

## RISK FACTORS OF JUVENILE SEX OFFENDER: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

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### ABSTRACT

Juvenile sex offenders are the highest cases of children facing law in Indonesia in 2018, which is as many as 530 cases. Children who commit sexual abused will have an impact on psychopathy that disrupts cognitive function and will risk recidivism which will increase the victims. Mapping the risk factors of child juvenile sex offender becomes an urgent matter in order to can be made appropriate prevention and resolution. Methode used systematic review with journal tracking through 2 database source, Pubmed and Scopus from January 2014 – January 2020. Authors used the PRISMA-P protocol in 2009 as guidelines and use the keywords “*risk factor*” AND “*juvenile sex offender*”. Risk factors for juvenile sex offending are caused by two factors, namely individual factors and family factors. Individual factor caused by experienced of being a victim of sexual abuse. In addition, there are risk markers namely children who have been paid for sex, consuming cigarettes, alcohol and drugs, truancy  $\geq 7$  times and exposure to pornography. Whereas family factors influence are parental neglect, parent conflict in the household, family history of violence both physically and sexually, parents who consume alcohol, and a low economy.

**Keywords:** *risk factor; juvenile sex offender; adolescent*

## INTRODUCTION

Violence namely the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation<sup>1</sup>. Sexual violence is sexual activity without agreement<sup>2</sup>. Sexual violence includes sexual and non-consensual sexual relations (sexual acts that do not involve contact, such as voyeurism), sexual harassment (including demands for sexual pleasure in return for work or school grades), forced sex in marriage and dating, rape by people foreign, systematic rape, forced prostitution and sexual trafficking, exploitation through social media, child marriage, and acts of violence against women's sexual integrity, including female genital mutilation and mandatory inspection for virginity. Sexual violence is influenced by all sexes, sexual orientation and age. Anyone can experience or commit sexual assault. Sexual violence is all unwanted sexual acts, experiments and comments using threats by anyone regardless of the relationship with the victim<sup>1,2,3,4</sup>. Globally, sexual violence is now recognized as an issue that needs attention. The severity of sexual violence is a result of the number of individuals who are victims and the level of damage they suffer from victimization<sup>5</sup>.

Population studies in Europe conducted by Abel, Osborn and Twig (1993) show that 50% - 80% of adults who commit sexual violence say that they first committed violence when they were teenagers<sup>6</sup>. In 2011, the National Center for Victims of Crime, Arlington showed 23% of sexual abuse was committed by children under the age of 18<sup>7</sup>. In Canada in 2012 also showed 30% of the number of cases of sexual abuse committed by children aged 12 to 17 years<sup>8</sup>. Whereas in Indonesia, based on the records of the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) 2018, cases of child complaints every year have increased from 2,170 cases (2011) to 4,885 cases (2018). Cases of children facing law (ABH) are the most cases in Indonesia, totaling 1,434 cases. The highest recorded cases of children facing

law are children as perpetrators of sexual violence, as many as 530 cases, while children as victims are 477 cases<sup>9</sup>. At another time, the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (Ministry of PPPA) launched the Result of National Survey on the Life Experience of Children and Adolescents (SNPHAR) 2018 that the most reported perpetrators of sexual violence, both contact and non-contact, were friends or peers (47% -73%) and around 12% - 29% who become perpetrators of sexual violence are their boyfriends<sup>10</sup>.

Children as perpetrators of sexual violence are often called juvenile sex offenders. Several studies have shown that children who commit sexual violence will have an impact on psychopathy and recidivism. Psychopathy is a mental disorder that causes dysfunction in thinking, understanding, and relating to other people. That causes a low level of empathy and care for the victim. Recidivism or the tendency to repeat violence becomes a frequent effect of some offenders unless they receive appropriate therapy. This tendency has the potential to increase the number of victims of sexual violence and will increase victimization. Whereas in the victimology perspective, children are one of the vulnerable groups that are obliged to get protection from the state. That is, children are in a position that has not been able to protect themselves both physically and psychologically, therefore the state is obliged to provide protection. Protection that must be given by the state is to ensure that children are free from practices of discrimination, exploitation and violence, including sexual violence. Every problem of sexual violence that occurs in children will cause complex problems (Jordan Institute for Family, 2002)<sup>11</sup>. However, studies that map the arguments why children commit sexual violence are still very minimal, so finding the root causes of children becoming perpetrators and how to resolve them are very necessary.

## METHODS

The method used in this research is systematic review, which is a type of literature review that uses systematic methods to critically evaluate research studies and synthesize findings qualitatively or quantitatively by identifying relevant journals in electronic databases using PRISMA-P (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis - Protocol 2009)<sup>12,13</sup>. The stages in this research consist of identifying research questions, developing research protocols, determining research databases, selecting relevant research results, extracting data, analyzing, and reporting results. Systematic review is the process of determining journals based on inclusion criteria using PICOS as research instruments<sup>10,14</sup>.

A systematic search was carried out to identify articles that met the requirements with using the keywords "*risk factor*" and "*juvenile sex offender*" in the electronic database, including: PubMed, Science Direct, Sage and ProQues, as many as 244 articles were obtained. Then check for duplications through the Mendeley application and make further reductions by looking at the file format and full text format. Thus, 4 articles were found according to inclusion criteria.

Inclusion criteria of documents that we considered to be appropriate (eligibility) for systematic review as follows: a journal from research; reported in English; published from January 2014 – January 2020. Inclusion criteria for the respondent are children (aged 12-18 years) as perpetrators of sexual violence. While the exclusion criteria from the articles are perpetrator has a disability, were reported not english, and using systematic review research. Thoroughly reviewed in accordance with a systematic review approach as seen in Figure 1.

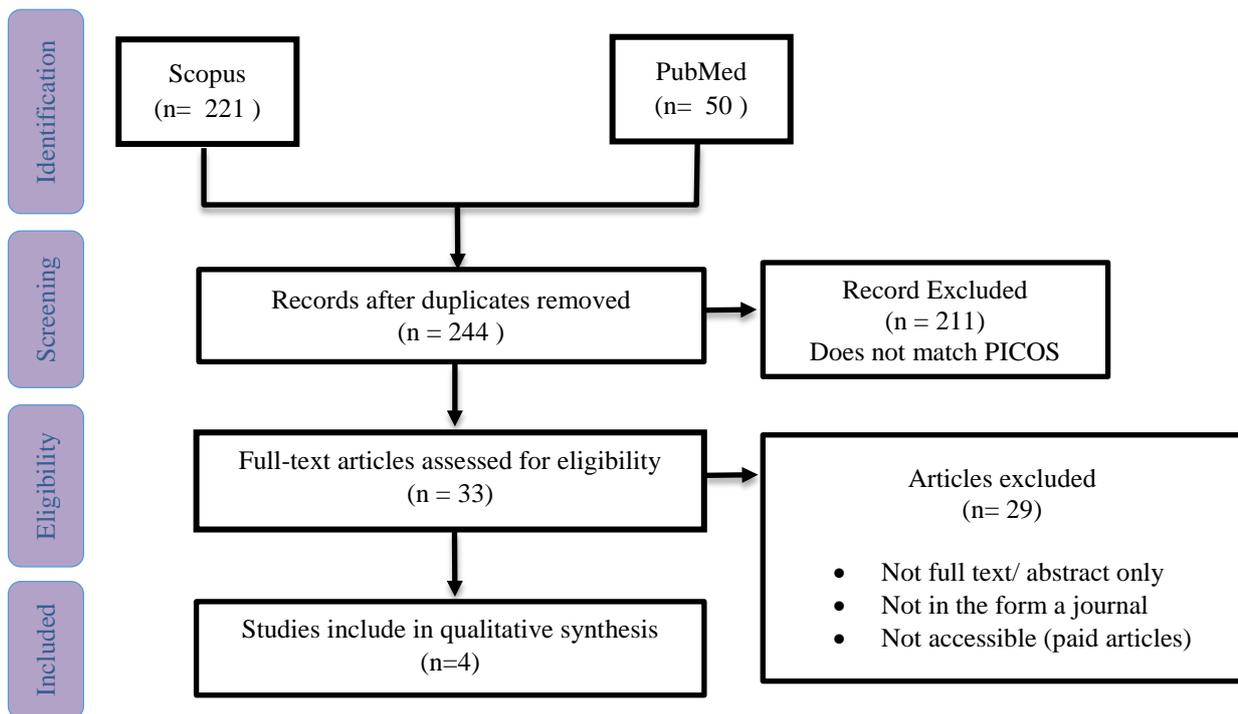


Figure 1

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## RESULT

From two databases tracking, we found 4 articles that appropriate the criteria (figure 1). The studies came from several countries, Ghana, Canada, Florida, New York, Oregon, South Carolina, and Texas. All the research use cross sectional study. For data collection using interview techniques, most using face-to-face interviewing and using standardized questionnaire. Informed consent was obtained from the respondent's parents while research ethics was obtained from the institutions and relevant government.

Risk factors for juvenile sex offending are caused by two factors, namely individual factors and family factors. A significant individual factor is the experience of being a victim of sexual abuse. In addition, there are risk markers as a tendency for children to commit sexual violence, namely children who have been paid for sex, consuming cigarettes, alcohol and drugs, truancy  $\geq 7$  times and exposure to pornography<sup>15,16</sup>. Whereas significant family

factors influence children to commit sexual violence, namely neglect of parents, parent conflict in the household, family history (father, mother, uncle, grandfather, grandmother) violence both physically and sexually, parents who consume alcohol, and economically low. One study found that gender and biological status of caregivers affected children to sexual harassment<sup>17</sup>. Men as primary caregivers significantly influence children to commit sexual violence. Whereas in relationship quality, children who do not commit violence are more cared for by biological parents and children who commit sexual violence have a better relationship quality for surrogate caregivers than biological parents<sup>18</sup>. Table 1. Matrix

Table 1. Matrix

No	Title	Author/ Year	Study Design/ Sample	Result	Conclusion
1.	Juvenile sexual offending in Ghana: Prevalence, risks and correlates	Kofi E. Boakye/ 2020	Crossectional/ 264 sample	The family is a risk factor for juvenile sex offenders. Statistically significant factors were parental neglect (P <0.01, OR: 4.55, 95% CI [2.46-9.44]), parental conflict (P <0.01, OR: 4.45 , 95% CI [2,35-8,44]), alcohol consumption in parents (P <0.05, OR: 3.07, 95% CI [1.66-5.59] violence by parents (P <0.05, OR : 2.90, 95% CI [1.63-5.5.19]), and family economic conditions (P <0.05, OR: 2.64, 95% CI [1.47-4.4.75]). Whereas children who commit sexual violence have a tendency to have experience being paid to have sex, consume cigarettes and drugs, and truancy school $\geq 7$ times	Risk factors for juvenile sex offenders are divided into two, individual factors and family factors. In this study, family factors, namely neglect and parental conflict, are the most important factors in influencing children to commit sexual violence
2	Abuse experiences of family members, child maltreatment, and the development of sex offending among incarcerated adolescent males: differences between adolescent sex	Evan C, McCuisd, Jesse Cale, and Raymond R. Corrado/ 2017	Crossectional/ 482 sample	The experience of family violence was significantly related to children becoming perpetrators(OR = 2.0, 95% CI = [1.1, 3.6]). While the experience of individuals becoming victims of physical and sexual violence is 3x greater risk for adolescents	The experience of family violence and the experience of being victims of violence both physically and sexually affect children to become perpetrators.

	offenders and adolescent non-sex offenders			engaging in sexual violence (OR = 3.5, 95% CI = [1.7, 7.3])	
3	The impact of disrupted caregiving for juvenile sexual offenders	Miranda H. Sitney/2019	Crossectional/ 824 sample	Male caregivers had a statistically significant relationship with children being perpetrators of sexual violence (P <0.05). Mean Relationship Quality Score shows that the quality of children cared for by women has a score of 2.8 while those cared for by men has a score of 2.4. Adolescents raised by biological parents had significantly higher relationship quality scores than adolescents raised by surrogate caregivers ( $\beta = -.298$ , $t(866) = -1.758$ , $p <.05$ ). Whereas adolescents who committed sexual violence had lower quality relationship scores with biological parents than with substitute caregivers ( $\beta = .274$ , $t(866) = 2.532$ , $p <.05$ )	The role of caregivers influences children's behavior. Gender and caregiver biological status proved significantly in influencing children to commit sexual violence.
4	Victim age and the generalist versus specialist distinction in adolescent sexual offending	Elisabeth, Leroux/ 2016	Crossectional/ 162 sample	Juvenile sex offender who against mix groups (children and adults) have a significantly higher experience of being victims of sexual violence and having psychosexual disorders ( $p = 0.037$ ) than do violence against children or adults only. Adolescent perpetrators of sexual violence against children were significantly less exposed to pornography than adolescents who sexually assaulted adults ( $p <.001$ )	Adolescents who commit sexual violence have different risk factors in each of the characteristics of their victims.

From the four studies identified, it was found that the experience of being a victim of sexual abuse and parental neglect was a strong factor in influencing children to commit sexual violence.

## DISCUSSION

In many countries, including Indonesia the frequency of sexual intercourse that takes place in children has increased very complex, not only kissing but to have sex. In the context of sexual violence perpetrated by children, Barbaree & Marshall (1987) distinguishes being children and juveniles. Children have no legal responsibility when committing sexual crimes<sup>19</sup>. In many countries, a person who has not reached the age of 12 is classified as a child. In other words, children who have not reached the age of 12 cannot be classified as sex offenders so they cannot be subject to criminal sanctions. Meanwhile, juveniles are children who commit crimes but have legal responsibilities. Their ages generally range from 12-17 years<sup>20</sup>.

Children as perpetrators of child sexual violence are defined as children who treat victims as objects of sexual gratification. This act can be done using force, threat, deception or pressure. Experts in this field agree that sexual or child sexual offense behavior, is sexual contact and which occurs without consent, without equality, and constitutes coercion, manipulation, play, or fraud (Shaw, 1999)<sup>21</sup>. Sexual violence does not have to involve bodily contact between the perpetrator and the victim. Voyeurism is also an act that falls into the category of sexual violence. Voyeurism is an act where the perpetrator watches the victim being naked or orders or forces the victim to engage in sexual activity with another, while the perpetrator watches the scene or even records it. Frequent exposure to pornography will potentially become perpetrators<sup>22</sup>.

A number of etiological factors (casual effects) have been identified to help explain the origin of the development of child sexual crime. The most influential factors are the experience of harassment, exposure to pornography, and drug abuse. Family factors are related to the appearance of delinquency in violence against children. Parental

psychopathology including conflicts in the household, poor parenting practices, and lack of positive reinforcement trigger children to have deviant behavior. Family influence plays an important role in causing maladaptive behavior in children. An incomplete family has a negative influence with juvenile crime<sup>23</sup>. The absence of family closeness will make the child not understand the environment well so that the recorded understanding and cognition become something right without being able to distinguish right from wrong. Cognition distortion due to neglect of parenting by parents. This will influence the child to take a decision that he thinks is right even though it is not justified by the norm, they cannot distinguish good from bad correctly. Family problems also affect the psychological aspects of children, children tend to be aggressive. Future anxiety, anxiety about sexual fantasies puts children at risk of committing criminal behavior. Adolescents who have ex-criminal family members are also found to be committing more crime / violence. Adolescents will view this violence as being acceptable to be involved continuously<sup>24,25</sup>.

Another study also mentions that the gender of caregivers has a significant influence on children sexual violence. Coles (2015) found that children who are cared for by men risk increasing various negative social and emotional outcomes. The results showed that adolescents with male primary caregivers had a lower quality relationship than adolescents treated by women<sup>26</sup>. This is consistent with the journals that have been analyzed in this systematic review that the results of the study show that the Mean Relationship Quality Score for female caregivers is higher, which is a score of 2.8 while those cared for by men have a score of 2.4. However, there is no research that confirms the causes of the differences between the two genders in providing care care. The parenting style of the male primary caregiver can be further investigated. The status of caregiver biology shows that children of sexual offenders who have biological guardians show significantly lower relationship quality scores than children of perpetrators of violence with surrogate guardians ( $\beta = .274, t(866) =$

2,532,  $p < 0.05$ )<sup>19</sup>. Attentive and sympathetic parents may have the potential to influence relationship quality scores and the types of juvenile offenses. This conclusion is consistent with the literature which shows that caring and supportive care is a protective factor against juvenile delinquency<sup>27</sup>. The research style of parenting from male primary caregivers can add to the interpretation of the research findings.

Another related factor is the experience of being a victim of sexual violence. The consequences of victimization in children also create a tendency for some individuals to respond to their own abuse by harassing others (Schwartz-Mette et al., 2019). These children are then labeled "sex offender". This term was originally applied only to children who engage in non-invasive, non-coercive, inappropriate sexual behavior such as public masturbation. However, this term now applies to children who display a range of sexual assault behaviors. Some studies confirm that not all children who are sexually abused become perpetrators and not all children who become sexual offenders have been victims of abuse. However, it is important to know that children who have been sexually abused have a higher risk of becoming perpetrators of violence. Some children who have been sexually abused demonstrate their own abuse to others in an attempt to gain control of their own experiences<sup>28,29</sup>.

Exposure to pornography and drug use has not significantly influenced sexual assault behavior. However, most perpetrators are exposed to pornography and have many dangerous drugs. Pornography can be bad for brain health. Frequent viewing of pornography in the form of images and videos can make the brain volume in the striatum area shrink. Striatum is an area in the brain that is related to motivation<sup>30</sup>. Drug use (cannabis and cocaine) is also associated with an increase in the number of reoffenses among juvenile offenders. Other studies show an association between alcohol use and deviant behavior among adolescents<sup>31</sup>.

Further research needs to be done to find out how much the relationship or strength of exposure to these two things becomes the risk of children becoming sex offenders.

## **CONCLUSION**

Children as perpetrators of sexual violence have an impact on psychopathology and recidivism. The mapping of risk factors becomes an urgency to be carried out in order to obtain appropriate prevention and resolution efforts. The experience of being a victim of sexual abuse and parental neglect is a strong risk factor in influencing a child to be a perpetrator. Protection of children from various forms of violence and maintaining the integrity of family attention are important efforts to prevent children from sexual violence

## **ETHICAL CLEARANCE**

No ethical clearance

## **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

The authors certify that they have no conflict of interest with any individuals or organizations related to the manuscript materials.

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