

Women's history of sexual abuse, their sexuality, and sexual self-schemas

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Abstrak

In this study, the authors assessed 48 female survivors of child sexual abuse (CSA) and 71 female control participants using measures of adult sexual function, psychological function (i.e., depression and anxiety), and sexual self-schemas. The primary purpose of this study was to examine whether differences existed between women with and without a history of CSA in the way that they viewed themselves as a sexual person and, if so, whether such differences mediated the link between early unwanted sexual experiences and later adult sexuality. CSA survivors were found to view themselves as less romantic and passionate than women who were not abused. In particular, CSA survivors showed an inverse relationship between romantic/passionate sexual self-schemas and negative sexual affect during sexual arousal. The relationship between CSA and negative sexual affect was independent from symptoms of depression and anxiety, suggesting that the impact of CSA on sexual self-schemas may be independent from the impact that the abuse may have in other areas of the survivor's life.