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## Sexual abuse and the individual: An integrative approach to treat adult survivors

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Child sexual abuse (CSA) is a universal problem, and its prevalence varies across cultures and nations. Research suggests that India has the world's largest number of CSA cases with one in every 10 children being sexually abused. Despite its magnitude, CSA continues to be a hidden issue in India today. People remain silent due to societal norms, social stigma, communication gaps between parents and children and lack of trust towards government and health care professionals. CSA can affect adult developmental outcomes and alters cognitive and emotional orientation by causing distortions in one's self-concept especially towards trust and intimacy. The long-term consequences span over mental health, psychological wellbeing, sexual risk-taking and physical health. Feelings of guilt, shame and blame are disclosed collectively with symptoms reflecting depression, anxiety, PTSD and eating disorders. Despite its prevalence, most research is restricted and illustrates CSA's effect on adult mental and physical health. The emphasis on the therapeutic paradigms and its applicability in clinical practice remains limited. This presentation will highlight this gap in existing research globally and specifically within the Indian context. It will examine the inclusion of variables such as gender differences, severity of abuse, timing and response to disclosure, culture, class and education. Existing literature has not studied these variables collectively, which limits and inhibits the complex nature of this problem. However, drawing from this literature as well as my clinical experience, an integrative therapeutic approach will be proposed centred around the individuality and sensitivity required in addressing this multifaceted problem. Previous efforts of existing therapeutic models within this population will be discussed and future directions for research will be suggested. These suggestions can further be used to improve clinical practice including assessment, treatment and professional training not only in India but also globally.

### Recent Publications

1. Aaron M (2012) The pathways of problematic sexual behavior: a literature review of factors affecting adult sexual behavior in survivors of childhood sexual abuse. *Sexual Addiction and Compulsivity*. 19(3):199-218.
2. Chen L P et al. (2010) Sexual abuse and lifetime diagnosis of psychiatric disorders: systematic review and meta-analysis. *Mayo Clinic Proceedings*. 85(7):618-629.
3. Chouliara Z et al. (2010) Talking therapy services for adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse in Scotland: perspectives of service users and professionals. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*. 20(2):128-156.
4. Easton S D (2013) Disclosure of Child Sexual Abuse Among Adult Male Survivors. *Clinical Social Work Journal*. 41(4):344-355.
5. Fergusson D M et al. (2013). Childhood sexual abuse and adult developmental outcomes: findings from a 30-year longitudinal study in New Zealand. *Child Abuse and Neglect*. 37 (9):664-674.

### Biography

Ishita Pateria completed her MSc in Mental Health - Psychological Therapies from Queen Mary University, London, UK in 2012 followed by her second MSc in Counselling Psychology from City University, London in 2016. Previously, she had worked at Jaslok Hospital, Mumbai and Promis Clinics, Each Counselling and NHS in London. She has been involved in the area of Mental Health for over 10 years and has gained experience in diverse clinical settings and populations with complex mental and emotional needs, i.e. depression, anxiety, panic disorders, phobia, stress management, comorbid mental health, addictions, trauma, abuse, PTSD, eating disorders, relationship issues, bereavement, infertility, oncology, self-esteem, etc. She is the Founder of State of Mind - The Emotional Wellness Centre in Mumbai and provides therapeutic care to individuals, couples and families through an integrative approach based on the client's needs. She also consults at MPower - Mind Matters and Doctor Mashru's Mumbai Clinic in Mumbai.

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