance of the incestuous act. In order to do this, this study will examine a selected sample of seven girls who have engaged in father-daughter incest, and explore their subjective perceptions of their relationships with their mothers. This exploration will take the form of qualitative investigation using individual in-depth interviews with both open-ended and closed questions.

Statement of Purpose

It has generally been shown that most sexual child abuse acts are committed by family members. For example, De Francis (1969) studied child sexual abuse in New York and found that only 25% of the cases in his sample were committed by

strangers. Additional follow-up studies further confirmed the notion that children are more "at risk" of sexual abuse from close relatives or frequent acquaintances. De Francis (1972) further reported that victims of child sexual abuse are more commonly girls at the ratio 10:1 (i.e., 10 girls to 1 boy).

There are some contradictory research findings regarding the degree of personal distress caused by sexual abuse in incest victims who were children. Sloane and Karpinski (1942) first reported serious repercussions of "acting out" behaviour, mostly of an unstable or promiscuous nature in adolescent girls. For example, many of the girls in the sample had run away from home, committed petty thefts and engaged in illicit sexual acts. Lukianowicz (1972) later concluded that 77% of the female victims in his study suffered serious after-effects, most notably promiscuity, anti-social behaviour, somatic complaints and to some extent, frigidity.

Conversely, other studies have attempted to show that incest initiated in pre-adolescent girls does not have such long-lasting or negative consequences. Bender and Gruett (1952), Barry and Johnson (1958) and Yurokoglou and Kempf (1966) all noted minimal anxiety in father-daughter incest cases where the victim was young and the mother was a collusive partner in the act.

Father-daughter incest is the most commonly reported variety. Weinberg (1955) indicated that the breakdown of 203 incestuous families in his study were ranked as follows:

father-daughter unions (164), brother-sister unions (37), mother-son unions (2) and multiple relations (5). Justice and Justice (1979) similarly reported 101 cases of father-daughter (paternal) incest in 112 incestuous families.

Given the above statistics, it seems crucial for social service agencies to begin recognizing incest as a real and not infrequent family problem, rather than an isolated and insignificant occurrence. The enormity of this problem as well as its universality and seriousness has definite implications for social work practice.

Although the importance of studying all forms of incest is acknowledged, this study will focus specifically on paternal incest. Nakashima and Zakus (1977) found father-daughter incest to be the most commonly detected and treated by professionals, hence a study of paternal incest should contribute more directly to actual clinical practice.

It is generally acknowledged by clinicians that incest often occurs in dysfunctional families. Reimer (1939), and Weinberg (1955) both found that incest occurred against a background of social disruption. This study will explore areas of dysfunction between mothers and daughters in paternal incestuous families and address the resulting implications for clinical practice. The perspective of mother-daughter dyads and their role in incestuous families has virtually been ignored by investigators, yet it seems to be a critical issue for several clinical reasons.

Clinicians view the family as an interrelated system

where all members occupy a certain role. In father-daughter incestuous families the father and daughter generally occupy a deviant role in relation to each other. Often, the father leaves home following incest disclosure (either voluntarily, or through incarceration). This absence of the father, under traumatic circumstances, enhances the need for the remaining parent to maintain a harmonious and supportive relationship with the victimized daughter. Dysfunctional mother-daughter relationships may often remain undetected during investigation of the illicit act and hence remain untreated.

Thus, in order to better understand the nature of the incestuous act and its impact on family units, it is important to examine the interrelationships among different family members. For example, if it can be found that the nature of the mother-daughter dyad is peculiar or unique in father-daughter incestuous families, then clinicians may begin to address some of these issues in the treatment phase.

Rationale for study. A study of mother-daughter dyads in incestuous families is important for several reasons. The paucity of literature on the topic primarily concentrates on the victim and the perpetrator. This study will attempt to focus on another perspective of incest - the interrelationship of the mother and daughter which may be crucial in understanding and treating familial systems.

Another reason for studying this subject coincides with the alarming rate of incestuous acts being reported in the

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province of Newfoundland. A recent review of statistics for the Department of Social Services, Child Welfare Division in Newfoundland, Canada indicated an increase of over 1600% confirmed cases of child sexual abuse from 1972-1980 (Child Welfare Statistics; 1972-1980). The majority of these cases were paternal incest, where the daughters remained in the home, or were in contact with the mother following disclosure of the act. Conversely, the majority of the fathers left the home either voluntarily or because of incarceration.

Since incest is a potentially emotionally charged situation for all concerned, a healthy mother-daughter relationship would seem important to the child's recovery. If the nature of this mother-daughter relationship is not thoroughly explored, treatment and clinical intervention may be ineffective and incomplete.

The relationship between mother and daughter has additional implications which exceed the immediate effects on family functioning. For instance, it is generally recognized by professionals in the field of family therapy that individuals often adopt the attributes and values of a significant person in their lives e.g., relatives or peer groups. In this context, another parental role, in addition to provision of physical and emotional support for their children, is to provide adequate role-models.

In this regard, Berry (1975) proposed the theory of the "incest-carrier". The "incest-carrier" is proposed to be a former sexually abused daughter who repeated the same

behavioural pattern with her own daughter and hence perpetuated the incest cycle over several family generations. Thus, recognition and correction of unhealthy mother-daughter relationships in incestuous families may assist in preventing this incest-carrier phenomena, if it is reality.

Finally, this study will contribute to a distinct research and literature void. Thus, the findings may have implications for assessment, treatment and program planning for incestuous families.

The concepts. Incest is defined as "the crime of sexual intercourse of cohabitation between persons related within the degrees within which marriage is prohibited by law" (Revised Oxford Dictionary, 1977). Various authors have broadened this definition to include sexual fondling, and/or oral-genital intercourse. For this study's purposes, incest is considered as sexual fondling, anal, oral-genital or vaginal intercourse between a daughter and a natural or adoptive father, or step-father of either a marital or common-law union.

The concept of the mother-daughter dyad is defined as four specific areas of interpersonal relationships in which the mother and daughter interrelate. Specifically, these areas are: 1) affection, 2) communication, 3) conflict and 4) the mother's reaction to incest disclosure.

Review of the Literature

The literature review is organized according to:

- 1) the nature of the incestuous act, 2) the dynamics of father-daughter incest, 3) the dynamics of mother-daughter relationships and 4) intrapsychic and interpersonal dynamics in the mother-father-daughter triad.

The Nature of the Incestuous Act

There is a paucity of literature pertaining to the general subject area of incest. Acknowledgement of the act's frequency and its clinical significance for practitioners have only recently been systematically addressed by researchers. The majority of available literature reveals information about single case studies, from which it is difficult to readily generalize methods or findings.

From an etiological perspective, Freud (1946) theorized that unresolved oedipal conflicts in pre-genital years could later lead to fantasized or overt incestuous acts. This psychoanalytic assumption proposed that a son with an unresolved sexual desire for his mother might later attempt to seek fulfillment of his thwarted desires with a daughter to whom he has attributed his mother's characteristics. Similarly, a daughter with an unresolved sexual desire for her father might displace these unfulfilled sexual desires onto a chosen son. Freud (1946) and later Frances and Frances (1976) further proposed that in paternal incest, the mother may


frequently be seeking oedipal gratification vicariously by offering her own daughter to the husband.

From a clinical perspective, Lustig, Dresser, Spellman & Murray (1966) suggested that incest may be symptomatic of general family dysfunctioning. In this regard, incest represents a transactional pattern of the family members which occurs in an effort to maintain family existence. For example, a family experiencing severe marital discord may engage in incest, thereby negating the need for the husband to seek sexual satisfaction in extra-marital affairs and risk the break-up of the family unit.

In reality, incest may occur in any family. Early researchers in the field suggested that incest occurred primarily in families of lower socioeconomic status. For example, Kaufman, Peck and Tagiuri (1954) conducted a study of 11 female incest victims who were referred for treatment. Almost all of the girls' families in this small study were of lower socioeconomic classes, with the fathers having sporadic employment and minimal education.

Conversely, Justice and Justice (1979) reviewed a large group of 300 families referred to a children's sexual abuse program. They reported that the mean educational level of the perpetrators was grade 12.5 and the yearly income was \$13,500. These findings seem to indicate that incest is not primarily confined to lower socioeconomic classes.

There are certain research limitations related to systematically studying the problem of incest. Thus, it



becomes difficult to clearly link causal variables such as socioeconomic class to incestuous acts. For example, the literature indicates that incest is frequently not reported by family members. Instead, much of the child sexual abuse is reported by social agencies, school officials, friends and neighbours. Many families of lower socioeconomic status have frequent contact with social agencies and consequently have a greater opportunity of incest being detected.

In addition, families of lower socioeconomic status often live in more crowded living conditions, e.g., slums, and consequently neighbours may have more access to intimate knowledge of the family's daily functioning. Thus, to suggest unequivocally that variables such as lower socioeconomic status impact on incest is generally misleading.

A review of the literature about the nature of incestuous families generally reveals that family collusion helps perpetuate incestuous acts. Lukianowicz (1972) reported findings of paternal incest where 40% of the 26 mothers were aware of the incestuous acts, but took no affirmative action to culminate the affair. In this regard, the mothers acted as support systems for the ongoing incestuous behavior.

Incest may also occur between multiple members of a family. For example, Kaufman, Peck et al. (1954), and later Browning and Boatman (1976) reported cases where the female paternal incest victim was further sexually abused by other family members (e.g., uncle, brother), once it became known that the father had sexual relations with her.

Berry (1975) further indicated that incest can also be transmitted through family generations and she introduced the term "incest-carrier" to describe this phenomenon. She suggested that exposure to role modelling of this sexual deviation or actual participation in the act may aid in a decreased internalization of the incest taboo.

For example, if young children see their siblings involved in incest, or if the children are themselves participants in incest, then they often do not perceive it as a "bad" or abnormal act. Furthermore, previously victimized women often marry men whose characteristics closely resemble the abusing father. In turn, these women often replicate with their own daughters the behaviour to which their own mothers exposed them and hence help to recreate an environment where incest can occur with their children.

While the literature is limited, cannot readily be generalized, and the general theoretical notions are speculative at best, the nature of incest may take various forms in various families. First, it is generally agreed that incest cases are underreported and when reported, are usually father-daughter acts. Second, certain familial patterns and theories have been offered to explain these behaviors. These were Freudian motivation-related unresolved electra/oedipal complexes, family dysfunction, generational transference, "incest-carrier" theory and

victimized role-modelling. The extent to which any or all of these can be used to readily explain incest in families is generally minimal.

The Dynamics of Father-Daughter Incest

Father-daughter incest may be initiated at any age in the victim's life. However, Gebhard (1965) and later Maisch (1972) found that incestuous unions with pre-puberty girls (less than 12 years of age) were usually confined to sexual fondling and/or oral-genital manipulation. Quite often, this fondling was introduced as an extended form of parental affection and its sexual significance was not perceived by the child as anything different than this. For example, Bender and Grugett (1952), and later Barry and Johnson (1958) noted minimal anxiety in young victims of father-daughter incest.

Meiselman (1978) reported that child sexual abuse is much more traumatic if the aggressor is known. She suggested that the act is more emotionally harmful if force is used, and the lengthier the incestuous affair the more damaging it may prove to the child. Further, the incestuous act, if initiated in adolescent years, is often more frightening to the child since this group is more aware of the sexual abnormality of the act.

In Sloane and Karpinski's study (1942), adolescent girls approached to engage in sexual acts were usually subjected to vaginal intercourse. Coercion was also often used by the fathers of these girls (either physical force

Or verbal threats). Some of these victims later experienced more serious and long-lasting effects. Similarly, Weiselman (1978) cited promiscuity, orgasmic dysfunction, homosexuality, depression and suicidal ideation as residual effects in a follow-up study of adolescents. Lukianowicz (1972) also found evidence of promiscuity, mental instability and frigidity in his study of victimized daughters.

Many incestuous affairs are of a prolonged nature. Molnar and Cameron (1975) found that affairs lasted for an average of 4.5 years. They also reported that the average age of the incestuous fathers at the initiation of the affair was between 30-40 years. Finally, they found that often when one daughter was lost to the father as a sexual partner (e.g., leaving home, refusal, etc.), then the next eldest daughter was subsequently approached as a sexual partner. Thus, the father prolonged the behavior by abusing more than one daughter over a period of time.

One of the reasons proposed to explain the lengthy duration of paternal incestuous affairs is that the victim is elevated by the father to a favoured position in the family. Thus, the daughter allows the acts to continue in return for extra parental affection, money, etc.. Cormier Kennedy and Sangowicz (1962) cited cases where the abused daughters were given gifts, money and extra privileges by their fathers. Similarly, Bender (1954) suggested that the daughter permitted the sexual interaction because she derived extra affection and nurturance from the father, which

compensated for her experience of maternal deprivation.

The actual acknowledgement of incest is seldom disclosed by any member of the family. Instead, disclosure is often discovered secondary to crisis intervention or investigation of a different presenting problem. For example, the incident(s) may be discovered indirectly by a social worker through investigation of family violence. Kaufman et al (1954) found that incest disclosure often came subsequent to investigation of other identified problems. Some of the presenting symptoms they encountered were depression, eating and sleeping disturbances, flights from home, learning difficulties, truancy, pregnancy and withdrawn behaviour.

Lustig et al (1966) reported that the victimized daughters often felt guilty about incest disclosure. However, their guilt was not always due to the commission of incest, but because they felt responsible for the family's disintegration, and/or incarceration of the father. For example, Bender (1954) found that the victim did not always see the act as a "bad" thing because the mother appeared to condone it or the victim had failed to internalize the incest taboo because of exposure to the act from an early age.

In sum, father-daughter incest may occur at any age in the victim's life. However, pre-puberty incest is often less frightening to the victims and is usually of a sexual fondling or oral-genital nature. Coercion and more long-lasting residual effects (e.g., frigidity, promiscuity,

neurotic symptoms) often accompany incest with adolescent victims.

As well, incest often extends over prolonged periods of time and the daughter may permit the incestuous activity because it elevates her to a favoured position in the family or because of special gifts, privileges or parental affection. The act of incest is often disclosed by someone other than the family members. The victimized daughter may express guilt following disclosure because of the dramatic negative consequences the disclosure has for the family.

The Dynamics of the Mother-Daughter Relationship

The dynamics of the mother-daughter relationship will be explored in four areas: 1) separation and individuation, 2) role identification and modelling, 3) transference of values and 4) the dynamics of areas 1, 2, and 3 which appear dysfunctional in mother-daughter dyads of incestuous families.

Freud (1914) and Piaget (1954) amongst others, agreed that the early years of life are the most formative in terms of personality development of any individual. All children in normal childhood experiences have an early symbiotic relationship with their mothers. A development phase referred to as separation-individuation occurs during the first three years of life. During separation-individuation, the child begins to realize that he/she is a person, not just an extension of the mother. Mahler (1968) states that "ego boundary setting" is essential in the separation-

individuation process as it allows for the daughter to see herself as a separate entity from the mother, thus enabling formation of object relations.

Friedlander (1947) stressed that direct satisfaction of infantile drives caused the shift to mature love objects to be more difficult, especially for adolescent girls.

Studies of incestuous families by Lustig et al (1966)

showed that the mother sometimes envisions the child as an extension of herself and ego-fusion or role-reversal may result. For example, the mother who overly identifies with her daughter may see the daughter as part of herself and hence can't separate that both are individuals with unique characteristics. An unhealthy interdependence between the mother and daughter may subsequently occur.

Role identification is also important in personality development. Bowlby (1969) noted that as a daughter moves into separation-individuation from the mother, she must still retain an identification with the feminine gender and role. Bowlby (1969) further stated that girls find it more difficult than boys to separate from the mother because the girl still retains much more of the mother's feminine attributes. Similarly, McIntyre (1981) found that the ideal mother was seen as being self-sacrificing and the main provider of emotional nurturance in the family. In this regard, mothers of incestuous families are often perceived as not fulfilling the ideal mother role.

Rhinehart (1961) reported that this notion of an inadequate mother figure was a finding in his study of

incestuous families. Victimized daughters reported that they viewed their mothers as stern, authoritative and unloving. This has further implications than the immediate inadequacies of the mother-daughter relationship, since the daughter will eventually assume the mother role herself, and may role model her own childhood experience and perception. Thus, the daughter may be recreating an environment where further incestuous activity may occur with her children (e.g., Berry's (1975) theory of the "incest carrier" phenomena).

In addition to role modelling, parents are also important in regard to the transference of values to their children. Some researchers, notably Cormier et al (1962), and later Lustig et al (1966), found that the wives in incestuous families often viewed sexual intimacy in a negative way and were generally dissatisfied or frigid in their intimate relationships. For instance, daughters may adopt their mothers' attitude to sex, and if they further adopt their mothers' criteria for mate selection, then they may be choosing husbands who have the potential to be sexually abusing fathers. Kaufman et al (1954) found these patterns duplicated in case studies. For example, one of the cases he reviewed showed a girl who married a man whose personality resembled her own sexually abusive father. This girl, like her mother, disliked sexual relations and hence an opportunity for incest to occur with her own daughters was recreated.

In sum, in incestuous families, the mother-daughter relationship often differs from the norm. Mothers and daughters may experience a blurring of ego boundaries, and consequently ego fusion may occur. Some daughters may have difficulty in perceiving the mother as a competent and affectionate parent, and hence may have even greater difficulty identifying with their own sex:

Interpersonal and Intrapsychic Dynamics
in the Mother-Father-Daughter Triad

Kaufman et al (1954) found that incestuous fathers often came from family backgrounds characterized by poverty, alcoholism, minimal education and lack of parental affection. Lukianowicz (1972) reported that these fathers frequently lacked appropriate parental role models, particularly from their own fathers or father figures. He also frequently found that these fathers left home at an early age having formed no binding family ties. Cormier et al (1962) further reported that some incestuous fathers were still seeking maternal figures.

Meiselman (1978) defined several classifications of males who may engage in incestuous behavior as follows:

- 1) 68% (n=40) were endogamic, 2) 16% (n=8) were psychopathic, 3) 5% (n=3) were psychotic, 4) 5% (n=3) were drunken and 5) 5% (n=3) were situational.

Weinberg (1955) studied the endogamic father and found he is of a patriarchal type; however, he is basically immature and depends on having all his emotional and

sexual needs met within the family boundaries. When sexually dissatisfied with their wives, Meiselman (1978) found that these men turned to their daughters, since social ineptitude served as a barrier to seeking women outside the family unit. She further reported that these endogamic fathers were frequently involved with pre-puberty daughters and engaged in sequential incest (i.e., when one daughter became unavailable as a sexual partner, the father engaged in sexual relations with the next eldest girl).

Gebhard (1965) described the psychopathic father as being sexually promiscuous and attaching no affectionate component to the act. He stated that these fathers often had family experiences of early and frequent exposure to sexual activity, had criminal records, abused alcohol and had violent tendencies.

The mothers in incestuous families were described by Heims and Kaufman (1963), and later Eist and Manuel (1968) as immature and lacking parental skills. Kaufman et al (1954) consistently found that these women had mothers whom they perceived as unloving, demanding, and/or hostile. As well, these incestuous mothers frequently lacked a father figure. These researchers further stated that the incestuous mothers seemed incapable of accepting this maternal rejection and were continuously seeking approval or substitute maternal nurturance.

Frances and Frances (1966) stated that the incestuous mother was often reluctant to assume both nurturing and

sexual roles, because of unfulfilled pre-genital needs. For example, the mother may have felt she was deprived of early affection from her own mother and hence could not fulfill these roles adequately herself in later life. The incestuous mother, according to Lustig et al (1966), had difficulties with the separation-individuation process with her children, and hence ego fusion occurred (i.e., the mother had difficulty separating herself from the child and may overly identify with the daughter).

In a study by Berry (1975), the mothers proceeded to single out a daughter for special attention. In turn, role-reversal occurred and later the daughter became the mother's substitute in an unwanted sexual intimacy. Some authors, such as Gordon (1955) speculated that incestuous mothers began to project the daughter into the role of the unloving maternal parent, and hence the incestuous mother's actions of role substitution were revenge tactics.

Meiselman (1978) found that the victimized daughter was often the eldest or most passive daughter living at home. Further, she noted that these daughters were frequently of at least normal intelligence. Lidz, Fleck, Cornelison, and Terry (1958) found that the victimized daughters were often encouraged to remain attached to their parents, especially in infantile erotic areas. Justice and Justice (1979) reported that the daughters often portrayed a pseudo-maturity, perhaps reinforced because of their prematurely assuming the roles of housekeeper, mother and

wife. These latter authors further elaborated that sometimes the daughters may accept these roles willingly because of a position of power in the family or favours bestowed on them by the incestuous fathers.

Kaufman et al (1954) using Rorschach tests (psychological projective test) administered to victimized daughters found they often expressed depressive feelings, confusion over sexual identification, fear of sexuality and oral deprivation. In addition, these tests revealed that the major defense mechanisms that the girls used were denial, repression and projection. These same girls perceived of their mothers as unjust and depriving, while their fathers were conversely seen as nurturant or ineffectual, sometimes frightening. A psychological investigation by Gordon (1955) proposed that incestuous daughters were orally deprived in the pre-oedipal stages, and hence utilized the sexual relationship with the father as a means of satisfying their oral needs and revenging the ungiving mother.

It has been postulated by some researchers including Rhinehart (1961), and Rappaport, Carpenter and Davis (1967) that incest is the product of family dysfunction and that interpersonally all members of the triad are searching for a nurturing maternal figure (the triad being the mother-daughter-father). Lustig et al (1966) reported that the parents in his study projected onto the victimized daughter their own sexual fantasies and maternal needs. These authors further reported that the daughter was expected

to satisfy the father's sexual needs and the mother's need to be protected.

All members of the triad use various methods to justify their behaviors in the incestuous act(s). Lukianowicz (1972) cited that the father often justified his behavior by projecting blame on his frigid wife. Cormier et al. (1962) found that the fathers excused their behavior by indicating they were seduced by their daughters or that they felt a moral obligation to teach her the facts of life. Kaufman et al. (1954) reported that the mother was unwilling or unable to assume a sexual role and hence she welcomed the daughter's substitution. Dietz and Craft (1980) proposed that the mother continued in the triad because of fear of physical violence.

McIntyre (1980) expanded this theme by stating women are culturally taught to be very dependent on men, and hence fear of losing the husband maintains the secrecy. Cormier et al. (1962) found that mothers often responded to disclosure with shock, depression and anger, as well as resentment against their daughters. In turn, the daughter, according to Bender (1954) acceded to the father's wishes in order to relieve the maternal affection of which she feels deprived. Justice and Justice (1979) found that the daughters often continued the incestuous affair because they felt pressure to maintain the family intact. Thus, all of the triad, for their own unique reasons, struggle to maintain a facade of a functional family.

To briefly summarize, incest is a mechanism used to maintain superficial family integration in a dysfunctional family unit. Both parents commonly have an absence of affectionate, and/or appropriate parental role models in their formative years. The incestuous fathers are most often of an endogamic or psychopathic type. The mothers have often experienced a hostile and unloving relationship with their own mothers, which they may replicate with their own daughters. Each member of the triad is seeking maternal nurturance and both adults look to the child to satisfy their needs in a sexual or protective manner. The three parties have a systemized pattern of defense mechanisms which allow them to continue participation in the incestuous act.

Summary

Father-daughter incest is often of a lengthy and frequent nature. The initial incidents are often introduced at a pre-adolescent age as forms of sexual fondling or oral-genital nature. Victimized daughters may accede to the father's wishes to obtain extra privileges, parental affection, etc.,. Incest frequently occurs in families with dysfunctional elements such as marital discord, violence, drinking, etc.,. The mother and daughter relationship in incestuous families may be impaired and there is sometimes blurring of ego boundaries and roles in their interactions. All of the triad (mother, father and daughter) engage in

the incestuous act for their own internal needs and develop defense mechanisms which allow the collusion to continue unhampered.

Method

Setting and Population

The open-ended interviews were conducted at the Department of Social Services, St. John's, Newfoundland from November to December, 1981. This particular location serves the city of St. John's and the metropolitan area with diverse services such as social assistance, child welfare and juvenile corrections.

St. John's, the provincial capital, covers an area of 13.5 square miles. The metropolitan area, including St. John's covers 323.5 square miles. The total population of St. John's, in 1976, according to Statistics Canada was 85,576. The total population, including the metropolitan area was 143,390, in 1976.

The study sample of seven girls ($n=7$) were all referred during the past year by social workers attached to the Child Abuse and Neglect Division of the Department of Social Services in St. John's. This division has two assigned workers and both have extensive experience in dealing with cases of abuse and neglect. The sample had all been in contact with the Child Abuse and Neglect Division and had been confirmed by them as definite cases of father-daughter incest.

At the time of the study, the girls were between the ages of 12-18 years. Statistics Canada's latest figures (Statistics Canada 1976) reported a total of 13,380 females between the ages of 12-18 years old residing in the St.

John's and metropolitan area. The respective ages of the girls in the sample were as follows: 12, 14, 15, 15, 15, 17 and 18 years. Statistics Canada's breakdown of girls in this age range for the metropolitan area of St. John's are as follows: 1,545; 1,535; 1,585; 1,480 and 1,600. In this regard, the sample of seven girls was not discernably different from the population in the environment.

The Sample

The Child Welfare Division of Department of Social Services was requested to refer female victims of paternal incest whom they felt might benefit from group therapy. They were instructed to choose referrals based on the following criteria: 1) the girls must have been confirmed as definite incidents of father-daughter incest, 2) the girls were of adolescent age and 3) the parents, foster parents, or guardians must have been informed about the nature of the group, and their permission was needed for attendance in the group therapy.

Prior to joining the group, all of the victims were interviewed separately and on a voluntary basis, in order to explain the purpose of the group therapy. Their verbal permission was also obtained at that time, for each to engage in an interview upon termination of the group, which would focus on their perception of the mother-daughter relationship in their own family. The concept of confidentiality among group members was stressed in this pre-

selection interview. None of the selected girls had participated in any therapeutic groups prior to this experience.

The average age of the sample ($n=7$) was 15.1 years. With the exception of one girl, all had experienced incestuous activity within the past 12 months. The one girl who was not in this group reported her last incestuous experience in the previous 24-month period.

Procedure

The group met twice weekly for eight consecutive sessions from October 6 to October 29, 1981. Each session lasted 1 1/2 hours and was co-led by a social work colleague. The co-leaders were both female and had clinical experience in conducting group therapy sessions of this nature. A central theme or issue was developed for each group session, and informal discussions of a self-exploratory nature were held on the different themes. An outline of the group therapy sessions is attached (see Appendix A).

The group met in a coffee room in the Department of Social Services' office building. The room was quite spacious (12' x 14') with two sofas and armchairs rearranged to permit visual contact with each person. There were no telephones and the room was booked for that scheduled time to ensure privacy. Flip charts were used to illustrate specific points in the group sessions.

Following completion of the group, separate interviews were conducted with each of the seven subjects. The interviews were held in the same location as the group meetings.

and they lasted approximately one hour.

The interviews were of a qualitative nature, consisting of both open-ended and closed questions. The actual interviews were comprised of a two-part questionnaire which had no standardized measures in it.

The Questionnaire

The questionnaire was composed of both open-ended and closed self-report questions, which were non-standardized measures (see Appendix B).

The questionnaire had two parts as follows:

Part 1 - consisted of a data sheet which each girl completed alone in the beginning of the interview. This section dealt with factual data of a general nature such as age, education, employment background, family background (e.g., composition of the family, position in family, present marital status, of parents, source of family income), duration of incest and frequency of incest.

Part 2 - consisted of 31 subjective and self-exploratory questions asked by the interviewer. It was stressed that all answers were subjective and there were no right or wrong answers. The girls were encouraged to speak openly and freely. Clarification was readily given if the girls did not appear to understand the questions. To further ensure the girls understood the questions, they were asked to give personal examples of situations that the particular question was addressing. The particular personal examples,

if not relevant, were not recorded.

These questions were divided into the following areas:

1) Areas of affection - this involved seven questions regarding the interaction between mother and daughter on an intimate level, 2) Areas of communication - this involved six questions reflecting the daughter's perception of how communication was handled on an interpersonal level between the mother and daughter, 3) Areas of conflict - this consisted of five questions exploring areas of conflict and management of same between mother and daughter and 4) Mother's reaction to disclosure - this involved 12 questions which explored the daughter's subjective feelings about how the mother appeared to react to the disclosure.

Pre-testing of the Questionnaire

The majority of the questionnaire used in this current study was pre-tested in July, 1981 with another group of girls who were sexually abused by their fathers. This group also took place bi-weekly for four consecutive weeks. The group was not however, as homogeneous in age range or maturity, as they were 9-18 years of age with the average age 12 years. The questionnaire was administered in the same manner. This pre-test helped in formulating and revising the final questionnaire for this study.

Results

Demographic Data

The demographic data from the questionnaire revealed that five of the seven subjects were enrolled in school at the time of the study. However, four of these girls were academically behind in their grade levels. One of the subjects at age 14 years was in grade 7; two of the subjects at age 15 years were in grade 8 and one subject at age 15 years was in grade 4 Special Education. Of the two girls who were not currently attending school, one had completed grade 9 and the other had completed grade 8. Only one of the subjects had any work experience and she was currently unemployed at the time of the study.

Three of the subjects at the time of the study were living in foster homes. Two subjects were living at home with both parents present and one subject lived at home with her mother and a common-law husband (not the incest aggressor). One subject lived independent from home.

All of the subjects had at least one sibling in the family group. One of the subjects was the only child living at home at the time of the incest. One subject was the only girl in the family.

At the time of the incestuous activity, five of the subjects were the oldest girls in the family. Another subject was the eldest girl living at home at the time the incest occurred.

Four of the girls' families were in receipt of frequent

or long-term social assistance. In the other two girls' families, both parents (mothers and fathers) were employed steadily in unskilled occupations.

Background Data about Incest and

Exploration of the Mother-Daughter Relationship

Table 1 gives information about the background data related to incest for the sample. The average age of the sample at the time of disclosure was 14.8 years. The average duration of the incest activity was 4.1 years. Four of the subjects reported incestuous activity occurring on a frequent basis (frequency for the purposes of this study will be defined as incestuous activity occurring at least twice monthly).

As indicated in Table 1, four of the subjects reported incestuous activity with their natural fathers. Also, four of the subjects reported incestuous activity with their step-fathers (one of these girls had been involved with both her natural father and step-father).

The nature of the incestuous activity was sexual fondling only for four of the girls. Three of the girls reported having vaginal intercourse as well as sexual fondling. The two subjects who reported the least number of incestuous incidents and the least frequent length of the affairs were both initiated to sexual fondling only.

The family backgrounds of six of these girls showed consistent abuse of alcohol by the fathers. Four of the fathers were described as promiscuous. One of the fathers

had previously engaged in a lengthy brother-sister incestuous affair, while three of the fathers had made sexual advances to other daughters.

Two of the mothers displayed a high level of immaturity. Three were described as passive. One mother was an alcoholic. Two were defined as promiscuous. All of the families also had backgrounds of marital discord.

Table 1
Background Data Related to Incest for the Study Sample (n=7)

Case No.	Age at Disclosure	Frequency	Duration	Relationship	History of Incest	Background to Incest
1	12	4-5 times only	Less than 1 year	Step-father	Sexual fondling	Step-father, history of alcohol abuse and violence; step-father incest; both parents' immature and permissive attitudes toward incest; history of promiscuity.
2	15	Twice monthly	4 years	Step-father	Voluntary intercourse and sexual fondling	Step-father has history of drinking and violence; mother over-protective of daughter due to epilepsy.
3	15	Twice monthly	4-5 years	Step-father	Sexual fondling	Step-father with violent tendencies; incest occurred first with subject's older sister, who left home.
4	15	Weekly	10 years	Natural father	Voluntary intercourse and sexual fondling	Father abused alcohol; diagnosed psychopathic personality; mother passive to father's behavior; incest began to younger daughter.
5	14	Twice monthly	6 years	Natural father	Voluntary intercourse and sexual fondling	Both parents promiscuous and immature; incest occurred first with subject's mother who drank to excess.
6	18	5-6 times only	Less than 1 year	Natural father	Sexual fondling	Father drinking excessively; mother left him and subject about 4 years previously.
7	15	Once every 2 months	2 years	Natural father	Sexual fondling	Both parents' alcoholism; father also violent and incest with older daughter who left home.

Table 2
Information Related to the Impact of Incest Disclosure for the Study Sample (n=7)

Case No.	Results of Disclosure for Victim				Status of Parents before Disclosure		Status of Parents following Disclosure		Reconciliation of victim	No change
	Present	Isolated	Foster home	Other	Living together	Separated	Living together	Separated		
1	12	X			X		X			
2	15		X		X		X			
3	15		X		X			X		
4	17		X		X		X			
									Latter, father was incarcerated following incest charges	
5	19		X		X			X		
6	18					X			X	X
									Went to live with mother	
7	15	X			X		X			

Table 2 reports information related to the actual incest disclosure. Following disclosure of incest, four of the subjects were placed in foster homes. One of the subjects had been living with her father and brothers prior to the incest, but was placed with her mother and her common-law husband following the disclosure.

Prior to incest disclosure, six of the marital couples had been living together. Following incest disclosure, four couples continued living together, two couples separated voluntarily and one husband was incarcerated.

Table 3

The Ranked Mean Scores, in Descending Order, on the Areas of Mother-Daughter Affection for Study Sample ($n=7$).

Items of Affection	Mean (\bar{X})	Standard Deviation (S.D.)
1. Daughter feels least close to mother in family.	.71	.49
2. Mother expresses feelings for daughter.	.57	.54
3. Mother and daughter share leisure time together.	.57	.54
4. Daughter feels she acts most like her mother.	.47	.54
5. Mother kisses and hugs daughter, etc.	.43	.54
6. Mother is daughter's favourite person in family.	.43	.54
7. Daughter feels she is mother's favourite child.	.29	.49
8. Daughter feels mother cares more for siblings.	.29	.49

Note: The range for this index was 0-1.

As indicated in Table 3, the highest mean score in the area of affection was $\bar{X}=.71$ (daughter feels least close to mother in family) and the lowest mean score was $\bar{X}=.29$ (daughter feels mother cares more for siblings). Five of the subjects reported that their mothers were not the persons they felt least close to in the family group. Only two of the subjects reported that they did not think their mothers cared more for the other children in the family.

Each of the items in the areas of affection were dichotomously and evenly weighted as either 1=Yes or 0=No. Items 1 and 8 were reversed scored in this index. In this regard, when each girl's score was summed and averaged, the overall mean for the sample was $\bar{X}=3.7$, S.D. 3.3. Considering that scores could range from 0-8, a \bar{X} of 3.7 reflected a limited overall degree of affection for the sample. The cutting points for this index were determined as follows: Highly affectionate (7-8), moderately affectionate (3.8-6.9), limited affection (2-3.7) and not affectionate (0-1.9). These data are further broken down in Table 4 which follows.

Table 4

The Degree of Affection for the Study-Sample ($n=7$).

Degree of Affection (Ra 0-8)	Frequency	Percentage %
Highly affectionate (7-8)	2	28.6
Moderate affection (4-6.9)	2	28.6
Limited affection (2-3.9)	-	---
Not affectionate (0-1.9)	3	42.8

It appears that 56% of the sample had a high or moderate level of affection with their mothers, while three of the sample reported no affection between their mothers and themselves.

Table 5 reports data on the next major area which was explored - the area of communication between the mother-daughter dyad. Table 5 reports the ranked mean scores in descending order related to the communication of the dyad.

Table 5

The Ranked Mean Scores, in Descending Order, of the Areas of Communication for the Study Sample ($n=7$).

Items of Communication	Mean (\bar{X})	Standard Deviation (S.D.)
1. Daughter confides problems to mother.	.58	.54
2. Daughter prefers, in the family, to tell problems to mother.	.58	.54
3. Mother shows positive attitude to sex.	.43	.54
4. Daughter feels mother understands her problems.	.29	.49
5. Mother gave daughter some sex education.	.29	.49
6. Daughter feels comfortable discussing sex with mother.	.14	.26

Note. * The range for this index was 0-1

Table 5 reports that the highest mean score in the area of communication was $\bar{X}=58$ (daughter confides problems to mother) and the lowest mean score was $\bar{X}=14$ (daughter feels comfortable discussing sex with mother). Four of the girls reported they confided their problems to their mothers, and only one of the sample reported she felt comfortable discussing sex with her mother.

Each of the items in the areas of affection were dichotomously scored and evenly weighted as either 1=Yes or 0=No. In this regard, when each girls' score was summed and averaged, the overall mean for the sample was $\bar{X}=2.9$, S.D. 2.0. Considering that the scores could range from 0-6, a mean of 2.9 reflected a limited overall degree of communication for the study sample. The cutting points were determined as follows: Highly communicative (5-6), moderately communicative (4.0-4.9), limited communication (2.1-3.9) and no communication (0-2.0).

Table 6

The Degree of Communication for the Study Sample (n=7)

Degree of Communication (Ra 0-6)	Frequency	Percentage %
Highly communicative (5-6)	1	14.3
Moderately communicative (4.0-4.9)	-	----
Limited communication (2.1-3.9)	2	28.6
No communication (0-2.0)	4	57.1

Thus for this sample, the areas of communication seem to be minimal. Overall, the group seemed to have limited or no communication with their mothers.

Table 7

The Ranked Mean Score, in Descending Order, of the Areas of Conflict for the Study Sample ($n=7$).

Items of Conflict	Mean (\bar{X})	Standard Deviation (S.D.)
1. Mother uses physical forms of punishment.	.71	.49
2. Mother tends to listen to daughters' side of argument.	.57	.53
3. Mother scolds or criticizes daughter excessively.	.57	.53
4. Mother and daughter fight most with each other.	.43	.53
5. Mother ignores daughter's problems.	.43	.53

Note: The range for this index was 0-1

As indicated in Table 7, the highest mean score in the area of conflict was $\bar{X}=.71$ (mother uses physical forms of punishment) and the lowest mean score was $\bar{X}=.43$ (mother ignores daughter's problems). Five of the girls reported that their mothers did not use physical punishment with them. Four of them reported that their mothers tended to ignore their problems rather than help to solve them.

Each of the items of the areas of conflict were dichotomously and evenly weighted as either 1=Yes or 0=No. Items 1, 3, 4 and 5 on this index were reverse scored. In this regard, when each girls' score was summed and averaged, the overall mean for the sample was $\bar{X}=2.7$, S.D. 2.1. Considering that scores could range from 0-5; a $\bar{X}=2.7$ reflected a limited overall degree of conflict for the sample. The cutting points were determined as follows: Highly conflicting (0-2), moderately conflicting (2.1-3.0), limited conflict (3.1-4.9) and no conflict (5).

Table 8

The Degree of Conflict for the Study Sample (n=7):

Degree of Conflict (Ra 0-5)	Frequency	Percentage %
No conflict (5)	2	28.6
Limited conflict (3.1-4.9)	1	14.3
Moderate conflict (2.1-3.0)	1	14.3
High conflict (0-2)	3	42.8

As indicated above in Table 8, there was diversity in the overall scores of the sample regarding degree of conflict. It would appear there were various degrees of mother-daughter conflict amongst the sample, but overall reflected a moderate degree.

Table 9

The Ranked Mean Scores, in Descending Order, of the Areas of Mother's Reaction to Incest Disclosure for the Study Sample ($n=7$).

Items related to Disclosure	Mean (\bar{X})	Standard Deviation (S.D.)
1. Mother wanted daughter removed from home.	.71	.50
2. Mother showed concern for daughter's feelings.	.57	.69
3. Mother did not really believe act took place.	.57	.69
4. Mother expressed anger towards daughter.	.57	.69
5. Mother wanted daughter removed from home.	.57	.69
6. Daughter felt satisfied with mother's handling of situation.	.43	.80
7. Mother felt father was responsible for the act taking place.	.43	.80
8. Mother seemed more concerned with her own needs and feelings.	.33	.80
9. Mother confronted father with the act.	.29	.87
10. Mother wanted father to receive treatment.	.29	.87
11. Mother knew/suspected the act, but ignored its existence.	.29	.87
12. Daughter disclosed the act's existence to her mother first.	.14	.09

Note: The range for this index was 0-1

In regard to Table 9, the highest mean score in the area of mothers' reaction to disclosure was $\bar{X}=71$ (mother wanted daughter removed from home) and the lowest mean score was $\bar{X}=09$ (daughter disclosed the act's existence to her mother first). Three of the subjects' mothers wished the girls removed from home following disclosure of the incestuous act. Only one of the subjects chose their mother as the first person to inform about the incestuous activity.

Each of the items in the areas of mother's reaction to incest disclosure was dichotomously and evenly weighted as either 1=Yes or 0=No. In this regard, when each girl's score was summed and averaged, the overall mean for the sample was $\bar{X}=5.3$, S.D. 4.5. Considering that the scores could range from 1-12, a \bar{X} of 5.3 reflected a limited degree of satisfaction by the subjects with their mothers' management of the area of incest disclosure. The established cutting points were determined as follows: highly satisfied (9-12), moderately satisfied (8.9-5.8), limited satisfaction (5.7-2.8) and not satisfied (2.7-0).

Table 10
The Degree of Satisfaction regarding
Mother's Reaction to Incest Disclosure

Degree of Satisfaction to Disclosure	Frequency	Percentage %
Highly satisfied (9-12)	2	28.6
Moderately satisfied (8.9-5.8)	1	14.3
Limited satisfaction (5.7-2.8)	1	14.3
Not satisfied (2.7-0)	3	42.8

Table 10 reveals that three of the girls were not satisfied with the way they perceived the mother handling the incest disclosure. Overall, this sample indicated that they were not very satisfied with the mothers' reaction to the situation.

Discussion

The sample study of seven girls with histories of paternal incest had an average of 14.8 years of age at the time of disclosure. This is consistent with a study by Molnar and Cameron (1975) of 10 paternal incest cases where the daughters had a mean age of 15 years at the time of disclosure.

The average duration of incest for the seven subjects was 4.1 years (range of less than 1 year-10 years). Molnar and Cameron (1975) found 4.5 years as the mean duration for their sample.

Meiselman (1978) reported that adolescent girls involved in incest often displayed serious after-effects such as promiscuity, sexual dysfunction, depression and suicidal ideation. Sloane and Karpinski (1942) also found that antisocial behavior was an after-effect for adolescent incest victims. The study sample was not investigated regarding their after-effects of incest, but this may have serious implications for future treatment planning and intervention for these victims.

All of the sample reported sexual fondling by their fathers (see Table 1). Only three of the subjects reported vaginal intercourse with their fathers; however, one may speculate that the subjects were reluctant to fully admit the extent of their incestuous intimacy.

Four of the subjects reported only sexual fondling by their fathers. This finding appears inconsistent with a

study by Sloane and Karpinski, (1942) which indicated that adolescent girls are more frequently approached to engage in sexual intercourse (often through coercion) than their pre-puberty counterparts. The reason for the inconsistency with these four subjects is unclear. However, three of these subjects had a much shorter duration of incestuous activity than the average for the sample (two of the girls had affairs of less than one year, while the third had an affair of two years duration)..

In addition, these same three subjects had a lower monthly frequency (.5) of incest in comparison with the average of 1.6 incestuous activities per month for the remaining sample. Thus, on the basis of these data one may further speculate that a longer period of time and more frequent incestuous activity is needed for vaginal intercourse to occur.

All of the daughters in the sample were the oldest girls living at home. Similarly, Weinberg (1955) studied 203 cases of paternal incest and found that 64% of the victims were the eldest daughter living at home. Thus, it would appear this sample is not significantly different from most incestuous victims in this regard.

Studies by Kaufman et al (1954), and later Lustig et al (1966) reported that the majority of incest cases in their studies were from the lower socioeconomic classes. The study sample of seven subjects revealed that five of these girls' families were in receipt of frequent or long-term

social assistance, while the two remaining families were of lower-middle class with both parents in each family working in unskilled jobs.

The high incidents of detected incest in lower socioeconomic classes has particular significance for social service agencies who frequently encounter these families. For example, social service agencies are familiar with the possible conditions which permit incest to occur, and with the identification of presenting symptoms in incestuous families and could possibly help to decrease this frequency of incest.

Four of the seven fathers in the study had previous exposure to incest. One father had engaged in a lengthy brother-sister affair, while three of the fathers had incestuous contact with other daughters. Cavallin (1965) reported that five (41.5%) of his 12 incestuous fathers had been involved with more than one daughter. Later, Lukianowicz (1972) found that five (19%) of the 26 fathers in his paternal incest study had relationships with more than one daughter. Although these studies similarly had small samples, the possibility of fathers involved in incest with multiple daughters enhances the need to identify at an early stage actual or potential incestuous families to prevent multiple sexual victims in these families.

In the three families where the fathers engaged in incest with more than one daughter, all had initially victimized the eldest daughter and then transferred their

sexual interest to the second eldest daughter when the eldest had become inaccessible through leaving home. This finding is consistent with that of Weiner's study (1962). In this regard, this study's sample were not significantly different from other incestuous victims reported in the literature.

Six of the incestuous fathers in the study (85.8%) had a history of excessive drinking. This is consistent with a similar small study by Kaufman *et al* (1954) which found eight (90%) of the 11 incestuous fathers were alcoholics. Alcohol is purported as instrumental in lowering sexual inhibition, and thus alcoholic fathers may have less inhibition about engaging in the sexually taboo area of incest.

Violence was a personality trait of five of the seven fathers in this study. Browning and Boatman (1977) found that seven (77.7%) of their nine incestuous fathers had histories of violent behavior. Meiselman (1978), and Dietz and Craft (1980) found similar tendencies toward violence in their samples of incestuous fathers. It would appear therefore, that more research should be devoted to determining the role that violence plays in contributing to incestuous relationships.

Promiscuity was a feature of three of the seven fathers in this study. All of these promiscuous fathers were also excessive drinkers and the exploration of the causal relationship between alcohol and promiscuity might

also be important. Weinberg (1955) described a class of incest offenders whose sexual behavior is characterized by indiscriminate promiscuity. Thus, it would appear these three fathers would fit Weinberg's description of psychopathic fathers for the most part.

Anti-social behavior was displayed by some of the mothers in this sample. Two of the seven mothers were deemed as being promiscuous. Other studies have found evidence of promiscuity among mothers of incest victims. For instance, Lukienowicz (1972) found eight (30.4%) of the 26 mothers in his study were promiscuous, while Maisch (1972) found that 22% of the mothers in his study of incest remained promiscuous following marriage.

Two of the seven mothers in the sample engaged in excessive drinking. The fact that three of the study's mothers displayed inappropriate role-modelling has definite implications for the immediate mother-daughter relationship, as well as the behavior the daughter herself may exhibit later as a parent.

Karpman (1954) and Lustig et al (1966) indicated that incest was often discovered against a background of adverse or socially disruptive conditions. All of the present study sample's families had reported marital discord. As well, social assistance was the main source of income for four of the families. A significant number of the fathers had alcohol problems, violent patterns of behavior and engaged in promiscuity, while three mothers were promiscuous or drank excessively.

In addition, several of the fathers engaged in incestuous activity with multiple daughters. It would appear that this small sample certainly had unstable and inadequate family backgrounds and this may have been a contributing factor in the commission of incest.

The sequelae to incest is often traumatic for many families. Four of the study's seven subjects were removed from their homes following disclosure and placed in foster homes, while four of the parents remained living together following the disclosure. This might imply that the mothers were more concerned with their own emotional needs, rather than those of the daughter.

Several studies, including Kaufman et al (1954) found the mothers very emotionally dependent on their husbands. Other researchers such as Dietz and Craft (1980) suggested that the mother remained with the father because she did not want to lose the husband's financial support. In this study, presence of the fathers for financial support does not appear to be a significant factor since six of the families relied on social assistance for their main source of income.

The areas of affection between mothers and daughters for the study sample showed three of the daughters felt there was no affection present between the two (Table 4). This finding is consistent with Kaufman et al (1954) where they reported that victimized daughters, in psychological testing, viewed their mothers as depriving and non-nurturant.

Four of the subjects felt that their mothers showed them physical affection or expressed feelings of affection for them. Only two of the subjects felt they were the mother's favourite child. These findings may have some corroboration with studies by Cormier et al (1962) and Lustig et al (1966) who found that mothers of victimized daughters often had poor relationships with their own mothers and were singled out for rejection by them. In turn, the mothers of these victimized daughters may replicate this pattern of behavior with their own daughters. Such findings cannot be definitely ascribed to this study's mothers, however, it might indicate a possible area for further exploration in treatment plans for future mother-daughter dyads and related research in this area.

The areas of communication between mothers and daughters for this sample seemed very deficient - six of the girls expressed limited or no communication with their mothers (see Table 6). Four of the girls confided problems to their mothers, but only two felt that their mothers understood their problems. Sexual knowledge was another important area where mothers and daughters did not communicate well. Only two of the mothers discussed sexual issues with the daughters and only three of the daughters felt their mothers conveyed a positive attitude toward sex.

Meiselman (1978) and Justice and Justice (1979) reported that incestuous activity was often justified by the father because of his wife's promiscuity or frigid behavior.

These studies displayed the need for mothers to communicate openly and positively about sexual matters with their daughters. Daughters may in fact, role model inappropriate sexual behavior in their own marriages (thus creating a potential environment for "incest-carrying", e.g., Berry, 1975).

Another area of exploration in this study was the conflict between mothers and daughters, with four of the girls expressing high or moderate degrees of conflict with their mothers (see Table 8). Kaufman et al (1954) found that psychological testing of victimized daughters revealed perceptions of their mothers as stern and authoritative; however, there was no substantial evidence of these findings with this particular study sample.

Within the area of mother's reaction to incest disclosure, four girls were dissatisfied or had limited satisfaction with their mother's handling of the disclosure (see Tables 9 and 10). Five of the girls felt their mothers knew or definitely suspected incest but did nothing about the issue. This finding is significantly higher than Lukianowicz's study (1972) where he reported that 10 out of 26 mothers (or 38%) definitely knew of the incestuous activity, but ignored it. Approximately five of this study's seven mothers denied the incest activity occurred, denied the incident to authorities and expressed anger towards the daughter and wanted her removed from the home. Such findings have definite implications for treatment and

intervention in the mother-daughter dyad in order to help re-establish some level of stability in this relationship.

Summary

Incest in this study sample often showed a history of prolonged and frequent incestuous activity. The background data relevant to incest reflected a portrait of families of social assistance or lower-middle socioeconomic status who had disruptive social features (e.g., alcoholism, violence and promiscuity). Incest was also often repeated sequentially with other daughters.

The mother-daughter dyad in the areas of communication, conflict and mother's reaction to incest disclosure were overall dissatisfactory to the daughters, while the area of affection was more positively perceived by the majority of the study sample. By ignoring the functioning level of the mother-daughter dyad, the victimized daughter's potential for experiencing serious after-effects may be increased. Further research into the area of mother-daughter relationships in incestuous families is consequently needed and documented by this study's findings.

Conclusions

The conclusion section is organized into four areas as follows: 1) background data, 2) self-exploratory aspects of mother-daughter dyads, 3) limitations and 4) recommendations.

Background Data

The average age of the seven subjects in the study sample was 14.8 years. All the subjects were engaged in paternal incest over an average time of 4.1 years. The average frequency of incestuous activity was 1.6 times per month.

Five of the subjects were attending school at the time of the study. Two had left school before completion of high school. None of the subjects were employed at the time of the study.

All seven of the subjects were the eldest daughters living at home at the time of incest. Three of the girls had sisters who had also engaged in sexual relations with their fathers. The sexual relations extended to vaginal intercourse with only three girls in the sample. All of the others involved sexual fondling.

Five of the girls' families were in receipt of social assistance, while the remaining two were in the lower-middle class. Six of the incestuous fathers had a background of excessive drinking, five had violent tendencies and three were promiscuous. Two of the seven mothers in

the sample study were promiscuous and two of the mothers drank excessively.

Following incest, four of the girls were placed in foster homes. Four of the parents continued living together following incest disclosure. One couple had been separated for several years prior to incest disclosure and the victimized daughter went to live with the mother following disclosure.

On the whole, the background data related to incest for this sample revealed prolonged and fairly frequent incestuous activity. In general, all of the families appeared dysfunctional in the area of marital relationships. There was evidence of excessive drinking, violent behavior and promiscuity present in the majority of the families. Although one cannot state conclusively that these socially disruptive conditions are linked directly to the incest, one may speculate that any or all of these conditions might have been a factor in the disintegration of the incest barrier.

Self-exploratory Aspects of Mother-Daughter Dyads

In the areas of affection between mothers and daughters, three of the daughters felt there was no affection present between the two. Four of the daughters felt there was a moderate or high degree of affection between the two. Overall, the subjects reported they were fairly evenly divided in their satisfaction/dissatisfaction with areas

o of affection between their mothers and themselves.

In the areas of communication between mothers and daughters, five of the girls felt there was no communication present. Limited communication was present with two of the mothers and daughters. Only one subject felt there was a high degree or level of communication between herself and her mother. Most of the study sample reported that there was impairment in the mother-daughter relationship in the area of communication.

In the area of conflict between mothers and daughters, four of the girls reported a high degree of conflict present between themselves and their mothers. A moderate amount of conflict was reported by one of the girls. Limited amount of conflict was reported by the other. No conflict between mother and daughter was reported by two in the sample. Overall, six of the subjects felt a degree of discontent in the areas of conflict between mothers and daughters.

In the area of mother's reaction to disclosure of incest, two in the sample were highly satisfied with their mothers' handling of the situation. Moderate satisfaction was expressed by one of the girls. Limited satisfaction was expressed by another one of the girls. Dissatisfaction was expressed by four of the girls. Overall, the majority of the sample reported dissatisfaction or limited satisfaction with their mother's handling of the incest disclosure.

In general, self-exploration of the mother-daughter dyads in incestuous families revealed that the majority of

the subjects' relationships were impaired in areas of communication and conflict between the mother and daughter. The areas of affection between the mothers and daughters were almost equally divided with five of the girls expressing high or moderate affection between the two, while four of the girls expressed there was no affection between the dyad.

Overall, the sample showed varying degrees of impairment in the areas of communication, conflict and mother's reaction to incest disclosure between the mother-daughter dyads of seven incestuous families. The sample had varying views of areas of affection within the mother-daughter dyads. These areas of interaction in incestuous families require more extensive research.

Limitations

This study had several major limitations. First, the study sample was small, hence any findings can only be applied specifically to this group of subjects and cannot be considered representative of the general population.

Also, the study may have been biased by the source of the referrals. All of the referrals were cases confirmed by Department of Social Services, St. John's, Newfoundland and five of these cases were actual recipients of social assistance. In this context one may speculate that incest would be detected in low socioeconomic classes more often because of their frequent contacts with the Department of Social Services. Thus, this sample of mother-daughter dyads may not be representative of all other incestuous families.

All of the sample were referred for group therapy and participation in this study. A study of self-referred victimized daughters may have produced different results in this study.

Four of the sample were in foster homes or living independently at the time of the study. This may have heightened the daughters' perception of impairment in the mother-daughter dyad relationship.

The subject matter of the questionnaire was very intimate. All of the sample appeared comfortable with the subject matter and the interviewer; however, the intimacy of the material might have contributed to incomplete or inaccurate answers by some of the sample.

The self-exploratory section of the questionnaire was very limited in its scope of questions. There were other questions which may have been pertinent to the four explored areas but which were omitted due to time limitations. Thus, this study examined only four aspects of a mother-daughter relationship and hence any results can only be applied to these four areas and not to the overall functioning of the dyad.

The study examined mother-daughter dyads from the daughter's perception only. The material explored was very subjective and hence there was no way to measure the accuracy of the statements or their consistency with the mothers' perceptions. Finally, the entire questionnaire was non-standardized, hence its reliability and validity has not been determined.

Recommendations

The recommendations of this investigation into mother-daughter dyads will be listed as follows:

- 1) Further studies of mother-daughter dyads should be completed with more diverse socioeconomic families to study if any differences occur in higher income families.
- 2) The mother-daughter dyad should also be explored from the mother's perception in order to give a more complete view of the interaction of the dyad and determine the degree of congruence between the data and perceptions of the daughter.
- 3) Since impairment of mother-daughter dyads seems to be an impediment to the victimized daughter's recovery, this issue should be addressed by clinicians on either the basis of mother-daughter group therapy or with the mother-daughter combination in individual families.
- 4) Incest may occur in dysfunctional families. This has particular implications for social services workers, who frequently encounter such families. Clinicians at the social service delivery level, should be trained to familiarize themselves with potential cues of incest and to be aware of the types of families who may be "at risk" of becoming incestuous in nature.
- 5) The roles and responsibilities of mother, daughter and marital partner should be clearly differentiated with each victimized daughter in order to address any exposure to inappropriate role-modelling.

- 6) Further areas of the mother-daughter relationship should be explored to give a more comprehensive picture of the overall interaction pattern of behavior.

This study attempts to explore four specified areas of the mother-daughter relationship in incestuous families namely: 1) affection, 2) communication, 3) conflict and 4) mother's reaction to incest disclosure. All of the seven girls in the sample were of adolescent age at the time of this study and most had engaged in lengthy and frequent incestuous activity. All of the girls' families were of low or lower-middle class socioeconomic status and all of the families had socially disruptive factors in them. The study revealed that most of the subjects were dissatisfied with some areas of the mother-daughter relationship and further investigation of this topic is recommended, since it has important implications for clinical social work practice.

2

Appendices

Appendix A

Group Therapy for
Victimized Daughters of Paternal Incest

Agenda

- October 6: Introduction
4:00-5:30 p.m. Purpose of group.
 Preview of overall content of 7 sessions.
 Input from sample regarding their needs
 to be met in sessions.
- October 8: Incest: Definition of Incest.
4:00-5:30 p.m. Discussion re the feelings surrounding
 the act.
 Incest disclosure.
 Self-perception of incest victims (guilt,
 blame, etc.).
- October 13: Role of Mothers:
4:00-5:30 p.m. Role of mother in family life.
 Role of wife in marital relationship.
 The differences between roles of wife
 and mother.
 Sample's perception of a good mother
 and wife.
 Sample's reflection of how their mothers
 fitted these definitions.
 Role of mother in incestuous families.
 Sample's feelings regarding their mothers.

October 15:

4:00-5:30 p.m.

Role of Fathers:

Role of father in family life.

Role of husband in marital relationship.

The differences between roles of husband and father.

Sample's perception of a good father and husband.

Sample's reflection of how their fathers fitted these definitions.

Role of father in the incestuous act.

Sample's feelings regarding their fathers.

October 20:

4:00-5:30 p.m.

Role of child:

Role of children in family life.

Sample's perception of their role in the family.

Sample's perception of how they related to the family group.

Sample's perception of how others related to them in the family group.

October 22:

4:00-5:30 p.m.

Sexual knowledge:

Menstruation

Sexual intimacy prior and following marriage.

Conception.

Birth control.

October 27:

4:00-5:30 p.m.

Dating and Marriage:

Feelings regarding boys generally.

Problems experienced in dating.

Criteria for choosing husbands.

Expectations for husband's behavior.

How to handle the question of incest
with future male partners.

General discussion of impact that incest
has on subjects' attitudes towards
sexual intimacy.

October 29:

4:00-5:30 p.m.

Assertiveness and Self-esteem:

Review of group.

Data Sheet

Name: _____

1. Age: _____ 2. Highest grade attained: _____

Are you presently _____

3. Attending school: _____

4. Working: _____

5. Unemployed: _____

At the time of incest were you living at:

6. Home: _____

7. Other - explain _____

Prior to the incest disclosure were your parents:

8. Living together: _____

9. Separated: _____

10. Divorced: _____

Following incest disclosure were your parents:

11. Living together: _____

12. Separated: _____

13. Divorced: _____

At the present are you living with:

14. Both parents: _____

15. Mother only: _____

16. Father only: _____

17. Foster home: _____

18. Other - explain: _____

Number of siblings: _____

19. None: _____

20. One: _____

Number of siblings (cont'd)

21. Two: _____
22. Three or more: _____

Position in family:

23. Oldest child in family: _____
24. Oldest girl in family: _____
25. Only girl in family: _____
26. Only child: _____

27. Oldest girl living at home
at time of incest: _____

28. Other - explain: _____

Family income:

29. Social assistance: _____
30. Father's occupation: _____
31. Mother's occupation: _____
32. Number of parents _____

presently working: _____

Incest occurred usually (state frequency, if known):

33. At least once per month: _____
34. Less than once per month: _____

Incest continued for a period of (state duration, if known):

35. Less than 12 months: _____
36. More than 12 months: _____

Appendix B

Areas of Affection Between Mother and Daughter

	Yes	No	Relevant Comments
1. Mother and daughter show physical affection - kissing, hugging etc.			
2. Mother tells the daughter her feelings of affection for her.			
3. Daughter feels that she is her mother's favourite child.			
4. Daughter feels that the mother cares more for other children than her.			
5. Daughter cares most for her mother in family.			
6. Daughter feels least close to her mother in family.			
7. Mother and daughter share some leisure time/activities together.			
8. Daughter feels she acts more like her mother than anyone else.			

Communication between Mother and Daughter

	Yes	No	Relevant Comments
9. Daughter tells her problems to her mother.			
10. Within the family group, the daughter would prefer to tell her problems to her mother.			
11. Daughter feels mother usually understands her problems.			
12. Mother gave some sexual education to daughter.			
13. Daughter usually feels comfortable discussing sexual issues with mother.			
14. Mother demonstrates to daughter a positive attitude towards sex.			

Areas of Conflict

	Yes	No	Relevant Comments
15. Mother uses physical punishment with daughter.			
16. Mother scolds, criticizes or belittles daughter excessively.			
17. Mother tends to listen to the daughter's side of the argument.			
18. Mother tends to ignore the daughter's problems, rather than help her solve them.			
19. Mother and daughter fight more with each other than with other family members.			

Mother's Reaction to Incest Disclosure

	Yes	No	Relevant Comments
20. Daughter was first person to tell mother of the incest.			
21. Mother felt the father was responsible for the act.			
22. Mother showed concern for the daughter's feelings.			
23. Mother confronted/discussed the issue with father.			
24. Mother wanted the father to receive treatment/help.			
25. Daughter felt satisfied with the mother's handling of situation.			
26. Mother did not really believe act took place.			
27. Mother denied the incident to authorities.			
28. Mother expressed anger towards daughter.			
29. Mother wanted daughter removed from home.			
30. Mother knew/suspected the act was taking place, but ignored it at first.			
31. Mother seemed more concerned with her own feelings in the situation, rather than the daughter's.			

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