Identification of Various Incest-associated Indicators within Families

Mary Kay Helling

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IDENTIFICATION OF VARIOUS INCEST-ASSOCIATED INDICATORS WITHIN FAMILIES

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science, Major in Home Economics, South Dakota State University 1982
IDENTIFICATION OF VARIOUS INCEST-ASSOCIATED INDICATORS WITHIN FAMILIES

This thesis is approved as a creditable and independent investigation by a candidate for the degree, Master of Science, and is acceptable as meeting the thesis requirements for this degree, but without implying that the conclusions reached by the candidate are necessarily the conclusions of the major department.

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MKH
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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Incest is a human behavior recorded in past and recent history. Behaviors labeled as incestuous vary greatly, ranging from sexual intercourse to intimate touching to display of sexual organs to verbal expression of sexual interest. For the purpose of this study, incest is defined as sexual activity among family members. More specifically, sexual activity is defined as either intercourse or intimate touching or petting. Family members are either blood relatives or relatives through marriage or adoption (i.e. stepfathers or stepmothers).

Throughout history, incest has typically been considered a taboo behavior. The taboo appears to be universal, yet various cultures may abide by different rules, allowing for certain relationships or behaviors that others do not. For example, brother-sister marriages took place in ancient Egypt (Middleton, 1962). Some cultures allow incestuous relationships ceremonially (Meiselman, 1978).

In the past, reasons given for the occurrence of incest were usually associated with personal characteristics such as a mental or physical illness. Through the passage of time and as a result of further study, it has become evident that along with personal characteristics, family circumstances must also be considered.
Significance of the Problem

The topic of incest is more widely addressed today than ever before. Mass media, via popular magazines, newspapers, radio and television are focusing on the issue of incest more frequently. As a result, workshops and intervention training sessions are addressing the needs of people in regard to the incest experience. Most people can cite personal knowledge of an incident of incest taking place, possibly in the community or even within one's own family (Meiselman, 1978).

One of the first scientifically oriented studies of incest was conducted in the 1800's by Richard von Krafft-Ebing (1886) (which because of the taboo nature of the studies, was written in Latin). Sigmund Freud was another early scientist to address the topic of incest. Freud (1954) explained incest as being a fantasy on the part of the child. Due to Freud's explanation, other clinicians also assumed that reports made by clients were mere fantasy, thus reducing the reported number of incest cases (Rosenfeld, 1977). Freud's theory of incest may also have been responsible for the small number of studies conducted on incest in the years following his writings. Later researchers have disagreed with Freud and the number of studies has increased since. Throughout the literature, various aspects and characteristics of incestuous individuals and families have been identified.

Possible consequences of incest can be noted primarily in terms of the victim and to a lesser degree the initiator and non-participant family members and the family as a unit. A small number
of studies suggest that no negative consequences result from being involved incestuously with a family member (Rasmussen, 1934; Bender and Grugutt, 1952). Many more studies exist in which negative consequences are found to be associated with incest.

Psychological factors associated with the victim include depression and feelings of guilt (Browning and Boatman, 1977). In a study by Peretti and Banks (1980), ten negative psychological factors were identified within the context of father/daughter incest. They included anxiety, fear, humiliation, guilt, self-devaluation, value-conflict, sexual meaninglessness, heterosexual aversiveness and suicide contemplation.

Behavioral variables associated with the victim of incest include promiscuity, illegitimate births, prostitution and frigidity (Lukianowicz, 1972). Suicide attempts, acute traumatic neurosis, school problems, delinquent behavior and sexual acting-out are also seen in some persons who have experienced incestuous relationships (Meiselman, 1978).

Not as many studies exist concerning the initiator of an incestuous relationship. Imprisonment can be a result if convicted. Guilt, embarrassment and depression may also be evident (Meiselman, 1978). Nonparticipant family members may or may not be aware of the incestuous behavior within the family. Guilt and embarrassment are two possible reactions to the knowledge of incest within the family. Fear of family breakup may be another response (Nakashima and Zakus, 1977).

Incest not only affects the individual, but the entire family. A cyclical pattern can be noted, in which internal family problems,
stress and disorganization make the family more vulnerable to incestuous behaviors, possibly leading to continued family problems and disorganization.

Incest poses unique problems because of the family setting. Warner (1980) states that "interfamilial sexual abuse is unique in that it involves the problem of continued daily contact between the perpetrator, victim and others." Warner (1980) also states; "unlike most cases of sexual abuse, incest involves persons who have long-term, primary and complex relationships with one another--relationships that will continue to influence all family members whether or not they are physically separated from one another."

The actual incidence of incest is not known and is difficult to estimate since cases may go undetected or unreported. Possible reasons for the lack of detection and reporting may be: (1) the taboo nature of the act of incest, (2) the acknowledged presence of incest as a threat to family members and family organization, (3) the feelings of embarrassment or guilt which may accompany the airing of the family "secret", (4) the threat of family separation, or (5) the lack of negative effects for either the individual or the family.

In summary, incest appears to be more widespread than previously thought. Negative aspects of having been or of being involved in an incestuous relationship have been identified, while in a limited number of incestuous experiences, no negative results were noted. Even though the exact incidence of incest is unknown, tools for further understanding are needed.
Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to review literature related to incest, apply a theoretical framework to incest and design a questionnaire/interview schedule which is a synthesis of indicators of incest in families as found in research literature. The theoretical basis for the paper is Crisis Theory as developed by Reuben Hill. A literature review is included concerning a theoretical background and an overview of incest-related research.

The questionnaire/interview schedule is designed in response to family and individual variables associated with incest throughout the literature. Three different forms were developed. Form I, when validated, is for use with clients in a retrospective sense, in that they are no longer in the incestuous relationship. Form II - Children, when validated, is for use by professionals working with children in identifying the likelihood of incestuous behavior being present in their families. Form III - Adults, when validated, is for use by professionals with parents or guardians in identifying the likelihood of incestuous behavior being present in their families. A pre-test was conducted on all forms to test the readability of the questionnaire/interview schedule. Validation of the questionnaire/interview schedule will be conducted in future research.
Chapter II

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

This chapter is divided into three parts. Part one is a review of several family theories. Part two includes a rationale explaining why each theory was or was not used for the study. In part three, Hill's Crisis Theory is applied to incest.

Overview of Theories

Social Exchange Theory. Social Exchange Theory, also referred to as the theory of choice and exchange, can be applied to the family. Nye explains the basic premise by stating, "Humans avoid costly and seek rewarding statuses, relationships and interaction and feeling states to the end that their profits are maximized... or to minimize their losses." (Nye in Burr, 1979). Homans (1961) explains social exchange or association, "as an exchange of activity, tangible or intangible, and more or less rewarding or costly, between at least two persons." Important concepts in social exchange theory include: (1) rewards, which are statuses, relationships, interaction, experiences other than interaction, and feelings which provide gratification to people, (2) costs, which are any statuses, relationships, interaction, milieu or feelings disliked by an individual, and (3) profits, which can be determined in terms of rewards and punishments involved in a contemplated sequence of actions (Nye in Burr, 1979).

Blau (1964) states that social exchange can be observed most anywhere, "not only in market relations but also in friendship..."
and even in love, as we have seen, as well as in many social relations between these extremes in intimacy." He provides examples such as neighbors exchanging favors, children exchanging toys, colleagues exchanging assistance and acquaintances exchanging courtesies.

The central core of the theory is identified as choice. The human being is viewed as a person that makes an endless number of choices during his/her lifetime. The reason for making such choices is to reduce costs and increase rewards for the most profits available (Nye in Burr, 1979). For example, if a person is given the choice of several jobs, most likely the person will consider which position has the most rewards and the least number of costs, thus maximizing the possibility of profit.

Application of Social Exchange Theory is viewed as highly useful in terms of courtship processes and marriage relationships (Holman and Burr, 1980). However, Holman and Burr (1980) also add, "...in a more complex relationship the exchange processes become more complicated, long term, subtle and unconscious and frequently irrelevant. Thus the theory loses much of its utility."

General Systems Theory. General Systems Theory is sometimes referred to as a general science of "wholeness". Von Bertalanffy (1968) foresees General Systems Theory as aiding the integration of the sciences and scientific education.

Within the General Systems Theory one views the family as a system, which is defined as "a set of objects, together with relationships between the objects and between their attributes." (Hill, 1962).
Von Bertalanffy (1968) one of the pioneers of General Systems Theory, defines systems as, "sets of elements standing in interaction."

Within the system, there are boundaries, which vary on a continuum from open to closed, along with units and the specification of relationship among the units. Of central concern within the system is what happens to the input as it is processed by the system on its way to becoming an output (Broderick and Smith in Burr, 1979). Such a process is influenced by rules of transformation or family rules in which prescribed ways of responding or reacting are maintained.

**Boundary**

Environmental Input \(\rightarrow\) Family (governed by rules) \(\rightarrow\) Output

**Symbolic Interaction.** Symbolic Interaction is another valuable theoretical perspective used to study the family. A basic contention of symbolic interactionists is that "the best way to understand humans is to deal with the mentalistic meanings and values that occur in the minds of people, because that is the most direct cause of their behavior" (Burr, Leigh, Day and Constantine in Burr, 1979). In other words, key in on how a person defines or understands something and the meaning that something has to that person.

Another focus is on "the nature of the feedback from intimate associates in primary groups, because how a person behaves depends on what occurs within intimate interactions" (Burr, Leigh, Day and Constantine in Burr, 1979). Thus, symbolic interaction keys in on
interactions among people and the meanings people ascribe to these interactions.

The concept of self is used extensively in symbolic interaction. The "self" is described as having several different parts. Symbolic interactionists distinguish between the physical and social self and the I and me aspects of the "self." The "self" is described as emerging from social interaction. The "self" is viewed as "a social structure existing in the activity of viewing oneself reflexively." (Stryker in Rosenberg, 1981).

Conflict Theory. Conflict Theory utilizes the ideas of competition, conflict, cooperation and consensus. Organizations, societies and families are viewed as a give and take proposition in which harmony can be achieved only through consensus and cooperation. Competition is identified as one of the key concepts and is defined as "a state of negative interdependence between the elements of a social system" (Sprey in Burr, 1979). Cooperation is also seen as a key concept in the explanation of family behavior. Sprey (1969) states that, "in a conflict framework the focus is no longer the properties of the differences per se, but rather the ability of the family members to deal with the latter, regardless of content and magnitude."

If one were to analyze relationships in terms of Conflict Theory, relationships would be defined as competitive. Thus, in such a competitive relationship, conflict and confrontation takes place between individuals and groups, concerning resources, goals and goods. A consensus is sought to achieve equilibrium. People use techniques such as negotiation, bargaining, power plays, aggression, threats and/or promises to reach the goal of consensus (Sprey, 1969, 1971).
Some of the basic assumptions that underlie the conflict approach to understanding families include: (1) human beings are self-centered implying that the self comes first, and (2) human societies operate under conditions of scarcity for resources, thus putting the individuals into a competitive situation. With such assumptions, the general view of marriage and the family as an "ongoing, competitive social system" arises (Sprey in Burr, 1979).

Crisis Theory. Hill's Crisis Theory is based on earlier works by Ernest Burgess (1937) and Robert Angell (1936). Angell (1936) studied the strengths of family organization and found that some families appear to be "crisis-proof" where others were "crisis-prone." He identified certain characteristics that seemed to make certain families more crisis-proof. Some of the characteristics included: (1) agreement on role structure, (2) subordination of personal ambitions to family goals, (3) family satisfactions which successfully meet the physical and emotional needs of its members, and (4) goals toward which the family is moving collectively (Hill and Hansen, 1962).

One may assume that if these are lacking a family would tend to be more crisis-prone. Angell (1936) also recognized that an initial disturbance in one area of family life tends to create tension in other areas.

In early works on success and failure in marriage and other related areas, Burgess (1937) classified crises into three categories. The first he identified as a "change in status", the next as "conflict among its members in the conception of their roles" and the third as the "loss of family members by departure, desertion, divorce or death" (Burgess in Hill, 1949).
Using some of the basic premises concerning families and crises previously presented by other researchers, Hill (1949) conducted a study of family adjustment to war separation and reunion. The author sought to pinpoint characteristics of successful versus unsuccessful families in adjusting to war separation and reunion.

Early in the book, *Families Under Stress*, Hill (1949) distinguishes between two different sources of crises. He describes some crises as resulting from extra-family circumstances such as a flood or tornado or economic depression. On the other hand, crisis can also evolve from inter-personal relations within the family.

Through his work in studying families subject to war separation, Hill identified variables to determine whether a given event becomes a crisis for any given family. Variables identified include: (1) the hardships of the situation or the event itself, designated as variable (A) (later to be labeled stressor events), (2) the resources of the family, its role structure, flexibility and previous history with crisis, designated as variable (B), (3) the definition the family makes of the event, that is, whether family members treat the event as if it were or as if it were not a threat to their status, their goals and objectives, designated as variable (C). Variables (A), (B) and (C) interact to determine whether a crisis, designated as variable (X), will evolve or not.

Hill did carry his work further into the area of recovery or reorganization after a crisis situation has evolved. Hill also reworked his research and updated factors found to be "related to the ability of families to recover from crisis" (Burr, 1973).
The factors listed below are not part of the ABCX model, but factors affecting adjustment to a crisis after it has evolved. The ABCX model focuses more on whether the occurrence of a given life event results in crisis. Along with the factors of integration and adaptability established by Angell (1936), Hill added the factors of: (1) suddenness of the event, (2) individuated versus kinship type of community, (3) affectional patterns, (4) marital adjustment, (5) power, (6) social participation of wives outside the home, and (7) previous successful experience with stress.

**Rationale for Use of Crisis Theory**

Social Exchange Theory, as previously stated, applies well to processes such as courtship or marriage relationships. When a more complex relationship exists in which the exchange processes become more subtle or even unconscious or long term, the theory becomes too difficult to pinpoint all exchanges, thus losing much of its usefulness (Holman and Burr, 1980).

Symbolic Interaction is a more general, broad-based and overall view of interaction patterns in the family, than in families specifically experiencing stressful situations. Hill's ABCX model of Crisis Theory utilizes some of the ideas of symbolic interaction, such as focusing on the process of family relationships and interaction and noting what influences these processes. Hill's theory addresses more specifically families facing stress. There are possibilities for using symbolic interaction in terms of a question asked by Hanson and Johnson (Burr, 1979), "When stressful events occur,
what influences do they have on the patterns of interaction in families?" Such a step has not yet been taken by symbolic interactionists.

General Systems Theory is also a more general approach to understanding families. Hill utilizes some of the components of General Systems Theory in that a family is a set of individuals in a process of interaction, as seen in the ABCX model. For example, stressor events are introduced into the family and the family must process them in some way.

Conflict Theory has as its focus larger organizations and societies, rather than individuals. The theory at its present stage of development, lacks middle range theories in which one variable is identified as influencing another. Thus, applying it to families in stressful situations would be cumbersome and difficult to carry out.

Crisis Theory keys in specifically on families in crisis. It views the family as a group of individuals responding to stressor events in a unique way for each family depending on resources available and how the family defines the situation. The ABCX model of Crisis Theory is adopted for this study because of it's specific design in response to families in crisis.

**Application of Crisis Theory to Incest**

Following early works by Burgess (1937) and Angell (1936), Hill established the ABCX model of Crisis Theory. As depicted by Burr (1979) a stressor event (A) leads to a crisis (X). The amount of crisis (X) in the family social system varies from situation to situation and from family to family. Variable (C), the family's
definition of the seriousness of the changes, influences the family's vulnerability to the stress (B) which influences the process of stressor event(s) (A) leading to crisis (X). The amount of change the family experiences also interacts in the process and influences the amount of crisis experienced by the family. (See Figure I).

Variable (A) was originally identified as "the hardships of the situation or event itself" (Hill, 1949). Hill (1949) went on to define the term hardship as "those aspects of a crisis-precipitating event which ordinarily demand a response in terms of resources which the event itself has temporarily paralyzed or made unavailable."

In later writings, Hill identifies variable (A) as the crisis-provoking event or stressor event (Hill, 1958, Hill and Hanson, 1962), defined as "a situation for which the family has had little or no prior preparation." Burr (1973) proposes that in order for variable (A) to be useable in forming propositions, it must be defined as a variable and indicate how it varies. Thus, variable (A), the stressor event, is defined as "an event that produces a change in the family social system" (Burr, 1973). By using Burr's definition, one can view some stressor events as producing large amounts of crisis while others produce very little crisis. For the purpose of this study, Burr's (1973) definition will be utilized.

In terms of incest, stressor events may include events as described by Brown (1978) in his profile of incestuous families. Recent changes in family patterns such as change in job status, especially unemployment, change of residence, death of a family
Stressor Event

Family's definition of the seriousness of the changes

Amount of change

The amount of change

Amount of crisis in the family

Family's vulnerability to stress (resources of the family)

Burr Interpretation of Reuben Hill's ABCX Model
member or a lingering mental or physical illness can be viewed as stressor events. Herman and Hirschman (1981) noted that in families they studied the mothers were disabled in some way.

Variable (B), the family's vulnerability to stress, is defined by Hill (1949) as the "crisis meeting resources within the family." In other words, variable (B) is the family's ability to prevent a change-producing or stressor event from creating a crisis situation. Some families are vulnerable or have few or inadequate resources to prevent a crisis situation from evolving when a stressor event is introduced into the family. Research has identified many familial and individual characteristics that are associated with incestuous activities in families. Such characteristics could be viewed as predisposing a family or individual to participate in incestuous behavior or in other words, as factors that make incest more likely within some families. Characteristics include: (1) role confusion (Brown, 1978), (2) role reversal (Butler, 1978; Browning and Boatman, 1977; Eist, 1968 and Machotka, 1967)*, (3) availability of the victim (Herman and Hirschman, 1981; Gentry, 1978; Brown, 1978), (4) sexual dysfunction between marital partners (Brown, 1978; Nakashima and Zakus, 1977), (5) overprotectiveness of the daughter's outside activities (Brown, 1978; Weinberg, 1955), (6) fear of family separation (Brown, 1978; Nakashima and Zakus, 1977),

* Throughout the literature the terms role confusion and role reversal are used interchangeably, though conceptually the terms are different. Role confusion refers to an unclear distinction between adult and child roles. Role reversal is a switching of roles between persons.
(7) overcrowdedness (Weinberg, 1955), (8) little contact with the world outside the family (Nakashima and Zakus, 1977), (9) alcohol or other drug problem (Peretti and Banks, 1980; Rosenfeld, 1977; Awad, 1976). This dimension is illustrated below.

As stated previously in Hill's (1949) original theory, the idea of "hardships of life" was added as a variable (A). Later he labeled variable (M, stressor event(s)). In later writings, the amount of change was still viewed as an integral variable of the model, interjected at a different level. (See Figure 1). Burr (1973) proposes that the greater the amount of change, the greater the amount of crisis the family experiences. It is important to note that Murray (1941) originally defined crisis as a stressor event leading to a crisis of family disorganization or family break-up. This dimension is illustrated below.

Some of the characteristics could be viewed as resources used by families to cope with stressful events. For example, use of alcohol or other drugs may be used by family members as a resource to deal with stressful situations.

Variable (C), the definition the family makes of the event, is defined as "whether the family defines the change in the system as easy or difficult" (Burr, 1973). For example, if the father of a family loses his job and views the incident positively, such as looking for other employment or other options, then the event may not lead to a
crisis situation. On the other hand, if a father loses a job and views the event as difficult or impossible to solve or respond to appropriately, stress may arise to the point of crisis. Variable (C) influences the family's vulnerability to the stressor event(s).

As stated previously in Hill's (1949) original theory, the idea of "hardships of the events" was included as a variable (A). Later he labeled variable (A), stressor event(s). In later writings the amount of change was still viewed as an integral variable of the ABCX model, but was interjected at a different point (Burr, 1973). (See Figure I). Burr (1973) proposes that the greater the amount of change, the greater the amount of crisis that results from the event.

It is important to note that incest could be interjected at various points in the ABCX model. For example, incest could be viewed as a stressor event leading to a crisis of family disorganization or family break-up. This dimension is illustrated below.

Incest can also be viewed as a family's response to stress as the result of various stressor events. Thus, incest can be the crisis (X).
Watzlawick, Beavin and Jackson (1967) address the idea that where one decides to intervene in a series of events will affect the understanding and perception of the situation. The authors label this phenomena, "the punctuation of the sequence of events." The idea of punctuation is defined as "organizing behavioral events." As stated by Whorf, Bateson and Jackson in Watzlawick, et. al. (1967), "The stimulus-response psychologist typically confines his attention to sequences of interchange so short that it is possible to label one item of input as "stimulus" and another item as "reinforcement" while labeling what the subject does between these two events as "response." Within the short sequence so excised, it is possible to talk about the "psychology" of the subject. In contrast, the sequences of interchange which we are here discussing are very much longer and, therefore, have the characteristic that every item in the sequence is simultaneously stimulus, response and reinforcement." (p. 54-55).

The authors cite an example of a marital relationship in which a husband is withdrawing and a wife is nagging in a continuous series of interchanges. If one chooses to look at the relationship at one point, one may understand the situation as the wife being critical and nagging because of her husband's behavior; in other words, she is simply reacting to his passivity. But, if someone were to intervene at the point of the husband withdrawing because his wife is nagging, the situation appears the opposite. Thus, where someone decides to "punctuate" or intervene in a series of events will affect how one understands or views the situation.

In summary, Hill's ABCX model of Crisis Theory can be a valuable tool in further understanding of incest in families. Keeping in mind Watzlawick, Beavin and Jackson's thoughts on the punctuation of a
series of events can help one in viewing incest within the process of total family functioning rather than regarding incest as an isolated event.

This review of literature is divided into five parts. Part one is a review of the literature that deals with the problems in defining incest. Part two is a review of the ways in which the origin of the incest taboo is explained. Possible reasons for the taboo's continued existence are also included. Part three includes some approximations of the incidence of incest and a review of various empirical and clinical research concerning incest. Such studies point out characteristics of persons and families involved with incest and responses and reactions to incest. In part four, techniques for the treatment of persons and families having been involved in incestuous relationships will be briefly reviewed. Part five includes a brief outline of elements to be aware of concerning the methodology used by researchers studying incest.

Definitions

Many definitions of incest are proposed throughout the literature. Definitions range from sexual intercourse to a fantasized sexual act (Gordon, 1955). Persons included in the scope of incest range from nuclear family members to persons only remotely related (Meiselman, 1978). Problems in defining incest seem to stem from two areas: (1) the specific acts to include, and (2) which persons can be considered too closely related to marry (Rosenfeld, 1977). Sexual relations involving father and daughter, mother and son, brother and sister are included in defining incest in many sources.
Chapter III

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This review of literature is divided into five parts. Part one is a review of the literature that deals with the problems in defining incest. Part two is a review of the ways in which the origin of the incest taboo is explained. Possible reasons for the taboo's continued existence are also included. Part three includes some approximations of the incidence of incest and a review of various empirical and clinical research concerning incest. Such studies point out characteristics of persons and families involved with incest and responses and reactions to incest. In part four, techniques for the treatment of persons and families having been involved in incestuous relationships will be briefly reviewed. Part five includes a brief outline of elements to be aware of concerning the methodology used by researchers studying incest.

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Homosexual relations, such as mother and daughter or father and son relationships are also considered incestuous (Awad, 1976). Sexual relations between various "legal" relatives such as stepparents or adoptive parents and their children are also included in the scope of incest (Weinberg, 1955). Some authors include sexual relations with uncles, aunts, cousins and grandparents (Lukianowicz, 1972). Meiselman (1978) states, "A minority extend the taboo to cover everyone who was known to be even remotely related to an individual."

What sexual acts to consider also varies. The strictest criterion used to describe incest is actual genital intercourse. Other acts such as petting or fondling may also be included. At the other end of the spectrum the thought of a sexual act with a family member is considered to be incest (Gordon, 1955).

Sagarin (1977) notes the importance of differentiating between true and statutory incest. The term true incest is used if the participants are genetically related, while the term statutory incest is used if the participants are "contractually related", such as stepfather and stepdaughter. Sagarin (1977) contends that, "It should be logical to expect that the meaning of the act is entirely different to both participants, depending on whether a consanguineal tie is known or believed to be present."

Brant and Tisza (1976), in their study based on emergency room records and clinical experiences, discuss "sexual misuse" which they define as "exposure of a child within a given socio-cultural context to sexual stimulation inappropriate for the child's age and level of development." They conclude that sexual misuse is often a characteristic of a disorganized or dysfunctional family.
Rosenfeld (1977) draws a comparison between the varying definitions used by professionals and organizations. He notes that while one clinician may define various behavior as incestuous, a judge, in legal terms, may not.

Origins of the Incest Taboo

Initially, incest was a taboo behavior based on ethical and religious principles. Though religious and ethical reasons are still utilized, most literature concerning the origin and prevalence of the incest taboo stem from two distinct arguments. One side of the spectrum is biologically based, the other more socially oriented.

Biological theories concerning the origin of the incest taboo are based on the idea that inbreeding is damaging to the offspring of incestuous relationships (Noble, 1978). Biological and genetic outcomes attributed to incestuous unions include mental deficiencies, genetic deterioration, albinism, dwarfism and severe congenital sensory losses (Noble, 1978; Meiselman, 1978).

Even though the biological theories are widely supported, many researchers propose socially and psychologically oriented theories. Socialization and family well-being appear to be the focal points of explanations of the incest taboo based on the social sciences. Supporters of such theories believe that if incest were allowed to take place, the family would suffer and possibly disintegrate. The incest taboo serves as a regulator, a socializer aiding the family in the normal development of their children. If incest were allowed to take place, children would not develop needed independence; the process of separation
would be hindered, confusion of family roles and relations would persist and socialization would be lacking (Noble, 1978; Frances and Frances, 1976; Parson, 1964). Exceptions to the taboo are discussed in related literature. One of the most often cited examples is that of ancient Egypt, specifically Cleopatra, a sibling spouse. Various primitive societies allowed some incestuous unions as a part of a ceremony or ritual. For example, in an area of Africa, father and daughter have sexual relations prior to the father setting out on a hunting excursion. Supposedly the sexual act guarantees success (Meiselman, 1978).

Empirical and Clinical Research

Incidence. Even though a taboo does exist, thus restricting the occurrence of incest, the behavior still takes place today. The rate of incidence of incest is speculative and usually offered as an estimate. Estimations include those based on criminal statistics, which according to Weinberg (1955) is one case per million persons per year. Other figures range from 5,000 cases per million (Nakashima, 1977) to one or two per hundred (Meiselman, 1978). Peretti and Banks (1980) propose a rate in terms of pairs, by stating, "In the United States, the incidence of incest has been estimated to occur from three hundred thousand pairs to one million pairs of people each year." As stated by Sagarin (1977), "Statistics are meager and it is now accepted that more incest occurs than reaches the courts."

Weinberg (1955) cites father or stepfather and daughter incest as the most common. Butler (1978) also states that the most common type of incest is adult male, whether father, grandfather, stepfather, older brother or uncle and younger female victim. Brother-sister incest
is second, followed by mother-son and homosexual incest (Weinberg, 1955). Some sources contend that sister-brother incest is the most prevalent (Finkelhor, 1980; Sagarin, 1977). Due to the fewer negative consequences associated with sibling incest it is simply not reported as often.

**Characteristics and Responses of Incestuous Families.** As a result of various research studies conducted on the topic of incest, characteristics and responses of those involved have been noted. In terms of incestuous families, Nakashima and Zakus (1977) conducted a study based on clinical experiences with 23 cases of incest. Interviews and collaborative information from various social service agencies were used as the data source. They identify two types of families in which incest has been detected. The "classic incest family" is described as "healthy" in the eyes of most outsiders. Little contact with the world outside the family is allowed, thus, little or no acting-out behavior by the children is observed. The families are further described as being rigid and restrictive with problems being well concealed. The "multi-problem incest family" is described as having many problems, of which incest is one. Acting-out behaviors were common and contact with at least one or more other agencies had taken place. The characteristic of family disorganization is referred to in other studies as well (McCown, 1980; Weinberg, 1955; Bender, 1937 and 1952).

Through the Nakashima and Zakus study (1977) three characteristics were found to be present in all cases whether previously categorized as "classic" or "multiproblem" families. The characteristics were:
(1) sexual difficulties between parents, (2) mothers condoning incest, and (3) shared fears of family disintegration by all individuals.

Sexual difficulties between parents has also been found to be common in other clinically based studies (Warner, 1980; Brown, 1978; Bernstein, 1977; Machotka, 1967). Several other studies found the mothers to be colluding in the father-daughter relationship (McCown, 1980; Connell, 1978). Armstrong's (1978) research contradicts the studies which contend that the mothers almost always knew or were supporting the relationship. She suggests that most of the 183 women she spoke with did not know (1978). She goes on to say that in cases of father-daughter incest when a mother eventually became aware of the situation, that mothers were then in a double bind. According to society, not only are mothers supposed to support and stand behind the husband, mothers are also to support and protect the children. Thus, the mother is in a no-win situation and emotions and loyalties are strained. Distorted or skewed emotional systems and the fear of family separation were found in other studies as well (Brown, 1978; Rosenfeld, 1977).

Like Nakashima and Zakus (1977), Weinberg (1955) in his study of approximately 200 people, also described two types of families. The first family type is one in which the family members find it difficult to foster relationships outside the family and relate primarily to each other. The other family type is described as promiscuous where sexual limits and attitudes are poorly defined. Some similarities can be noted between the Nakashima and Zakus types and the Weinberg types, primarily in the amount of contact with people outside the family and the acting-out behavior.
In a more controlled study, Herman and Hirschman (1981) identify additional characteristics of families in which incest may be detected. Forty women who had experienced incest with their fathers were compared to 20 women who reported that their fathers had been suggestive, but had stopped short of actual incest behavior. Subjects were roughly matched by age, class, religiosity and race. The authors found that in the families in which overt incest had taken place, the fathers were dominant and used force and intimidation, the mothers were disabled in some way and the women, during adolescence, had experienced acting-out behaviors.

Other studies support Herman and Hirschman's findings. In the Brown (1978) study, fathers were described as being "extremely overprotective or overrestrictive of the daughters' social activities." Weinberg (1955) also described fathers as being dominant through intimidation and physical violence. The opportunity for incest to take place, as a result of one parent being disabled or absent from the family for a period of time was also noted by other researchers (Gentry, 1978; Brown, 1978).

Another characteristic of the incestuous family is role confusion in that the children assume or are assigned and carry out many adult responsibilities (Warner, 1980; Bogopolsky, 1979; Brown, 1978; Eist, 1968; Machotka, 1967). For example, in a father-daughter incest relationship, the daughter may assume through either assignment or maternal default, many adult responsibilities which echo the typical roles and responsibilities of a mother and/or wife. Browning and Boatman (1977) identify such a phenomenon as a risk factor describing
the situation as the "eldest daughter who has been forced to play the "little mother" role with regard to household duties and the care of younger siblings."

Alcoholism or other drug use is also noted within incestuous families. Statistics vary on the percentage of family members involved in drinking or drug episodes. In reference to the Herman and Hirschman (1981) study, the mother was at times disabled due to alcoholism. Meiselman (1978) noted the use of alcohol in lowering inhibitions or setting the stage for incestuous behaviors in fathers.

Reactions to incest in terms of the entire family vary. In a 1977 compilation of research studies, Rosenfeld noted feelings of anger, guilt and anxiety directed at the parent who did not prevent the incest. Gentry (1978) also includes the feelings of anxiety and denial by some families and feelings of failure and rejection by other families. Threats are often made by family members to dissolve the marriage relationship or to break up the family, yet such an event seldom actually happens, possibly due to ambivalence and interdependency of family members (Gentry, 1978).

Characteristics and Responses of the Victim. In terms of characteristics and responses of the victim, the eldest daughter is the most likely victim of incest within a family (McCown, 1980; Butler, 1978; Weinberg, 1955). Some authors have described the victims as being seductive (Bender and Blau, 1937), while others describe them as being forced into adult roles which can encompass the sexual aspect of that role (Brown, 1978; Browning and Boatman, 1977; Eist, 1968; Machotka, 1967).
Most sources agree that children need warmth and affection and, thus, may be willing or be coerced or forced into accepting any form of attention which sometimes includes incest. Butler (1978) summarizes by stating, "Victims are white, black, Latin and Asian. They are male and female. They are five, seven and twelve years old. They are fat, skinny, beautiful and ugly, poor and middle class. Incest is relentlessly democratic."

Many studies touch on the effects on the victim of an incestuous relationship. Since the majority of incest cases reported involve father-daughter family members, more information is available concerning women as victims. Peretti and Banks (1980) conducted a study in which 41 women in a Chicago area were interviewed specifically concerning self-perceived negative effects. The sample was a matched group, holding resistance and involuntary participation constant. As a result, ten negative psychosocial variables were identified. The variables were, in order of frequency of response, anxiety, fear, humiliation, guilt, self-devaluation, value conflicts, sexual meaninglessness, sexual frigidity, heterosexual aversiveness and suicide contemplation. Eighty-eight percent of the women included anxiety, while 27 percent stated suicide contemplation.

Other studies found many of the variables identified in the Peretti and Banks (1980) study. Meiselman (1978) compared 16 women who had been involved in an incestuous relationship to 16 women who had not. The women were matched by age, education, ethnic group, and referring therapist. It was noted that incest history patients reported more problems in the area of sexuality than those women
having never been involved in an incestuous relationship. Such findings reinforce the several sexually related variables included in the Peretti and Banks (1980) study. Tsai and Wagner (1978) in their clinical work with women also found difficulties in sexual functioning for women having been involved in incestuous relationships. Kaufman (1954) and Tsai and Wagner (1978) also found guilt and depression present in the girls or women included in their clinical studies. Lukianowicz (1972) and Nakashima (1977) cited depression and suicide attempts in their sample in which follow-up studies were done.

Behavioral characteristics or responses are also associated with involvement in incestuous relationships. Lukianowicz (1972) conducted interviews with 26 persons in various settings. Out patient clinics, guidance centers, homes for run-away girls were used as sources of participants. Among characteristics found were promiscuity, frigidity and acting out behaviors, such as running away, drug use and prostitution. Other studies also support such findings (Rosenfeld, 1977; Nakashima, 1977; Bernstein, 1977; Malmquist, 1966).

Some researchers in rather dated studies have come to the conclusion that incest results in no negative effects. Rasmussen (1934) found that 46 out of 54 persons included in the study were said to have "normal adult adjustment." Bender and Grugett (1952) conducted a study with children who had been hospitalized because of sexual involvement with an adult and concluded that most of the children had no negative effects, psychologically, from the experience. Rascovsky and Rascovsky (1950) concluded that incest served to prevent manic-depressive psychosis. Friday (1975) includes experiences of women
in which incest has been a positive experience. For example, brother-sister and uncle-niece relationships was described as "natural" by one person. One must note that the situations described by Friday were the result of letters written to the author and that no scientifically based study was carried out.

**Characteristics and Responses of Initiator.** In looking more specifically at the characteristics and responses of the initiator in an incestuous relationship, Butler (1978), pinpoints two personality traits of the father initiator. She found the characteristics to be consistent throughout interviews with hundreds of men and women and through research into counseling programs. The first type is a person who has "a lack of impulse control, either sexual or emotional. The second trait is a confusion of roles in which the child is regarded at times as something other than a child, or as a surrogate for someone else."

Some studies describe the male initiator as aggressive and physically violent (Herman and Hirschman, 1981; Weinberg, 1955). Other studies describe the male more in terms of being manipulative, coercive or intimidating, but not physically violent (Warner, 1980; Butler, 1978; Meiselman, 1978).

Studies also describe the male initiator as having been physically abused or neglected as a child (Bernstein, 1977; Weinberg, 1955). Use of alcohol or other drugs (Meiselman, 1978; Anderson, 1976) and dominance within the family (Meiselman, 1978; Lustig, 1966) are also noted as characteristics.
Responses to the situation vary. Some feel no guilt and explain the behavior by stating that it is their duty or right to teach their child about sex (Bernstein, 1977). Gentry (1978) describes a variety of responses. Some persons deny the behavior, others make promises to reform, others withdraw out of guilt, shame and fear.

Characteristics of Other Incest Forms. Other forms of incest are studied to a lesser degree, thus, less information is available concerning brother-sister, mother-son and homosexual incest. Finkelhor (1980), in a survey of 796 college students, at six New England colleges, found that 15% of the females and ten percent of the males reported a variety of sexual experiences with siblings. Questionnaires were distributed in which the subject of sibling sex was approached indirectly. A wide variety of questions were included. Types of sexual activity ranged from "sex play" (which was the most prevalent) to actual intercourse (least prevalent). Variables associated with the experience included higher levels of sexual self-esteem and higher levels of current sexual activity for females that reported a positive sibling sex experience. Whether the experience was negative or positive depended on the age difference in the children. For example, a negative experience resulted more often if an older brother (by several years) forcibly exploited a younger sister. Much sexual activity among siblings was viewed as developmental or as the result of curiosity of the opposite sex.

Males can also be victims of incest, by either male adult family members or female adult family members. Raybin (1969) notes the lack of information concerning homosexual incest. From the lack of
literature Raybin (1969) concludes that homosexual incest is a rare phenomenon. He includes a case study of one family in which multigenerational incest has occurred. Initiators are described as dominant and aggressive. Women in the family are seen as denying the behavior and being subservient to the domineering ways of the males within the family. Raybin (1969) notes the entire family's involvement as evidence of family distortion in communication and interaction.

Langsley (1968) reported one case in which a father and son participated in homosexual incest during the son's early adolescence. He found that the incest behavior in this particular case was not related to family problems as noted by Raybin (1969) but to the father's intrapsychic problems.

Awad (1976) also cites a case study involving a father-son incest situation. In this particular case, the father was intoxicated during incest episodes, which was viewed as lowering inhibitions to latent homosexual tendencies of the father. Marital difficulties were also noted. There was also acting-out behavior by the son. The family described by Awad (1976) more closely resembles the father-daughter incest family constellation.

From involvement in a child sexual abuse treatment program, Nasjleti (1980) has concluded that our society makes it difficult for males to express feelings of helplessness and vulnerability. The author contends that it is more difficult for boys or men to expose their victimization. Such societal expectations may influence the number of reported cases of incest in which males were victims.
The topic of female initiators is addressed by Weinberg (1955). The females were seen as dominant, while the male adult figure was either absent or very subordinate. Attitudes of the female initiator toward children varied from seeing the children as a burden to being possessive and in constant control of the children.

Treatment

After incest occurs within a family or has been reported to persons outside the family constellation, treatment may be sought by family members, suggested by friends or confidants or required by the courts. Nakashima (1977) states that "intervention must be planned according to the needs of each individual case." Techniques include physical separation, individual treatment, marital counseling and family therapy.

As previously mentioned, protection from further incest is suggested as one of the first steps in treatment (Gentry, 1978; Meiselman, 1978; Peters, 1976). Many times victims are removed from the home to provide such protection.

Counseling and various types of therapy for individuals is another avenue of intervention. In terms of the victim, Gentry (1978) emphasizes the need for nonsexual affection, open discussion of feelings, self-concept improvement and the need for appropriate role models. Case-handling recommendations are quite different from person to person (Meiselman, 1978). Therapy groups are sometimes used as a positive source of support for family members (Tsai and Wagner, 1978).
Marital counseling can focus on factors within the marital relationship that may have influenced the incest behavior in some way. Communication, sexual relations, role responsibilities and rights can be areas of concern.

Family therapy is included in several sources of recommendations for treatment and is viewed by some as being the most appropriate treatment modality (McCown, 1980; Meiselman, 1978; Nakashima, 1977; Eist and Mandel, 1968; Machotka, 1967). It focuses on pathological family dynamics rather than the sexual activity which is seen as a symptom of the underlying skewed family relationship problems (Nakashima, 1977). One model for treating the incestuous family is the Humanistic Treatment Model in Santa Clara, California. Emphasis is first on strengths of the family and then on the problem. Within the family therapy setting, Gentry (1978) also suggests capitalizing on family strengths, allowing for expression of feelings and also the need for fostering community support.

In summary, considering all treatment models and suggestions, prevention must be recognized as the best "treatment" for incest. By being aware of variables that are associated with incestuous families, one can take a valuable step toward prevention.

Research Note

Throughout the literature on incest, it is important to note the methodology used in providing data and conclusions. Sample size varies greatly from study to study. Some writers present only one or two case studies while others include hundreds of people. For example,
Awad (1976) presents information based on one case of incest, while Weinberg (1955) included over 200 people in his study.

One must also take note of where the sample was obtained. Many studies use mental health centers, adolescent clinics or hospital clinics (Meiselman, 1980; Peretti and Banks, 1980; Nakashima, 1977). Others gather data based on their own private clinical experiences (Rosenfeld, 1977). Non-clinical samples are not included in many studies.

The technique used to gather data can also vary from clinical impressions to more controlled studies in which standard questionnaires and control groups are used. In considering all factors, one must be cautious not to overgeneralize the results and conclusions obtained in research studies concerning incest.
Chapter IV

METHODS, PROCEDURES AND RESULTS

Rationale for Questionnaire/Interview Schedule

The questionnaire/interview schedule is a synthesis of indicators of incest in families found in research literature. The questions are based on characteristics and life events of individuals and families which repeatedly appear in research studies of incest. Questions are included in reference to the following categories: (1) background information, (2) family make-up, (3) crowdedness in the home, (4) parents' marital relationship, (5) contact with others, (6) situational factors, (7) fear of family break-up, (8) role confusion, (9) changes in family patterns, (10) acting-out behaviors, (11) adult-caretaker characteristics, (12) chemical use, (13) family sexual activity.

Information need not be obtained only in response to direct questions. Being aware of individual and family characteristics can be beneficial to persons working with children and families. The questionnaire/interview schedule is presented in three forms. Form I, when validated, can be used with clients in a retrospective sense, in that the client is no longer in the incestuous relationship or household. Form II, when validated, is for use by professionals with children in identifying the likelihood of incestuous behavior being present in their families. Form III, when validated, is for use by professionals with parents or guardians in identifying the likelihood of incestuous behavior being present in their families.
A rationale is provided for each category in Form I based on research findings. Forms II and III include the same general categories, the questions being restated in order to be appropriate for the population for which they are intended. They follow the same rationale.

**Background Information.** Questions concerning sex, age, marital status and number of children parented can be used for control purposes in matching sample groups. One could also add questions concerning socio-economic status and religiosity. Such techniques are used in controlled studies (Herman and Hirschman, 1981; Peretti and Banks, 1980).

**Sex**
- ( ) Male
- ( ) Female

**Age**
- ( ) Under 16
- ( ) 16 - 25
- ( ) 26 - 35
- ( ) 36 - 45
- ( ) 46 - 54
- ( ) over 55

**Marital Status**
- ( ) Single
- ( ) Living together, not married
- ( ) Married
- ( ) Separated
- ( ) Widowed
- ( ) Divorced

**Number of children (that you parented)**
- ( ) None
- ( ) One
- ( ) Two
- ( ) Three or more

**Family Make-Up.** The eldest daughter is a more likely victim of incest as revealed in several studies (McCown, 1980; Butler, 1978; Weinberg, 1955). Family make-up questions concerning the number of brothers and sisters in one's family of origin and other persons in the home are
also provided for use in supplying data for control and comparison purposes. Questions also provide the researcher with an idea of how many people were in the home and their relationship to one another.

Position in family (in which you grew up)
( ) Oldest child ( ) Middle child
( ) Youngest child ( ) Only child

How many brothers and sisters did you have living in your home (the home in which you grew up)?
( ) None ( ) Three - Four
( ) One ( ) Five - Six
( ) Two ( ) Seven or more

Other than brothers and/or sisters, who else lived with you? (May check more than one box if needed).
( ) Mother and Father ( ) Stepmother and Father
( ) Mother only ( ) Stepfather and Mother
( ) Father only ( ) Other, please specify

Crowdedness in the Home. Weinberg (1955) noted the variable of crowdedness in his study of 200 persons. He describes a situation in which there is more opportunity for incest behavior if persons sleep in the same room or in close proximity.

In the home in which you grew up in, was the house too small to easily accommodate all the people who had to live there (did you feel cramped and crowded)?
( ) No
( ) Yes

List the people who shared bedrooms and their relationship to one another.
Adult-Caretaker Characteristics. The initiator is described by researchers as dominant, aggressive and in some cases physically violent (Herman and Hirschman, 1981; Weinberg, 1955). Other researchers have found the initiator to be manipulative, coercive and intimidating through psychological pressure (Warner, 1980; Butler, 1978).

Would you describe your father, stepfather or male guardian as:
( ) Dominant ( ) Gentle
( ) Violent ( ) Dependent
( ) Passive ( ) Other, please specify

Would you describe your mother, stepmother or female guardian as:
( ) Dominant ( ) Gentle
( ) Violent ( ) Dependent
( ) Passive ( ) Other, please specify

Changes in Family Patterns. Unemployment, death of close family members, change in residence can all cause stress within families (Monat and Lazarus, 1977). Such changes have also been associated with families in which incest has been present (Brown, 1978).

While you were living at home, was anyone in your family unemployed?
( ) No
( ) Yes

If yes, who was it? __________________________________________

How long? __________________________________________

How often? __________________________________________

While you were living at home, was there a death of a family member who your family was especially close to?
( ) No
( ) Yes

If yes, who? __________________________________________
When you were living with your family, how often did you move?
( ) Never  ( ) 5 - 6 times
( ) 1 - 2 times  ( ) Over 7 times
( ) 3 - 4 times

Marital Relationship. Strain within a marital relationship has also been associated with incest in families. More specifically, sexual difficulties between partners has been associated with incestuous families (Warner, 1980; Brown, 1978; Nakashima, 1977; Bernstein, 1977; Machotka, 1967).

If both of your parents or guardians lived at home while you were living at home, did you think they had a "happy" relationship?
( ) No
( ) Yes
( ) Not applicable (if one parent family)

As you look back at your parents' relationship, do you think they had sexual difficulties?
( ) No
( ) Yes
( ) Not applicable

Fear of Family Break-Up. Closely tied to questions concerning the marital relationship between parents, is fear of the family breaking up as the result of the parents separating or divorcing. This has been linked to families experiencing incest (Brown, 1978; Nakashima and Zakus, 1977). Children frequently express guilt because they blame themselves for such break-ups (Brown, 1978).

While you were living at home, do you recall worrying about your parents or guardians separating or divorcing?
( ) No
( ) Yes

If yes, did you feel that you were responsible?
( ) No
( ) Yes
Contact with Others. The amount of contact with those outside the family was noted in the Nakashima and Zakus (1977) study. Within the study, the authors identified the "classic incest family" as having little contact outside the nuclear family. Control over social activities of children in the family was also identified by other researchers (Brown, 1978; Weinberg, 1955). In families which experienced incest, a greater amount of control was noted.

When you were at home, how often did family members participate in social functions (church, school, community organizations)?

- Less than 1 per month
- 1 per month
- 2 - 3 per month
- More than 4 per week

When you were living at home, did your parent(s) have a great deal of control over your social activities (for example, how late you could stay out, who you could be with, etc.)?

- No
- Yes

If yes, give an example of one of the restrictions.

Situational Factors. Brown (1978) includes situational factors such as one person being out of the home for long periods of time due to work schedules, hospital stays or visits to relatives, in his profile of incestuous families. Such a situation provides a more likely opportunity for incest to take place undetected. Other situations such as confinement to a room or area of the home due to disablement or a chronic illness could also provide such opportunities.
While you were living at home, was anyone that lived with you chronically ill or disabled in some way?
( ) No ( ) Yes, Father
( ) Yes, Mother ( ) Yes, Stepfather
( ) Yes, Stepmother ( ) Other, please list

If both of your parents or guardians lived at home while you were living at home, did one of them work at night?
( ) No one worked nights ( ) Yes, Father or Stepfather
( ) Not applicable ( ) Yes, Mother or Stepmother

If Yes, did your other parent or guardian work at a different time?
( ) No
( ) Yes

If Yes, when did they work?
( ) Mostly days
( ) Mostly nights
( ) Changes shifts (both days and nights)

While you were living at home was one parent or guardian away from home for long periods of time (to visit friends or relatives, hospital stay, etc.)?
( ) No
( ) Yes

If Yes, how long ____________________________
how often ____________________________

Chemical Use. Alcohol and/or other drug use is noted in some incestuous families (Herman and Hirschman, 1981; Meiselman, 1978). Statistics vary on the percentage of incestuous families in which alcohol or other drug use is a key factor. Use of alcohol or other drugs can serve to lower inhibitions or alter behaviors, thus playing a part in the incest behavior.

While you were living at home, did either of your parents or guardians have a problem with drinking?
( ) No
( ) Yes, but the drinking did not disrupt the family.
( ) Yes, and the drinking did disrupt the family.
While you were living at home, did either of your parents or guardians have a problem with drugs (other than alcohol)?
( ) No
( ) Yes, but the drug use did not disrupt the family.
( ) Yes, and the drug use did disrupt the family.

Role Confusion. Another characteristic of the incestuous family is role confusion. In such a situation, the children are assigned or assume many adult responsibilities in the household (Warner, 1980; Bogopolsky, 1979; Brown, 1978). Tasks range from major responsibility for cooking and planning menus to care for younger siblings.

Before you reached the age of 15 and while you were still living at home, which, if any, of the below listed tasks did you have major responsibility for?
( ) Not responsible for household tasks
( ) Grocery shopping
( ) Car maintenance
( ) Decision making, concerning menus, how to discipline other children, etc.
( ) Washing clothes
( ) Household repairs
( ) Housecleaning
( ) Cooking
( ) List any others: ____________________________

How did you feel about being responsible for such duties?


While you were living at home, did you have major responsibility for the care of younger brothers and/or sisters (more than occasional babysitting)?
( ) No
( ) Yes
( ) Not applicable
If Yes, how did you feel about being responsible for them?

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

Acting-Out Behaviors. Running away, missing school and sexual promiscuity are three behavioral characteristics associated with children in incestuous families (Brown, 1978; Rosenfeld, 1977; Nakashima and Zakus, 1977).

While you were living at home, did you ever run away from home?
( ) No ( ) Yes, 5 - 6 times
( ) Yes, 1 - 2 times ( ) Yes, 7 or more times
( ) Yes, 3 - 4 times

If Yes, what were some of the reasons for running away?

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

When you were living at home, about how much school did you miss?
( ) None
( ) Very little (1-2 times per month)
( ) Moderate amount (3-7 times per month)
( ) Alot (8 or more times per month)

If you did miss school, what were some of the reasons?

____________________________________________________________________

How many people were you sexually active with?

____________________________________________________________________

Family Sexual Activity. Questions concerning whether sexual activity took place among family members are included only in Form I.

Was there ever any sexual activity (such as intimate touching, petting, intercourse) between you and any other family member(s)?
( ) No (Please turn to the final page and include any further comments, questions or concerns that you may have).
( ) Yes
How old were you when the sexual activities took place? If more than one response applies, mark all the appropriate boxes.

( ) 2 - 6 years
( ) 7 - 11 years
( ) 12 - 16 years
( ) 17 - 21 years
( ) Other, please specify

How frequently did the sexual activities take place? Please specify (i.e., only once or twice, once or twice a week, once or twice a month, etc.).

( ) Only once or twice
( ) Once or twice a week
( ) Once or twice a month
( ) Three or more times a week

How long did the sexual activities continue? Please specify (i.e., one instance only, one week, one month, several months, years, etc.).

( ) One instance only
( ) One week
( ) One month
( ) Several months
( ) One year
( ) Several years

Please specify the relationship of the family member or relative with whom the sexual activities took place (i.e., father, mother, grandparent, uncle, aunt, sister or brother, etc.).

( ) Father
( ) Mother
( ) Grandfather
( ) Grandmother
( ) Brother
( ) Sister
( ) Uncle
( ) Aunt
( ) Stepfather
( ) Stepmother
( ) Other

In general, describe the relationship between yourself and the other person involved in the relationship (for example, the relationship was happy and friendly or frightening and intimidating).

The incestuous relationship started because of:

( ) Forceful intimidation (violence)
( ) Coercion (talked me into it)
( ) Threats
( ) Mutual exploration (interest)
Do you think the experience had
( ) No effect on you
( ) Good effect(s) on you
( ) Bad effect(s) on you

What were (are) some of the effects?

Did you confide in anyone about the sexual activities?
( ) No (Please turn to the final page and include any further
questions, comments or concerns).
( ) Yes

If Yes, in whom did you confide?
( ) Minister, priest, rabbi ( ) Father
( ) Counselor ( ) Brother or sister
( ) Friend ( ) Other family member
( ) Mother ( ) Other

Was the person to whom you confided
( ) Male
( ) Female

How long did you wait before you shared any feelings or information
concerning the sexual activities?
( ) One day or less
( ) One week - one month
( ) Two months - six months
( ) Seven months - one year
( ) Several years

Why did you tell someone else?

What did you hope would happen by telling someone else?

What was the (general) response of the person(s) you told?
Were you satisfied with the response of the person(s) you told?
( ) No
( ) Yes

The above listed questions can be used as a part of a future research tool to assess the validity of the previous questions concerning various family and individual characteristics. The questions can be included in order to determine whether the characteristics referred to in the questionnaire are actually associated with people who have experienced an incestuous relationship.

The purpose of the questions concerning whether the victim communicated their experience to others, is to assess the degree to which other people and/or professionals were helpful. By asking about who was told, when they told someone, etc., agencies can use such information in responding to individuals and families in the future.

Forms II and III do not include questions concerning the existence and peculiarities of sexual activity among family members, due to the audience they are proposed for and the use to which they will be put. As a result of administering the interview schedule, one should note whether there is a high number of incest associated characteristics present with the client or not. After assessing the results of Forms II and III, the professional handling the case should then decide on further action.

Implementation of Pre-Test

The purpose of the pre-test was to obtain feedback on the readability and usefulness of the questionnaire/interview schedule. Forms I, II and III were administered to a variety of groups and individuals.
Description of Subjects and Procedures

Form I - Research, was given to female and male undergraduate students enrolled at South Dakota State University in 1982. The students were selected from freshman and sophomore level Child Development courses. A total of 52 students participated. The group was designated as Group A. They were asked to read all questions carefully and respond to all questions. Subjects were also asked to note which questions were difficult to understand and to comment on the difficulty.

Form I - Research, was also given to a counseling/support group of seven women who have experienced incest. The group was designated as Group B. They were asked to read and respond to all questions, comment on any questions difficult to understand and to comment on the useability of the form.

Group C consisted of two Speech professors, one English instructor and one physicist. They were given Form I - Research, and were asked to look for evidence of bias. They were not asked to respond to the questions.

Form II - Children, was administered to four children ages 11, 13, 14, and 16. The group was labeled Group D. They were asked to read and respond to all questions and to comment on anything they did not understand. They were also asked to explain why they did not understand a particular question.

Form II - Children and Form III - Adult, were also sent by mail to 12 mental health or guidance centers throughout South Dakota. The centers were labeled Group E. They were asked to assess Forms II and III by carefully reading, noting any questions difficult to understand
or that they thought a client would have difficulty understanding and why. The administrators were also asked to comment on how they or their staff could use such a tool. They were not asked to administer the forms, simply to give feedback on the readability and usefulness. A self-addressed, stamped envelope was included for return purposes.

Results

In the following report of results, comments and questions of respondents are grouped according to the type of concern referred to. The number of categories varies from one form to the next depending on responses. One example is provided for each category. Included in the example is the original question as it appeared on the pre-test form, the comment involved and in what manner the question was changed. (See the appendix for responses for each group on each individual question. See the revised forms for how each question was changed, if a change was made). Changes were not made if it was evident that an inappropriate answer was made due to not reading directions or understanding requests. Changes were also not made if the question was relevant and necessary for research purposes.

Form I - Research (Groups A, B, C). Several questions were noted by the respondents to be confusing or unclear due to varying definitions or understanding of a word. For example question number 12, as stated in the pre-test reads:

"List the people who shared bedrooms and their relationship to one another."

Some respondents answered the question by stating the emotional relationship instead of role relationship. The question was changed to:
"List the people who shared bedrooms and their role relationship to one another (for example, Ann and Sue--sisters, Tom and Keith--brothers)."

Respondents also commented on questions that needed more responses. For example question number 16 which reads:

"If both of your parents or guardians lived at home while you were living at home, did you think they had a "happy" relationship?"

( ) No
( ) Yes
( ) Not applicable (if one parent family)

The question was changed to read as follows:

"If both of your parents or guardians lived at home while you were living at home, did you think they had a "happy" relationship?"

( ) Always
( ) Most of the time
( ) Sometimes
( ) Never
( ) Not applicable (if one parent family)

Two questions were cited as not being clear as to whether the respondent could make more than one choice in replying to a question.

Question eight reads as follows:

"Would you describe your father, stepfather or male guardian as:"

( ) Dominant
( ) Violent
( ) Passive

( ) Gentle
( ) Dependent
( ) Other, please specify

The question was changed to:

"Would you describe your father, stepfather or male guardians as:"

(check all that apply).

( ) Dominant
( ) Violent
( ) Passive

( ) Gentle
( ) Dependent
( ) Other, please specify

A few respondents commented on some questions not allowing for varying family make-up or life styles. In some questions, eight
and nine, a response was added of "Not applicable" to allow for families in which no male or female figure is present in the family.

For example, number nine:

"Would you describe your mother, stepmother or female guardian as:"
( ) Dominant ( ) Gentle
( ) Violent ( ) Dependent
( ) Passive ( ) Not applicable
( ) Other, please specify

The question was changed to read:

"Would you describe your mother, stepmother or female guardians as:"
( ) Dominant ( ) Dependent
( ) Violent ( ) Not applicable
( ) Passive ( ) Other, please specify

Several questions were cited as not being clear in regard to the time period the question is addressing. For example, question number 32, which reads as follows:

"How many people were you sexually active with?"

The question was changed to read as follows:

"While you were living at home, how many persons were you sexually active with (other than family members or spouse)?"

A few respondents stated that some questions were too personal to ask. One example of such a question was number 33:

"Was there ever any sexual activity (such as intimate touching, petting, intercourse) between you and any other family member(s)?"
( ) No (Please turn to the final page and include any further comments, questions or concerns that you may have).
( ) Yes

The author did not change or exclude the question. The purpose of such a question is to determine the presence of incest within a family.

The question needs to be included for research purposes.
Form II - Children (Groups D and E.) The majority of comments or questions were the result of varying definitions or understanding of a word or phrase. For example number four and five, as they are stated in the pre-test:

"How would you describe your father, stepfather or male guardian?"

"How would you describe your mother, stepmother or female guardian?"

As stated in the pre-test, it is not clear as to what type of description is wanted—physical or personality. In response to the comment, the questions were changed to:

"How would you describe your father's, stepfather's or male guardian's personality?"

"How would you describe your mother's, stepmother's or female guardian's personality?"

A suggestion was made to offer a more open-ended question for number 19. On the pre-test form the question reads:

"Do you feel like it is your fault?"

The question was changed to read:

"How do you feel when they fight?"

Form III - Adult (Group E). Respondents suggested that several questions be restated in a more open-ended fashion. Question 12 was changed in response to the suggestion. On the pre-test the question reads:

"Do you have a great deal of control over your child's(ren's) social activities. . ." 

The question was changed to:

"What kind of control do you have over your child's(ren's) social activities. . ."
Discussion

Earlier studies (Meiselman, 1980; Peretti and Banks, 1980; Brown, 1978; Nakashima and Zakus, 1977; Weinberg, 1955) have suggested that various characteristics and life events are associated with incest. Some of the repeated characteristics include sexual difficulties between parents (Brown, 1978; Nakashima and Zakus, 1977; Machotka, 1967), role confusion (Warner, 1980; Bogopolsky, 1979; Brown, 1978; Eist, 1968 and Machotka, 1967), and fear of family separation (Brown, 1978; and Nakashima and Zakus, 1977). Life events such as unemployment or a death in the family are also associated with incest (Brown, 1978).

When applying Hill's (1949) ABCX model of Crisis Theory to incest, life events can be labeled stressors (A) and characteristics can be seen as factors influencing the family's vulnerability to stress (B). It is important to note that various factors can be interjected at other points in the model.

One way of using such information is to compile a questionnaire and/or interview schedule. The implementation of the questionnaire/interview schedule, when validated, could include use by counselors, school teachers, clergy and other professionals working in child and family settings to assess the potential for incest behavior within the family.

The present study attempted to compile characteristics repeatedly found throughout the literature into question form.
A pre-test was given to test the readability and useability of the tool. The results of the pre-test indicated the need to revise some questions due to varying definitions and understanding of words or phrases. Other problems arose due to directions not being clear. Respondents also cited questions that were unclear due to the lack of appropriate alternatives and reference to ambiguous time periods. In some cases, questions were changed to allow for greater clarity and more accurate responses.

It also became clear through the pre-test that the purpose and use of Forms II and III be more clearly stated. The purpose of Forms II and III of the interview schedule, when validated, is to provide a guideline or checklist for initial or preliminary contact with a child, adult or family or to be used as a reference checklist after several contacts have been made. For example, if a teacher suspects incest within a family, he/she may use the questionnaire/interview schedule to check for further characteristics that are typical in incest families according to the literature. If such a tool reinforces the suspicion, more detailed, pinpointed questions may need to be asked in a therapeutic or diagnostic interview.

Limitations of the Study

One limitation of the study was the result of the particular theoretical perspective used. As the result of choosing a specific theory, information is ordered, classified and understood in a particular way. The ABCX model of Crisis Theory tends to emphasize stressor events, along with how the family defines the situation, the amount
of change and the resources available to the family as playing a major role in the advent of crisis within a family. Due to the theory's specific scope, it is limited in use to primarily families in crises situations. Other theories emphasize other aspects. For example, Social Exchange Theory focuses on the specific acts of choice and exchange, thus forcing one to look at the specific interchanges between persons. Social Exchange, along with other more grand theories, such as General Systems or Role Theory, can be applied to a greater variety of family events and situations more readily.

Another limitation of the study results from the data used to design the interview schedule. Data from which the questionnaire/interview schedules were constructed were primarily drawn from cases of father-daughter incest. The possibility exists that other types of incest may be associated with other characteristics besides those included in the questionnaire/interview schedule.

Another limitation of the study is that it is only one step in the process of validating whether the characteristics included in the interview schedule are associated with incest. The author stops short of statistically validating the questionnaire/interview schedules.

The present study was also limited by the nature of the questionnaire in Form I. Some disadvantages of questionnaires include the lack of flexibility and the possibility of respondents not being able to fully explain in writing behaviors, attitudes and feelings. Respondents may also provide inaccurate answers to questions.
Future Research

A logical next step following the development of the questionnaire/interview schedule would be to continue to refine the schedule as a result of a specific test for reliability. Tests for validity could also be conducted.

One could also administer the questionnaire/interview schedule to test for the validity of the characteristics associated with incest victims, families or initiators. One technique for doing this could be comparing a group of people who have experienced incest with a non-incestuous sample, using control variables such as age, sex, marital status, socio-economic status, religiousity, ethnic background and level of education. One could then statistically measure the extent to which such characteristics are truly associated with the occurrence of incest within the particular sample. When using non-incestuous populations, one could note how often the characteristics are associated with this group even though incest is not present.

One other possibility for future research is to test each characteristic or variable individually. One would need to operationally define the variable and apply it to a continuum.

Another possibility for future research would be to approach the problem from a different theoretical framework. For example, Symbolic Interaction could be applied to incest. By using the theory, one could more specifically focus on the patterns of interaction within the family due to the existence of stressor events or crisis situations such as incest. By using the tools of Symbolic Interaction, one would employ other techniques for ordering data and ideas for further investigation.
One should also note the addition of more variables by Burr (1973). He has expanded primarily in the area of the family's vulnerability to stress. Burr (1973) has proposed additional propositions such as "the amount of personal influence in a social system influences the vulnerability of families to stress and this is a positive relationship" (Burr, 1973). One may wish to apply the expanded version of Crisis Theory to incest.
Chapter VI

SUMMARY

Incest is a human behavior recorded throughout history. Even though incest is considered a taboo behavior, it still takes place. The known occurrence of incest is increasing possibly due to increased knowledge, laws concerning mandatory reporting of abuse of children and greater understanding of possible negative consequences. Some authorities still consider the reported number of cases to be only a fraction of the actual incidence (Butler, 1978; Sagarin, 1977).

Hill's (1949) ABCX model of Crisis Theory can be used as a tool for further understanding of the process of a crisis (such as incest) in a family social system. By employing the ABCX model, one can note the existence of stressor events (A) influencing the amount of crisis (X) within a family. The variables of how the family defines the situation (C) and the family's vulnerability to the stress (B) also influences the process and the amount of crisis to evolve when using the ABCX portion of the theory. Incest can be interjected at various points in the process. Incest can be labeled as a stressor event leading to a crisis of family break-up or disorganization, or as a resource utilized by the family to curb break-up. Incest can also be viewed as a crisis itself, influenced by a variety of stressor events and by several characteristics often associated with incest behavior found in related literature.

Life events, such as unemployment or death of a family member have been identified as possible stressors or stressor events
associated with incest (Brown, 1978). Characteristics of families and individuals such as role confusion (Warner, 1980; Bogopolsky, 1979; Brown, 1978), sexual difficulties between parents (Warner, 1980; Brown, 1978; Nakashima and Zakus, 1977; Bernstein, 1977), and fear of family separation (Brown, 1978; Nakashima and Zakus, 1977), have been identified as characteristics that predispose one to incest. Such characteristics can be incorporated into variable (B), the family's vulnerability to stress in that if certain characteristics are present, a family is more vulnerable to certain life events, thus, more likely to experience incest.

Life events and characteristics found throughout the literature along with the theoretical basis was used to develop a questionnaire/interview schedule. Three forms were developed. Form I, when validated, can be used with persons in a retrospective sense, in that they are no longer in the incestuous relationship. Form II - Children, when validated, is for use by professionals working with children in identifying the likelihood of incestuous behavior being present in their families. Form III - Adults, when validated, is for use by professionals with adult parents or guardians in identifying the likelihood of incestuous behavior being present in their families. A pre-test was conducted on all forms to test the readability and useability of the questionnaire/interview schedule.

Forms were given to a variety of groups and individuals for the purpose of obtaining feedback. In some cases, questions were
changed, alternatives added and words or phrases recorded in response to specific feedback.

In conclusion, the questionnaire/interview schedule can be used as a valuable tool assisting persons who work with children and families in focusing on aspects associated with incest in families. Keeping in mind, Hill's (1949) ABCX model of Crisis Theory, one can key in on incest as a response to or process of total family functioning instead of considering it an isolated event.
REFERENCES


Bender, L. and Blau, A. "The Reaction of Children to Sexual Relations with Adults." American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 1937, 7, 500-518.


RESULTS

Group A: 117 non-female and male undergraduate students

Questions without comment or question
1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 25, 27

Questions with comment or question
- Varying definition or understanding of word or phrase
  2, 12, 14, 16, 19, 20, 26, 29, 30, 31, 32
- More respondents needed
  2, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 16, 27
- Not clear whether respondents can mark more than one choice
  3, 5, 6, 7, 10
- Not allowing for varying family makeup or lifestyle
  1, 4, 9, 10
- Not clear as to what period
  1, 2, 14, 15, 21, 22, 23, 24
- Not clear as to how to ask
  2, 21, 22

APPENDIX

Group A: The 117 non-female and male undergraduate students

Questions without comment or question
1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32

Questions with comment or question
- Varying definition or understanding of word or phrase
  2, 12, 14, 16, 19, 20, 26, 29, 30, 31, 32
- More respondents needed
  2, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 16, 27
- Not clear whether respondents can mark more than one choice
  3, 5, 6, 7, 10
- Not allowing for varying family makeup or lifestyle
  1, 4, 9, 10
- Not clear as to what period
  1, 2, 14, 15, 21, 22, 23, 24
- Not clear as to how to ask
  2, 21, 22

Group B: 117 female undergraduate students
RESULTS

Group A - Fifty-two female and male undergraduate students.
Form I - Research
Questions without comment or question
1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 15, 17, 23, 24, 25, 29
Questions with comment or question
--Varying definition or understanding of word or phrase
12, 13, 14, 18, 19, 20, 28, 30, 31, 32
--More responses needed
8, 9, 16, 21, 22, 26, 27
--Not clear whether respondent can mark more than one choice
8, 9
--Not allowing for varying family make-up or life-style
6, 8, 9, 20
--Not clear as to time period
6, 10, 11, 32
--Too personal to ask
32 - 45

Group B - Counseling/support group of seven persons
Form I - Research
Questions without comment or question
1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20 - 27, 29, 30, 31, 33 - 45
Questions with comment or question
--Varying definition or understanding of word or phrase
6, 12, 19, 28, 32
--Not clear as to time period
32

Group C - Two Speech professors, one English instructor and one physicist
Form I - Research
Questions without comment or question
1 - 7, 10 - 38, 40 - 45
Questions with comment or question
--More choices needed
8, 9

--Bias shown
39 - Respondent stated that the responses available were stereotypically more male oriented than female oriented.

Group D - Four children, ages 11, 13, 14, and 16
Form II - Children
Questions without comment or question
1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 14, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24

Questions with comment or question
--Varying definition or understanding of word or phrase
4, 5, 8, 9, 14, 15, 17, 21

Group E - Mental Health Center Administrators (Twelve mental health centers were contacted by letter, three responded. Their responses are included below).
Form II - Children and Form III - Adults
Form II
Questions without comment or question
1 - 18, 20 - 24

Questions with comment or question
--More open ended
19

*Lacking categories
 violence
touching

Form III
Questions without comment or question
1 - 8, 11, 13 - 16, 18 - 22

Questions with comment or question
--More open ended
9, 10, 12

--Varying definition of understanding of word or phrase
17

*Lacking categories
 violence
touching
The areas of violence and touching are obviously involved in incest situations. They were not included within the questionnaire/interview schedule because they were not found as separate characteristics or events in the literature. They are implied in Form I in questions that refer to one's personality and the nature of the incestuous acts themselves. The areas of violence and touching would be beneficial to include in further therapy or counseling.
March 10, 1982

Dear Sir/Madam:

I am a graduate student in Child Development and Family Relations at SDSU. I would like to ask your cooperation in assessing the enclosed questionnaires on the topic of incest.

I have enclosed a copy of two questionnaires for your perusal. "Form II - Children" is designed for use by professionals working with children in determining the likelihood of incestuous behavior being present in their families. "Form III - Adult" is designed for use by professionals working with parents or guardians in determining the likelihood of incestuous behavior being present in their families.

Questions are based on characteristics of individual and families which repeatedly appear in research studies of incest. Questions are included in the following categories: (1) background information, (2) family make-up, (3) rowdedness of family dwelling, (4) parent's marital relationship, (5) contact with others, (6) situational factors, (7) fear of family break-up, (8) role confusion, (9) changes in family patterns and (10) acting-out behaviors.

Forms II and III can be used in two ways. First of all, they can be used as they appear in an intake interview setting. They can also be used in a checklist fashion over a period of interviews to focus on incest-associated characteristics within the client's family.

First of all, read over each questionnaire. While reading, please note any questions you do not understand or that you think a client would have difficulty understanding keeping in mind the audience they are intended for. Also, please comment on how you and/or your staff could use such a tool. We are not asking you to administer the questionnaires, simply to give feedback on their readability and usefulness. Please enclose your comments and questions in the addressed and stamped envelope and return by April 1 or as soon as possible.

If you are interested in further information concerning the questionnaires, a rationale for each question, along with other background information is available. If you have any questions, call 688-6418 or 688-6622, Child Development and Family Relations Department, Pugsley Center, SDSU, Brookings, SD 57007.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Mary Kay Helling
Graduate Assistant

Mary Kay Helling
Graduate Assistant

Enclosures

College of Home Economics/South Dakota State University/ Brookings, SD 57007
The purpose of this questionnaire is to validate characteristics, found throughout clinically and empirically based research, attributed to incestuous families. Research indicates that the following areas have been associated with the presence of incest: (1) background information, (2) family make-up, (3) crowdedness in the home, (4) parent's marital relationship, (5) contact with others, (6) situational factors, (7) fear of family break-up, (8) role confusion, (9) changes in family patterns, (10) acting-out behaviors, (11) adult-caretaker characteristics, (12) chemical use, (13) family sexual activity.

Not only can the questionnaire be used for research purposes, but can also be used by professionals with clients in a retrospective sense, in that the client is no longer in the incestuous relationship or household.
GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS: Complete the questionnaire using either pencil or pen. Some of the questions may be answered by placing an "X" in the appropriate space; other questions ask for write-in answers. Please complete all questions that pertain to you. Do not put your name on the questionnaire. All information obtained is confidential.

1. Sex
   ( ) Male
   ( ) Female

2. Age
   ( ) Under 16
   ( ) 16 - 25
   ( ) 26 - 35
   ( ) 36 - 45
   ( ) 46 - 54
   ( ) over 55

3. Marital Status
   ( ) Single
   ( ) Living together, not married
   ( ) Married
   ( ) Separated
   ( ) Widowed
   ( ) Divorced

4. Number of children (that you parented)
   ( ) None
   ( ) One
   ( ) Two
   ( ) Three or more

5. Position in family (in which you grew up)
   ( ) Oldest child
   ( ) Middle child
   ( ) Youngest child
   ( ) Only child

6. How many brothers and sisters did you have living in your home during your school years (the home in which you grew up)?
   ( ) None
   ( ) One
   ( ) Two
   ( ) Three - Four
   ( ) Five - Six
   ( ) Seven or more

7. Other than brothers and/or sisters, who else lived with you? (May check more than one box if needed).
   ( ) Mother and Father
   ( ) Mother only
   ( ) Father only
   ( ) Stepmother and Father
   ( ) Stepfather and Mother
   ( ) Other, please specify

8. Would you describe your father, stepfather or male guardian as (check all that apply)
   ( ) Dominant
   ( ) Violent
   ( ) Passive
   ( ) Supportive
   ( ) Dependent
   ( ) Gentle
   ( ) Loving
   ( ) Not applicable
   ( ) Other, please specify
9. Would you describe your mother, stepmother or female guardian as (check all that apply)
   ( ) Dominant    ( ) Gentle
   ( ) Violent     ( ) Loving
   ( ) Passive     ( ) Not Applicable
   ( ) Supportive  ( ) Other, please specify
   ( ) Dependent

10. While you were living at home, was anyone that lived with you chronically ill or disabled in some way?
   ( ) No
   ( ) Yes, Father
   ( ) Yes, Mother
   ( ) Yes, Stepfather
   ( ) Yes, Stepmother
   ( ) Other, please list

11. In the home in which you grew up in, was the house too small to easily accommodate all the people who had to live there (did you feel cramped and crowded)?
   ( ) No
   ( ) Yes

12. List the people who shared bedrooms and their relationship to one another (for example, Ann and Sue - sisters, Tom and Keith - brothers).

13. While you were living at home, was any adult (over the age of 18) in your family unemployed?
   ( ) No
   ( ) Yes
   If yes, who was it? ________________________________________________________
   How long? ________________________________________________________________
   How often? ______________________________________________________________

14. While you were living at home, was there a death of a family member who your family was especially close to?
   ( ) No
   ( ) Yes
   If yes, who? ______________________________________________________________

15. When you were living with your family, how often did you move?
   ( ) Never
   ( ) 1 - 2 times
   ( ) 3 - 4 times
   ( ) 5 - 6 times
   ( ) Over 7 times
16. If both of your parents or guardians lived at home while you were living at home, did you think they had a "happy" relationship?
   ( ) Always
   ( ) Sometimes
   ( ) Most of the time
   ( ) Never
   ( ) Not applicable (if one parent family)

17. As you look back at your parent's relationship, do you think they had sexual difficulties?
   ( ) No
   ( ) Yes
   ( ) Not applicable

18. When you were at home, how often did family members (either as a group or individuals) participate in social functions (church, school, community organizations)?
   ( ) Less than 1 per month
   ( ) 1 per month
   ( ) 2 - 3 per month
   ( ) 1 per week
   ( ) 2 - 3 per week
   ( ) More than 4 per week

19. When you were living at home, did your parent(s) have a great deal of control over your social activities (for example, how late you could stay out, who you could be with, etc.)?
   ( ) No
   ( ) Yes
   If yes, give an example of one of the restrictions.

20. If both of your parents or guardians lived at home while you were living at home, did one of them work away from home at night on a regular basis?
   ( ) No one worked nights
   ( ) Not applicable
   ( ) Yes, Father or Stepfather
   ( ) Yes, Mother or Stepmother
   If yes, at what occupation did the person work

21. If yes, did your other parent or guardian work at a different time?
   ( ) No
   ( ) Yes
   ( ) Not applicable

22. If yes, when did they work?
   ( ) Mostly days
   ( ) Mostly nights
   ( ) Changes shifts (both days and nights)
   ( ) Not applicable
23. While you were living at home was one parent or guardian away from home for long periods of time (to visit friends or relatives, hospital stay, etc.).
( ) No
( ) Yes

If yes, how long ________________________________
how often ________________________________

24. While you were living at home, did either of your parents or guardians have a problem with drinking (alcohol)?
( ) No
( ) Yes, but the drinking did not disrupt the family.
( ) Yes, and the drinking did disrupt the family.

25. While you were living at home, did either of your parents or guardians have a problem with drugs (other than alcohol)?
( ) No
( ) Yes, but the drug use did not disrupt the family.
( ) Yes, and the drug use did disrupt the family.

26. While you were living at home, do you recall worrying about your parents or guardians separating or divorcing?
( ) No ( ) Not applicable
( ) Yes

27. If yes, did you feel that you were responsible?
( ) No ( ) Not applicable
( ) Yes

28. Before you reached the age of 15 and while you were still living at home, which, if any, of the below listed tasks did you have major responsibility for (in other words, if you did not do them they wouldn't get done)?
( ) Not responsible for household tasks
( ) Grocery shopping
( ) Car maintenance
( ) Decision making, concerning menus, how to discipline other children, etc.
( ) Washing clothes
( ) Household repairs
( ) Housecleaning
( ) Cooking
( ) Yardwork or gardening
( ) Chores on farm or ranch
( ) List any others: ________________________________
How did you feel about having major responsibility for such duties?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

29. While you were living at home, did you have major responsibility for the care of younger brothers and/or sisters (more than occasional babysitting)?

( ) No
( ) Yes
( ) Not applicable

If yes, how did you feel about being responsible for them?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

30. How many persons have you been sexually active with (other than family members or spouse)?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

31. While you were living at home, did you ever run away from home?

( ) No
( ) Yes, 1 - 2 times
( ) Yes, 3 - 4 times
( ) Yes, 5 - 6 times
( ) Yes, 7 or more times

If yes, what were some of the reasons for running away?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

32. When you were living at home, about how much school did you miss?

( ) None
( ) Very little (1-2 times per month)
( ) Moderate amount (3-7 times per month)
( ) Alot (8 or more times per month)

If you did miss school, what were some of the reasons?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

33. Was there ever any sexual activity (such as intimate touching, petting, intercourse) between you and any other family member(s)?

( ) No (Please turn to the final page and include any further comments, questions or concerns that you may have).
( ) Yes
34. How old were you when the sexual activities between family members took place? If more than one response applies, mark all of the appropriate boxes).
( )( ) 2 - 6 years
( )( ) 7 - 11 years
( )( ) 12 - 16 years
( ) 17 - 21 years
( ) Other, please specify

35. How frequently did the sexual activities take place? Please specify (i.e., only once or twice, once or twice a week, once or twice a month, etc.).
( )( ) Only once or twice
( )( ) Once or twice a year
( ) Once or twice a month
( )( ) Once or twice a week
( )( ) Three or more times a week

36. How long did the sexual activities continue? Please specify (i.e., one instance only, one week, one month, several months, years, etc.).
( )( ) One instance only
( )( ) One week
( )( ) One month
( ) Several months
( ) One year
( ) Several years

37. Please specify the relationship of the family member or relative with whom the sexual activities took place (i.e., father, mother, grandparent, uncle, aunt, sister or brother, etc.).
( )( ) Father
( )( ) Mother
( )( ) Grandfather
( )( ) Grandmother
( )( ) Brother
( )( ) Sister
( )( ) Uncle
( )( ) Aunt
( )( ) Stepfather
( )( ) Stepmother
( )( ) Other

38. In general, describe the relationship between yourself and the other person involved in the relationship (for example, the relationship was happy and friendly or frightening and intimidating).

39. The incestuous relationship started because of:
( )( ) Forceful intimidation (violence)
( )( ) Coercion (talked me into it)
( )( ) Threats
( )( ) Bribery
( )( ) Mutual exploration (interest)

40. Did you think the experience had
( )( ) No effect on you
( )( ) Good effect(s) on you.
( )( ) Bad effect(s) on you.
What were (are) some of the effects?

41. Did you confide in anyone about the sexual activities?
   ( ) No (Please turn to the final page and include any further questions, comments or concerns).
   ( ) Yes

42. If yes, in whom did you confide?
   ( ) Minister, priest, rabbi
   ( ) Counselor
   ( ) Friend
   ( ) Mother
   ( ) Father
   ( ) Brother or sister
   ( ) Other family member
   ( ) Other

43. Was the person to whom you confided
   ( ) Male
   ( ) Female

44. How long did you wait before you shared any feelings or information concerning the sexual activities?
   ( ) One day or less
   ( ) One week - one month
   ( ) Two months - six months
   ( ) Seven months - one year
   ( ) Several years

Why did you tell someone else?

What did you hope would happen by telling someone else?

What was the (general) response of the person(s) you told?

45. Were you satisfied with the response of the person(s) you told?
   ( ) No
   ( ) Yes
Any further comments, questions or suggestions are welcome.

The purpose of this interview schedule is for use by professionals working with children in identifying the likelihood of inappropriate behavior being present in their families. Questions can be administered in the form in which they appear or changed in response to the age of the child. Some questions may need to be further explained, terms may need to be defined and examples given. The interview schedule could be given directly to an older adolescent to complete on their own or asked verbally by an attending professional. Changes, additions or deletions can be made in response to each individual case.

The interview schedule could also be used by professionals in a checklist fashion, over a period of interviews to focus on incest possibilities within the client's family.

Thank you for your cooperation and honesty.
The purpose of this interview schedule is for use by professionals working with children in identifying the likelihood of incestuous behavior being present in their families. Questions can be administered in the form in which they appear or changed in response to the age of the child. Some questions may need to be further explained, terms may need to be defined and examples given. The interview schedule could be given directly to an older adolescent to complete on their own or asked verbally by an attending professional. Changes, additions or deletions can be made in response to each individual case.

The interview schedule could also be used by professionals in a checklist fashion, over a period of interviews to focus on incest possibilities within the client's family.
Client's Name ______________________  Sex ___ Age ____

Case/File No. ________________________

1. How many brothers and sisters do you have?

2. What position in the family are you? (birthorder, oldest, middle, youngest).

3. Other than brothers and sisters who else lives in your home?

4. How would you describe your father's, stepfather's or male guardian's personality?

5. How would you describe your mother's, stepmother's or female guardian's personality?

6. Is anyone in your home sick or disabled in some way?  
   If yes, who?

7. Is your house too small for all the people that live there (do you feel cramped and crowded)?

8. Who are the people that share bedrooms and what is their relationship to one another (for example, Ann and Sue--sisters, Tom and Keith--brothers)?

9. Is anyone that is over 18 years of age in your family unemployed (not working)?  
   If yes, who?  
   How long?  
   How often?
10. Has anyone died in your family that your family was especially close to?  
If yes, who?

11. How often have you moved?

12. Do you think that your parents or guardians are happy?

13. How often does your family participate in social functions (either together or individually - church, school, community organizations)?

14. Do your parents or guardians have a lot of control over your social activities (for example, how late you can stay out, who you can be with)?
   If yes, give an example of one of the restrictions or rules.

15. Does one of your parents work away from home at night?  
   If yes, who?
   When does your other parent or guardian work?

16. Has one of your parents or guardians been away from home for a long period of time (for example, to visit relatives, a hospital stay, etc.)?  
   If yes, how long?
   How often do they go away?

17. Do either of your parents or guardians drink alcohol?  
   If yes, what effect does it have on your family?
   If yes, what effect does it have on you?

18. Do either of your parents or guardians use drugs (other than alcohol)?  
   If yes, what effect does it have on your family?
   If yes, what effect does it have on you?
19. How much do your parents fight and quarrel?

How do you feel when they fight?

20. Do you ever worry about your parents or guardians separating or divorcing?

21. What household duties (jobs, tasks) do you have major responsibility for (in other words, if you didn't do it, it wouldn't get done)?
   ( ) None
   ( ) Grocery shopping
   ( ) Car (maintenance)
   ( ) Decision making, concerning menus, disciplining other children in the family.
   ( ) Washing clothes
   ( ) Household repairs
   ( ) Housecleaning
   ( ) Cooking
   ( ) Yardwork or gardening
   ( ) Chores on farm or ranch
   ( ) List any others: ______________________________
      ______________________________

How do you feel about being responsible for such duties?

22. Do you have major responsibility for the care of younger brothers and/or sisters (more than occasional babysitting)?

How do you feel about being responsible for them?

23. Have you ever run away from home?
   If yes, how often?
   If yes, why did you run away?

24. How much school do you miss?
   If you do miss school, what are some of the reasons?
The purpose of this interview schedule is for use by professionals with parents or guardians in identifying the likelihood of incestuous behavior being present in their families.

Questions can be administered in the form in which they appear or changed in response to the individual case and circumstances. Most likely an interview process would be used to administer the questionnaire. Changes, additions and/or deletions can be made in response to each individual case.

The interview schedule can also be used by professionals for use in a checklist fashion over a period of interviews to focus on incest possibilities within the client's family.
Client Name __________________________ Sex ___ Age ___
Marital Status ________________________ Case/File Number __________

1. How would you describe your personality?

2. How would you describe your spouse's personality?

3. Is anyone living in your house chronically ill or disabled in some way?  
   If yes, who?

4. Is your house too small to easily accommodate all the people who have to live there (do you feel cramped and crowded)?

5. List the people who share bedrooms and their relationship to one another.

6. Is anyone that is over 18 years of age, in your family, unemployed?  
   If yes, who?  
   How long?  
   How often?

7. Has there been a death of a family member who your family is especially close to?  
   If yes, who?

8. How often have you moved since you've been married?

9. Do you think you have a "happy" relationship with your spouse?

10. Are there sexual difficulties between you and your partner?

11. How often do family members participate in social functions either as a group or individuals (church, school, community organizations)?
12. Do you have a great deal of control over your child's(ren's) social activities (for example, how late they can stay out, who they can be with, etc.)? If yes, give an example of one of the restrictions.

13. Do you work outside the home? If yes, do you work evenings or nights?
   Does your spouse work outside the home?
   If yes, do they work evenings or nights?

14. Have either you or your spouse been away from home for long periods of time (for example to visit friends or relatives, hospital stay, etc.)?
   If yes, who?
   How long?
   How often?

15. Do either you or your spouse have a problem with drinking alcohol? If yes, what is the effect on the family?

16. Do either you or your spouse have a problem with drugs (other than alcohol)? If yes, what is the effect on the family?

17. Does your paycheck go far enough to cover all your expenses? Do you have problems with staying out of debt?

18. Do any of your children ever voice concern that you may get a divorce or separate from the family?
19. Of your children who are 15 years old and younger, what, if any, of the tasks listed below do they have major responsibility for? In other words, if they didn't do it, it wouldn't get done.

( ) Not responsible for household tasks
( ) Grocery shopping
( ) Car maintenance
( ) Decision making, concerning menus, how to discipline other children, etc.
( ) Washing clothes
( ) Household repairs
( ) Housecleaning
( ) Cooking
( ) Yardwork or gardening
( ) Chores on farm or ranch
( ) List any others: ________________________________

20. Of your children who are 15 years old and younger do any have major responsibility for the care of younger brothers and/or sisters (more than occasional babysitting)? If yes, who?

21. How often have any of your children run away from home?

22. How much school do your children miss?