



The 1 in 6 Statistic

Researchers have found that 1 in 6 men have experienced unwanted or abusive sexual experiences before age 16. And this is probably a low estimate, since it doesn't include non-contact experiences, which can also have lasting negative effects.

What the best research tells us:

- A 2005 study conducted by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, on San Diego Kaiser Permanente HMO members, reported that 16% of males were sexually abused by the age of 18.¹
- A 2003 national study of U.S. adults reported that 14.2% of men were sexually abused before the age of 18.²
- A 1998 study reviewing research on male childhood sexual abuse concluded that the problems is "common, under-reported, under-recognized, and under-treated."³
- A 1996 study of male university students in the Boston area reported that 18% of men were sexually abused before the age of 16.⁴
- A 1990 national study of U.S. adults reported that 16% of men were sexually abused before the age of 18.⁵

Why these statistics are probably underestimates:

- Males who have such experiences are less likely to disclose them than are females.⁶
- Only 16% of men with documented histories of sexual abuse (by social service agencies, which means they were very serious) considered themselves to have been sexually abused.⁷

Men who have had such experiences are at much greater risk for serious mental health problems than men who have not been abused, including:

- Symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder and depression.^{1, 2, 8}
- Alcoholism and drug abuse.^{1, 9}
- Suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts.^{1, 9}
- Problems in intimate relationships.^{1, 10}
- Underachievement at school and at work.^{1, 10}

Think about it, and about educating others

In summary, the 1 in 6 statistic is supported by solid scientific research, including a study conducted by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, and is likely an underestimate of the actual prevalence. Furthermore, this widespread problem contributes to many adult men's mental health, personal and work difficulties.

References*

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* There are many more studies than these. Our goal here is to summarize some key research published by respected scientists, in reputable journals, after the work was reviewed and approved by scientific peers.