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THE SEXUAL ASSUALT OF MALE INMATES IN A PRISON SETTING

by

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ACQUISITIONS

THE MALE SEXUAL ASSAULT VICTIM IN INCARCERATED SETTINGS

- 1. Despite a perception of the prevalence of male sexual assault in prisons, there are no reliable data on the actual incidence of this phenomena.
- 2. The prison culture and environment reinforce victimization and a malignant subculture of victims and aggressors, and the weak preying upon the weaker.
- 3. Male sexual assault victims experience the trauma of victimization, the loss of status, feminization and threat of continued revictimization.
- 4. Prison administration and policy often provide less than adequate intervention or appropriate treatment for victims.
- 5. Denial/malaise in affirmative handling of such situations places victims, staff and institutions at risk, and creates a potential cycle of victimization and revictimization.

THE SEXUAL ASSAULT OF MALE INMATES IN INCARCERATED SETTINGS

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ABSTRACT

Male inmate sexual assault is a problem in any prison environment. While it is known to occur, the phenomena remains a "hidden" crime, often not reported out of fear, shame or disbelief. Those selected as victims include the young, the defenseless, weak, handicapped, inexperienced, or individuals incarcerated for sexual crimes themselves. The outcomes of such assault have profound impact upon the victims and the institutions.

Staff and institutional management of such incidents vary, in part due to the nature of the ethic of prison. Some inmates trade sex for survival or goods or protection; others are coerced into sex with a "protector". Many staff even take the position that sexual assault is a natural consequence of having committed a crime and coming to prison. The responses may range from justification, denial, invalidation or even "blaming the victim". The consequences for victims become even more catastrophic, causing some to endure continued victimization, others to seek isolation or suicide as protection, still others to act out their own rage upon more defenseless victims.

Prison policy must be developed to identify these situations, and encourage reporting of coercive sex. Prison staff must be trained and mandated to respond appropriately and humanely to a problem which can further alienate the victim/offender, or set up even more hidden rage waiting to erupt. The continued silence of prison staff and policy upon this issue must yield to a healthier, more professional response to better manage the prison population, and create a safer institutional environment for incarceration.

Sexual victimization of male inmates in incarcerated settings is a phenomena which is popularized in the media, in anecdotal accounts of prison life, and by correctional/criminal justice professionals. Certainly a "malignancy" which in part is the result of the prison experience, it may also represent a wound waiting to erupt in both the individual victim of such events, and within the institutions in which they occur. In the last twenty (20) years, there has been attention to systematically identifying this phenomen, and to suggesting changes in both clinical intervention strategies as well as prison management policies. Despite these efforts, there continues to abound much misunderstanding, under-reporting, continued victimization and mismanagement within prison institutions. Such conditions portend serious consequences for the victim inmate, prison staff and administration, and society as a whole.

Epidemiology of Sexual Victimization of Males in Prison

Systematic study of sexual victimization in prison settings has taken on increased importance among both psychological and criminal justice professionals. Ground breaking work was developed by a number of individuals, including Fuller (1977), Lockwood (1978, 1980), Moss, Hosford and Anderson (1979), Nacci and Kane (1982, 1984) and Cotton and Groth (1982, 1984). Despite this wealth of research, Cotton and Groth (1984) note that "the actual extent of male sexual assault in jails and prisons remains unknown." Estimates vary from a very small amount to the staggering assertion (Donaldson, 1984) that eighteen (18) adult males are raped every minute. In order to assist in documenting the variability of the data presently available, <u>Table I</u> outlines an extensive literature search in the last twenty (20) years regarding this matter.

TABLE I
EPIDEMIOLOGY OF SEXUAL VICTIMIZATION OF MALES IN PRISON

AUTHOR(S)	YEAR	SETTING	RATE OF YICTIMIZATION	
4. J. Davis	1968	Prison (Philadelphia)	●2,000 assault/1,500 victims ●0ver 26 month period ●1,000 appox. annually	
D. Lockwood	1978	State Prison (New York State)	∞28% of prisoners targets of sexual aggression at least one time	
C. S. Moss R. Hosford & W. Anderson	1979	Federal Prisons	●12/1,100 in 12 months ●0.5% - 3.0% annually	
D. Lockwood	1980	State Prison (New York State)	●At least two out of ten inmates are sexual assault targets	
P. Nacci & T. Kane	1982	Federal Prisons	●9.0% targets in prison ●2.0% targets in federal institution ●0.6% victims in federal prison ●0.3% raped in federal institution	
C. Bartollas & C. Sieverdes	1983	Juvenile Corrections (Southeastern U.S.)	●9.1% of residents reported sexual victimization	
5. Donaldson	1984	State and Local facilities	●18 adult males raped every minute	
T. Pierson & D. Spieker	1988	State Prison (Missouri)	●118 forcible sexual misconduct violations committed by 0.9% of prison population	
M. Forst, J. Fagen & T.S. Vivona	1989	Juveniles in adult prisons and juvenile institutions	Sexual assault was five (5) times more likely among youth in prison than training schools	

As we examine this data, how can we interpret its significance? Does it accurately portray the nature of the problem? Or, like much data regarding crime victimization, is the reported incidence only a shadow of the reality (Sommer, 1975)? One needs to examine this further, in light especially of the ethic of prison.

National incidence data is generally unavailable. The <u>Uniform Crime Reports</u>, compiled by the Federal Bureau of Investigation from state-wide reports to local/state police departments does not include any specific reference/mention of this phenomenon. In a recent review of violence in prison, <u>Corrections Compendium</u> (Herrick, 1989) does not specifically identify inmate rape/sexual assault. The single biggest violence-related problems, reported by at least sixteen (16) states, was "inmate on inmate assaults", which by definition includes sexual assault. Yet, no conclusive data exist.

At the state level, similar difficulties are encountered. For example, the Massachusetts Department of Correction does not maintain any separate data regarding inmate assaults (Holt, 1990), nor does its health services contracted agency, Goldberg Medical Associates. The best "guesstimate" of male sexual victimization in Massachusetts incarcerated settings was provided by Veronica Ryeback (1990), Director of the Rape Crisis Intervention Program at the Beth Israel Hospital, who indicated that her unit served twenty-five (25) male rape victims in 1989, many of whom were presented from the County Houses of Correction and the Massachusetts Department of Correction.

This situation is further compounded by the fact that many anecdotal reports abound about the frequency of sexual victimization. In a decision against the Texas Department of Corrections, federal Judge William W. Justice noted that brutalization

of inmates by other inmates, including forced coercive sexual assault was often "routine". [Ruiz v. Estelle, (1980)]. Similarly, in a <u>Pulitzer Prize</u> winning series about "Rape in the County Jail" for <u>The Washington Post</u>, Tofani (1982) noted that despite an official figure of less than ten (10) rapes per year among male inmates, on-the-record interviews with 10 guards, 60 inmates and one jail medical worker noted that there were "approximately a dozen incidents a week in the Prince George's County Detention Center".

Lerner (1984) identifies that <u>Corrections Magazine</u>, in a court-ordered investigation of conditions in one Florida prison in 1980, found that "assaults, rapes, robberies, shootings and stabbings were commomplace even in high-confinement, lock down areas". So prevalent was the issue of sexual assault that one correction officer quoted in a report to a state legislator said that a young inmate's chances of avoiding rape were "almost zero...He'll get raped within the first twenty-four to forty-eight hours. That's almost standard" (Lerner, 1984).

Given the disparity of both the perception and reporting of male sexual victimization in incarcerated settings, one must search deeper into the root of the problem. One of the earliest accounts of sexual behavior in prison was noted by J.F. Fishman (1934), a one-time Inspector of Prison. West (1977) poignantly describes the prison subculture, and notes Fishman's charge that prison guards "turn a blind eye to sexual abuses".

Philadelphia District Attorney Allan Davis (1968) detailed the reality of prison sexual assault. In interviewing over 3,000 prisoners and 500 staff, numerous accounts were reported of brutal gang rapes and victimization of young, inexperienced inmates. Of the estimated 1,000 assaults which took place each year,

only about 3 percent were ever reported, due to a variety of conditions. Scacco (1982) notes that sexual violence abounds in almost all institutions - prisons, training schools - where staff are unable/unwilling to adequately protect or help their inmates. Cotton and Groth (1984) further support the argument that correctional facilities are high risk settings for male rape. They indicate that any "available statistics must be regarded as very conservative at best since discovery and documentation of this behavior are compromised by the nature of prison conditions, inmate codes and subculture, and staff attitudes. (Cotton and Groth, 1984).

Jails and Prison: A Closed Society of Fear, Humiliation and Violence

Jails and prisons are closed, single sex societies in which the "outside world" is but a glimmer of reality in contrast to "life inside the walls". The social stratification of the prison subculture has received much attention by a number of authors (Sykes, 1958; Weiss and Friar, 1974; Sommers, 1976; Von Hirsh, 1976; Fuller and Orsagh, 1977). As a society isolated from the larger community, there exists a pattern of behavior, a hierarchy of players, as well as its own "language", aptly described by Amore and Wolfe (1976). In order to understand the dilemma of identifying the incidence of sexual victimization, one must examine the nature of prison itself.

The prison hierarchy, or "pecking order", reflects the distorted norms, values and mores of the offender. It is a world of "rats", "fags", "punks", "skinners" and "diddlers". Interestingly, while the terms may have changed somewhat over the decades, prison slang defines sexual habits and inmate status simultaneously, using homosexuality "as a means of placing individuals within the inmate caste system"

(West, 1977). <u>Table II</u> presents a proposed inmate "pecking order" (hierarchy) with the prison term and approximate definition provided.

TABLE II

PROPOSED INMATE HIERARCHY: TERMS AND THEIR MEANINGS IN THE PRISON SUBCULTURE (Modified from the work of G. Sykes (1958), Amore and Wolfe (1975), West (1977), Wooden and Parker (1982) and Cotton and Groth (1984).}

GENERAL CH	HARACTERISTICS	TERM	DEFINITION
the prison "	in status through 💢 🤻	<u>"Stand Up Guy/Con"</u>	loyal inmate who functions well under very difficult/ hazardous circumstances
rear 7 memm	uation.	<u>"Gorilla"</u>	person who takes what he wants by force
sexual tensi	al men who relieve on by assuming sexual role with	<u>"Pitcher"</u>	person who takes the masculine role in sexual victimization; would engage in the role of the aggressor
		<u>"Daddu"</u>	person who courts, befriends, or patronizes weaker, inexperienced inmates into sexual gratification.
in some case	al men (and bisexual es) forced to assume ssive/submissive role	. \{ \frac{"Kid"}{}	the "sex slave" who submits by providing sexual favors, often in reward for protection
		("Punk"	person who submits to sexual acts, after an initial resistance, which finally gives way to force; considered a weakling, someone who can't "do his time"; may also relate to an "informer".
Homosexual declare thei behavior af	ir feminity in	<u>"Faq"</u>	man who is a "natural homosexual"; a man who engages in homosexuality because he "likes it"; passive homosexual; also known as a "girl".
		<u>"ūueen"</u>	homosexual (or Transexual)males who adopt stereotype effeminate mannerisms and play a predominate submissive role.

TABLE II CONTINUED

inmates who have abused their power in sexual conquest of defenseless women & children <u>"Skinner"</u>

sex offender/rapist

Inmates without loyalty to the prison "code" and the inmate "code".

<u>"Diddler"</u>

child molester

"Rat"

person who betrays inmates in general, by informing the authorities, or who "gives up" information.

"P.C."

person who must reside in Protective Custody environment, as a result of victimization, type of crime (sex crime), pre-prison occupation (police officer) or informing (being a "rat"). It must be noted that this proposed hierarchy is only an attempt to identify the complex stratification of the prison social system.

These sexual scripts help to define an inmate's orientation within a society which values aggression, power, loyalty - many of the attributes of traditional "masculinity" in society. These characteristic patterns also help to define the treatment which an inmate is likely to receive from other inmates and correction officers. Being a closed society, the roles may shift due to changes in inmate behavior or knowledge about a particular inmate.

Interestingly, this stratification of the prison subculture within the context of sexual roles appears to have cross-validation. Similar constructs have been identified in prison setting in India (Srivastava, 1974), Australia (Richmond, 1978; Prince, 1984), Holland (Swinnenm 1983), Canada (Parizeau, 1984) and France (Claude, 1985). Such information may be particularly helpful in helping prison administration and clinicians in defining and managing the prison ecosystem/environment.

Parker (1978) notes that "homosexuality is a prominent phenomenon in our correctional system". Additional evidence has been presented which demonstrates that this may be a situational or transitional experience for most men, reflecting a manner of releasing sexual tension and physical need (Pierce, 1973; Ibrahim, 1974; Climent et al., 1977; French, 1979; Money and Bohmer, 1980; Popper, 1981; Aldridge, 1983). It appears that most inmates, as noted by Richmond (1978), "rewrite" their conceptualization of homosexual behavior into the acceptable "masculine" role, which is transient, highly physical and unemotional, retaining power and status, and a "feminine" role, which accentuates cowardice, weakness and submission. Estimates of prison homosexuality have been attempted by several researchers (Sagarin, 1976;

Popper, 1981), and it have been noted that there may be approximately 25,000 males presently in such institutions whose initial homosexual experience took place (or will take place) during incarceration.

Since it is difficult to separate social status and sexual behavior in prison (as they are intertwined) the responses of victims vary. These responses reflect the size, physical stature, charisma, and social network of the inmate. Cotton and Groth (1984) note that coerced sex in prisons creates a "no-win" situation: inmates will choose a role as victim or aggressor. Tofani (1982), in describing the inner life of the Prince George's County Detention Center, outlines the profile of Francis Harper, a convicted armed robber who "decided to teach a lesson to the inmate who switched the television channel in the county jail" by raping him. Harper contended that rape is the best way for an inmate to command fear and respect among other inmates commenting that "I was aggressive because I was afraid".

Can such anecdotal accounts of male inmate sexual assaults be valid? A number of researchers support this view. Newman (1974) argues that self esteem and level of violence/aggression are central to the criminal's view of the self. Lockwood (1978/1980) states that targets of sexual aggression often carry out violence, which is supported by peers and staff, as a means of demonstrating that they are "tough", or as a means of resisting further attack. Scacco (1975/1982) documents the rampant manifestations of this behavior, while Cotton and Groth (1982/1984) argue that inmate rape is not primarily sexually motivated, but constitutes sexual expression of aggression which may be retaliatory, compensatory and/or erotic. They further state that the behavior is framed within the context of the two primary sources of male identity - sexuality and aggression - which are compromised for victims, and which may, as a result, further exacerbate the trauma experienced by victims.

Several other investigators, notably Wooden and Parker (1982) and Nacci and Kane (1982, 1984), confirm the aggression of victims and the victim/assaulter transition as a means of saving "face" within the closed community of prison. Prince (1984) also notes the manifestation of "ritualized rapes" as a punishment for contravention of the inmate code of behavior.

Juvenile offenders face greater risks, as they attempt to survive as new "fish" in the murky waters of prison life. Scacco (1975, 1982), Lockwood (1978, 1980), Nacci and Kane (1982, 1984), Cotton and Groth (1983, 1984) all note this fact with grave concern. Bartollas and Sierverdes (1983) state that one third of sexual assault victims exploit other residents, often as a means of earning respectability and avoid the bottom of the "pecking order" by becoming aggressive toward weaker peers. In fact, the same researchers noted above have identified a prototype victim, characteristically described as light, young, white, non-violent, tall and slender. Of even greater concern is the racial characteristic of the offender which is often drawn along clear lines (Toch, 1977; Carroll, 1977; Moss et al., 1979) forcing gang/group membership and gang sexual violence as a mechanism to demonstrate the inmate's "machismo".

There are even more profound implications for juvenile offenders in adult incarcerated settings which portend concern for society. West (1977) notes that we do not yet have an accurate perspective of the impact of prison homosexual violence upon subsequent sexual behavior patterns, particularly in light of the "yet unsettled behavior patterns" of inmates which may fluctuate as a result of their imprisonment. Nacci and Kane (1982) state that the inmate who commits a crime as a youth and is diverted rather than sent to a training/reform school has a greater chance of abstaining from prison sex as an adult. Researchers, notably Thomas et

al. (1983) and Forst et al. (1989), also note that juveniles in adult prisons appear to suffer increased danger of sexual/physical violence.

One final note of concern. Prisons and incarcerated institutions represent the ultimate of control, helplessness and hopelessness. Cooper (1974) states that depression is the normal rather than abnormal state in prison life, reinforcing the inner feelings of inmate loss of control over their lives. Clearly, such lack of control may fester into violence waiting to erupt, either during the prison experience, or subsequent to release.

Clinical Implications of Treating Male Sexual Assault Victims

While there has been etablished a sound, methodological protocol in treatment of female sexual assault victims, are there additional concerns which must be considered for male victims of sexual assault? A number of investigators have explored this in detail, using data from prison and other sources. Table III outlines the key research in specifically treating male sexual assault victims.

TABLE III SUMMARY OF KEY RESEACH IN TREATING MALE VICTIMS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

AUTHOR(S)	YEAR	SETTING	MAJOR FINDINGS
D. Lockwood	1978 1980	State prison (New York) State prison (New York)	●Effects on victims of sexual assault quite severe, including fear, anxiety, suicidal thoughts, social disruption and attitudinal change. Victims manifest higher rates or psychological disturbance and suicidal ideation. Since this study focused on prison settings, it noted victims major concerns of fear of stigma/revictimization.
A. Kaufman et al.	1980	County Hospital emergency room	Male victims were more likely to have sustained more physical trauma, more likely to have been a victim of multiple assaults from multiple assailants, and more likely to have been held captive longer. Great reluctance in reporting was noted, and denial played a key role in emotional control. Sensitivity of clinician to "hidden trauma" encouraged in clinician
A. N. Groth & A. W. Burgess	1980	Forensic mental health facilities and correctional institutions	Similarities and difference between male and female rape victims were noted. Most male victims, in addition to both the short term crisis reactions of any victim, experienced concerns about their masculinity, fears about reprisal, reports a loss of status in the prison community, and feared/experienced further victim- ization.

C. L. Anderson	1981	General population and institutions	•States that the phenomenon is virtually ignored in the literature. Male victims suffer the "rape trauma syndrome" as described for female victims, but also experience various forms of stigmatization and secondary trauma. Three (3) phases of the victim experience are provided. Avoidance of the subject itself creates a negative environment for victims.
A. Scacco (editor)	1982	Prisons, training schools and mental hospitals	■Identifies the pervasiveness of male rape, noting the reality that "young rape old, blacks rape whites, whites rape blacks, juveniles rape juveniles, men rape man and boys". Identifies the enhancing of identity through victimization of others, with the ability to rape as the ultimate test of one's strength.
D. Cotton & A. N. Groth	1982	Prison Populations	■In addition to the trauma experienced by the male victim, which is similar to the female victim of sexual assault, the experience may be more devastating, since the victim is devalued in regard to the two (2) primary sources of his male identity: sexuality and aggression. In addition, the victim often continues to reside in the same institution as the offender.
D. Cotton & A. N. Groth	1984	Correctional settings	●In futher expanding upon their earlier work (1982), the authors note that victims have no good options in responding to sexual attacks. If they fight back, they risk greater physical injury. If they submit, they may be labeled as vulnerable. If they go into protective segregation, they cut themselves off from many inmate services.

D. Calderwood	1987	General population	
G. Mezey	1989	Survey of 22 victims	The immediate and long-term responses were very similar to those described by female victims of rape.

The consistent themes noted in each of these studies demonstrates the complexities of treating the male sexual assault victim. Not only does the terror, trauma and victimization impact upon the victim, but the additional components of one's identity and sense of self must be considered. Unfortunately, the negative consequences are compromised in and outside prison. For incarcerated male victims, there is an increase of fear, loss of status and feminization, including the threat of continued revictimization. Even for non-incarcerated males, the response by the intervening social systems (hospitals, police, courts, mental health agencies) may re-enforce the victim's negative self perception and may encourage victims not to report their trauma.

Interestingly, in studies of sexual molestation of men by women (Sarrel and Masters, 1982; Masters, 1986), the post-trauma reaction affected both the victim's sexual function and psychological state. In fact, Masters (1986) reports that more difficulties were encountered in returning to each man his sense of personal dignity and confidence in his masculinity.

Consequently, clinical intervention strategies must be developed to include not only the established protocol for all rape victims (such as those established by Ellis, 1983 and Holmes and St. Lawrence, 1983) but also consideration of the unique psycho-social-sexual crisis which appears to be faced by male victims of sexual assault.

Administrative Response to Sexual Assault of Male Victims: Too Little, Too Late?

Cotton and Groth (1984), in outlining the dilemma of male sexual assault of inmates remark that

Although a number of researchers have addressed this issue, it continues to remain a subject more of academic interest than of practical concern.

Yet inmate sexual assault is a serious problem that constitutes a major undercurrent in incidents of institutional violence, a problem that can only escalate as correctional institutions become more crowded.

Is the evidence clear and convincing regarding the potential danger of sexual assault of male inmates? A number of researchers offer important clues to this debate. Sylvester et al. (1977) notes that homosexual activity was the leading motive for inmate homicides in American prisons. Toch (1977) also confirms prison homosexuality as a motivating factor in prison violence. Like its counterpart in heterosexual communities, feelings of rejection, jealousy and refusals appear to play a significant role in generating violent episodes.

Herrick (1989) analyzed prison violence for <u>Corrections Compendium</u>, noting a decline in the total number of violent deaths and inmates killed by other inmates, in the last five (5) years (1988 vs. 1984). However, as previously identified, at least sixteen (16) states noted "inmate on inmate assaults". Of striking importance is the experience of the state of Arkansas, which reported the highest number of assaults on staff by inmates resulting in injury and non-injury of all the states in the United States (1,113 in 1988). Arkansas identified homosexuality as the single biggest cause of inmate violence.

Nacci and Kane (1982,1984). who have contributed greatly to our understanding of male inmate sexual victimization in federal institutions, were initially charged with the task of examining the phenomenon following violence at the United States Penitentiary in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania when, in a 26 month period (ending 1979) there were eight (8) inmate murders and numerous inmate-on-inmate assaults referred to the

Federal Bureau of Investigation. Of the eight (8) homicides noted, five (5) were linked to sexual motivation, including sex pressuring, unrequited love and jealousy. Additionally, a quarter of the major assaults reported were linked to inmate homosexual activity (Nacci and Kane, 1982).

Clearly, the area of male sexual victimization in incarcerated settings represents a major security concern in most prison institutions. It represented such a major breach of safety that it caused at least one judge, Justice Robert Gardner (1975) of the Court of Appeal, fourth district, Southern California, to rule that conditions can get so bad that the prisoner has a human right to leave, rather than submit to rape, but he must do "everything possible to defend himself against the attack". This case resulted in a spirited debate in legal circles about the viability of this defense (Schermer, 1977), but it served to document the importance of this issue.

Cotton and Groth (1984) further indicate the varieties of institutional responses vis a vis sexual assault of male inmates in incarcerated settings. They correctly identify the three (3) primary areas of responsibility in dealing with sexual assault: a) prevention; b) intervention and c) prosecution. Increasingly, correctional institutions are being held liable for punitive damages for failure to provide the adequate care, custody and control of inmates under their supervision. Zeringer (1972, 1977) notes such concerns, while Barbash (1983) reported on the United States Supreme Court case, Smith v. Wade, which ruled that officials are subject to punitive damages not only when they purposely expose an inmate to an assault - but also when they act with indifference or with recklessness in a way that results in an assault." The High Court ruled in a 5-to-4 decision that Daniel R.

Wade, an inmate at the Algoa Reformatory in Missouri had been "harrassed, beat and sexually assaulted" by two other inmates, and that prison guard William H. Smith "knew or should have known" that an assault was likely under the circumstances. The Supreme Court upheld the 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals assessment of \$25,000 in compensatory damages and \$5,000 in punitive damages against Smith.

In the environment known as the "neglected asylum" (Briar, 1983), the "rule of the cruel" (Lerner, 1984) pervades prison institutional life. The results for the victim who is incarcerated can include suicide and/or substance abuse (Akers et al., 1974) as a coping mechanism. Rown and Hayes (1988) identify victims of homosexual rape at high risk of suicide in incarcerated settings. Suicidal behavior among inmates represents a major problem in prisons/jails. Saliva et al. (1989) identify the rate of 40 suicides per hundred thousand male inmates per year (1979 - 1987) in the Maryland State Prison System, which is substantially higher than the rate in the general population in Maryland (22 suicides per hundred thousand people per year) notes that at least 400 people each year kill themselves in the nation's jails and detention centers. Herrick (1989) notes that between 110 and 136 inmates have committed suicide in prison annually (4984-4989). While there is no specific indication, as to the rationale for these suicides, it is reasonable to assume that in at least some of these cases, the suicide was prompted by an inability to escape from the pain, humiliation and degradation of sexual assault in prison.

In addition to the potential of suicide, male sexual victimization is dangerous from a purely public health perspective. The issue of HIV infection and AIDS is an area of grave concern among all criminal justice professionals - male sexual victimization represents a likely source of infection, among an already "at-risk" group: intravenous drug users, promiscuous individuals and men who engage in homosexual behavior. Glaser et al. (1989) further note the increasing risk among

rape victims, including male rape victims, for the acquisition of many sexually transmitted conditions, (Neisseria gonorrhoeae, Chlamydia trachomatis, herpes simplex virus, human papillomavirus, Treponema pallidum) as well as hepatitis B, the acquired immunodeficiency syndrome and other infections prevalent among homosexual men.

Strategies for Change: Can Prisons Respond Affirmatively to Handling This Issue?

As has been demonstrated, the issue of male sexual vicitmization has grave implications for the victim of such assaults, for prison staff, institutions and for society as a whole. If, in fact, an unknown percentage of male inmates are exposed to violent, brutal victimization while incarcerated, is it not reasonable to assume that for some of these individuals, they will leave prison more embittered, angry and violent? If the ethic of prison has created a "victimize or be victimized" mentality, and a hierarchy of, as one inmate client has characterized, "the weak victimizing the weaker", have we not exacerbated the deleterious effects of prison institutionalization potentially creating a genre of "time bombs" waiting to explode?

Such questions need to be asked. It is curious that despite the large amount of attention which has been brought to bear on this issue, most prison settings have not responded with a practical protocol, using the model developed by Cotton and Groth (1984). In fact, the National Institute of Corrections was only able to identify one (1) prison protocol, the San Francisco <u>Jail Protocol for Victims of Sexual Assault</u> (1981), which had been developed by D. J. Cotton with a grant from NIMH's National Center for the Control and Prevention of Rape, (October 1978), and which served as the model for the work of Cotton and Groth (1982, 1984).

In addressing the issue of strategies, the three (3) tier model of Cotton and Groth (1984) provide a framework for prison administrators. In Prevention, a key emphasis has to be on providing a vehicle for staff awareness and responsiveness of the problem. Nacci and Kane (1982) accurately portray correctional officers as the "primary agents of influence" on prisoner behavior. They further argue that many correctional officers make the assumption that homosexuality/bisexuality are consensual in all cases, which, as has been demonstrated, is an incorrect assumption. One of the ways to ensure protection is to give officers a greater understanding of the outcomes of sexual assault, in particular its relationship to inmate violence and assaults on staff. By providing the Motivation to Protect Inmates, [as elucidated by Nacci and Kane (1982)] correctional staff may be in a better position to impact upon such behavior.

Additional preventative strategies have been identified by Cotton and Groth (1984), including:

a) profiling characteristics of victims and offenders;

b) screening of "vulnerable" inmates;

 c) housing and classifying inmates in accordance with institutional experience, as first time and/ or non-aggressive inmates as a means of separating.

d) provide adequate surveillance of institutional blind spots, including areas which may be prone toward victimization (holding cells, shower rooms, stairways).

<u>Intervention</u> includes a variety of strategies to be implemented by the prison staff and administration, including decisions regarding the inmate victim; placement

of the inmate offender; a protocol for meeting the medical, psychological, legal, social and protective needs of the inmate victim in a timely manner; and maintaining security of the institution needs to be developed in each correctional institution.

Because of the peculiar nature of prison, protection afforded to inmates usually takes the form of protective custody ("P.C"), which, by definition of the inmate caste system, further alienates and stigmatizes the inmate with both staff and inmate alike. One prison administrator (Thompson, 1990) aptly notes that few options exist for protecting inmate victims outside of protective custody. In face, the problem with P.C. beds is that the more beds which are available, the more likely such places are to filled. The American Correctional Association (1983) has examined the issue of Protective Custody in Adult Correctional Facilities, and concluded that at least seven percent (7%) of adult inmates are housed in protective custody units for "protection - unspecified", of which some clearly include sexual victimization. The same analysis reported that correctional staff estimated that at least sixteen percent (16%) of the protective custody inmates were housed in such facilities as "protection from sexual assault".

Protective custody may further victimize inmate victims by limiting access to services, isolating the inmate from the normal "flow" of operations and potentially even exposing the inmate victim to the immate offender. (Since there is no distinction of reason, many institutional protective custody units also serve as the punitive environment for inmates who have violated institutional disciplinary policy).

FIGURE I

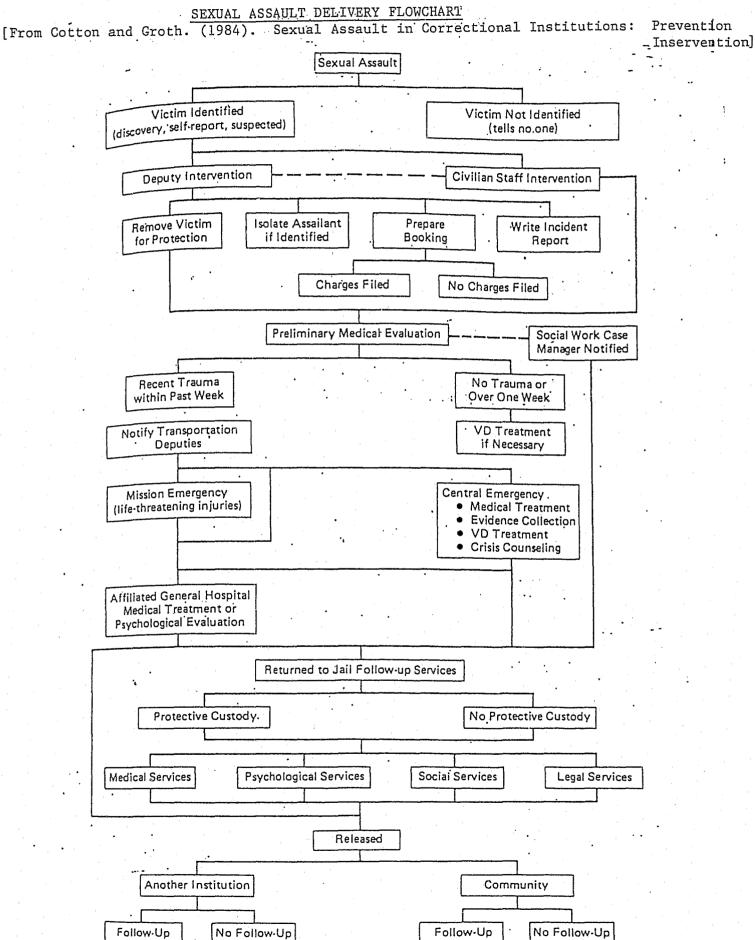


Figure I, taken directly from the work of Cotton and Groth (1984), provides a systematic "flow chart" of possible intervention and outcomes for inmate victims. Such a process makes intervention a therapeutic endeavor, rather than a secondary victimization, which has often been encountered by sexually assaulted inmates.

One final strategy within the context of Intervention must include the mandatory reporting of such behavior when it is identified/implied. At the present time, it is entirely possible (perhaps likely) that many inmates who are assaulted will endure the continued humiliation/violation without any disclosure. This is, as noted by many researchers, supported by the institutional environment and staff who often penalize inmate victims when they come forward with such complaints. A mechanism to reduce this tendency is perhaps to adopt policies such as those promulgated by the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health (1984). 104 CMR 24.00(ff) indicates that the Department of Mental Health shall conduct investigations and bring matters to a resolution in four circumstances: 1) medicolegal death of a DMH client; 2) whenever there is alleged to have occurred an incident which is dangerous, illegal, or inhumane; 3) whenever there is alleged to exist a condition which is dangerous, illegal or inhumane; and 4) in any other case where an investigation would be in the public interest, as determined by the person in charge or by the Commissioner or his designee. As noted by Tink (1990), such a policy eliminates the ethic of violation of disclosure ("ratting" in prison jargon), and mandates staff to respond affirmatively and unilaterally, rather than the present haphazard approach manifest in many correctional settings.

The final area noted by Cotton and Groth (1984) is the area of <u>Prosecution</u>. In some respects, while this is the mechanism to ensure compliance and deter potential offenders, it is often the most difficult to achieve in a prison setting. Mechanisms exist to refer to the District Attorney/prosecutor assaults and other violations of law which occur within correctional institutions. An offender who victimizes another inmate may face not only institutional disciplinary proceedings, but also criminal prosecution, with the potential of increased sentencing. Such cases, however, are difficult to prosecute in part due to the nature of the prison subculture.

Prison staff and administration must develop protocols which enhance the viability of criminal prosecution. Evidence collection and preservation, both testimonial and physical, must conform to legal standards of chain of custody, timeliness of reporting, and ethical/legal practice. If intervention in sexual assault cases is not timely, it is likely that much physical evidence may be distorted/lost as a result.

Additionally, the consequence in loss of esteem and risk of alienation makes criminal prosecution even more unlikely. Discussions held with the Directors of the Sexual Assault Units for two (2) prominent Massachusetts District Attorneys (Fallon, 1990; Nigreli, 1990) revealed that few cases, although referred for prosecution, ever go to trial. The time involved in prosecution (which can be lengthily in a capital case), the risk of compromise/further victimization or stigmatization of the inmate victim in other correctional settings, and the general lack of credibility of inmate witnesses with the general public may be factors in this process.

Summary and Recommendations

The problem of sexual assault of male inmates in incarcerated settings is a serious scourge and indictment of the American criminal justice system. The consequences of this phenomena are complex and varied. For the inmate victim, there is humiliation, degradation, and potential revictimization in a system that often does not respond affirmatively to such assaults. For the correctional environment itself, the phenomena has been undoubtedly linked to prison violence, and resultant injury/death to inmates and staff. For society, the notion of an inmate victim returning to the community embittered and broken, angry and full of rage portends even greater risk of creating more victims of sexual aggression.

Tom Cahill (1990) provides support and self-help to the countless victims of inmate sexual violence. He contends that it is only with recognition, attention and intervention that we can avoid the label of the "American Gulag". Although there has been considerable attention devoted to the topic, many correctional institutions at the still do not have meaningful strategies to deal with such circumstances. In light of this fact, prisons/jails/correctional institutions at the local/state/federal level should consider the following recommendations:

- Ascertain in a scientifically valid and accurate manner the incidence of prison sexual violence, utilizing not only "official" reporting, but also inmate/victim surveys, staff/officer interviews, and direct observation.
- Establish and implement a comprehensive crisis-intervention protocol for inmate victims, patterned after the Cotton and Groth (1984) model, with clear, definitive resources within the institution and accessible to inmate victims.

- Provide on-going training and attitudinal development for correctional staff, in an effort to instruct staff in the potential dangers of such phenomena, as well as encourage a more professional and humane response to inmate victims.
- 4. Provide adequate long term strategies for inmate victims, especially younger inmates, who may be deleteriously impacted by such victimization and may require long-term, comprehensive treatment to provide healing/reintegration.
- Mandate reporting of any incident of sexual assault, particularly as a means
 of determing potential offenders, and ensuring compliance of such a policy
 through all correctional staff.
- Provide a more efficient, timely and swifter response toward prosecution of such offenses, as well as general informing of the public at large of this insidious problem.

No complex problem will be ameliorated by simple solutions. There are no panaceas for us to consider. We must, however, confront this issue openly and directly, in an effort to mange the potential aftermath of such victimization. Interestingly, Justice William J. Brennan, who recently retired form 33 years on the United States Supreme Court, may have aptly stated the dilemma for inmates in a little-noted case reported recently by <u>Associated Press</u> (1990). In the 1986-1987 term, Justice Brennan wrote a dissenting opinion on prison inmates which may typify this present crisis:

"Prisoners are persons whom most of us would rather not think about...
It is easy to think of prisoners as members of a separate netherworld...
Nothing can change the fact, however, that the society these prisoners inhabit is our own."

Society may chose to continue to ignore this dilemma. It may chose to even consider it a natural consequence of having violated society's norms and mores. Yet, in the end, society's failure to redress the injustice of inmate sexual assault may further victimize a culture struggling to maintain order and compassion in an ever changing world.

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