

Abstract

This study examined the relations between childhood sexual abuse (CSA) and later psychological and social adjustment in a female university sample. 399 Chinese adults were recruited from 6 universities and 1 tertiary institution in Hong Kong. Subjects have completed the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire (CTQ), the Chinese Personality Assessment Inventory-2 (CPAI-2), the Trusting Behavior Scale (TBS) and the Miller Social Intimacy Scale (MSIS). Results corroborated the hypotheses that CSA survivors had higher levels of anxiety, depression and somatization and experienced a lower level of intimacy in coupling relationships than did subjects without a history of CSA. No significant differences in interpersonal trust were found between sexually abused and non-abused subjects. Furthermore, a number of subjects reported having experienced emotional and physical maltreatment and the inter-correlation among sexual abuse, physical maltreatment and emotional maltreatment was very high. No strong additional predictive power of sexual abuse could be found on the mental and social functioning being measured except depression over and above that predicted by physical and emotional maltreatment. The implications, limitations and suggestions for further studies were discussed.