CORPORAL PUNISHMENT OF CHILDREN AND SEXUAL BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS: RESULTS FROM FOUR STUDIES

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Website:  http://pubpages.unh.edu/~mas2

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• Other publications on this and related issues can be downloaded from http://www.pubpages.unh.edu/~mas2
• The work was supported by National Institute of Mental Health grant T32MH15161 and by the University of New Hampshire
THE FOUR STUDIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Study 1</td>
<td>Sexual coercion by University students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study 2</td>
<td>Risky sex by University students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study 3</td>
<td>Risky sex by Secondary school students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study 4</td>
<td>Masochistic sex by University students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

QUESTIONS TO BE ADDRESSED

1. What is corporal punishment (CP)?
2. How prevalent and how chronic is CP?
3. What is the theoretical model which guided studies 1, 2, and 3?
4. What is the empirical evidence that led to this model?
5. What are the results of the four studies of sexual behavior problems?
6. What are the implications for primary prevention of these and many other social and psychological problems?
Questions 1 & 2: **WHAT IS CORPORAL PUNISHMENT (CP) AND HOW PREVALENT IS IT?**

- A. USE OF PHYSICAL FORCE
- B. WITH THE INTENTION OF CAUSING BODILY PAIN
- C. BUT NOT INJURY
- D. FOR PURPOSES OF CORRECTION OR CONTROL

**EXAMPLES**

- “SPANK,” “SMACK”
- SLAP HAND
- SHAKE, SHOVE, JERK
- GRAB OR SQUEEZE HARD
- TWIST EAR
- etc.
CP IS THE PRIMORDIAL VIOLENCE

Over 90% hit toddlers

More than a third hit infants

US national survey, 1,000 children, Straus & Stewart, 1999

One out of four are still hitting at age 16
### THREE EXAMPLES OF STUDIES SHOWING HOW OFTEN PARENTS HIT CHILDREN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NATION &amp; REF.</th>
<th>SAMPLE &amp; Number</th>
<th>CHILD AGE</th>
<th>% HIT</th>
<th>TIME PERIOD</th>
<th>MEAN TIMES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SWEDEN STATIN ET AL, 1995</td>
<td>STOCKHOLM BIRTH COHORT 1955-58 N = 212</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>YEAR</td>
<td>33% AT LEAST DAILY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA GILES-SIMS ET AL, 1995</td>
<td>NATIONAL N = 1,770 1988, 1990</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>DURING INTERVIEW</td>
<td>3.2 TIMES PER WEEK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA HOLDEN ET AL, 1995</td>
<td>COLLEGE ED MOTHERS, AUSTIN, TX N = 39</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>WEEK</td>
<td>2.5 TIMES PER WEEK</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
QUESTION 3: WHAT COULD EXPLAIN WHY CORPORAL PUNISHMENT IS LINKED TO SEXUAL COERCION AND RISKY SEX?

MEDIATING PROCESSES
- Low Moral internalization
- Low Self control
- Antisocial Personality
- Aggressiveness
- Violence Approval
- Low self-esteem

QUESTION 4, WHAT IS THE EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE THAT CP IS RELATED TO ABOVE MEDIATING VARIABLES? – next slide
### META ANALYSIS OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT STUDIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OUTCOME MEASURED</th>
<th># OF STUDIES</th>
<th>HARMFUL EFFECT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A. EFFECTS ON CHILDREN</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less Moral Internalization</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggression</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delinquent and antisocial behavior</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of parent-child relationships</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental health</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victim of child abuse</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B. EFFECTS ON ADULTS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggression</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal and antisocial behavior</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental health</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult abuse of own child or spouse</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C. CP NOT MORE EFFECTIVE THAN OTHER DISCIPLINE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compliance</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


93% agreement in studies of harmful side effects
Example 1

Physical attacks on other children in school are twice as frequent if the mother used corporal punishment six months earlier.
Example 2

SPANKED CHILDREN
The more spanking the **more** antisocial behavior two years later

NOT SPANKED
Antisocial behavior measured two years later **decreased**
Example 3

NATIONALLY REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLE OF 9,789 CANADIAN CHILDREN AGE 4-11 (Millar, 2006)

SPANKING AT TIME 1 IS RELATED TO AN INCREASE IN CHILD’S:
- Physical Aggression .27
- Psychological aggression .11
- Child Delinquency (property crimes) .39

SPANKING HAD A STRONGER EFFECT ON AGGRESSION AND DELINQUENCY THAN:
- * Parent depressed
- * Inadequate supervision
- * Lack of Love and support
- * Low income
- * Broken family

AFTER MANY CONTROL
THESE RESULTS ARE AFTER CONTROLLING FOR

- Age of child
- Gender of child
- Psychological aggression by the parent
- Positive interaction with child (love and support)
- Supervision by parent
- Depression of parent
- Education of parent
- Family income
- Income below poverty
- Family structure (single parent family)

Millar 2006
STUDY 1 - CORPORAL PUNISHMENT AND SEXUAL COERCION BY UNIVERSITY STUDENTS
(Gamez & Straus, 2008)

• **Sample:** 14,252 students at 68 universities in 32 nations

• **Measure of Corporal Punishment:**
  ~ Did not strongly disagree that “I was spanked or hit a lot before age 12”
  ~ Median nation = 52%, US = 61%, UK = 55%

• **Measure of Sexual Coercion In Past Year** - Revised Conflict Tactics Scales
  ~ Verbal Sexual Coercion Scale
    Median nation = 23.3%, US = 27.4%, UK = 17.9%
  ~ Forced Sex scale
    Median nation = 1.4%, US = 2.1%, UK = 1.7%

### 32 Nations In the International Dating Violence Study

**PERCENT WHO DID NOT STRONGLY DISAGREE THAT THEY WERE SPANKED OR HIT A LOT BEFORE AGE 12**

**ALL NATIONS MEDIAN**: Total = 52, Males = 55, Females = 50

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In rank order of national context total (VS01_1)
FIGURE 2. PATHS FROM VICTIMIZATION TO SEXUAL COERCION
Left number is the percent by which corporal punishment increases the probability of sexual coercion by men; right is the percent for women*

* Percentages are based on odds ratios from logistic regression controlling for age, length of relationship, socioeconomic status, and score on a social desirability response bias scale
PERCENT WHO SEXUALLY COERCED IN PREVIOUS 12 MONTHS BY CORPORAL PUNISHMENT BEFORE AGE 12, AND GENDER

- Men do more coercing
- But relation of CP to coercion is same for men and women

14,252 students in 32 nations

“I was spanked or hit a lot before Age 12”
PERCENT WHO PHYSICALLY FORCED SEX IN PREVIOUS 12 MONTHS BY CORPORAL PUNISHMENT BEFORE AGE 12, AND GENDER

I was spanked or hit a lot before Age 12

14,252 students in 32 nations

Men

Women

% Who Physically Forced Sex

strongly disagree
disagree
agree
strongly agree
STUDY 2 – CORPORAL PUNISHMENT AND RISKY SEX BY UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

➢ Theory of study 2

* Corporal punishment (CP) increases the probability of two characteristics that lead to insisting on sex without a condom
  ~Lack of self-control and internalized standards of behavior
  ~Approval of violence

➢ Sample: Same as Study 1

➢ Measure of Risky Sex: Insisting on sex without a condom

➢ Measure of Self Control: 6 item scale (Rebellon & Straus, 2008)

➢ Measure of Violence Approval: 8 item scale (Straus et al, 1999)

  Personal and Relationships Profile (PRP). Durham, NH: University of New Hampshire, Family
  Research Laboratory. Available in: http://pubpages.unh.edu/~mas2/.
  assessment of Gottfredson and Hirschi’s general theory within and across 32 national settings.
  European journal of criminology.
Percent by which the variable at the left increases or decreases the probability of the variable at the right.
Calculated from logistic regression, controlling for age of student, education of mother and father, length of relationship, and score on Limited Disclosure Scale. High Self-Control and High Violence Approval are the high scoring fifth of the sample.
THE MORE CORPORAL PUNISHMENT AS A CHILD, THE GREATER THE PROBABILITY OF RISKY SEX AS A YOUNG ADULT*
THE MORE VIOLENCE IS APPROVED, THE GREATER THE PROBABILITY OF INSISTING ON SEX WITHOUT A CONDOM*
STUDY 3 – CORPORAL PUNISHMENT AND RISKY SEX
BY SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

Sample: 440 students in 9th through 12th grade of a New Hampshire high school

Measure Corporal Punishment: five groups:
  Group 1: No CP (39% of the sample)
  Groups 2-5: Quartiles of those who experienced CP
    (Group 5: CP at age 13 years or older)

Measure of Risky Sex: Factor score from analysis of the following behaviors: Ever had sexual intercourse. Number of times sex in the past year. Age at first sex. Number of sex partners. Frequency of condom use. Frequency of pill use. Frequency of use of other contraception. Number of time purchased condoms in the past year. Whether or not the respondent has had or caused a pregnancy.
THEORETICAL MODEL OF LINKS BETWEEN CORPORAL PUNISHMENT AND UNSAFE SEX

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

- Alienation from parents
- Poor school achievement
- Sexual victimization
- Low self-esteem

RISKY SEX
Chart 2-4.1 Students Who Experienced the Most Corporal Punishment Were Most Likely to Engage in Risky Sexual Behavior
CHART 2-4.2 PATHS FROM CORPORAL PUNISHMENT TO RISKY SEX
(Dark lines are theoretically predicted paths)

Gender = Female

Year in School = Senior

Corporal Punishment Scale

SES

Grades in School

Alienation from Parents

Traditional Gender Roles

Risky Sex

Sexual Victimization

Self-Esteem

SES

Corporal Punishment Scale

Year in School = Senior

Gender = Female

Grades in School

Alienation from Parents

Traditional Gender Roles

Risky Sex

Sexual Victimization

Self-Esteem

SES

Corporal Punishment Scale

Year in School = Senior

Gender = Female

Grades in School

Alienation from Parents

Traditional Gender Roles

Risky Sex

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Risky Sex

Sexual Victimization

Self-Esteem

SES
STUDY 4 – CORPORAL PUNISHMENT AND MASOCHISTIC SEX BY UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

• The Theory: Corporal punishment creates a fusion of love and violence, especially when parents are high in affection

• Sample: 207 students (76 men and 131 women) in sociology and psychology classes at three universities and colleges in the Northeast

• Corporal Punishment: Factor score from analysis of six questions: Age when most often hit by Fa & Mo. How often hit at age 10 by Fa & Mo. How often hit at age 17 by Fa and Mo

• Masochistic Sex: Six question scale. Whether ever sexual aroused by doing or imagining a partner:
  ~ Restrained me as part of sex play
  ~ Spanked me as part of sex play
  ~ Engage in playful fights and partner being physically rough

Alpha = .72
MASOCHISTIC SEX IS VERY PREVALENT
CHART 8–3. As corporal punishment increases, so does the chance of masochistic sex as an adult.
When parents are warm and loving, there is much less masochistic sex.

But the effect of corporal punishment is much greater.

- High rate of masochistic sex regardless of amount of CP
- CP increases masochistic sex by only 12%

- Lower rate of masochistic sex regardless of amount of CP
- CP increases masochistic sex by 48%
QUESTION 6. PRACTICE AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

• Meta-analysis of effects of CP shows 93% agreement in finding harmful effects (Gershoff, 2002)
• Over 90% of US parents use CP with toddlers (Straus, 2001, Straus, 2008)
• Therefore: potential for primary prevention of sexual and relationship violence is large (Rose, 1985)
• Because research shows spanking is not more effective than other discipline methods, there is no need to expose children to the risk of harmful effects of spanking (Fower, 1986; Larzelere, 1994; Roberts, 1986)

PRIMARY PREVENTION OF RELATIONSHIP VIOLENCE AND MANY OTHER SOCIAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS NEEDS TO INCLUDE

• National policies & professional societies recommend never spanking

• Educate care providers about the evidence-base for the policy so that they can give this information to parents

• Posters and brochures in pediatric and other provider offices

• Warning notice on birth Certificates “Spanking has been shown to be dangerous to your child’s health and well-being”
FOR EVIDENCE ON THESE POINTS AND MANY OTHERS SEE

* This book

* Papers on my website (1st slide)

* ALSO Forthcoming book

**THE PRIMORDIAL VIOLENCE:**
**CORPORAL PUNISHMENT, COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT, AND CRIME**

* Some references on last slide
A FEW ADDITIONAL REFERENCES


END FOR 28 FEB PRESENTATION
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In rank order of national context total (VS01_1)
SEXUAL COERCION SCALE
Of the Revised Conflict Tactics Scales

Insist
- Insisted on sex when my partner did not want to (but did not use physical force)
- Made my partner have sex without a condom
- Insisted my partner have oral or anal sex (but did not use physical force)

Threaten
- Used threats to make my partner have oral or anal sex
- Used threats to make my partner have sex

Forced
- Used force (like hitting, holding down, or using a weapon) to make my partner have sex
- Used force (like hitting, holding down, or using a weapon) to make my partner have oral or anal sex

Alpha: By participant  Males = .637 Females = .500, Total = .562
By partner - Males = .603, Females = .589, Total = .592
* For Information on this instrument see http://pubpages.unh.edu/~mas2
WHAT EXPLAINS THE LINK?

“AFTER THE SPANKING IS OVER, TAKE THE CHILD INTO YOUR ARMS AND TELL HIM HOW MUCH YOU LOVE HIM”
These 4 studies and many others show that humane treatment of children can have major benefits in creating better human relationships in general, including between men and women.
700 CHILDREN IN NOTTINGHAM, ENGLAND STUDIED AT AGE 1, 4, AND 7 IN EARLY 1960’S

Age 1  62%
Age 4  97% - 75% once a week or more often
Age 7  over 56% - 41% once a week or more often
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GROWING UP IN SCOTLAND STUDY, WAVE 2, 2007</th>
<th>Age 2 years 4,512 children</th>
<th>Age 4 years 2,500 children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Smacked child</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smacked other child in household</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Believed smacking useful or very useful</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A PREVIOUS SCOTTISH STUDY
(Anderson, Brownlie and Murray, 2002)

Children under 2      38%
Children age 3-5      68 %
Children age 6-10     49%
Children aged 11 or older  14%

SMACKING AND ATTITUDES ABOUT SMACKING

Representative quota sample of 1,822 parents of child under 18 in England and Wales, 2007

* Ever smacked 62%
* Smacked in past year 35%

* Smacked child 11 to 15 in past year 18%
* Smacked child 16 to 17 in past year 10%

* Agree that ‘it is sometimes necessary to smack a naughty child’ 52%
* Did not “Strongly Disagree” that spanking is sometimes necessary 80%

* Opposed to a legal ban on smacking 82%

* The larger the percent who experienced corporal punishment as a child, the larger the percent who severely assaulted a partner.

32 Nations in the International Dating Violence Study

- Male: \( r = .28 \)
- Female: \( r = .71 \)