
Katie M. Meidlinger, Tiffany West, Grace S. Hubel, & David J. Hansen
University of Nebraska Lincoln

Introduction

• Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) is a widespread problem that occurs across the demographic and socioeconomic spectrum, with impacts that are as heterogeneous as the affected population (Friedenberg, Hansen, & Flood, in press).
• Many children who experience CSA develop related psychological difficulties while others resume normal functioning (Putnam, 2003).
• While a variety of factors (e.g., environmental stressors, children’s coping skills) can influence outcomes following CSA, research consistently demonstrates that non-offending parents play an important role in influencing children’s post-abuse functioning (Mannarino & Cohen, 1996).
• More specifically, a parent’s expectations of their child’s adjustment following sexual abuse can affect parent-child interactions and in turn influence outcomes (Kouymdjian, Perry, & Hansen, 2005).
• Considering the potentially important role of parental expectations following the disclosure of CSA, methods for adequately assessing those expectations are important for understanding the varying outcomes experienced by this population. The current study examined the psychometric properties of two parental expectation measures.

Method

Participants and Procedures
• Participants were 199 nonoffending parents of sexually abused children. Participants ranged in age from 23 to 72 years (M = 37.74, SD = 7.48), and the majority were female (88%) and identified as European American (90.4%).
• Participants were members of Project SAFE (Sexual Abuse Family Education), a 12-week Child Advocacy Center based group treatment for sexually abused children and their nonoffending family members.
• The PES and PSAES were developed for use in the clinical research aspect of Project SAFE. Participants completed these measures as part of a larger assessment battery at pre-, mid-, post-treatment, and again in a 3-month follow-up session.

Measures
• Parental Expectancies Scale. The PES assesses parent’s expectations of their child’s general functioning. Higher scores indicate expectations of positive outcomes.
• Post Sexual Abuse Expectations Scale. The PSAES assesses parent’s expectations regarding the negative impact of CSA. Higher scores indicate expectations of more negative outcomes.
• The Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL; Achenbach & Rescorla, 2001) is a 113-item parent report checklist that assesses children’s internalizing and externalizing behaviors.

Results

• Internal consistency was excellent for both the PES (α = 0.916) and the PSAES (α = 0.893).

Temporal Stability
• The pattern of correlations between each administration of the PES and the PSAES was significant and in the expected direction. Please refer to Table 2 for the correlation matrix.

Construct & Convergent Validity
• The scales are significantly correlated in the expected direction (r = -0.329, p < .001). The PES and the PSAES are also both significantly correlated with the CBCL subcategories of internalizing, externalizing and total scores in the expected direction. Refer to Table 3 for results.

Treatment Sensitivity
• There was a significant decrease in negative parental report of expectations between the pre- and post-treatment reports on the PSAES, (F(1, 97) = 4.082, p = .046). However, there was no significant difference between the pre- and post-treatment for the PES.
• Additionally, there was no significant difference for the PSAES or PES between pre-treatment and follow-up assessment or between the post and follow-up assessment, which may in part, be due to the smaller sample size at follow-up.

Discussion

• Results provide support for the validity and reliability of the PES and the PSAES. Specifically, results indicate that both assessments are adequate in measuring parental expectations and are correlated with another well validated assessment of parental report for child behaviors. These measures are also adequate for assessing changes over treatment.
• These measures are potentially valuable resources for furthering clinical research in the area of parental expectations of their children's functioning and life outcomes after experiencing sexual abuse.
• A robust body of literature demonstrates that adult expectations of other groups of children (e.g., children with developmental disabilities) influence children's psychological and behavioral development (Keller & Fox, 2009). It is expected that future research will support the growing core of evidence that indicates the effects of adult expectations generalize to the population of CSA victims.
• The evidence of validity and reliability of the PES and the PSAES combined with research evidence pointing to the importance of parental expectations in children’s post-CSA functioning provides initial support for the use of these measures in evidence-based treatment for victims of CSA.

Table 1
Temporal Stability of the PES and the PSAES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre- Treatment</th>
<th>Mid- Treatment</th>
<th>Post- Treatment</th>
<th>Follow-up</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Treatment</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>.56**</td>
<td>.48**</td>
<td>.60**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Treatment</td>
<td>.64**</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>.74**</td>
<td>.69**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Treatment</td>
<td>.53**</td>
<td>.69**</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>.72**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow-up</td>
<td>.46**</td>
<td>.77**</td>
<td>.58**</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Correlations for the PES are below the diagonal; correlations for PSAES are above the diagonal.
*p < .05    **p < .001

Table 2
Convergent Validity of the PES and the PSAES with the CBCL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PES Internalizing Problems</th>
<th>PES Externalizing Problems</th>
<th>PSAES Internalizing Problems</th>
<th>PSAES Externalizing Problems</th>
<th>CBCL Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PSAES</td>
<td>-.33*</td>
<td>.30**</td>
<td>.41**</td>
<td>.39**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internalizing</td>
<td>-.30**</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>.64**</td>
<td>.87**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Externalizing</td>
<td>-.29**</td>
<td>.64**</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>.89**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBCL Total</td>
<td>-.34**</td>
<td>.87**</td>
<td>.89**</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Correlations for the PES are below the diagonal; correlations for PSAES are above the diagonal.
*p < .05    **p < .001