

Risk Factors of Sexual Aggression and Victimization Among Homosexual Men¹

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This study examined risk factors of sexual aggression and victimization among homosexual men ($N = 310$). They completed the Homosexual Experiences Survey to record sexual aggression and victimization and provided information about 2 groups of potential risk factors: childhood abuse and sexual lifestyle (number of partners, age at first intercourse, age at coming out, accepting or paying of money for sex, and rape proclivity). One in 4 respondents reported severe forms of sexual victimization; 17% reported moderate victimization. Prevalence of perpetration of sexual aggression was almost 20% for severe aggression and 9% for moderate aggression. The risk of victimization increased as a function of childhood abuse as well as high number of partners and acceptance of money for sex. The risk of committing sexual aggression was positively related to childhood abuse, acceptance and payment of money for sex, high number of sexual partners, and rape proclivity. The findings are discussed in relation to evidence on heterosexual aggression.

Sexual aggression is socially constructed as a heterosexual phenomenon. With the possible exception of childhood sexual abuse, victims of sexual aggression are seen as almost exclusively female (Scarce, 1997). While it is undoubtedly true that male assaults on female victims account for the vast majority of sexually aggressive acts, the idea that men cannot be sexually assaulted or raped has long been identified as a myth (cf. Coxell & King, 1996). Despite this recognition, the problem of male rape has received very little research attention. Of the few studies available, most are based on small samples of victims and describe the characteristics and circumstances of their assault experiences (e.g., Groth & Burgess, 1980; Hodge & Canter, 1998; Mezey & King, 1989; Stermac, Sheridan, Davidson, & Dunn, 1996) or examine the psychological impact of the assault on

¹This study was supported by a grant from the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft to the first author. The authors would like to thank Anja Berger, Immo Fritsche, Andreas Haubner, Susanne Kolpin, Ingrid Möller, and Eva Waizenhöfer for their support in conducting this study. The help and advice of Bastian Finke and his team at Mann-O-Meter e.V. Berlin are also gratefully acknowledged.

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the victim (e.g., Anderson, 1982; Goyer & Eddleman, 1984; Mezey & King, 1987). A small number of studies have looked for prevalence rates of male sexual victimization, either in the community at large (e.g., Hickson et al., 1994; Sorenson, Stein, Siegel, Golding, & Burnam, 1987) or in special populations, such as college students (e.g., Duncan, 1990; Moore & Waterman, 1999) or prison inmates (e.g., Struckman-Johnson, Struckman-Johnson, Rucker, Bumby, & Donaldson, 1996).

Even less evidence is available concerning potential risk factors associated with an increased likelihood of committing a sexual assault against a male victim or of being sexually victimized by another man. Stermac et al. (1996) reported that a substantial proportion of their 29 male assault victims were affected by economic hardships and suffered from either physical or cognitive disabilities. Waterman, Dawson, and Bologna (1989) failed to support the prediction that length of relationship, perceived power in the relationship, and perceived economic power in the relationship distinguished between victimized and nonvictimized men.

The aim of the present study is to conduct a first analysis into potential risk factors of sexual aggression and victimization in male-on-male sexual assaults based on a comparatively large community sample of 310 homosexual men. Homosexual men have been identified in some studies as particularly vulnerable to sexual victimization by another man (Duncan, 1990; Mezey & King, 1989; Stermac et al., 1996), even though, as several authors have pointed out, male-on-male sexual assault is not confined to this group (cf. Struckman-Johnson, 1991). Currently, there is no substantial database for assessing the risk of sexual victimization for homosexual as compared to heterosexual men. Nonetheless, it is certainly true to say that the very fact that homosexual men seek consensual sexual contacts with other men—who are the main perpetrators of sexual aggression—puts them at risk of encountering sexual aggression in much the same way as heterosexual women.

Studies into the prevalence and circumstances of male sexual victimization led to the conclusion that the dynamics of male-on-male sexual assault are highly similar to female sexual victimization by male perpetrators (cf. Struckman-Johnson, 1991). Given the lack of previous evidence on risk factors of homosexual aggression and victimization, the selection of potential risk factors in the present study draws on evidence from the heterosexual literature, including our own previous research. On the basis of this evidence, two groups of variables were selected as potential risk factors of sexual aggression and victimization: (a) negative childhood experiences, such as physical abuse, sexual abuse, and emotional neglect; and (b) sexual lifestyle, such as high number of sexual partners, early onset of sexual activity, and rape proclivity. The next two sections provide a summary of research supporting the selection of these variables as potential risk factors of sexual aggression and victimization among homosexual men.

Negative Childhood Experiences

A large body of evidence suggests that childhood experiences of abuse are likely to increase the risk of sexual victimization in later life. This is true for physical abuse (e.g. Beitchman et al., 1992; Mullen, Martin, Anderson, Romans, & Herbison, 1993), emotional neglect in the form of feelings of worthlessness conveyed in the family (Beitchman et al., 1992), and, in particular, for sexual abuse (e.g., Gidycz, Hanson, & Layman, 1995; Koss & Dinero, 1989; Krahé, Scheinberger-Olwig, Waizenhöfer, & Kolpin, 1999; cf. also Messman & Long, 1996, for a comprehensive review). These adverse childhood experiences are seen as undermining the ability of victims to exert their right of sexual self-determination and to successfully reject unwanted sexual advances. Indications that a similar revictimization cycle is operative in the case of male-on-male assault come from Stermac et al. (1996), who found that 34% of their adult male victims reported childhood experiences of sexual abuse.

Furthermore, studies of male victims of childhood abuse have identified a victim-to-perpetrator cycle by showing that victims of childhood abuse had an increased probability of becoming perpetrators of sexual aggression (e.g. Becker, Harris, & Sales, 1993; Blaske, Borduin, Henggeler, & Mann, 1989; Browne, 1994; Hall & Hirschman, 1991; Lisak, 1994). There is evidence that the pathway from childhood abuse to subsequent sexual aggression is mediated by delinquency and promiscuity (cf. Malamuth, 1998). Studying a homosexual sample, Landolt and Dutton (1997) found that parental rejection was linked to the emergence of an abusive personality, which, in turn, led to increased levels of both physical and psychological abuse (sexual abuse was not examined in their study). Altogether, this evidence suggests taking a closer look at childhood experiences of abuse as risk factors of both sexual victimization and the perpetration of sexually aggressive behavior.

Sexual Lifestyle

The second group of risk factors comprises variables associated with a person's sexual lifestyle. Several studies using both cross-sectional retrospective and prospective longitudinal designs have shown that a high level of sexual activity is associated with an increased risk of sexual victimization (Abbey, Ross, McDuffie, & McAuslan, 1996; Gidycz et al., 1995; Himelein, 1995; Tyler, Hoyt, & Whitbeck, 1998; Vicary, Klingaman, & Harkness, 1995). High sexual activity is indicated in these studies by the number of sexual partners and the age at first intercourse.

At the same time, there is evidence that a high level of sexual activity is also a risk factor for the perpetration of sexually aggressive behavior (e.g., Abbey, McAuslan, & Ross, 1998; Kanin, 1985; Malamuth, 1998). A further risk factor

derived from the heterosexual literature is self-reported *rape proclivity*; that is, a man's estimated likelihood that he would rape another person, provided he could be sure not to be caught and punished (Malamuth, 1981). This variable has been conceptualized as a behavioral intention measure and found to be predictive of actual sexual aggression (Abbey et al., 1998; Krahé, 1998; McDonel & McFall, 1991).

In addition, aspects specific to the sexual lifestyles of homosexual men need to be considered. One such aspect refers to the readiness to engage in sexual contacts in anonymous places (such as "tea rooms" and cruising grounds; cf. Coxon, 1996). Anonymous sexual contacts account for a significant proportion of homosexual contacts. In a large-scale survey of 3,048 homosexual men in Germany, 44.6% of the respondents reported that "more than half," "most," or "all" of their sexual contacts over the last 12 months had been anonymous (i.e., were one-time contacts with a previously unknown man whom they would only expect to see again by chance; Bochow, 1997). Since anonymity lowers the threshold for anti-social behavior, both victimization and aggression are expected to be more prevalent in this subgroup.

Another potential risk factor associated with a particular homosexual lifestyle is the readiness to accept money in return for sexual contacts. Bochow's (1997) survey shows that men who accept money for sex are more sexually active, show a greater variety of sexual behaviors, and are more likely to engage in unprotected sexual contacts. Rather than making a living through prostitution, they accept money as part of a "hedonistic lifestyle" (p. 56). Thus, acceptance of money can be seen as a facet of a particularly active sex life and thus as a contributory factor to both sexual aggression and victimization. Finally, paying money for sexual contacts appears to be a relevant variable in trying to predict sexual aggression. Men who pay money to obtain sexual contacts are expected to be more likely to enforce their sexual intentions on an unwilling partner.

Hypotheses

The general proposition underlying the present study is that risk factors that were found to be associated with heterosexual aggression and victimization are also predictive of sexual aggression and victimization among homosexual men. Based on the theorizing and data summarized in the previous section, the following hypotheses are advanced:

Hypothesis 1. Childhood experiences of physical abuse, sexual abuse, and emotional neglect are linked to an increased likelihood of sexual victimization as well as sexual aggression.

Hypothesis 2. Sexual lifestyle variables indicating a high level of sexual activity, such as early onset of sexual activity, high numbers

of sexual partners, seeking sexual contacts in anonymous settings, and paying or accepting money for sexual contacts are associated with an increased risk of both sexual victimization and sexual aggression.

Hypothesis 3. Self-reported likelihood of rape (rape proclivity) is predictive of the performance of sexually aggressive acts.

Method

Participants

A total of 325 men responded to the survey, which was conducted in the city of Berlin, Germany. A total of 15 respondents were excluded from the sample because they had not had any homosexual experience ($n = 12$) or had missing data on all critical items of sexual aggression and victimization ($n = 3$). The final sample comprised 310 men with homosexual experience. The average age of the sample was 21.79 years ($SD = 3.56$).

Respondents' sexual orientation was measured on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*homosexual*) to 7 (*heterosexual*). The mean score on this measure was 1.71 ($SD = 0.91$), suggesting that the sample consisted predominantly of men who identified themselves as homosexual. The average age of first homosexual contact was 16.55 years ($SD = 2.80$), and the average age at which respondents had their "coming out" (i.e., acknowledged their homosexual orientation to themselves, to others, or both) was 17.84 years ($SD = 2.45$). Respondents were members of the general public who were contacted in a variety of settings frequented by homosexual men (cf. the section on Procedure). Their educational background was representative of the general distribution of educational qualifications of school-leavers in Berlin, except that a somewhat higher proportion of respondents sought (or had obtained) a university entrance qualification. In the latter respect, the present sample is similar to the large sample surveyed by Bochow (1997).

Measures

Homosexual Experiences Survey

To measure sexual aggression and victimization, a self-report instrument was developed, the Homosexual Experiences Survey (HSES). This instrument was derived from the Sexual Experiences Survey (SES) by Koss and Oros (1982; cf. also Koss, Gidycz, & Wisniewski, 1987), which is the most widely employed instrument for measuring heterosexual aggression in North American research. Since the SES is geared toward the measurement of heterosexual aggression, it

had to be adapted to the assessment of sexual aggression among homosexual men. In particular, it had to be modified to accommodate the different sexual practices prevalent among homosexual men and to address both victimization and perpetration in the same instrument.

The HSES was developed from a German version of the SES (Koss & Oros, 1982), which has been used in a series of studies to establish prevalence rates of heterosexual aggression among German adolescents (Krahé, 1998; Krahé, Scheinberger-Olwig, & Waizenhöfer, 1999). It was shown to have high retest reliability over a period of 3 to 4 weeks (Krahé, Reimer, Scheinberger-Olwig, & Fritsche, 1999). Unlike heterosexual aggression, where the roles of victim and perpetrator are clearly separated along gender lines, in homosexual aggression, both victims and perpetrators are male, and respondents are addressed as potential victims as well as perpetrators. Therefore, the HSES was designed to cover both victimization by and perpetration of sexual aggression. Two versions of the HSES were created in which the order of presentation of the victimization and perpetration items was counterbalanced.

In keeping with the heterosexual SES (Koss & Oros, 1982) and other instruments measuring sexual aggression (e.g., Tyler et al., 1998), the HSES differentiates three forms of coercing another person into sexual acts against his will: (a) the use (or threat) of physical force; (b) the exploitation of another man's inability to resist unwanted sexual advances because he is in an incapacitated state (e.g., following excessive consumption of alcohol or drugs); and (c) the use of verbal pressure.

Each of these three forms of aggression was combined with four types of sexual acts: touching, masturbation, oral sex, and anal sex. These four sexual acts were chosen on the basis of evidence on the predominant sexual practices of homosexual men (e.g., Bochow, 1997; Coxon, 1996).³ Subjects indicated for each type of coercive strategy and each type of sexual act whether (a) another man had ever inflicted, or tried to inflict, that behavior on them (victim perspective); and (b) whether they themselves had ever inflicted, or tried to inflict, that behavior on another man (perpetrator perspective). Multiple responses were possible with respect to the different types of coercion and sexual acts.

The total HSES consists of six pages, three for each type of coercive strategy (i.e., physical force, exploitation of incapacitated state, verbal coercion) from the perpetrator and the victim perspective, respectively. The format and layout of the HSES is presented in the Appendix. HSES items were preceded by an introduction that served three purposes: (a) to establish whether or not respondents had

³ Respondents were asked to consider each sexual act with regard to three types of relationships: a partner (ex-partner), a friend or acquaintance, and an unknown man. This differentiation served to facilitate a more fine-grained analysis of the prevalence of sexual aggression and victimization (cf. Krahé, Schütze, Fritsche, & Waizenhöfer, 2000). Since it is not pertinent to the issue of risk factors addressed in the present paper, it will not be considered further.

experienced consensual contacts with a man so that it was possible—in combination with HSES responses—to identify respondents without any homosexual experience and to exclude them from the sample; (b) to clarify that HSES items did not refer to incidents of sexual abuse in childhood or in relationships with a clear power differential (e.g., teacher–pupil); and (c) to explicate the meaning of *unwanted sexual contacts* as referring to situations in which people are made to engage in sexual activities against their will through the use or threat of physical force (e.g., hitting, holding down, injuring), the exploitation of the other person’s inability to offer resistance (e.g., after heavy drinking), or the use of verbal pressure (e.g., threat to end the relationship).

Predictors of Sexual Aggression and Victimization

Instruments used in previous work on heterosexual aggression were adapted to measure the predictors selected for the present analysis (Krahé, Scheinberger-Olwig, Waizenhöfer, & Kolpin, 1999):

Childhood experiences. To measure childhood experiences of physical abuse and emotional neglect, the following questions were asked:

Physical abuse: “As a child or young adolescent, have you been beaten often or regularly at home?”

Emotional neglect: “As a child or young adolescent, have you often felt worthless at home?”⁴

To measure childhood experiences of sexual abuse, three items were derived from the child sexual abuse literature (cf. Finkelhor, 1986) to measure experiences of contact abuse: (a) “When you were a child, did anyone ever touch you in a sexual way (e.g., touch your sex organs) or make you touch him/her in a sexual way (e.g., touch his/her sex organs) against your will?”; (b) “When you were a child, did anyone ever try to penetrate your body (mouth or anus) against your will, but in the end penetration did not occur?”; and (c) “When you were a child, did anyone ever penetrate your body against your will?” Responses to the three items were made in a dichotomous Yes/No format.⁵

Sexual lifestyle. Seven items were included to address aspects of sexual behavior potentially relevant to sexual aggression and/or victimization:

Sexual contacts in anonymous places: “Have you ever had sex in anonymous places (such as tea rooms, cruising grounds, etc.)?” Response options: no, yes.

⁴Making a child feel worthless is a key component of emotional neglect, according to Barnett, Miller-Perrin, and Perrin’s (1997) definition in terms of failure to provide emotional support, security, and encouragement of the child.

⁵In the initial version of the questionnaire, a single-item measure of childhood sexual abuse was used (“Were you ever sexually abused as a child?”). However, it became clear that this item was not sufficiently well defined to provide meaningful responses. The item was then replaced by the more detailed three-item measure of contact abuse. Therefore, the *N* for this measure was reduced to 213.

Acceptance of money for sex: "Have you ever received money in return for sexual contacts?" Response options: no, once, repeatedly.

Payment of money for sex: "Have you ever paid money in return for sexual contacts?" Response options: no, once, repeatedly.

Age at first consensual homosexual contact: "How old were you when you first had sex with a man that you both wanted?"

Age at "coming out": "How old were you when you had your coming out?"

Number of sexual partners: "How many men have you had sex with?"

Rape proclivity: "Provided that you could be sure not to be caught and punished, how likely is it that you would force another man to have sex with you against his will?" Responses to this item were made on a 10-point scale, ranging from 0% to 100% with decimal subdivisions (Malamuth, 1981). The concluding part of the questionnaire asked for respondents' age, level of education, current job situation, nationality, and religion.

Procedure

The survey was conducted in the city of Berlin, Germany, which has a large homosexual community. Respondents were approached by trained male and female interviewers in a variety of places frequented by homosexual men, including social clubs, different gay events, youth centers, and so forth. According to Bochow (1997), the majority of homosexual men regularly visit such places. Locations frequented only for the sake of obtaining sexual contacts (public sex environments; Coxon, 1996) were excluded from the range of data-collection sites. Care was taken to ensure that respondents were able to complete the questionnaire anonymously and in private in the respective settings. They were paid 10 German Marks (approximately \$5 US) for their participation. After returning the questionnaires, all respondents received a list of local counseling agencies offering advice to victims and perpetrators of sexual violence.

Results

Since sexual aggression and victimization represent the dependent variables in the analyses, the first task was to identify each respondent's status with regard to the two variables. Prior to this step, the internal consistency of the HSES was examined and found to be high, with Cronbach's alphas of .90 for the victimization items and .88 for the perpetration items.

Establishing Victim Status

Based on subjects' responses to the HSES, each respondent was assigned to one of three categories of victimization: *none*, subjects who endorsed "No" in

response to all three victimization items; *moderate*, subjects who reported that another man had forced them to engage in any form of unwanted sexual contacts through the use of verbal pressure or that another man had attempted to make them engage in unwanted sexual contacts through the use or threat of force or by exploiting their incapacitated state; or *severe*, subjects who reported that they had been subjected to unwanted touch, masturbation, oral intercourse, or anal intercourse through the use or threat of force or exploitation of their incapacitated state. The acts combined in the severe victimization category (i.e., use or threat of force or exploitation of another person's inability to offer resistance in order to force that person to engage in sexual contacts) qualify as sexual offenses (sexual coercion, rape) under German law, regardless of the gender of the victim. Sexual acts involving penetration of the victim's body fall under the charge of *rape*, while other forms of sexual activity constitute *sexual coercion*. Both charges are covered by the same article.⁶

Since multiple responses were possible across different forms of victimization, respondents were classified according to their most serious experience (in terms of the definitions used to establish victim status). This procedure conforms to standard practice in research on heterosexual aggression (e.g., Gidycz et al., 1995; Koss et al., 1987).

Establishing Aggressor Status

A parallel classification was made with regard to the self-reported perpetration of sexually aggressive behavior: *none*, subjects who endorsed "no" in response to all three perpetration items; *moderate*, subjects who reported that they had forced another man to engage in any form of unwanted sexual contacts through the use of verbal pressure or that they had attempted to make another man engage in sexual contacts through the use or threat of force or by exploiting his incapacitated state; and *severe*, subjects who reported that they had subjected another man to unwanted touch, masturbation, oral intercourse, or anal intercourse through the use or threat of force or exploitation of his incapacitated state. The resulting classifications for victim and aggressor status are displayed in Table 1.

Because the HSES covers the perspectives of both victims and perpetrators, it is possible to establish the extent to which the two roles co-occur within the same individual. A significant relationship was found between the two roles, *Kendall tau-b*(298) = .313, $p < .000$. Of the 306 respondents who were assigned to one of the three victim groups, 92 reported some form of sexually aggressive behavior.

⁶On July 1, 1997, a legal change came into effect in German criminal law that removed the restriction of rape and sexual coercion to female victims (§177 StGB). Since then, it has been possible to legally prosecute the sexual coercion and rape of male victims.

Table 1

Classification of Victimization and Perpetration Status

	Perpetration status			Total
	None	Moderate	Severe	
Victimization status				
None	137	9	18	164
Moderate	37	6	7	50
Severe	40	10	34	84
Total	214	25	59	298

Note. $N = 12$ missing cases.

Conversely, of the 301 respondents who were assigned to one of the three aggressor groups, 137 had experienced some form of sexual victimization. To show this overlap of victim and perpetrator role, Table 1 presents the cross-classification of the two roles. The most noteworthy finding from this analysis refers to the 59 men who reported severe sexual aggression, of whom 41 also reported some form of sexual victimization. It is important to note in this context that the order of presentation of the victim and perpetrator items was counterbalanced across subjects. No order effects were found on either victimization or perpetration reports.

*Risk Factors of Sexual Victimization and Aggression**Prevalence of Risk Factors*

Before exploring the relationship between the risk factors of sexual aggression and victimization, the prevalence of each risk factor was examined for the sample as a whole. Table 2 presents the results of this analysis.

For those risk factors that were recorded in a forced-choice format (i.e., physical abuse, emotional neglect, acceptance and payment of money for sex, and sex in anonymous places), the figures in Table 2 refer to the percentage of "yes" responses. For the two sexual lifestyle variables "money received" and "money paid," the response options *once* and *repeatedly* were combined into an overall percentage indicating a "yes" response because of low frequencies for the two original options. For rape proclivity, age at first homosexual contact, age at coming out, and number of sexual partners mean scores are reported.

To identify respondents' childhood abuse status, a dichotomous abuse variable was created. Respondents were classified as *abused* if they had endorsed any

Table 2

Distribution of Risk factors of Sexual Victimization and Aggression

Risk factor	%	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Childhood experiences			
Physical abuse	21.6		
Contact sexual abuse ^a	20.7		
Emotional neglect	30.0		
Sexual lifestyle			
Money received	23.2		
Money paid	7.4		
Sex in anonymous places	51.0		
Rape proclivity (0-10)		1.50	2.21
Age at first homosexual contact (in years)		16.55	2.80
Age at coming out (in years)		17.84	2.45
Number of sexual partners		38.81	75.61

Note. *N* = 310.

^aFor this variable, *N* = 213 (cf. Footnote 5).

of the three contact abuse items and as *nonabused* if they had answered "no" to all three items. The prevalence data reported in Table 2 are based on this index.

Table 2 shows that the risk factors considered in the present study have substantial prevalence rates in the total sample of homosexual men. A considerable proportion of the sample reported adverse childhood experiences in the form of physical abuse, sexual abuse, and emotional neglect. Almost one fourth of all respondents indicated that they had received money at least once in return for sexual contacts. However, only a minority reported having paid money for sexual contacts.

The correlations between risk factors, presented in Table 3, were generally low. Only 4 out of the 66 correlation coefficients were above .25, while the majority of coefficients were nonsignificant.

Predicting Sexual Victimization and Aggression

The impact of childhood sexual abuse, physical abuse, and emotional neglect as well as paying for or accepting money for sex and having sex in anonymous places was examined through a series of loglinear analyses yielding 2 × 3 (Risk Factor × Victim/Aggressor Status) contingency tables (Norusis, 1993). In

Table 3
Correlations Among Risk Factors

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Physical abuse	—								
2. Sexual abuse	.18*	—							
3. Emotional neglect	.44***	.18*	—						
4. Money received	.14*	.10	.22***	—					
5. Money paid	.12*	.09	.05	.22***	—				
6. Anonymous places	.00	.16*	.01	.25***	.10	—			
7. Rape proclivity	.09	-.05	.12*	.17**	.11	.12*	—		
8. Age at first homosexual contact	-.11	-.08	-.12*	-.23***	-.06	-.17**	-.01	—	
9. Age at coming out	-.09	-.10	-.06	-.16*	-.02	-.07	-.06	.48***	—
10. Number of partners	.10	.11	.12*	.37***	.11	.55***	.06	-.09	-.04

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

loglinear analysis, all variables used for the cross-tabulation are independent variables. The number of cases in the different cells of the table represents the dependent variable. A systematic link between a risk factor and victim status or aggressor status therefore requires evidence of a significant interaction between the two variables involved. The impact of the four continuous sexual-lifestyle variables (i.e., age at first homosexual contact, age at coming out, number of sexual partners, and rape proclivity) was examined through a series of ANOVAs treating victim or aggressor status as independent variables and the sexual-lifestyle variables as dependent variables.

Because of the lack of previous evidence on risk factors of homosexual aggression and victimization and the relatively large number of independent variables, the analyses were conducted separately for each risk factor. Moreover, because of missing data on the sexual-lifestyle variables and reduced sample size on the sexual abuse measure (cf. Footnote 2), combining the risk factors would have resulted in a substantial reduction of the original sample size.

Risk Factors of Sexual Victimization

This section presents results on the links between risk factors and respondents' victimization status. Evidence concerning the risk factors of committing sexually aggressive behavior are examined in the next section. The distributions of frequencies for the two levels of each categorical risk factor as well as for the mean scores of the three continuous variables are presented in Table 4.

Childhood variables. Significant interactions were found between each of the three childhood variables and victim status: physical abuse, likelihood ratio (LR) $\chi^2(2, N = 302) = 17.69, p < .000$; childhood sexual abuse, $\chi^2(2, N = 189) = 11.10, p < .01$; and emotional neglect, $\chi^2(2, N = 299) = 19.51, p < .000$. The parameter estimates for the interactions indicate the "boost" associated with considering both variables collectively, as opposed to individually (Norusis, 1993). Parameters with z values higher than ± 1.96 can be considered significant at the .05 level. In Table 4, these parameters are indexed by superscripts.

For physical abuse, two parameters were significant. The first parameter indicates that the number of respondents in the no physical abuse/no victimization group is higher (and the number of the physical abuse/no victimization group is lower) than the number expected only on the basis of the frequency of nonabused respondents and the frequency of nonvictimized respondents ($\lambda = .401, z = 4.03$). The second significant parameter indicates that the number of nonabused respondents in the severe victimization group is lower (and the number of abused respondents higher) than expected on the basis of the two variables (physical abuse and victimization status) considered independently ($\lambda = -.205, z = -2.05$).

For childhood sexual abuse, a parallel pattern was obtained: Significantly more nonabused respondents fell into the no-victimization group ($\lambda = .336, z = 2.77$),

Table 4

Risk Factors of Sexual Victimization

Risk factors	Victimization			
	None	Moderate	Severe	Total <i>N</i>
Childhood experiences				
Physical abuse				
No	148 (62.2%) _a	34 (14.3%)	56 (23.5%) _a	238 (100%)
Yes	21 (32.8%) _a	16 (25.0%)	27 (42.2%) _a	64 (100%)
Sexual abuse				
No	95 (64.6%) _a	24 (16.3%)	28 (19.0%) _a	147 (100%)
Yes	16 (38.1%) _a	8 (19.0%)	18 (42.9%) _a	42 (100%)
Emotional neglect				
No	134 (64.1%) _a	27 (12.9%) _a	48 (23.0%)	209 (100%)
Yes	33 (36.7%) _a	23 (25.6%) _a	34 (37.8%)	90 (100%)
Sexual lifestyle				
Money received				
No	139 (60.2%) _a	43 (18.6%)	49 (21.2%) _a	231 (100%)
Yes	28 (40.0%) _a	9 (12.9%)	33 (47.1%) _a	70 (100%)
Money paid				
No	157 (56.5%)	48 (17.3%)	73 (26.3%)	278 (100%)
Yes	10 (43.5%)	4 (17.4%)	9 (39.1%)	23 (100%)
Anonymous places				
No	89 (61.8%)	25 (17.4%)	30 (20.8%)	144 (100%)
Yes	79 (50.6%)	27 (17.3%)	50 (32.1%)	156 (100%)
Age at first homosexual contact (in years)				
	16.7	16.5	16.6	295
Age at coming out (in years)				
	18.0	17.4	17.6	197
Number of sexual partners				
	31.9 _b	31.7	58.2 _c	264

Note. Means with different subscripts differ at $p < .05$. The same subscripts within cells indicate that the significant interaction was because of that cell (significant parameter estimates with z values $> \pm 1.96$).

while significantly more abused respondents fell into the severe victimization group ($\lambda = -.325, z = -2.54$). For emotional neglect, the parameters indicate a higher number of nonaffected respondents in the no-victimization group ($\lambda = .380, z = 4.33$) and a higher number of affected respondents in the moderate victimization group ($\lambda = -.236, z = -2.23$).

Sexual lifestyle. Significant interactions were found between the acceptance of money for sex and sexual victimization, $LR \chi^2(2, N = 301) = 17.02, p < .000$. Of the respondents who fell into the no-victimization category, significantly fewer had accepted money ($\lambda = .21, z = 2.14$). Of the respondents who fell into the severe victimization category, significantly more had accepted money ($\lambda = -.388, z = -3.82$). No significant interactions were found between victim status and the payment of money and seeking anonymous sexual contacts, respectively. Age at first homosexual contact and age at coming out also failed to be related to victimization status in the ANOVAs ($F_s < 1$). Finally, number of partners was significantly related to victimization status, $F(2, 263) = 3.12, p < .05$. Respondents in the severe victimization group had significantly more sexual partners than did respondents in the no-victimization group.

Risk Factors of Sexual Aggression

Parallel analyses were conducted to examine possible links between the risk factors and the commitment of sexually aggressive behavior. The findings from these analyses are presented in Table 5.

Childhood variables. Significant interactions were found between each of the three childhood variables and aggressor status. For physical abuse, the interaction was significant, $LR \chi^2(2, N = 297) = 5.80, p < .05$. This interaction was a result of the "no-aggression" category in which significantly more respondents without physical abuse experience were found ($\lambda = .250, z = 2.50$). For childhood sexual abuse, the interaction was significant, $LR \chi^2(2, N = 186) = 11.62, p < .000$. Two of the parameters were significant for this interaction: In the no-aggression group, respondents without experience of sexual abuse were significantly overrepresented ($\lambda = .396, z = 2.93$). In contrast, respondents with sexual abuse were significantly overrepresented in the moderate aggression group ($\lambda = -.640, z = -3.10$). Finally, the interaction between emotional neglect and aggressor status was also significant, $LR \chi^2(2, N = 294) = 9.29, p < .01$. As with sexual abuse, respondents who did not report emotional neglect were significantly overrepresented in the no-aggression group ($\lambda = .283, z = 3.00$), while their number was significantly lower in the moderate aggression group ($\lambda = -.317, z = -2.29$).

Sexual lifestyle. A significant interaction was found between the acceptance of money for sex and sexual aggression, $LR \chi^2(2, N = 296) = 17.40, p < .000$. Of the respondents who fell into the no-aggression category, significantly fewer had

Table 5

Risk Factors of Sexual Aggression

Risk factors	Perpetration			Total <i>N</i>
	None	Moderate	Severe	
Childhood experiences				
Physical abuse				
No	173 (74.6%) _a	17 (7.3%)	42 (18.1%)	232 (100%)
Yes	39 (60.0%) _a	10 (15.4%)	16 (24.6%)	65 (100%)
Sexual abuse				
No	107 (74.8%) _a	4 (2.8%) _a	32 (22.4%)	143 (100%)
Yes	25 (58.1%) _a	8 (18.6%) _a	10 (23.3%)	43 (100%)
Emotional neglect				
No	156 (76.1%) _a	12 (5.9%) _a	37 (18.0%)	205 (100%)
Yes	54 (60.7%) _a	14 (15.7%) _a	21 (23.6%)	89 (100%)
Sexual lifestyle				
Money received				
No	175 (76.4%) _a	21 (9.2%)	33 (14.4%) _a	229 (100%)
Yes	36 (53.7%) _a	5 (7.5%)	26 (38.8%) _a	67 (100%)
Money paid				
No	201 (73.6%) _a	24 (8.8%)	48 (17.2%) _a	273 (100%)
Yes	10 (43.5%) _a	2 (8.7%)	11 (47.8%) _a	23 (100%)
Anonymous places				
No	109 (76.8%)	8 (5.6%)	25 (17.6%)	142 (100%)
Yes	102 (66.7%)	18 (11.8%)	33 (21.6%)	153 (100%)
Rape proclivity (0-10)	1.27 _b	1.46	2.46 _c	292
Age at first homosexual contact (in years)	16.8 _b	16.4	15.8 _c	290
Age at coming out (in years)	18.0	17.8	17.5	195
Number of sexual partners	31.8	46.4	54.6	261

Note. Means with different subscripts within rows differ at $p < .05$. The same subscripts within cells indicate that the significant interaction was because of that cell (significant parameter estimates with z values $> \pm 1.96$).

accepted money ($\lambda = .21, z = 2.14$). Of the respondents in the severe aggression category, significantly more had accepted money ($\lambda = -.410, z = -3.38$). The interaction between payment of money for sexual contacts and aggressor status was also significant, LR $\chi^2(2, N = 296) = 10.32, p < .01$. Respondents who had not paid money for sex were significantly overrepresented in the no-aggression group ($\lambda = .364, z = 2.24$) and significantly underrepresented in the severe aggression group ($\lambda = -.393, z = -2.39$). The ANOVA conducted on the rape proclivity measure showed that this variable was significantly related to aggressor status, $F(2, 291) = 6.58, p < .01$. Respondents in the severe aggression group scored significantly higher on rape proclivity than did respondents in the no-aggression group ($M_s = 1.27$ and $2.46, SD_s = 2.12$ and 2.50 , respectively). Furthermore, aggressor status varied as a function of age at first homosexual contact, $F(2, 289) = 2.93, p < .05$. Respondents in the severe aggression group had their first homosexual contact at a significantly younger age than did nonaggressive respondents. The remaining aspects of sexual lifestyle (i.e., number of partners, having sex in anonymous places, and age at coming out) were unrelated to aggressor status.

Overlap of Victim and Perpetrator Roles

In comparing the findings on sexual aggression and victimization, it is important to remember that a substantial proportion of respondents featured both as victims and as perpetrators of sexual aggression (cf. Table 1). Thus, similarities between the aggression and victimization findings are likely to be a result, in part, of the fact that they were based in overlapping samples. This is not a design problem of the present study, but a factual problem that previous studies on homosexual aggression, by concentrating exclusively on victimization reports, have been unable to detect. However, in order to estimate the effects of this confounding of roles, the analyses on victimization were repeated including only those respondents who did not at the same time feature as perpetrators of sexual aggression. These analyses yielded results almost identical to those obtained for the total sample summarized in Table 4. The only exception was the parameter for the physical abuse/severe victimization cell. In this case, the parameter estimate was just below the critical value of 1.96, and its failure to reach significance must be seen against the substantially smaller n values in this subsample. A parallel analysis for the three aggression groups was not feasible because after exclusion of all victimized respondents, the n values became too small (cf. Table 1). The high similarity of the findings on victimization based on the respondents without any perpetration of sexual aggression with the findings based on the entire sample suggest, therefore, that the risk factors established for sexual victimization cannot be attributed to the presence of perpetrators in that sample.

Discussion

The present study examined possible risk factors of sexual aggression and victimization among homosexual men. In the absence of previous evidence on predictors of male-on-male sexual assault, the selection of risk factors was guided by findings from the literature on heterosexual aggression. Therefore, the findings will be interpreted against the background of available evidence predicting sexual victimization in female victims and sexual aggression committed by men against women.

First of all, the findings show that sexual aggression is a genuine problem among homosexual men. Over one fourth of the present sample reported severe victimization (i.e., experiences where another man had used, or threatened to use, physical force or exploited their incapacitated state to make them comply with his sexual advances). In terms of the perpetration of sexual aggression, almost 20% of respondents reported sexually aggressive behaviors that meet the legal definition of rape/sexual coercion under German law. A further 9% acknowledged moderate forms of sexual aggression. A full description of the prevalence rates for the different forms of sexual aggression is presented by Krahe et al. (2000).

The main purpose of the present study was to explore the role of potential predictors associated with an increased risk of sexual aggression and sexual victimization. Risk factors from two categories were selected for this analysis: adverse childhood experiences and sexual lifestyle. Starting with the findings for sexual victimization, variables from both categories were related to unwanted sexual experiences, as hypothesized. Frequent physical abuse in childhood, sexual abuse, and emotional neglect were systematically linked to the likelihood of sexual victimization: Respondents who were physically or sexually abused as children were significantly more likely to experience severe victimization and were significantly less likely to avoid victimization than respondents without these adverse childhood experiences. For emotional neglect, an increased risk was found for moderate forms of sexual victimization. Findings for the sexual-lifestyle variables were less conclusive. Of the variables in this category, only two were related to sexual victimization: Acceptance of money for sexual contacts, and reporting a high number of sexual partners each were associated with an increased risk of severe victimization.

The majority of risk factors also turned out to be predictive of the perpetration of sexually aggressive acts. Individuals who did not experience physical abuse, sexual abuse, or emotional neglect in childhood were significantly more likely to be nonaggressive than were those who reported these negative experiences. For the different sexual-lifestyle variables, the findings show that respondents who reported severe forms of sexual aggression were more likely to accept money for sex, to pay money for sex, to have had their first homosexual experience at a

younger age, and to endorse a greater probability of raping a man (provided that they would not be caught and punished).

Overall, the findings present a coherent picture of the impact of the identified risk factors on both the performance of and victimization by sexually aggressive behavior. This consistency suggests that the risk factors selected for the present analysis are indeed meaningful in understanding the antecedent conditions of sexual violence. Given the exploratory nature of the present study, this seems an important conclusion. Furthermore, the findings show that the range of risk factors selected from the literature on heterosexual aggression are indeed relevant to the prediction of homosexual aggression. Thus, they corroborate the view that the dynamics of sexual aggression are similar for male rape and heterosexual aggression (Struckman-Johnson, 1991).

Nevertheless, several reservations need to be made with regard to the scope of the present findings. Even though the risk factors analyzed in this study turned out to be relevant to the prediction of homosexual aggression and victimization, they are by no means exhaustive. Other risk factors not considered in this study may well be found to be equally or perhaps even more important than the present set of predictors. One aspect not included in our analysis, but shown to be highly relevant in other studies, refers to the role of alcohol (Abbey et al., 1996, 1998; Gidycz et al., 1995; Himelein, 1995). Differences between sexually aggressive and nonaggressive men with regard to sexual arousal, emotional self-regulation, and cognitive processing of sexually charged stimuli have been suggested as further personality-related risk predictors of sexual aggression (cf. Hall & Hirschman, 1991). Furthermore, the possibility of risk factors specific to homosexual men, such as sexual-lifestyle variables, needs to be more carefully examined.

What the present study certainly has demonstrated is that sexual aggression is widely prevalent among homosexual men. Together with studies showing that the psychological impact of rape on male victims is in no way less serious than the impact on female victims (e.g., Goyer & Eddleman, 1984; Kaufman, Divasto, Jackson, Voorhees, & Christy, 1980; Mezey & King, 1989), the present findings highlight the need for more systematic and large-scale investigations into a problem that has been neglected for too long in sexual aggression research.

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Appendix

*Homosexual Experiences Survey (HSES)**Victimization Items*

V1: Has a man ever made you have sex with him against your will by using physical force or threatening to do so?

V2: Has a man ever made you have sex with him against your will by exploiting the fact that you could not resist (e.g., after too much alcohol or drugs)?

V3: Has a man ever made you have sex with him against your will by using verbal pressure?

Perpetration Items

P1: Have you ever made a man have sex with you against his will by using physical force or threatening to do so?

P2: Have you ever made a man have sex with you against his will by exploiting the fact that he could not resist (e.g., after too much alcohol or drugs)?

P3: Have you ever made a man have sex with you against his will by using verbal pressure?

Example of Response Format (cf. Footnote 3)

Has a man ever made you have sex with him against your will *by using physical force or threatening to do so?*

No

Yes, ...

... my (ex-) partner:

- Touching (Kissing, stroking)
- Masturbating ("Wanking")
- Oral sex ("Sucking")
- Anal sex ("Fucking")

.....
 ... a friend or acquaintance:

- Touching
 - Masturbating
 - Oral sex
 - Anal sex
-

... an unknown man:

- Touching
- Masturbating
- Oral sex
- Anal sex