

SEXUAL  
EXPLOITATION OF  
**BOYS**



**A GLOBAL REVIEW OF EXISTING  
LITERATURE ON THE SEXUAL  
EXPLOITATION OF BOYS**

*September, 2021*



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# RATIONALE

In recent years, there has been a growing awareness that we lack a comprehensive understanding of how sexual exploitation affects boys. In 2019, ECPAT International began a **Global Initiative to Explore the Sexual Exploitation of Boys** to focus attention with dedicated research - including new primary data collection in ten countries - as well as advocacy and programming to put the sexual exploitation of boys firmly on the global agenda.<sup>1</sup> Data on the sexual exploitation of all children is generally lacking. When it does exist, it tends to focus on girls. In the rare cases that governments collect good data on sexual exploitation and abuse of children, samples are often limited to adolescent girls, or youth engaged in other service systems, such as child welfare or juvenile justice.<sup>2</sup> Yet, evidence suggests that boys may be as, or *even more*, vulnerable than girls in some contexts.<sup>3</sup> The sexual exploitation of boys continues to be relatively under-researched, sometimes unrecognised in legislation and policy, and broadly unaddressed in programming.<sup>4</sup>

As a foundational project, and in order to ensure that lessons from existing research were observed,

ECPAT International partnered with a Canadian Institutes of Health (CIHR)- funded team in boys' and men's health and sexual violence victimization (CIHRTeamSV: [youthresilience.net](http://youthresilience.net)), from the Department of Pediatrics at McMaster University, to undertake a systematic, multi-language, global literature review of all research exploring the sexual exploitation of boys. The review identified publications via a search of the formal peer-reviewed literature as well as by conducting a global search of relevant grey literature through the global network of 122 ECPAT member organisations in 104 countries. The project was informed by an earlier 2018 literature review on the topic that identified 33 studies from 18 countries<sup>5</sup> but also went further by accommodating a series of exclusions from the earlier study that were identified as limitations.

The review included non-refereed or 'grey' literature, research published by non-government organisations and other organisations working with vulnerable youth populations, and non-English language publications.<sup>6</sup> Key findings from these two literature bases help define the ongoing research agenda on the topic of sexual exploitation of boys.

1. Josenhans, V., Kavenagh, M., Smith, S., & Wekerle, C. (2020). *Gender, Rights and Responsibilities: The need for a global analysis of the sexual exploitation of boys*. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 110.
2. The Economist Intelligence Unit. (2018). *Methodology Paper Out of the Shadows: Shining light on the response to child sexual abuse and exploitation – a 40-country benchmarking index*, London: The Economist Intelligence Unit, 3.
3. Boyer, C. B., Greenberg, L., Chutuape, K., Walker, B., Monte, D., Kirk, J., Ellen, J. M., Belzer, M., Martinez, M., Dudek, J., Smith, M., Stroger, J. H., Henry-Reid, L., Martinez, J., Lewis, C., Young, A., Holliman, J., McFadden, A., D'Angelo, L., the Adolescent Medicine Trials Network. (2017). *Exchange of Sex for Drugs or Money in Adolescents and Young Adults: An examination of sociodemographic factors, HIV-related risk, and community context*. *Journal of Community Health*, 42(1), 90–100.
4. Mitchell, K., M., Moynihan, M., Pitcher, C., Francis, A., English, A. & Saewyc, E. (2017). *Rethinking Research on Sexual Exploitation of Boys: Methodological Challenges and Recommendations to Optimize Future Knowledge Generation*. *Child Abuse and Neglect* 66, 142-151.
5. Moynihan, M., Mitchell, K., Pitcher, C., Havaei, F., Ferguson, M. & Saewyc, E. (2018). *A Systematic Review of the State of the Literature on Sexually Exploited Boys Internationally*. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 76. 440-451.
6. Mitchell et al. (2017). *op.cit*.

# METHODOLOGY

In mid-2020, a detailed scoping review methodology was developed - with the intent of gathering all relevant peer-reviewed and grey literature on the sexual exploitation of boys.<sup>7,8</sup> The study selection and review protocol was developed by two authors (SJS; CW), with input from the ECPAT Global Boy's Initiative Steering Committee. The research questions were:

1. What is the state of the global, peer reviewed and grey literature to date on the sexual exploitation of boys?
2. What are the characteristics of the sexual exploitation of boys and how can they be compared/contrasted on a global scale?
3. What interventions, policies, and frameworks exist globally to aid in the prevention,<sup>9</sup> protection<sup>10</sup> and recovery of boys from child sexual exploitation?

## INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION CRITERIA

Included studies were required to:

1. Address SEC victimization. (Search terms captured alternate phrases, such as child sexual exploitation or CSE)
2. Include findings specific to boys.

For the purpose of this review, sexual exploitation of children (SEC) was defined as sexual activities perpetrated on children (persons under 18) that involved an element of exchange such as money, material goods, immaterial things like protection or shelter, services, privileges or attention/affection, or even the mere promise of these things.<sup>11</sup> SEC can be committed by adults or peers and usually involves an individual or group taking advantage of an imbalance of power. It can be committed with or without explicit force, with offenders frequently using authority, power, manipulation or deception.<sup>12</sup>

SEC occurring both in-person, and via information and communications technologies were deemed relevant. Peer exploitation was included, where the perpetrating individual was three or more years older than the victim. As the frequency of SEC events range, herein we consider one or more SEC occurrences. It is noted that studies on other types of abuse and exploitation were included only if SEC was identified explicitly. Studies describing SEC of male-identifying children and youth, age 18 and under, were included. Studies that included male and female children and youth who had experienced SEC, and those over the age of 18, were included only if the data were stratified by sex/gender and age, to allow for data specific to the population of interest to be retrieved. Additionally, studies where participants were key informants, rather than SEC victims were included as well.

7. Munn, Z., Peters, M. D. J., Stern, C., Tufanaru, C., McArthur, A., & Aromataris, E. (2018). [Systematic Review or Scoping Review? Guidance for authors when choosing between a systematic or scoping review approach](#). *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, 18(1), 143.
8. Peters, M. D. J., Godfrey, C. M., Khalil, H., Mclnerney, P., Parker, D., & Soares, C. B. (2015). [Guidance for Conducting Systematic Scoping Reviews](#). *International Journal of Evidence-Based Healthcare*, 13(3), 141–146.
9. *For the purpose of this study, prevention will refer to efforts to reduce/eliminate the occurrence of SEC prior to victimization (e.g., programming for at-risk boys, investigation/deterrence efforts aimed at offenders etc.).*

10. *For the purpose of this study, protection will involve safeguarding measures for boys who are already in exploitative situations/environments or are vulnerable due to previous victimization.*
11. Interagency Working Group on Sexual Exploitation of Children. (2016). [Terminology Guidelines for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse](#). Bangkok: ECPAT International. 18.
12. *Ibid.*

Studies of other types of exploitation (e.g., labour trafficking) and child sexual abuse (CSA; i.e., sexual abuse of children *without* an element of exchange of money, material goods etc. or identified as CSA) were not included in this review, unless they contained significant overlap with/focus on SEC.

The decision was made to include studies from the year 2000 forward, to capture those that were conducted following the formal adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography - in May of 2000. Relevant peer-reviewed publications, monitoring and evaluation documents related to programs and projects (reports and publications, non-commercial and non-academic work, and documents not formally published), theses/dissertations, and online books/book chapters were included. In terms of research design, qualitative studies, quantitative studies, randomized controlled trials, pilot studies, explorative studies, longitudinal studies and discussion articles were deemed relevant for inclusion.

Exclusion of documents included: podcasts and audio files, newspaper articles, imagery and personal communications. Additionally, single participant or case study designs, review studies and meta-analyses were also excluded in the review findings. Studies of participants over the age of 18, retrospectively reporting SEC victimization, were also excluded in order to minimize the effect of recall bias.

## ETHICS SCREENING

In order to be included in the review, studies were required to adhere to ethical standards that demonstrate appropriate planning, engagement and execution to protect vulnerable participants from risk of further harm. Studies were included if they explicitly stated that they had received ethical clearance from an institutional or local ethics review board. Studies lacking detail of ethical processes were required to pass an ethics screening criteria developed by the research team (*Appendix 1*). The screening tool was created using the guidelines for ethical research on sexual exploitation involving children.<sup>13</sup> Studies were required to score 70% or above on this ethics screening criteria for inclusion. Over 75 studies were assessed in this way, with 28 included. It should be noted that many of

the studies reviewed made no mention of ethics clearance status and were therefore reviewed by the research team, using the aforementioned assessment criteria; however, it is expected that those published in peer-reviewed journals likely had received formal ethics approval.

## PEER-REVIEWED LITERATURE

A comprehensive search strategy was developed, utilizing combinations of search terms, keywords, and subject headings related to the sexual exploitation of boys (search strategy can be provided on request). This search strategy was reviewed by an Information Science specialist at McMaster University. The following databases were searched: Medline, CINAHL, PsycINFO, PsycARTICLES, ERIC, Sociological Abstracts, and Cochrane. The database searches were conducted from October 15-17, 2020. These systematic searches yielded 15,147 unique records (i.e., 25,629 imported studies, 10,482 of which were removed as they were duplicate records). Double-blind screening and data extraction were completed by six independent screeners (SJS, KK, NN, AR, JS, & OH). Conflicting judgements were resolved by two senior screeners via consensus (SJS and KK). Of the 15,147 studies that underwent title and abstract screening, 14,808 records were deemed irrelevant. Of the 339 studies that underwent full-text review, 300 studies were excluded. The most commonly cited reasons for exclusion were study of a population over the age of 18, the inability to disaggregate the male data or a primary focus on child sexual abuse relative to SEC. A total of 39 peer-reviewed English-language studies were selected for inclusion in this study that were published between 2000 to 2020.

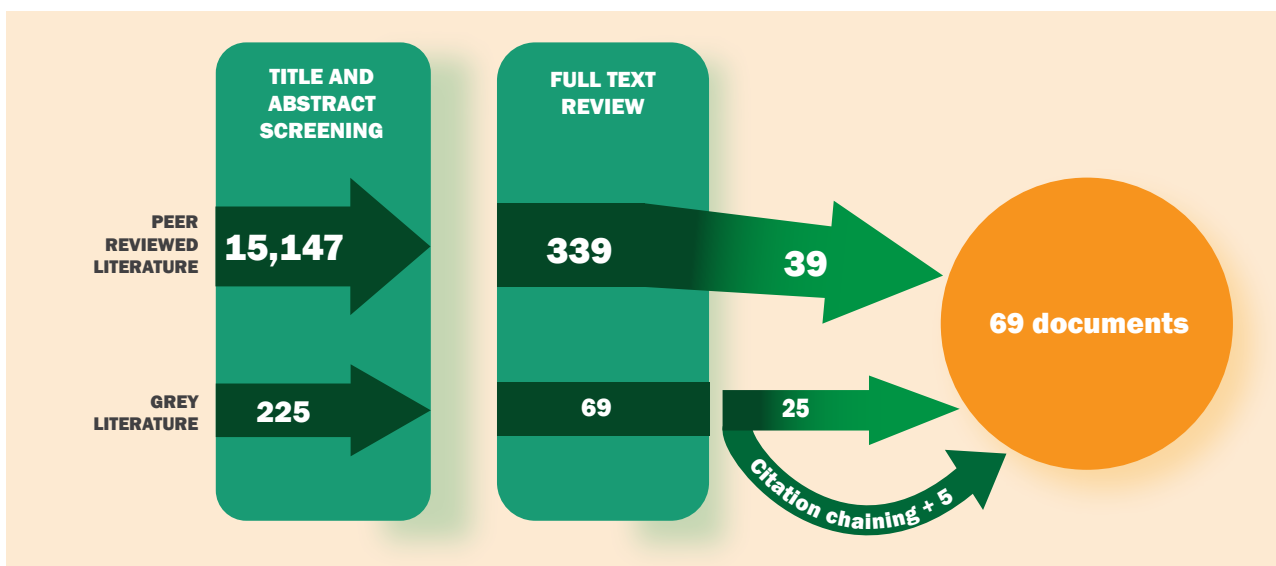
## GREY LITERATURE

A call for non-refereed or 'grey' literature, research published by non-government organisations and other organisations working with vulnerable youth populations related to the sexual exploitation of boys, was put out to ECPAT International's global network of 122 organisations (submissions were accepted in any language). Between July and September 2020, a total of 225 documents were obtained from 36 participating member organisations in 34 countries and in 14 languages. These reports underwent double-blind review by a group of six independent screeners (SJS, SS,

13. ECPAT International. (2019). [Guidelines for Ethical Research on Sexual Exploitation Involving Children](#). Bangkok: ECPAT International.

DD, LH, NH, TD). Abstracts of non-English reports were screened at this early stage by the research team using Google Translate. Following title and abstract screening, 69 reports progressed to full-text screening (including an ethics review). At this stage, non-English reports underwent formal one-way translation to English for inclusion in full-text screening. The search resulted in 25 grey literature documents being included. Backwards and forward citation chaining (i.e., examining the references of the set of included studies, as well as studies that cited the set of included studies) was conducted on the included English-language reports to identify any additional studies for consideration and five studies were added to the grey literature inclusions. A total of 30 grey literature studies were therefore selected for inclusion in this study. The grey literature reports ranged in dates from 2005 to 2019. Most grey literature studies used purposive or convenience sampling.

is provided in this report, detailed features of the included studies can be found in *Appendix 2*. Amongst the 69 documents included, various regions in the global South (Africa, Southeast Asia, South Asia) and global North (Europe, United Kingdom, North America) are represented, with notably fewer in Middle Eastern countries. Studies came from the following countries: Albania, Benin, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Canada, China, Colombia, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, India, Italy, Liberia, Malawi, Mexico, Morocco, Netherlands, Niger, Norway, Philippines, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Syria, Tanzania, Uganda, United Kingdom (UK), United States (US), and Vietnam. The highest number of overall studies came from the US (13 peer-reviewed and 3 grey literature reports), followed by the UK (2 peer-reviewed and 4 grey literature reports), tied with Cambodia (1 peer-reviewed and 3 grey literature reports). Other studies that include publications in



## OUTCOME & ANALYSES

No risk of bias/quality assessment was conducted for peer-reviewed studies or grey literature. The data extracted from the peer-reviewed and grey literature underwent content analysis (i.e., coding and categorization of text to identify patterns, their frequency and relationships).<sup>14</sup> Data extraction consensus was completed by SJS and KK collaboratively. A narrative summary of results

both the peer-reviewed and grey literature include Canada and Uganda.

Studies used a range of sampling, from population-based approaches (random, stratified), to sampling strategies for specific regions or locales (census), to convenience sampling. However, the majority of studies reviewed herein utilized non-probability or convenience sampling and, as such, incidence and prevalence rates cannot be further determined.<sup>15</sup>

14. Vaismoradi, M., Turunen, H., & Bondas, T. (2013). *Content Analysis and Thematic Analysis: Implications for conducting a qualitative descriptive study. Nursing & health sciences, 15*(3), 398–405.

15. Tyrer, S., & Heyman, B. (2016). *Sampling in Epidemiological Research: Issues, hazards and pitfalls. BJPsych Bulletin, 40*(2), 57–60.

# RESULTS

Results are reported integrating the peer and grey literature. Analysis of the 69 included studies is provided in this section. Implications for practice are noted throughout. Adapted quotes from the peer-reviewed or grey literature, highlighting the lived experience of boys subjected to SEC, appear through the report. These selections were chosen to amplify the lived experience voices that complement the key findings.

## STUDY CHARACTERISTICS

A total of 113,435 participants were reported across the peer-reviewed (N=76,192) and grey literature (N=37,243). Of these participants 1,863 were key informants (e.g., SEC service providers, family members of SEC victims) in the peer-reviewed (n=782) and grey literature (n=1,081). Studies varied in the use of the words “sex” and “gender” to describe participants (see Table 1 for gender description). Sometimes, gender reflected diverse gender categories, at other times, it seems to have been used to denote sex. It is recognized that these

terms have had fluctuating meanings in research.<sup>16</sup> Across the 39 peer-reviewed studies, all reported on sex of the youth, and 8 included male participants only. With regards to the use of the word gender, 4 studies included only male-identifying participants, 19 included male- and female-identifying participants, 4 included male, female, and other gender categories (e.g., transgender, non-binary, not reported) identifying participants. Of the 30 grey literature reports identified, sex was reported in 29 studies, 17 included both male and female participants, and 12 noted that they included only males. In terms of gender, 2 included only male-identifying individuals, 7 studies mentioned the participants including male- and female- identifying individuals, and only 4 studies noted including other-identifying individuals (e.g., gender non-conforming, androgynous, etc.). It is important to note that, although gender was reported by some studies, the word gender may have been used interchangeably or in replacement of sex. These findings may therefore not accurately reflect the current conceptualizations of gender.<sup>17</sup>

**Table 1: Analysis of descriptions of gender of participants in the included studies**

	Male-identifying only	Male and female identifying	Male, female, other identifying genders	No mention of “gender”
Peer-reviewed studies (39)	4	19	4	12
Grey literature studies (30)	2	7	4	17

Participants in the peer-reviewed literature included youth with SEC experiences, as well as other key informants. Participants ranged in age from 7 to 29 years old; however, only data pertaining to males and gender-diverse youth 18 years and below were analyzed. Total sample sizes (i.e., including male and female participants) ranged from N=6 (qualitative, case series study) to N=13,294 (quantitative, nationally representative probability study). Male-specific sample sizes ranged from 6 (case series study) to 9,316 (nationally representative

study). Four peer-reviewed studies included data from professionals, in addition to youth victims, that provided input on their experience working with sexually exploited boys. Participants in the grey literature reports included youth with SEC experiences, as well as professionals who provide services to youth, these participants ranged from 6 to 32 years of age, however again, only data pertaining to males and gender-diverse youth 18 years and below were analyzed. In the grey literature, total samples ranged from N=20 to

16. Blakeman, J.R. (2020). *Words Matter: Sex and gender as unique variables in research*. *Advances in Nursing Science*, 43, 214-227.

17. American Psychological Association. (n.d.). *Definitions Related to Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity in APA Documents*.



N=9042, with those containing an all-male sample ranging from N=2 to N=2,986. In six of the grey literature studies, data was collected from key informants.

## FACTORS THAT PUT BOYS AT RISK OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

Consistent risk factors in the socio-economic environments were found across the globe. Some distinct factors were found to put boys at risk of SEC in the reviewed studies. Overall, in many contextually focused studies males were shown to be at higher risk than females (e.g., more likely to be street-living or street-involved youth continuing to live at times at home). A younger age child living on the street is at higher risk for SEC. Overall, based on the peer-reviewed studies (Appendix 2a), there is indication that in the global South, entry into SEC is younger (under age 14), whereas in the global North, it is older (at or over age 14). These differences seem to be systemic. Global North epidemiology targeted high school-attending adolescents. Sample-specific studies, such as street-involved youth, reflected runaways from home or systems of care (e.g., child welfare foster care); in the US, youth entering foster care as adolescents have the highest runaway risk.<sup>18</sup> Global South SEC has been noted as labour-related, where children may be first trafficked for labour.<sup>19</sup> Thus, boys may be more vulnerable to be trafficked for labour as a pathway to CSE. Girls in the global South are more vulnerable in other contexts, such as child marriage

or coerced as “sex slaves” in conflict zones to support the recruitment of males.<sup>20</sup>

Family violence is a consistent early risk factor that predates the onset of SEC generally. Status variables included: lack of education or healthcare, lack of employment opportunities, living in big cities, homelessness, street-involvement, running away from home/child welfare services, being a refugee or asylum seeker, poverty, history of childhood maltreatment and family dysfunction.<sup>21,22,23,24,25,26,27,28,29</sup>

Within the grey literature, a wide range of gender-specific risk factors for boys were identified, echoing the risk factors noted in the peer-reviewed studies.<sup>30</sup> Gender variables included: migration from a remote location (and being indebted to traffickers), being kicked out of their home due to diverse sexual orientation or gender identity, homophobia/stigma, lack of awareness that boys can be sexually abused, perception that abuse of boys is not serious or harmful, conscription into the military, gang involvement, and “macho” male image.<sup>31,32,33,34,35,36,37</sup> SEC-facilitative factors included: criminal involvement, being known for drug dealing, consumption of drugs and alcohol, lack of safe spaces to discuss and/or engage in same sex relationships, peer involvement in SEC, lack of appropriate sex education, and lack of visibility to service providers.<sup>38,39,40,41,42,43</sup> We detail family dynamics and gender-specific risk factor findings below.

18. Office of Justice Programs. (2019). [The Invisible Faces of Runaway and Homeless Youth](#).
19. UNODC. (2018). [Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2018](#).
20. *bid*.
21. Estes, R. J., & Weiner, N. A. (2002). [The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in the U.S., Canada and Mexico](#). University of Pennsylvania.
22. Gruber, Z. D. S. K., Brownlees, L., Bertrand, S. L., Garcia, A. D., Jones, C., Ferreria, J., & Saksena, P. (2018). [Caring for Boys Affected by Sexual Violence](#). Family for Every Child.
23. Hilton, A., Sokhem, K., Socheat, N., Syphat, O., Channy, S., Sothearwat, S., Ponarry, T., Vibol, L., & Dalin, M. (2008). [“I Thought it Could Never Happen to Boys: Sexual Abuse & Exploitation of Boys in Cambodia, an Exploratory Study](#). Organization: Social Services of Cambodia (SSC).
24. Jansson, L., & Dahl, M. (2014). [Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children – in the Philippines: A qualitative study based on seven respondents’ construction of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children as a social problem](#). Linnaeus University.
25. Nguyen, H. Y., & Nguyen, H. G. (2012). [Exploratory Research –Trafficking in Boys in Viet Nam](#). Government of Viet Nam.
26. Nicholls, C. M., Cockbain, E., Brayley, H., Harvey, S., Fox, C., Paskell, C., Ashby, M., Gibson, K., & Jago, N. (2014). [Research on the Sexual Exploitation of Boys and Young Men: A UK scoping study, summary of findings](#). Barnardo’s & NatCen.
27. Tratta, D. (2011). [I Piccoli Schiavi Invisibili](#). ECPAT Italy.
28. Van Den Borne, A., & Kloosterboer, K. (2005). [Investigating Exploitation Research into Trafficking in Children in the Netherlands](#). ECPAT Netherlands.
29. Vidra, Z., Baracci, K., & Sebhelyi, V. (2015). [Child Trafficking in Hungary—Sexual Exploitation, Forced Begging and Pickpocketing](#). Central European University (CEU).
30. Willis, B., Robert, N., & Friedman, S. A. (2013). [And Boys Too: An ECPAT-USA discussion paper about the lack of recognition of the commercial sexual exploitation of boys in the United States](#). ECPAT-USA.
31. Consorcio ECPAT Bolivia. (2012). [Diagnóstico Sobre Violencia Sexual Comercial en Bolivia](#).
32. Gruber et al. (2018). *op.cit*.
33. Fox, C. (2016). [It’s Not on the Radar’: The hidden diversity of children and young people at risk of sexual exploitation in England](#). Barnardo’s.
34. Hilton et al. (2008). *op. cit*.
35. Nicholls et al. (2014). *op. cit*.
36. Vidra et al. (2015). *op. cit*.
37. Willis et al. (2013). *op. cit*.
38. Jansson, L., & Dahl, M. (2014). *op. cit*.
39. Gruber et al. (2018). *op.cit*.
40. Nguyen, H. Y., & Nguyen, H. G. (2012). *op. cit*.
41. Nicholls et al. (2014). *op. cit*.
42. Willis et al. (2013). *op. cit*.
43. ECPAT International & ECPAT Colombia. (2012). [Aproximación a la Explotación Sexual Comercial de Niños y Adolescentes de Sexo Masculino en Bogotá y Cartagena de Indias Colombia](#).

*“My family is very poor, my brother was sick, so I want to help my mother. I was only 8 years old.” (Boy, Age 12).<sup>44</sup>*

## Family Dynamics Risks

Family strain and household dysfunction were common risks across grey and peer-reviewed studies. Reviewed literature indicates that the most common risk factor for SEC identified by US professionals is family dysfunction, in terms of stability, monitoring, support, family attachments, child maltreatment, including the presence of a familial trafficker who most commonly used force or coercion.<sup>45,46,47</sup> Caregiver “strain” may be related to other parenting issues that result in low monitoring of the child or youth, such as parental arrests and incarceration, parental addiction, and intimate partner violence.<sup>48</sup> Although the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)<sup>49</sup> questionnaire has not been often co-considered with SEC questions, ACEs (child sexual, physical, emotional abuse, neglect, parental substance abuse, having a single parent), and poor family attachment were associated with greater likelihood of boys experiencing SEC.<sup>50,51,52,53</sup> In two separate school-based samples in the UK and Norway, it was found that parental break-up was associated with SEC for boys.<sup>54,55</sup> In an African population survey, there was no relationship between the type of household and SEC among boys.<sup>56</sup> Poverty was another factor increasing boys’ vulnerability to SEC,<sup>57</sup> as was parental

alcohol and substance use.<sup>58,59</sup> Among middle/high school students in Norway involved in SEC, their alcohol exposure index at home was twice as high, compared to students who were not.<sup>60</sup> A US ACEs study of juvenile justice-involved youth found that ACEs scores of 6 and above were present among youth involved in SEC.<sup>61</sup> More specifically for boys, emotional abuse increased the odds of a SEC report over two-fold, and CSA increased the odds over 8-fold (for girls, it increased the likelihood of a SEC report over two-fold).

*“The trafficker was his mother. It was very confusing. He had continued visitation [after removal]. He wanted to see her but was also frightened.”<sup>62</sup>*

Child sexual abuse was the most studied relative to other forms of child maltreatment.<sup>63,64,65,66,67</sup> A large portion (39%) of male SEC victims in a sample of high-risk youth (i.e., living in the slums) in Uganda also reported ever being raped.<sup>68</sup> In a sample of mostly male youth offenders in the US, 8% of those experiencing SEC before age 17 reported ever experiencing rape.<sup>69</sup> Additionally, a case series of male pediatric patients revealed four out of six participants experienced child sexual abuse.<sup>70</sup> Physical abuse was specifically reported in two studies.<sup>71,72</sup> In a sample of adolescents from sub-Saharan Africa, boys with child physical abuse histories were more likely to experience SEC, as compared to those without physical abuse

44. Nguyen, H. Y., & Nguyen, H. G. (2012). *op. cit.*
45. Cole, J., & Sprang, G. (2015). Sex Trafficking of Minors in Metropolitan, Micropolitan, and Rural Communities. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 40, 113–123.
46. Cole, J. (2018). Service Providers’ Perspectives on Sex Trafficking of Male Minors: Comparing background and trafficking situations of male and female victims. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, 35(4), 423–433.
47. McNeal, B. A. (2020). Correlates of Exchanging Sex for Drugs or Money for Adolescent Males: A hidden population. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 1–29.
48. Reid, J. A., & Piquero, A. R. (2016). Applying General Strain Theory to Youth Commercial Sexual Exploitation. *Crime & Delinquency*, 62(3), 341–367.
49. Center for Disease Control and Prevention. (2019). Vital Signs Fact Sheet: Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).
50. Adjei, J. K., & Saewyc, E. M. (2017). Boys are Not Exempt: Sexual exploitation of adolescents in sub-Saharan Africa. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 65, 14–23.
51. McNeal, B. A. (2020). *op. cit.*
52. Moore, J., Fitzgerald, M., Owens, T., Slingsby, B., Barron, C., & Goldberg, A. (2020). Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking: A case series of male pediatric patients. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 886260519900323.
53. Self-Brown, S., Culbreth, R., Wilson, R., Armistead, L., Kasirye, R., & Swahn, M. H. (2021). Individual and Parental Risk Factors for Sexual Exploitation among High-risk Youth in Uganda. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 36(5–6), NP3263–NP3284.
54. McNeal, B. A. (2020). *op. cit.*
55. Pedersen, W., & Hegna, K. (2003). Children and Adolescents who Sell Sex: A community study. *Social Science & Medicine*, 56(1), 135–147.
56. Adjei, J. K., & Saewyc, E. M. (2017). *op. cit.*
57. Freccero, J., Biswas, D., Whiting, A., Alrabe, K., & Seelinger, K. T. (2017). Sexual Exploitation of Unaccompanied Migrant and Refugee Boys in Greece: Approaches to prevention. *PLOS Medicine*, 14(11), e1002438.
58. Moore et al. (2020). *op. cit.*
59. Self-Brown et al. (2021). *op. cit.*
60. Pedersen, W., & Hegna, K. (2003). *op. cit.*
61. Reid, J. A., Baglivio, M. T., Piquero, A. R., Greenwald, M. A., & Epps, N. (2017). Human Trafficking of Minors and Childhood Adversity in Florida. *American Journal of Public Health*, 107, 306–311.
62. Cole, J. (2018). *op. cit.*
63. Fredlund, C., Dahlström, Ö., Svedin, C. G., Wadsby, M., Jonsson, L. S., & Priebe, G. (2018). Adolescents’ Motives for Selling Sex in a Welfare State—A Swedish national study. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 81, 286–295.
64. Hounmenou, C. (2017). An Initial Exploration of Prostitution of Boys in the West African Region. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 69, 188–200.
65. Moore et al. (2020). *op. cit.*
66. Reid, J. A., & Piquero, A. R. (2016). *op. cit.*
67. Self-Brown et al. (2021). *op. cit.*
68. *Ibid.*
69. Reid, J. A., & Piquero, A. R. (2014). Age-graded Risks for Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Male and Female Youth. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 29(9), 1747–1777.
70. Moore et al. (2020). *op. cit.*
71. Adjei, J. K., & Saewyc, E. M. (2017). *op. cit.*
72. Self-Brown et al. (2021). *op. cit.*

victimization.<sup>73</sup> In a sample of high risk youth in Uganda, 43.9% of male SEC victims reported experiencing parental violence.<sup>74</sup> An under-studied form of violence linked with SEC was adolescent dating physical violence in a Uganda study.<sup>75</sup> Notably absent was the measurement of emotional or psychological abuse.

## Gender-Related Risks

Traditional beliefs surrounding masculinity can make boys more vulnerable to SEC, as boy victims are less likely to be detected or acknowledged in society, or even by service providers.<sup>76</sup> In Afghanistan, it is more socially acceptable to exploit boys as compared to girls, with coercive control in boy “harems.” This can increase boys’ risk for long-term SEC and disrupted development, as well as limit opportunities for victim disclosures and professional reporting.<sup>77</sup> In Tanzania, it is suggested as an

initiation rite into street gangs and the “rules of the street”.<sup>78</sup> Boys may be at higher risk due to factors relating to sexual activity. Earlier age at first sexual encounter was linked to self-reports of experiencing SEC among male juvenile offenders and high school students.<sup>79,80,81,82</sup> In a US study of middle and high school students, boys who had an earlier sexual debut, more sexual partners, and sexual attraction to males were all more likely to have experienced SEC.<sup>83</sup> Male pediatric patients experiencing SEC were more likely to identify as gay or bisexual.<sup>84</sup> Several factors were identified by Swedish high school boys involved in SEC, with motives for pleasure, money/drugs and coping with negative emotionality (e.g., to feel appreciated, to reduce anxiety).<sup>85</sup> SEC as a form of self-harm has been noted, as running away from home has been called “living suicide”.<sup>86</sup> However, there are very few SEC research studies that comprehensively measured self-harm (or suicidality).

## Lessons for Frontline Workers

- While girls are more commonly victimized globally, in some contexts, boys are at higher risk than girls for SEC.
- Extensive **status, gender and facilitator** factors can contribute to a boy’s vulnerability to SEC.
- Poverty overlaps with SEC risk.
- Family dysfunction is a key risk factor, regardless of socio-economic background.
- Previous experiences of child maltreatment/adverse childhood experiences are frequently connected with boys’ vulnerability to SEC. High ACEs and street-involvement should prompt query for SEC.
- Gender norms related to sex unmistakably impact boys vulnerability to SEC, through tacit cultural and social acceptance of boy victimization, and attitudes regarding boys’ sexual behaviours.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF BOYS

### Coercions and Control Mechanisms

In both the peer-reviewed and grey literature, various control mechanisms were mentioned for

boys and girls, including material possessions, dependency, emotional manipulation, shame (e.g., for taking part in SEC with men and not identifying as gay or bisexual), coercion (e.g., reminders of illegal activity), as well as alcohol/and or drugs.<sup>87,88,89,90,91</sup> Among sexually exploited boys in Vietnam, some mentioned offenders threatening to expose the boys’ involvement in SEC to their parents as a control mechanism.<sup>92</sup> In a population of high

73. Adjei, J. K., & Saewyc, E. M. (2017). *op. cit.*

74. Self-Brown et al. (2021). *op. cit.*

75. *Ibid.*

76. Cole, J., & Sprang, G. (2015). *op. cit.*

77. Freccero et al. (2017). *op. cit.*

78. Lockhart, C. (2002). Kunyenga, “Real Sex,” and Survival: Assessing the risk of HIV infection among urban street boys in Tanzania. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, 16(3), 294–311.

79. Averdijk, M., Ribeaud, D., & Eisner, M. (2020). Longitudinal Risk Factors of Selling and Buying Sexual Services among Youths in Switzerland. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 49(4), 1279–1290.

80. McNeal, B. A. (2020). *op. cit.*

81. Pedersen, W., & Hegna, K. (2003). *op. cit.*

82. Reid, J. A., & Piquero, A. R. (2016). *op. cit.*

83. McNeal, B. A. (2020). *op. cit.*

84. Moore et al. (2020). *op. cit.*

85. Fredlund et al. (2018). *op. cit.*

86. Reid, J. A., & Piquero, A. R. (2016). *op. cit.*

87. Akula, S. L., & Raghuvanshi, A. (2006). *Situational Analysis Report on Prostitution of Boys in India (Hyderabad)*. ECPAT International.

88. Cole, J. (2018). *op. cit.*

89. Fox, C. (2016). *op. cit.*

90. Fredlund et al. (2018). *op. cit.*

91. McIntyre, S. (2005). *Under the Radar: The Sexual Exploitation of Young Men*.

92. Nguyen, H. Y., & Nguyen, H. G. (2012). *op. cit.*

school youth, both boys and girls noted that they did not feel mentally well and the buyer persuaded them to allow SEC.<sup>93</sup> A large-scale study of Liberian students reported that about 20% of both boys and girls were threatened with a knife, gun or other weapon to engage in SEC.<sup>94</sup>

*“When I arrived, I was sexually abused by Mr. X. One night he raped me when I was sleeping. He recorded it on film and took photos as evidence for threatening and controlling me. Then he showed me the film and photos and forced me to follow what he said. If I reject him, he will send the photos to my mother and disseminate the film. I participated in sex work after that. All of my identification was kept by him.” (Vietnamese boy, age 18)<sup>95</sup>*

## What is Exchanged?

With regards to the exchange involved in the SEC, money was most common, endorsed in 13 peer-reviewed studies<sup>96,97,98,99,100,101,102,103,104,105,106</sup> and 16 grey literature reports.<sup>107,108,109,110</sup> Other exchanges included receiving valuables and gifts,

such as “destination vacations,” drugs, school and transportation fees, clothing, electronics, scooters, games, etc.<sup>111,112,113,114,115,116,117,118,119,120</sup> Food and affection were also noted.<sup>121,122,123,124,125</sup> Getting a better grade was also mentioned in regards to SEC in a school setting.<sup>126</sup> Key informants from the US, Canada, and Mexico noted how SEC was positioned as a means to finance their hormone therapy and any necessary transition surgeries for transgender youth.<sup>127</sup>

*“Sometimes I ask myself how I got this far as I wish I had not been doing it. But the money and trips to expensive hotels can be exciting.” (Adolescent male)<sup>128</sup>*

## Offender Characteristics

Details about offenders were limited across studies. In the grey literature, different mechanisms of recruitment into SEC were mentioned, including facilitators, such as peers, family, pimps and escort agencies.<sup>129,130,131,132</sup> It was noted that male youth victims could also take on the role of facilitators. Offenders exploited boys’ desires to be financially independent (e.g., by introducing SEC to them as

93. Fredlund et al. (2018). *op. cit.*
94. Postmus, J. L., Hoge, G. L., Davis, R., Johnson, L., Koechlein, E., & Winter, S. (2015). *Examining Gender Based Violence and Abuse Among Liberian School Students in Four Counties: An exploratory study. Child Abuse & Neglect, 44, 76–86.*
95. Nguyen, H. Y., & Nguyen, H. G. (2012). *op. cit.*
96. Averdijk et al. (2020). *op. cit.*
97. Freccero et al. (2017). *op. cit.*
98. Hounmenou, C. (2017). *op. cit.*
99. Lichtenstein, B. (2000). *HIV Risk and Healthcare Attitudes Among Detained Adolescents in Rural Alabama. AIDS Patient Care and STDs, 14(3), 113–124.*
100. Thurman, T. R., Brown, L., Richter, L., Maharaj, P., & Magnani, R. (2006). *Sexual Risk Behavior among South African Adolescents: Is orphan status a factor? AIDS and Behavior, 10(6), 627–635.*
101. Nada, K. H., & Suliman, E. D. A. (2010). *Violence, Abuse, Alcohol and Drug Use, and Sexual Behaviors in Street Children of Greater Cairo and Alexandria, Egypt. AIDS (London, England), 24 Suppl 2, S39–44.*
102. Osthus, I. S., & Sewpaul, V. (2014). *Gender, Power and Sexuality among Youth on the Streets of Durban: Socio-economic realities. International Social Work, 57(4), 326–337.*
103. Kudrati, M., Plummer, M. L., & Yousif, N. D. E. H. (2008). *Children of the Sug: A study of the daily lives of street children in Khartoum, Sudan, with intervention recommendations. Child Abuse & Neglect, 32(4), 439–448.*
104. Postmus et al. (2015). *op. cit.*
105. Sabin, L. L., Beard, J., Agyarko-Poku, T., DeSilva, M., Ashigbie, P., Segal, T., Esang, M., Asafo, M. K., Wondergem, P., Green, K., Wambugu, S., & Adu-Sarkodie, Y. (2018). *“Too much Sex and Alcohol”: Beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors of male adolescents and young men who have sex with men in Ghana. The Open AIDS Journal, 12, 69–80.*
106. Senaratna, B. C. V., & Wijewardana, B. V. N. (2012). *Risk Behaviour of Street Children in Colombo. The Ceylon Medical Journal, 57(3), 106–111.*
107. Akula, S. L., & Raghuvanshi, A. (2006). *op. cit.*
108. Nguyen, H. Y., & Nguyen, H. G. (2012). *op. cit.*
109. Nicholls et al. (2014). *op. cit.*
110. Willis et al. (2013). *op. cit.*
111. Averdijk et al. (2020). *op. cit.*
112. Cluver, L., Boyes, M., Orkin, M., Pantelic, M., Molwena, T., & Sherr, L. (2013). *Child-focused State Cash Transfers and Adolescent Risk of HIV Infection in South Africa: A propensity-score-matched case-control study. The Lancet Global Health, 1(6), e362–e370.*
113. Cole, J. (2018). *op. cit.*
114. Hounmenou, C. (2017). *op. cit.*
115. Kudrati et al. (2008). *op. cit.*
116. Nada, K. H., & Suliman, E. D. A. (2010). *op. cit.*
117. Oppong Asante, K., & Meyer-Weitz, A. (2017). *Prevalence and Predictors of Suicidal Ideations and Attempts Among Homeless Children and Adolescents in Ghana. Journal of Child and Adolescent Mental Health, 29(1), 27–37.*
118. Postmus et al. (2015). *op. cit.*
119. Thurman et al. (2006). *op. cit.*
120. Tsai, L. C., Lim, V., & Nhanh, C. (2020). *Experiences of Trafficked and Sexually Exploited Boys Transitioning from Shelter Programmes into the Community: Findings from a longitudinal study. Children & Society, 34(5), 392–407.*
121. Fredlund et al. (2018). *op. cit.*
122. Nada, K. H., & Suliman, E. D. A. (2010). *op. cit.*
123. Postmus et al. (2015). *op. cit.*
124. Thurman et al. (2006). *op. cit.*
125. Tsai et al. (2020). *op. cit.*
126. Postmus et al. (2015). *op. cit.*
127. Estes, R. J., & Weiner, N. A. (2002). *op. cit.*
128. Sabin et al. (2018). *op. cit.*
129. Gruber et al. (2018). *op. cit.*
130. Van Den Borne, A., & Kloosterboer, K. (2005). *op. cit.*
131. Vidra et al. (2015). *op. cit.*
132. Willis et al. (2013). *op. cit.*

a career) and wish for a life in a high or middle income country. Grooming techniques included buying the boys food, offering places to stay, giving mobile devices, and providing alcohol or drugs, which perpetuated the boys' dependency (rather than autonomy).<sup>133,134,135</sup> While offenders meeting boys on the streets was frequently reported, the use of online communication and mobile devices was of rising concern within the grey literature. Digital avenues were reportedly more discreet and easier for offenders to gain access to a wider range of victims for exploitation.<sup>136,137,138</sup>

Overall, most studies reported males and females involved in offending. A study with service providers for male SEC victims reported most were exploited by family members.<sup>139</sup> In African school-based studies, victims reported domestic male and female offenders in a range of occupations: school staff, classmates, family members, religious figures, police, transport drivers, shop owners.<sup>140,141,142,143,144</sup> No study reported on solely female offenders, and when involved, females were noted as facilitating exploitation.<sup>145,146,147</sup> These studies described older women friends or acquaintances as supporting the youth to leave their homes and enter into sexual transactions with others or move in with their offenders. It was endorsed that some women provided the youth with food and shelter, as they entered into SEC, or purchased their services themselves, as a show of support. It should be noted that studies did not frequently inquire about females as SEC offenders.

Age of the offender may also not be clear to the victim of SEC. However, in a study of street youth in Egypt, those paying for SEC were predominantly other street children.<sup>148</sup> In a similar vein, among Sudanese street children, boys reported exploitation by adult men for money, and by older street boys for *silision* (i.e., bicycle tire repair glue for getting high).<sup>149</sup>

*"I have been staying with Joseph a ... tourist for the last five years. He says that he will take me with him. I have sex with him regularly. Initially it was painful, I used to cry. Now it is a daily routine. He gives money to my family. He has sex with other children also. Sometimes, he wants us to have sex with each other [peer children]." (Boy, Age 15)<sup>150</sup>*

Some SEC was from direct approach by adults to children, offering them money, and occurring in locations nearby. In a study of school-attending Liberian youth, boy victims were likely to experience SEC by teachers and religious figures.<sup>151</sup> Other studies stated the involvement of a pimp or facilitator. For example, in a study of sexually exploited boys in the West Africa region, nearly half of participants reported having an intermediary, who assisted in connecting boys and offenders together and securing spaces for SEC to occur.<sup>152</sup> Service providers in one survey indicated that the internet was used to facilitate around 30.8% of SEC involving male victims, which was less common than for female victims at 45.8%.<sup>153</sup>

133. Hilton et al. (2008). *oop. cit.*

134. McIntyre, S. (2005). *op. cit.*

135. Vidra et al. (2015). *op. cit.*

136. Chynoweth, S. (2017). *We Keep it in Our Heart—Sexual Violence Against Men and Boys in the Syria Crisis*. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

137. Gruber et al. (2018). *op. cit.*

138. Nicholls et al. (2014). *op. cit.*

139. Cole, J. (2018). *op. cit.*

140. Kudrati et al. (2008). *op. cit.*

141. Lichtenstein, B. (2000). *op. cit.*

142. Lockhart, C. (2002). *op. cit.*

143. Nada, K. H., & Suliman, E. D. A. (2010). *op. cit.*

144. Tsai et al. (2020). *op. cit.*

145. Vidra et al. (2015). *op. cit.*

146. McNaughton Nicholls, C., Harvey, S., & Paskell, C. (2014). *Gendered Perceptions: what professionals say about the sexual exploitation of boys and young men in the UK*. Essex: Barnardo's.

147. Van Den Borne, A., & Kloosterboer, K. (2005). *op. cit.*

148. Nada et al. (2010). *op. cit.*

149. Kudrati et al. (2008). *op. cit.*

150. Vidya, S., Ram Kumar, G., Bhaskaran, S., Ray, J., Dasgupta, A., Upadhyay, J., & Viswanath, R. (2008). *Unholy Nexus—Male Child Sexual Exploitation in Pilgrim Tourism Sites in India: Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, and Orissa*. EQUATIONS & ECPAT International.

151. Steiner, J. J., Johnson, L., Postmus, J. L., & Davis, R. (2018). *Sexual Violence of Liberian School Age Students: An investigation of perpetration, gender, and forms of abuse*. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 30(1), 21–40.

152. Hounmenou, C. (2017). *op. cit.*

153. Cole, J. (2018). *op. cit.*

## Lessons for Frontline Workers

- Offenders subjecting boys to SEC include family, teachers, people in positions of power and control, and peers.
- Offenders' manipulation and coercion of boys subjected to SEC can utilise forms of violence, shame (including capitalising on homophobia), dependency and strategic rewards.
- Online communication and mobile devices are of rising concern as methods for identifying and connecting to boy victims, perhaps more so than for girls.
- Many instances of exploitation still involve facilitators, though in other instances offenders directly contact children – particularly when using digital tools.
- Female offenders are involved, and must be considered in responses.
- Overall, offenders themselves are not a priority for research, which should be addressed.

## CHARACTERISTICS CORRELATED WITH BOYS' EXPERIENCES OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

It is a robust finding overall that the SEC experiences are significantly linked with negative consequences for boys, particularly in terms of mental health and substance abuse. However, the appropriate statistical analyses were generally not conducted to isolate the unique contribution of the SEC experiences to outcomes. Studies were not longitudinal in nature across childhood or adolescence. Child maltreatment-related psychological sequelae may have occurred prior to or concomitant with SEC. The involvement in SEC likely amplifies mental health problems or contributes to new onset of problems. In global North studies of high school students, the number of SEC events were low (median of 1 event). In high-risk samples in the global North and South, the number of SEC events was higher (5+ events). It is noted that for many youth, estimating the number of occurrences may be difficult. As drug trafficking and human trafficking are linked, a child may be involved in overlapping activities (i.e., assaulted while others are high or intoxicated, common threats of organized criminal activity). Of reviewed studies, about one-third measured youth mental health and about half measured youth substance use. When mental health problems co-occur with substance use problems, it would

be expected that mental health symptoms are exacerbated when a youth is in a non-intoxication or withdrawal-from-toxicants state. SEC research does not extensively examine all types of substance use and polysubstance abuse. The impact to a learned maladaptive lifestyle is a significant developmental risk to self-care. The experience of having low agency to secure or use sexual protection has implications for sexual health. Of sexually transmitted diseases, HIV infection was most considered in studies. Mental health, substance abuse, and STI findings are considered in more depth below.

### Mental Health Concerns

Boys accessing SEC services were found to have more physical, cognitive and/or emotional/behavioural disabilities, as compared to girls.<sup>154,155</sup> However, boys may be less likely to approach specific SEC services that they may perceive as more accepting of female victims. For example, in a UK out-reach and drop in centre for SEC, over 90% of clients were females.<sup>156</sup> Professionals identified mental health needs as a top concern.<sup>157,158,159,160,161</sup> Having a prior psychiatric diagnosis, suicidal ideation, and self-injurious behaviour were found among male pediatric patients experiencing SEC.<sup>162</sup> Mental health outcomes noted in the studies were more generalized (e.g., internalizing, impulsivity) than specific. Negative emotionality (hopelessness, loneliness, depression, anxiety, shame, suicidal

154. Cockbain, E., Ashby, M., & Brayley, H. (2017). *Immaterial Boys? A large-scale exploration of gender-based differences in child sexual exploitation service users*. *Sexual Abuse*, 29(7), 658–684.

155. Gruber et al. (2018). *op. cit.*

156. Hilton et al. (2008). *op. cit.*

157. Chynoweth. (2017). *op. cit.*

158. Cole, J. (2018). *op. cit.*

159. Cole, J., & Sprang, G. (2015). *op. cit.*

160. Gibbs, D. A., Hardison Walters, J. L., Lutnick, A., Miller, S., & Kluckman, M. (2015). *Services to Domestic Minor Victims of Sex Trafficking: Opportunities for engagement and support*. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 54, 1–7.

161. Willis et al. (2013). *op. cit.*

162. Moore et al. (2020). *op. cit.*

ideation) was a primary outcome in eight peer-reviewed studies<sup>163,164,165,166,167,168,169,170</sup> and nine grey literature reports.<sup>171,172,173,174,175,176,177,178,179</sup> Among migrant and refugee boys in Greece, unmet emotional needs were found to increase boys' need for affiliation, and their vulnerability to exploitative relationships.<sup>180</sup>

Only one study,<sup>181</sup> considering a large sample of US juvenile justice-involved adolescents, reported specific psychotic symptoms with youth involved in SEC. But it was unclear as to whether this is related to social alienation, psychiatric illness, drug dependency, post-traumatic stress disorder or otherwise. Given the widely accepted traumatic impact of SEC, it is very surprising that only two studies examined post-traumatic stress symptomatology.<sup>182,183</sup> Williamson et al.<sup>184</sup> noted that the number of US trauma-informed therapists with knowledge in SEC is very limited.

## Substance Use

Substance use problems among youth involved in SEC was found across the range of substances, from alcohol, marijuana to heroin.<sup>185,186,187,188,189,190,191,192,193,194</sup> Substances may serve many functions, ultimately as self-medication, or part of the engagement in delinquency (e.g., drug-selling) among boys involved in SEC.<sup>195</sup> Reasons for substance use often included wanting to cope with the distress associated with SEC.<sup>196,197</sup> In a sample of high school students from rural

Canada whose exploitation involved the exchange of sex for substances, boys reported greater proportions of weekly binge drinking, as well as consumption of marijuana and one or more other drugs, compared to non-exploited youth.<sup>198</sup> Higher levels of alcohol-related problems and drug use was found in a Norway community study of adolescents.<sup>199</sup> Specifically, 32.8% of the boys involved in SEC reported having used heroin, compared to 1.4% of boys who were not involved.<sup>200</sup> Among high-risk youth in Uganda, 46.3% of the sexually exploited boys reported alcohol use.<sup>201</sup>

*"I'd have to relax so he got me doing glue, and then I wanted to learn to drive, but because I was so short, I sat on his knee, I started doing more glue and more glue. Then he started coming to my junior high school and he would pull me out of school and take me to his mother's house and he would sodomize me." (Male youth)<sup>202</sup>*

## Sexually Transmitted Infections

Pertaining to physical impacts of male SEC victims, HIV infection and STIs were mentioned in four peer-reviewed studies.<sup>203,204,205,206</sup> Among adolescents whose exploitation involved the exchange of sex for drugs or money in the United States, 15% of boys reported having HIV or other STIs.<sup>207</sup> In a sample of 13 sexually exploited boys in the West Africa region, all received HIV testing at least once in their lives, and four admitted to contracting an STI at least

163. Cole, J. (2018). *op. cit.*

164. Freccero et al. (2017). *op. cit.*

165. Gibbs et al. (2015). *op. cit.*

166. Homma, Y., Nicholson, D., & Saewyc, E. M. (2012). A Profile of High School Students in Rural Canada who Exchange Sex for Substances. *The Canadian Journal of Human Sexuality, 21*(1), 29–40.

167. Wells, M., & Mitchell, K. J. (2007). Youth Sexual Exploitation on the Internet: DSM-IV diagnoses and gender differences in co-occurring mental health issues. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal, 24*(3), 235–260.

168. Oppong Asante, K., & Meyer-Weitz, A. (2017). *op. cit.*

169. Pedersen, W., & Hegna, K. (2003). *op. cit.*

170. Reid, J. A., & Piquero, A. R. (2016). *op. cit.*

171. Akula, S. L., & Raghuvanshi, A. (2006). *op. cit.*

172. Chynoweth. (2017). *op. cit.*

173. ECPAT Guatemala, & ECPAT International. (2010). *La Explotación Sexual Comercial de Niños y Adolescentes Varones en Guatemala (Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Boys and Adolescents in Guatemala)*.

174. McIntyre, S. (2005). *op. cit.*

175. Moore et al. (2020). *op. cit.*

176. McNaughton Nicholls et al. (2014). *op. cit.*

177. Nguyen, H. Y., & Nguyen, H. G. (2012). *op. cit.*

178. Vidra et al. (2015). *op. cit.*

179. Willis et al. (2013). *op. cit.*

180. Freccero et al. (2017). *op. cit.*

181. Reid, J. A., & Piquero, A. R. (2014). *op. cit.*

182. Fredlund et al. (2018). *op. cit.*

183. Wells, M., & Mitchell, K. J. (2007). *op. cit.*

184. Williamson, E., O'Brien, J., Jones, L., Mitchell, K., & Dunford, L. (2020). Featured Counter-Trafficking Program: Love146. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 100*, 104131.

185. Fredlund et al. (2018). *op. cit.*

186. Hilton et al. (2008). *op. cit.*

187. Homma et al. (2012). *op. cit.*

188. Moore et al. (2020). *op. cit.*

189. Nguyen, H. Y., & Nguyen, H. G. (2012). *op. cit.*

190. Pedersen, W., & Hegna, K. (2003). *op. cit.*

191. Sabin et al. (2018). *op. cit.*

192. Self-Brown et al. (2021). *op. cit.*

193. Van Den Borne, A., & Kloosterboer, K. (2005). *op. cit.*

194. Wells, M., & Mitchell, K. J. (2007). *op. cit.*

195. McNeal, B. A. (2020). *op. cit.*

196. McIntyre, S. (2005). *op. cit.*

197. Vidra et al. (2015). *op. cit.*

198. Homma et al. (2012). *op. cit.*

199. Pedersen, W., & Hegna, K. (2003). *op. cit.*

200. *Ibid.*

201. Self-Brown et al. (2021). *op. cit.*

202. McIntyre, S. (2005). *op. cit.*

203. Edwards, J. M., Iritani, B. J., & Hallfors, D. D. (2006). Prevalence and Correlates of Exchanging Sex for Drugs or Money among Adolescents in the United States. *Sexually Transmitted Infections, 82*(5), 354–358.

204. Hounmenou, C. (2017). *op. cit.*

205. Moore et al. (2020). *op. cit.*

206. Sabin et al. (2018). *op. cit.*

207. Edwards et al. (2006). *op. cit.*

once. Of those four boys, only one received medical attention from a public clinic. The others expressed shame and fear of discrimination going to public clinics for treatment, and resorted instead to self-treatment or traditional medicine.<sup>208</sup> Unprotected sex and low rates of condom usage were mentioned in boys from Ghana, with boys being paid more for unprotected sex.<sup>209</sup> Moreover, physical injuries were reported by four studies that may impact STI acquisition, most of which were focused on street-based contexts.<sup>210,211,212</sup> The cause of injuries varied, including those from engaging in anal sex,<sup>213</sup> and violence inflicted by offenders.<sup>214,215</sup> Sexually exploited boys in the West African region specifically related their abuse and assault to their male gender, young age, lack of law enforcement, and stigma against males who have experienced SEC.<sup>216</sup> The grey literature also endorsed the presence of STIs across male victims<sup>217,218</sup> as well as physical injuries, such as wounds and anal fissures from interactions with offenders.<sup>219,220</sup> It should be emphasized that youth are not developmentally prepared to be their own sexual health monitors, lacking knowledge and relational power, even if they are proactive.

*"I pay for you and I was told that was for A to Z. But I did not understand that from A to Z means sexual intercourse. ...It was really hard... for rural people, condoms were so strange. When I learnt about condoms, I know it was useful but at that time, I did not know how to use it. (Boy victim, 17)"<sup>221</sup>*

## Resilience Factors

Resilience is a protective process, referring to the mitigation or buffering of the adversities experienced, and may be considered a developmental capacity and evolving from multiple systems.<sup>222</sup> The capacity to adapt depends on multiple systems, internal and external to the child. Few of the SEC studies examined resilience and resilience conceptualizations were more

aligned with static protective factors than resource provisions or dynamic change (e.g., provision of trauma-focused supports over time). Resilience factors were investigated across six peer-reviewed studies.<sup>223,224,225,226,227,228</sup> In particular, family connectedness and living in two-parent homes was related to lower likelihood of exchanging sex in Canadian and US middle/high school students.<sup>229,230</sup> Other factors included awareness of SEC-related risks, such as transmission of STIs.<sup>231,232</sup> The grey literature did not mention resilience factors within samples of boys subjected to SEC. While securing SEC victims' physical and psychological safety is an early intervention priority, a comprehensive assessment of individual need and a tailored, manageable suite of resources is not yet at the research investigation stage.

### Lessons for Frontline Workers

- There are clear relationships with boys subjected to SEC and a range of mental health concerns characterised by negative emotionality (hopelessness, loneliness, depression, anxiety, shame, suicidal ideation).
- Substance use problems were common, and could be simultaneously coping behaviours and drivers exacerbating vulnerability to SEC.
- Sexually transmitted infections are unsurprisingly a concern, with shame and fear of discrimination also obstructing boys' access to mitigations.
- Limited research has explored resilience factors amongst boys subjected to SEC; this strengths-based approach to recovery is essential and part of an on-going process.

208. Hounmenou, C. (2017). *op. cit.*

209. Sabin et al. (2018). *op. cit.*

210. Hounmenou, C. (2017). *op. cit.*

211. Lockhart, C. (2002). *op. cit.*

212. Osthus, I. S., & Sewpaul, V. (2014). *op. cit.*

213. *Ibid.*

214. Hounmenou, C. (2017). *op. cit.*

215. Lockhart, C. (2002). *op. cit.*

216. Hounmenou, C. (2017). *op. cit.*

217. ECPAT Guatemala, & ECPAT International. (2010). *La Explotación Sexual Comercial de Niños y Adolescentes Varones en Guatemala (Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Boys and Adolescents in Guatemala).*

218. McIntyre, S. (2005). *op. cit.*

219. Chynoweth. (2017). *op. cit.*

220. Willis et al. (2013). *op. cit.*

221. Nguyen, H. Y., & Nguyen, H. G. (2012). *op. cit.*

222. Masten, A.S. (2021). *Resilience in Developmental Systems: Principles, pathways, and protective processes in research and practice.* In M. Ungar (Ed.), *Multisystemic resilience: Adaptation and transformation in contexts of change* (pp 113-135), New York: Oxford University Press.

223. Homma et al. (2012). *op. cit.*

224. Hounmenou, C. (2017). *op. cit.*

225. Kudrati et al. (2008). *op. cit.*

226. Lockhart, C. (2002). *op. cit.*

227. McNeal, B. A. (2020). *op. cit.*

228. Sabin et al. (2018). *op. cit.*

229. Homma et al. (2012). *op. cit.*

230. Hounmenou, C. (2017). *op. cit.*

231. *Ibid.*

232. Sabin et al. (2018). *op. cit.*



## SYSTEM RESPONSE, PROGRAMMES AVAILABLE

*"Once you join the streets you will automatically start having sex even if you are 5 years old...where I was yesterday [in Kenya] I was shocked to see a very young boy having sex. Very young. So it depends. I started at 9 years." (Male youth)<sup>233</sup>*

Boys displaying homelessness were more likely to experience sexual exploitation.<sup>234,235,236,237,238,239,240,241</sup> Runaway youth are often exiting abusive home environments or problematic foster care placements. A US key informant evaluation noted that more than a third of youth had a child welfare case worker at the time of SEC program intake, and noted the structural barriers (i.e., aging out of foster care) in the provision of long-term support.<sup>242</sup> One study identified the need for a validated risk tool for SEC, as an avenue toward identifying victims faster and more accurately, especially among vulnerable populations of youth.<sup>243</sup> Unaccompanied and separated migrant children experiencing SEC may have unique needs from other male victims, in terms of language translation and child relocation to family or alternative caregivers.<sup>244</sup>

*"I was walking and I had no place to stay, and I never had any food, never had nothing and I was kicked out of the house. It's like I didn't have a house to live in and some guy offered me money... and at that time it was a lot of money." (Male youth)<sup>245</sup>*

The systemic responses to male SEC appeared to be negative in certain contexts. In a study of professionals, while the majority reported at least one of the traffickers in their case was charged with

criminal offences, it was noted that male victims were also more likely to be charged themselves with criminal offences, compared to female victims.<sup>246</sup> Clearly, the exploited youth cannot be the criminal. Within the UK, male SEC victims were also more likely to be referred to criminal justice agencies, compared to social and education services like female victims.<sup>247</sup>

Discrimination from healthcare providers further exacerbated the difficulties in obtaining health care such as HIV testing, treatment, and/or referrals.<sup>248</sup> Boys expressed the need for clinics that were welcoming to both sexually diverse identifying boys, and any boys who have sex with boys (but identify as straight).<sup>249</sup> Grey literature reports likewise noted the lack of awareness and services available for male SEC victims. In Hungary, key informants shared the harmful societal view that SEC is considered an expression of boys' homosexuality and, therefore, it is not the responsibility of society to support victims.<sup>250</sup> In Vietnam, sexually exploited boys reported that while female SEC victims might be referred to a social education centre, male SEC victims were not.<sup>251</sup>

In a large-scale UK service study, boys were referred for SEC services at a median age of 14; however, more boys than girls, under the age 11, were referred.<sup>252</sup> Young boy victims of SEC need further empirical study as to the contexts of assaults; for example, less than 30% of child sexual abuse material (CSAM) is boys. When images included an offender, about 50% of images reflected more severe assaults with a young child.<sup>253</sup> Other needs included behavioural/developmental disability (e.g., ADHD, Autism) and learning disability. The service needs of youth experiencing SEC include immediate needs, such as crisis intervention, sheltering, protection from traffickers, and STI/HIV testing.<sup>254,255,256,257,258,259,260,261,262</sup> Examples of

233. Embleton, L., Wachira, J., Kamanda, A., Naanyu, V., Winston, S., Ayuku, D., & Braitstein, P. (2015). "Once you Join the Streets you will have to do it": Sexual practices of street children and youth in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya. *Reproductive Health*, 12(1), 106.
234. Hilton et al. (2008). *op. cit.*
235. Homma et al. (2012). *op. cit.*
236. McNeal, B. A. (2020). *op. cit.*
237. Moore et al. (2020). *op. cit.*
238. Nicholls et al. (2014). *op. cit.*
239. Reid, J. A., & Piquero, A. R. (2016). *op. cit.*
240. Self-Brown et al. (2021). *op. cit.*
241. Willis et al. (2013). *op. cit.*
242. Gibbs et al. (2015). *op. cit.*
243. Panlilio, C. C., Miyamoto, S., Font, S. A., & Schreier, H. M. C. (2019). Assessing Risk of Commercial Sexual Exploitation among Children Involved in the Child Welfare System. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 87, 88–99.
244. Freccero et al. (2017). *op. cit.*
245. McIntyre, S. (2005). *op. cit.*
246. Cole, J. (2018). *op. cit.*
247. Cockbain et al. (2017). *op. cit.*
248. Sabin et al. (2018). *op. cit.*

249. *Ibid.*
250. Vidra et al. (2015). *op. cit.*
251. Nguyen, H. Y., & Nguyen, H. G. (2012). *op. cit.*
252. *Ibid.*
253. Salter, M., & Whitten, T. (2021). A Comparative Content Analysis of Pre-Internet and Contemporary Child Sexual Abuse Material. *Deviant Behavior*.
254. Atwood, K. A., Kennedy, S. B., Shamblen, S., Taylor, C. H., Quaqua, M., Bee, E. M., Gobeh, M. E., Woods, D. V., & Dennis, B. (2012). Reducing Sexual Risk Taking Behaviors among Adolescents who Engage in Transactional Sex in Post-conflict Liberia. *Vulnerable Children and Youth Studies*, 7(1), 55–65.
255. Cockbain et al. (2017). *op. cit.*
256. Freccero et al. (2017). *op. cit.*
257. Gibbs et al. (2015). *op. cit.*
258. Hilton et al. (2008). *op. cit.*
259. Hounmenou, C. (2017). *op. cit.*
260. Nicholls et al. (2014). *op. cit.*
261. Uganda Youth Development Link (UYDEL). (2011). *Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in Uganda, A critical review of efforts to address CSEC 2005–2011*.
262. Williamson et al. (2020). *op. cit.*

boy-specific services in the reviewed literature include the BLAST project in the UK,<sup>263</sup> as well as support groups for the men who have sex with men community in the West African region,<sup>264</sup> and among street-involved youth.<sup>265</sup> Sexually exploited boys in West Africa faced difficulties joining support groups, particularly when offenders prevented them from joining in order to maintain the offenders' secrecy (i.e., in the case boys disclosed offender identities).<sup>266</sup> In contrast, in a school sample, it was found that students experiencing SEC disclosed to friends, parents, family members, healthcare professionals, etc..<sup>267</sup> Some male youth were referred to services due to suspected involvement with SEC, without necessarily youth disclosures.<sup>268,269,270</sup>

Non-gender-specific interventions noted in the reviewed literature included: HIV prevention for students,<sup>271</sup> Barnardo's (UK) Safe and Sound Derby (SEC service provider);<sup>272</sup> US Standing Against Global Exploitation Everywhere (SAGE) Project (service for adults and youth impacted by sexual exploitation in San Francisco);<sup>273</sup> US Salvation Army Trafficking Outreach Program and Intervention Techniques (STOP-IT) program (service for trafficking victims in

Chicago);<sup>274</sup> US Streetwork Project at Safe Horizon (service for homeless and street-involved youth in New York);<sup>275</sup> a life skills curriculum in Greece about sexual health promotion and SEC prevention for refugee and migrant boys specifically;<sup>276</sup> and Love146 (international organization focused on ending SEC in the US, with a trauma-informed approach). Specific to the global South, non-SEC specific services include the Uganda Youth Development Link (drop-in center with various support services for youth); Child Restoration Outreach (drop-in centre for street children) in Uganda;<sup>277</sup> Hagar's Aftercare Programme (program for girl SEC victims, but looking to expand to males) in Cambodia.<sup>278</sup> Despite the various programs, rigorous evaluation on a set of relevant outcomes, with appropriate follow-up periods, was not reported in any study. Service gaps in Cambodia were noted in terms of re-integration planning, safety planning, challenges in school completion, securing employment and lack of information on shelter stay time limits.<sup>279</sup> A promising systems-focused approach in South Africa - national child-focused cash transfers to households - was found to reduce female's SEC engagement; however, variable impacts were noted for boys' SEC.<sup>280</sup>

### Lessons for Frontline Workers

- With worker sensitisation to SEC, homelessness prevention services could be a key avenue for identifying and supporting boys.
- Support systems tend to treat boys subjected to SEC with justice-focused responses rather than social support or trauma-informed care practices.
- Problematic assumptions that SEC victimization is an expression of boys' homosexuality must be debunked as this is victim-blaming to sexually diverse boys, and may discourage straight boys from disclosure. The message that minors are never responsible for adults subjecting them to SEC must be clearly communicated in the empathic response to victims.
- Boys need health and social services that are welcoming to all – sexually and gender diverse youth, as well as straight identifying boys.
- Rigorous evaluation of services and their intended outcomes are scant and should be prioritized in service delivery models.

263. Nicholls et al. (2014). *op. cit.*

264. Hounmenou, C. (2017). *op. cit.*

265. Williamson et al. (2020). *op. cit.*

266. Hounmenou, C. (2017). *op. cit.*

267. Postmus et al. (2015). *op. cit.*

268. Cockbain et al. (2017). *op. cit.*

269. Moore et al. (2020). *op. cit.*

270. Tsai et al. (2020). *op. cit.*

271. Atwood et al. (2012). *op. cit.*

272. Cockbain et al. (2017). *op. cit.*

273. Gibbs et al. (2015). *op. cit.*

274. *Ibid.*

275. *Ibid.*

276. Freccero et al. (2017). *op. cit.*

277. Uganda Youth Development Link (UYDEL). (2011). *Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in Uganda, A critical review of efforts to address CSEC 2005–2011.*

278. Hilton et al. (2008). *op. cit.*

279. Tsai et al. (2020). *op. cit.*

280. Cluver et al. (2013). *op. cit.*

# DISCUSSION

## NEGATIVE CORRELATES AND OUTCOMES

The strongest risk factors for SEC noted from the reviewed studies involved dysfunctional family dynamics, represented by a range of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) (maltreatment, poverty, parental substance abuse, criminality, etc.). While ACEs or SEC screening<sup>281</sup> may be appropriate in certain contexts (e.g., emergency department services, teen clinics), this review did not evaluate screening studies and further research on screening (versus assessment) is indicated. In this review, youth mental health issues, particularly in the depression/anxiety range, were examined. Very surprisingly, post-traumatic stress symptomatology was rarely measured in SEC research. It seems essential to understand the psychological consequences of SEC in depth, particularly for the prevention of re-victimization and re-traumatization, and the promotion of resilience. SEC experiences do not define the child or youth, but are a significant risk factor potentially for a range of concerns in self-care, safety, relational health and wellbeing. These findings point to a need to address ACEs within research on youth at-risk for SEC, with particular attention paid to instances of CSA. Also, the consideration of SEC within ACEs studies, particularly with at-risk youth groups, is important. SEC may be considered an ACE that has not yet been included broadly in research. Appreciating the full adversity picture may support ACE-specific interventions where impact can be assessed as a function of ACEs scores in statistical analyses, such as multi-level modelling. Indeed, the unique contribution of SEC, above and beyond ACEs, can be accommodated statistically and may help direct child-safe policy decision-making, such as a standardization of the age of sexual consent to address potential criminalization of male youth and gender-based misperceptions of participation rather than exploitation and coercion. Also, such a policy would address gender-specific drivers of

expectations of male children providing financial support to families or self-support via any means including SEC. Boys are survivors who are in need of safeguarding, and have a right to be free of violence and to live healthy lives. Training in child maltreatment more generally is important for service provision to SEC experiencing youth. A modularized, open access curriculum is available that equips frontline workers with good clinical practices in responding to indications of child maltreatment ([VEGA Project](#)).

One of the most frequent SEC outcomes identified in the reviewed studies was problems with substance use (24 peer-reviewed studies and 13 grey literature reports). This review found a relationship between SEC and youth substance use in the majority of studies that considered it. Further, some studies identified caregiver substance use as a risk factor. In such contexts, a dual-target approach that considers the trauma of SEC and substance use problems may be indicated.

Suicidal ideation, self-harm, suicide attempts and deaths by suicide need greater attention in SEC research. Psychological aspects, such as SEC as self-harm, merit further study, as does the use of power-abusive psychological persuasion (guilt induction, provision of “relationship”, perceived lack of options) and emotional abuse (threats, withholding food/water, containment, restraints).

With a wide range of overwhelming emotional experiences, some owing from family dysfunctionality and child maltreatment, as well as the SEC characteristics and experiences, negative emotionality emerged as a consistent finding in the review for boys subjected to SEC. The number of SEC victims who die by suicide, substance overdose, or who die by virtue of their SEC experiences are unknown. We do know that most offenders are male, and there is a trend towards more internet involvement, more child sexual abuse material

281. Greenbaum, V. J., Livings, M., Lai, B., Edinburgh, L., Baikie, P., Grant, S., Kondis, J., Petska, H., Bowman, M., Legano, L., Kas-Osaka, O., & Self-Brown, S. (2018). [Evaluation of](#)

[a Tool to Identify Child Sex Trafficking Victims in Multiple Healthcare Settings](#). *Journal of Adolescent Health*. 62(6), 745-752.

(CSAM) on-line, more severe CSAM, and young victim ages. Service providers need to balance youth agency with youth mental health and substance abuse needs.

*“Even though they are trying to deal with us working, there’s always something underneath it. That’s why we’re working, so maybe it would be better if they tried helping with the underlying stuff instead of the working stuff.” (Male youth)<sup>282</sup>*

## SUPPORT SERVICES AND HELP-SEEKING

The studies identified systematic failings that influence boys’ access to help, including tendency towards justice-based rather than social support-based response pathways, discriminatory practices and attitudes, unwelcoming, or simply lacking availability of services for boys subjected to SEC. Service provider understanding is key. Lemaigre et al.<sup>283</sup> identified the following barriers to disclosure of CSA that is also relevant to SEC, namely, poor or inadequate responses to disclosure; perceived negative consequences to disclosure; experiences of intra-familial abuse; and certain emotional responses, such as guilt, self-blame, or a sense of personal responsibility for the abuse. Facilitators to disclosure include being prompted or asked directly about abusive experiences, especially if asked by a trusted person; providing children with information about CSA and SEC that is developmentally appropriate; positive emotional responses (e.g., “thank you for sharing that, I’m sorry that this ever happened to you”). Situations of victimization that were not family related or facilitated are easier to disclose for a host of reasons (e.g., child’s concern for attachment persons).

Therapeutically, reaching out for help and learning healthy emotion regulation skills are key skills for resilience; yet, this and other reviews confirm that

boys are limited in their help-seeking opportunities and relatedly, their help-seeking behaviours. Williamson et al.<sup>284</sup> outline a trauma-informed care model for SEC victims and the potential range of trauma-specific, evidence-based interventions. Trauma-informed approaches should focus on physical and psychological safety, provision of basic needs, a non-judgemental stance, and building upon strengths and support networks. These seem to align with the goals of existing non-governmental services. Yet only one service mentioned in the review, Love146, integrated a trauma-informed approach.<sup>285</sup> Trauma-focused cognitive behaviour therapy (TF-CBT) is recommended for its evidence based in addressing negative emotionality following trauma events,<sup>286</sup> with online training available ([TF-CBT Web2.0](#)). TF-CBT is recommended for children and youth with trauma backgrounds, especially for CSA experiences.<sup>287</sup> An adaptation for SEC is currently manualized and publicly [available](#). TF-CBT addresses the adult-victim relationship with inclusion of a non-offending caregiver or other supportive adult in the treatment plan. In this way, it rebuilds family functionality. It remains the only trauma treatment with evidence for implementation with SEC victims.<sup>288</sup> Importantly, the youth’s acknowledgement of SEC as a trauma is not required for engagement in TF-CBT. To date, evidence-based practice is not apparent in the SEC service research.

Cole and Sprang<sup>289</sup> in reviewing service providers concluded that there is an on-going need for professional training in detecting and working with SEC experiences among their at-youth or crime victim clients. Gender norms emerged in the reviewed studies, placing concern with gender inequality and traditional masculine norms. These were noted in studies in the global North and South. Sex and gender distinctions were blurred in research reports, suggesting sex and gender training may be important for providers and researchers. Free sex-and-gender curricula are available [online](#).

282. McIntyre, S. (2005). *op. cit.*

283. Lemaigre, C., Taylor, P., & Gittoes, C. (2017). [Barriers and Facilitators to Disclosing Sexual Abuse in Childhood and Adolescence: A systematic review](#). *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 70, 39-52.

284. Williamson et al. (2020). *op. cit.*

285. *Ibid.*

286. Cole, J., Sprang, G., Lee, R., & Cohen, J. (2016). [The Trauma of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Youth: A Comparison of CSE Victims to Sexual Abuse Victims in a Clinical Sample](#). *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 31(1), 122–146.

287. McTavish, J. R., Santesso, N., Amin, A., Reijnders, M., Ali, M. U., Fitzpatrick-Lewis, D., & MacMillan, H. L. (2021). [Psychosocial Interventions for Responding to Child Sexual Abuse: A systematic review](#). *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 116, 104203.

288. O’Callaghan, P., McMullen, J., Shannon, C., Rafferty, H., & Black, A. (2013). [A Randomized Controlled Trial of Trauma-focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Sexually Exploited, War-affected Congolese Girls](#). *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 52(4), 359–369.

289. Cole, J., & Sprang, G. (2015). *op. cit.*

It should be noted that intolerance of gender diverse young people in services may be experienced as an on-going trauma. Sexually and gender diverse young people consistently cite homophobic and transphobic intolerance as reasons they are kicked out of their homes.<sup>290,291,292</sup> To then face gender discrimination when seeking help is further damaging. Gender acceptance and non-judgmental attitudes towards gender expression is a powerful healing factor, especially in Indigenous cultures:

*“My Aboriginal beliefs are what actually opened me up to being Julie. Um, the Aboriginal honor the Two Spirited people with great respect and being Aboriginal helped me open up to being Two Spirited and accepting myself for who I was. Both man and woman. It’s given me my strength and the capability to find happiness within myself to a point of full acceptance and I thank the Great Spirit for that. Something I try and teach a lot for the Aboriginal people is that Two Spirited is being accepted.” (James/Julie, youth)<sup>293</sup>*

## TRAUMA-INFORMED RESPONSE MODELS

No study measured childhood emotional abuse comprehensively (only one study in Cambodia mentioned it as a vulnerability risk factor,<sup>294</sup> and there is little understanding to what extent SEC may represent active self-harm, affiliation seeking, or coping with long-standing negative emotionality (e.g., motives for alcohol and drug use may direct interventions further). Given that there is consistent evidence for negative emotionality, easy-to-access

approaches may be worth investigating; mHealth technology (apps) may support skill-building and well-being in low-resource regions in SEC recovery/intervention programs.<sup>295,296</sup> The WHO-UNICEF joint initiative, *Helping Adolescents Thrive Toolkit*, was developed to implement a core set of evidence-informed strategies to promote and protect adolescent mental health.<sup>297</sup>

More recently, the collective aspect of community as a resilience-enabler in Zongo communities in Ghana have focused on the cultural value of solidarity to help poly-victimized youth,<sup>298</sup> and in Indigenous North American communities, linkages to cultural teachings and language are considered essential components of resilience.<sup>299</sup> Prevention of SEC and prevention of lasting, complex impairment (universal access to physical, mental, emotional, spiritual health services) remain as research and practice priorities.

## RISK AND RIGHTS EDUCATION

Universal risk and rights education may assist youth and caregivers realizing SEC victimization is occurring. Exit and safety strategies are important components of education. Creating safe spaces for discussing sexual violence, and training for professional response, is essential. This is consistent with the WHO LIVES framework to provide psychological first aid to children, youth and families in crisis, providing non-intrusive, practical support, and may be an appropriate brief training tool for mental health service providers.<sup>300</sup>

Sexual health is a right. Boys were clearly at risk for STIs according to the reviewed studies, with none to low levels of condom usage evident, and high contextual risks for HIV (intravenous drug use, anal

290. Shelton, J., & Bond, L. (2017). “It Just Never Worked Out”: How Transgender and Gender Expansive Youth Understand their Pathways into Homelessness. *Families in Society*, 98(4), 284–291.
291. Reck, J. (2009). Homeless Gay and Transgender Youth of Color in San Francisco: “No one likes street kids” — Even in the Castro. *Journal of LGBT Youth*, 6(2-3), 223-242.
292. Abramovich, I. A. (2012). No Safe Place to go-LGBTQ Youth Homelessness in Canada: Reviewing the literature. *Canadian Journal of Family and Youth/Le Journal Canadien de Famille et de la Jeunesse*, 4(1), 29-51.
293. McIntyre, S. (2005). *op. cit.*
294. Hilton et al. (2008). *op. cit.*
295. Alam, M. Z., Hoque, M. R., Hu, W., & Barua, Z. (2020). Factors Influencing the Adoption of mHealth services in a Developing Country: A patient-centric study. *International journal of information management*, 50, 128-143.
296. Rowland, S. P., Fitzgerald, J. E., Holme, T., Powell, J., & McGregor, A. (2020). What is the Clinical Value of mHealth for Patients? *NPI digital medicine*, 3(1), 1-6.

297. World Health Organization & UNICEF. (2021). *Helping Adolescents Thrive Toolkit*.
298. Abdullah, A., Cudjoe, E., Jordan, L. P., & Emery, C. R. (2021). Child Polyvictimization in Zongo Communities in Ghana: Young people’s reflections on systemic resilience enablers. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 105075.
299. Noronha, N., Smith, S. J., Martin Hill, D., Davis Hill, L., Smith, S., General, A., & Wekerle, C. (2021). The Use of Mobile Applications to Support Indigenous Youth Wellbeing in Canada. *International Journal of Child and Adolescent Resilience/Revue internationale de la résilience des enfants et des adolescents*, 8(1), 1-11.
300. Kimber, M., McTavish, J. R., Vanstone, M., Stewart, D. E., & MacMillan, H. L. (2020). Child Maltreatment Online Education for Healthcare and Social Service Providers: Implications for the COVID-19 context and beyond. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 10474

intercourse, untested or untreated offenders etc.). The current review noted an understanding of the value of condoms amongst sampled boys, but an uneven adoption of protection practices. It must be noted that in experiences of SEC, boys may have little power to influence offenders' condom usage anyway, regardless of their knowledge. SEC victims noted the stigma attached to help-seeking for sexual health, and sexual health education seems to be

generally lacking proactively. Repeated infections and illness may be experienced as traumatizing to SEC victims. While sexual health issues point to potential intervention sites for boys' SEC in various treatment service systems, several studies noted uncomfortable experiences with healthcare, either as judgemental, coercive, or homophobic. Addressing this could result in these entry points to help-provision being capitalised on.

# CONCLUSION

This review of the existing global literature identifies a raft of outcomes and correlations regarding the sexual exploitation of boys that can immediately be used to inform frontline worker practices, as well as direct the future research and advocacy agenda. Key risk factors encompass status variables like family dynamics and adverse childhood experiences; gender variables like masculinity beliefs and norms; and a range of other facilitative factors.

Not enough is still yet known about offenders. People known to boys and in positions of power are identified and technology is being increasingly used as a tool to facilitate boys' exploitation.

Mental health concerns, problems with substance use, and sexual health concerns were prominent outcomes emerging from the research for boys subjected to SEC. These may represent problematic coping in some instances that further exacerbate SEC-related impacts and limit resilience. These may also represent pathways for identifying boys who have been subjected to SEC in order to

provide support – with or without requiring victim disclosure of their exploitative experiences. A focus on identifying resilience factors in affected populations, and strengthening skills that foster resilience is an important co-target to addressing health. It must be stressed that responsibility for solving these problems does not rest on these young people. Adults safeguard minors.

Finally, fully considering the emotional and psychological implications of boys' sexual exploitation is not nearly evident enough. Trauma-informed response models provide excellent models for such practice.

*“Getting my life back on track, getting back to where I was um seven years ago, um how I can put like all this behind me ya know. Will a day ever come where it won't be something that I think about on a daily basis? Or ya know, I just get that gross disgusting feeling.” (Male youth)<sup>301</sup>*

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301. McIntyre, S. (2005). *op. cit.*

# APPENDICES

## Appendix 1: Ethics screening criteria

To be used only when a study has not received formal ethics clearance by their respective ethics board. These items have been adapted from the “Ethical Tasks” in ECPAT International’s Guidelines for Ethical Research on Sexual Exploitation Involving Children (2019) to suit the needs of this study.

INCLUSION/EXCLUSION SCREENING CHART		
Screening Item	Screening Question	Notes
<b>SECTION A-MEANINGFUL CHILD PARTICIPATION</b>		
1	Were children meaningfully engaged in the study or was justification as to why not provided?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Could involve different levels of participation (e.g., consultation, steering committee involvement, participation in interviews or survey data collection, input on research design, assisting with research duties)</li> </ul>
<p><b>0-The report does not meet the ethical criteria.</b>  <b>1-The report has attempted to meet the ethical criteria satisfactorily.</b>  <b>2-The report meets the ethical criteria.</b>  <b>N/A-Item not relevant to the study.</b>  <b>SCORE:</b></p>		
2	Did the research instruments or data collection tools use appropriate language?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developmentally appropriate, trauma-informed, non-judgemental language should be used in all participant facing documents</li> <li>Language reflects the study population (i.e., in terms of age, gender, culture)</li> </ul>
<p><b>0-The report does not meet the ethical criteria.</b>  <b>1-The report has attempted to meet the ethical criteria satisfactorily.</b>  <b>2-The report meets the ethical criteria.</b>  <b>N/A-Item not relevant to the study.</b>  <b>SCORE:</b></p>		
3	Were all procedures carefully documented in the methodology section?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The methodology should include clear recruitment strategy, study design, tools used, limitations and any ethical considerations</li> </ul>
<p><b>0-The report does not meet the ethical criteria.</b>  <b>1-The report has attempted to meet the ethical criteria satisfactorily.</b>  <b>2-The report meets the ethical criteria.</b>  <b>N/A-Item not relevant to the study.</b>  <b>SCORE:</b></p>		
4	Did the research team have established expertise in the field of child sexual exploitation or receive training to conduct this work in a trauma-informed manner? Or were they able to access/refer to appropriate support mechanisms?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The team may have also had significant expertise in a related field (e.g., child sexual abuse, child advocacy, immigration, child welfare, social work, youth justice), experience working with humanitarian organizations, clinical training, or consultation with experts</li> </ul>
<p><b>0-The report does not meet the ethical criteria.</b>  <b>1-The report has attempted to meet the ethical criteria satisfactorily.</b>  <b>2-The report meets the ethical criteria.</b>  <b>N/A-Item not relevant to the study.</b>  <b>SCORE:</b></p>		



5	Were documented efforts made to help the participants feel safe, keep the participants free of harm, and mitigate the potential for psychological harm?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This may include gender-matching the interviewer to the child, having a third party support person present during data collection, conducting data collection in a private location (that is still visible), providing access to crisis resources, and/or having trained mental health clinicians on site</li> </ul>
<p><b>0-The report does not meet the ethical criteria.</b>  <b>1-The report has attempted to meet the ethical criteria satisfactorily.</b>  <b>2-The report meets the ethical criteria.</b>  <b>N/A-Item not relevant to the study.</b>  <b>SCORE:</b></p>		
<b>SECTION C-INFORMED CONSENT</b>		
6	Were the consent procedures used in accordance with the legal requirements for obtaining consent to participate in research within the country (e.g., written assent/consent obtained)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Different countries may have different ages/circumstances under which a child can independently provide consent to participate in research</li> </ul>
<p><b>0-The report does not meet the ethical criteria.</b>  <b>1-The report has attempted to meet the ethical criteria satisfactorily.</b>  <b>2-The report meets the ethical criteria.</b>  <b>N/A-Item not relevant to the study.</b>  <b>SCORE:</b></p>		
7	Were the limits to confidentiality explained and an informed consent procedure conducted to acquire consent from participants/parents/ caregivers free of coercion or pressure to participate?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In cases where parents consented for their child's participant, the child must have provided assent to participate</li> </ul>
<p><b>0-The report does not meet the ethical criteria.</b>  <b>1-The report has attempted to meet the ethical criteria satisfactorily.</b>  <b>2-The report meets the ethical criteria.</b>  <b>N/A-Item not relevant to the study.</b>  <b>SCORE:</b></p>		
<b>SECTION D-PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY</b>		
8	Were efforts made to protect participant privacy and confidentiality during data collection?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May include filling out questionnaire in private, completing interview in a private (but visible) location</li> <li>Participants are not asked to put identifying information on questionnaires or forms containing sensitive information (participant identification number used instead)</li> </ul>
<p><b>0-The report does not meet the ethical criteria.</b>  <b>1-The report has attempted to meet the ethical criteria satisfactorily.</b>  <b>2-The report meets the ethical criteria.</b>  <b>N/A-Item not relevant to the study.</b>  <b>SCORE:</b></p>		

9	Were efforts made to protect participant privacy and confidentiality in the storage of data?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May include de-identification of data, storage of identifying information (e.g., consent form, audio files,) separately from research data, keeping physical data securely stored in locked storage system, storing electronic data within encrypted, password protected folders/drives and limiting who has access, destroying data after required retainment</li> </ul>
<p><b>0-The report does not meet the ethical criteria.</b>  <b>1-The report has attempted to meet the ethical criteria satisfactorily.</b>  <b>2-The report meets the ethical criteria.</b>  <b>N/A-Item not relevant to the study.</b>  <b>SCORE:</b></p>		
10	Were efforts made to protect participant privacy and confidentiality in the reporting of the study?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifying information not reported on (e.g., participant geography of origin non-specified), pseudonyms assigned to participants, small sample sizes reported on at the group-level to avoid identification of individuals based on the sample characteristics</li> </ul>
<b>SECTION D-PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY</b>		
<b>Screening Item</b>	<b>Screening Question</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<p><b>0-The report does not meet the ethical criteria.</b>  <b>1-The report has attempted to meet the ethical criteria satisfactorily.</b>  <b>2-The report meets the ethical criteria.</b>  <b>N/A-Item not relevant to the study.</b>  <b>SCORE:</b></p>		
<b>SECTION E-SUSPICIONS AND DISCLOSURES OF ABUSE AND EXPLOITATION</b>		
11	Was a clear procedure established in the case of suspicion or disclosure of abuse/exploitation and were all researchers/research staff trained on this procedure?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This procedure should place the best interest of the child at the forefront and adhere to the legal reporting laws of the country/ jurisdiction</li> </ul>
<p><b>0-The report does not meet the ethical criteria.</b>  <b>1-The report has attempted to meet the ethical criteria satisfactorily.</b>  <b>2-The report meets the ethical criteria.</b>  <b>N/A-Item not relevant to the study.</b>  <b>SCORE:</b></p>		
12	Were support services available to participants?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Either on site or on call</li> </ul>
<p><b>0-The report does not meet the ethical criteria.</b>  <b>1-The report has attempted to meet the ethical criteria satisfactorily.</b>  <b>2-The report meets the ethical criteria.</b>  <b>N/A-Item not relevant to the study.</b>  <b>SCORE:</b></p>		

13	Were participants debriefed following participation in the study?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Verbally, able to obtain a copy of report results, or conduct an information session</li> </ul>
<p><b>0-The report does not meet the ethical criteria.</b>  <b>1-The report has attempted to meet the ethical criteria satisfactorily.</b>  <b>2-The report meets the ethical criteria.</b>  <b>N/A-Item not relevant to the study.</b>  <b>SCORE:</b></p>		
<b>SECTION F-PAYMENT AND COMPENSATION</b>		
Screening Item	Screening Question	Notes
14	Were participants compensated for any costs that they incurred to participate in the research?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Could include transportation/travel and/or food/beverages</li> </ul>
<p><b>0-The report does not meet the ethical criteria.</b>  <b>1-The report has attempted to meet the ethical criteria satisfactorily.</b>  <b>2-The report meets the ethical criteria.</b>  <b>N/A-Item not relevant to the study.</b>  <b>SCORE:</b></p>		
<p><b><u>TOTAL SCORE:</u>            /28 x 100</b></p> <p><b>*Subtract 2 from the denominator for each N/A item.</b></p> <p><b>*To pass, the document must score 70% or above.</b></p>		

## Appendix 2: Detailed features of the included studies

### a. Characteristics of the peer-reviewed literature

FIRST AUTHOR, YEAR	SETTING (COUNTRY)	RESEARCH DESIGN	SAMPLING LOCATION	SAMPLING STRATEGY	AGE OF PARTICIPANTS	SAMPLE SIZE	MALE SAMPLE (N/%)
Adjei & Saewyc (2017)	Burkina Faso, Ghana, Malawi, Uganda	Cross-sectional quantitative survey	Households	Nationally representative stratified	12-19 (disaggregated data: 12-17; 18-19)	N=2158	n=983 (aged 12-17)
Atwood et al. (2012)	Liberia	Experimental, RCT	School	Attention-matched group RCT	14-18	N=814	n=419
Averdijk et al. (2019)	Switzerland	Longitudinal quantitative survey	School	Probability, cluster sampling	Wave 5 average age: 13.7 years (SD=0.37) Wave 6 average age: 15.4 years (SD=0.36) Wave 7 average age: 17.4 years (SD=0.37)	N=1675 Wave 5: 82% of original target sample Wave 6: 86% of original target sample Wave 7: 78% of original target sample	52%
Balaji et al. (2018)	USA	Cross-sectional quantitative survey	Venue-based sampling (New York City): venue = clubs, organization, street locations + Respondent-driven sampling (Chicago, New York City, Philadelphia); begins with a set of "seeds" who recruit members of their social network + Facebook sampling (Chicago, Philadelphia); targeted banner ads	Non-probability, convenience sampling	13-18	N=415	100%
Cluver et al. (2013)	South Africa	Prospective case-control study	Households	Cluster probability, propensity score matched	10-18	N=3401	n=1475
Cockbain & Brayley (2012)	UK	Chart/case review	Service	Service census	10-17	N=211	n=53
Cockbain et al. (2017)	UK	Chart/case review	Service	Service census	8-17	N=9042	n=2986
Cole (2018)	USA	Cross-sectional quantitative survey	Service	Non-probability, purposive sample	N/A	N=323 personnel	N/A
Cole & Sprang (2014)	USA	Mixed methods: quantitative/qualitative	Service	Purposive sample & snowball sampling	<18	N=323 professionals	N/A

FIRST AUTHOR, YEAR	SETTING (COUNTRY)	RESEARCH DESIGN	SAMPLING LOCATION	SAMPLING STRATEGY	AGE OF PARTICIPANTS	SAMPLE SIZE	MALE SAMPLE (N/%)
Edwards et al. (2006)	USA	Cross-sectional quantitative survey	School	Nationally representative probability	12-18	N=13,294	n=6448
Freccero et al. (2017)	Greece	Discussion Article	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Fredlund et al. (2018)	Sweden	Cross-sectional quantitative survey	School (Sweden + Stockholm County)	Nationally representative stratified sample	Mean age = 18.0 years (SD = 0.6).	N=3498	46%
Gámez-Guadix et al. (2018)	Spain	Quantitative survey	School	Probability, cluster sampling	12-15	N=196	47%
Gibbs et al. (2015)	USA	Project/Program Evaluation	Agency	Non-probability, purposive sampling	N/A (informants reported on cases of 12-18 year old children and youth)	N/A N=113 key informants N=45 case narratives	N/A (Programs reported to serve approximately 20% male minors)
Helweg-Larsen et al. (2011)	Denmark	Cross-sectional quantitative survey	School	Nationally representative, stratified random sampling	14-17	N=3707	n=1875
Homma et al. (2012)	Canada	Cross-sectional quantitative survey	School	Regional census	12-18	N=2360	n=1154
Hounmenou (2017)	Benin, Burkino Faso, Niger	Cross-sectional quantitative survey	Service	Convenience sampling	14-17	N=13	100%
Kudrati et al. (2008)	Sudan	Mixed methods: quantitative/qualitative	Street	Non-probability, convenience sampling	<18	N=872 children *Sample size for other methods not reported	47% (of surveyed children)
Lavoie et al. (2010)	Canada	Cross-sectional quantitative survey	School	Census of grade 11 & 12	15-18	N=815	n=349
Lichtenstein (2000)	USA	Qualitative interviews	Public health clinics and institutional settings	Non-probability purposive sampling	14-18	N=158 (*23 key informants interviewed)	n=69 (HIV positive and negative adolescents)
Lockhart (2002)	Tanzania	Qualitative interviews	Street (Mwanza)	Non-probability snowball sampling	9-19	N=75	100%
McNeal (2020)	USA	Secondary quantitative data analysis	School	Nationally representative, probability cluster sampling	12-18	N=9,316	100%
Moore et al. (2020)	USA	Case series, retrospective chart review	Service (tertiary health-care)	Non-probability purposive sampling	14-17	N=6	100%

FIRST AUTHOR, YEAR	SETTING (COUNTRY)	RESEARCH DESIGN	SAMPLING LOCATION	SAMPLING STRATEGY	AGE OF PARTICIPANTS	SAMPLE SIZE	MALE SAMPLE (N/%)
Nada & Suliman (2010)	Egypt	Cross-sectional quantitative survey	Street	Probability sampling, randomized by time and location	12-17	N=857	n=727
Opong Asante & Meyer-Weitz (2017)	Ghana	Cross-sectional quantitative survey	Street	Non-probability convenience sampling	7-18	N=227	n=122
Panlilio et al. (2019)	USA	Secondary quantitative data analysis of a nationally representative, longitudinal study	Child-welfare system	Non-probability purposive sampling of a nationally representative cohort	11-17.5	N=2422	42.03% at T1, 44.69% at T2, 52.13% at T3
Pedersen & Hegna (2003)	Norway	Cross-sectional quantitative survey	School	City census	14-17	N=10,828	50.80%
Postmus et al. (2015)	Liberia (Monserrado, Bong, Grande Gedeh and Grand Bassa)	Cross-sectional quantitative survey	School	Non-probability convenience sampling	>10	N=1858	n=1100
Reid & Piquero (2014)	USA	Longitudinal quantitative survey	Service (juvenile justice)	Non-probability, purposive sampling	Mean age = 16.04 (SD=1.14) at baseline	N=1354	86.40%
Reid & Piquero (2016)	USA	Longitudinal quantitative survey	Service (juvenile justice)	Non-probability, purposive sampling	14-18	N=1354	86.40%
Sabin et al. (2018)	Ghana	Qualitative interviews	Service (public medical clinic and HIV service)	Non-probability purposive and snowball sampling	14-29 (disaggregated data: 14-17)	N=99	n=45 (aged 14-17)
Scharer Osthus & Sewpaul (2014)	South Africa	Qualitative interviews	Street	Non-probability convenience and snowball sampling	N/A	N=37	n=20
Self-Brown et al. (2018)	Uganda	Cross-sectional quantitative survey	Service (drop-in centers with support services for youth)	Non-probability convenience sampling	12-18	N=593	n=244
Senaratna & Wijewardana (2012)	Sri Lanka	Qualitative interviews	Street	Non-probability snowball sampling	<18	N=283	n=210
Steiner et al. (2018)	Liberia	Cross-sectional quantitative survey	School	Non-probability purposive sampling	N/A	N=811	n=513
Thurman et al. (2006)	South Africa	Cross-sectional qualitative interviews and cross-sectional survey	Households	Modified stratified, multi-stage cluster sampling	14-18	N=1694	46.80%
Tsai et al. (2020)	Cambodia	Longitudinal quantitative interviews and cross-sectional survey	Service (shelters and services for trafficked and exploited boys)	Non-probability purposive sampling	9-17	N=22	100%
Wells & Mitchell (2007)	USA	Cross-sectional quantitative survey	Service (social work, psychology, and psychiatry)	Non-probability purposive sampling	6-17	N=512	57%
Williamson et al. (2019)	USA	Project/Program Evaluation	Service (CSE)	N/A	<15-18+	N=411	6%

## b. Characteristics of reports included from grey literature

TITLE	ORGANIZATION	FIRST AUTHOR, YEAR	TRANSLATION	SETTING (COUNTRY)	RESEARCH DESIGN	SAMPLING LOCATION	SAMPLING STRATEGY	AGE OF PARTICIPANTS	SAMPLE SIZE	MALE SAMPLE (N/%)
Situational Analysis Report on Prostitution of Boys in India (Hyderabad)	ECPAT International	Akula & Raghuvanshi (2006)	No	India	Qualitative interviews	School, street, community, NGOs	Non-probability purposive sampling	13-18	N=66	100%
We Keep It In Our Heart - Sexual Violence Against Men and Boys in the Syria Crisis	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	Chynoweth (2017)	No	Syria	Document review and qualitative interviews	Agency, NGOs, and community	Non-probability purposive and snowball sampling	14-24+	N=294 (73 key informant interview participants, 33 key informant survey participants, 196 refugee focus group participants)	n=111 (in focus groups)
Not just a girl thing: A large-scale comparison of male and female users of child sexual exploitation services in the UK	University College London; National Centre for Social Research, Barnardo's	Cockbain et al. (2014)	No	UK	Database review	Service (Barnardo's)	N/A (database)	8-17	N=9,042	n=2,986
Surviving the Streets of New York Experiences of LGBTQ Youth, YMSM, and YWSW Engaged in Survival Sex	Organization: Urban Institute	Dank et al. (2015)	No	USA	Qualitative interviews	Community	Non-probability respondent-driven sampling	15-26	N=283	50%
The Lingha Boys of Siem Reap" A Baseline Study of Sexually-Exploited Young Men in Siem Reap, Cambodia	Organization: Chab Dai, Love 146, The Hard Places Community, First Step	Davis & Miles (2012)	No	Cambodia	Qualitative interviews	Massage establishments	Non-probability purposive and snowball sampling	18-32	N=50	100%
I Want to be Brave": A Baseline Study on the Vulnerabilities of Street-Working Boys in Sihanoukville, Cambodia	Organizations: Love146, M'Lop Tapang	Davis & Miles (2014)	No	Cambodia	Qualitative interviews	Street	Non-probability purposive and snowball sampling	8-22	N=56	100%

TITLE	ORGANIZATION	FIRST AUTHOR, YEAR	TRANSLATION	SETTING (COUNTRY)	RESEARCH DESIGN	SAMPLING LOCATION	SAMPLING STRATEGY	AGE OF PARTICIPANTS	SAMPLE SIZE	MALE SAMPLE (N/%)
They didn't help me; They shamed me. "A Baseline Study on the Vulnerabilities of Street-Involved Boys To Sexual Exploitation in Manila, Philippines	Organization: Love146	Davis & Miles (2015)	No	Philippines	Qualitative interviews	Street	Non-probability purposive and snowball sampling	10-19	N=51	100%
The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in the U.S., Canada and Mexico	Institution, University of Pennsylvania	Estes & Weiner (2002)	No	USA, Canada, Mexico	Qualitative interviews	Community and agency	Non-probability convenience and purposive sampling	<18	N/A	N/A
Lasten ja nuorten väkivaltakokemukset 2013	Save the Children Finland	Fagerlund et al. (2013)	Yes	Finland & Åland	Cross-sectional quantitative survey	School	Probability cluster sampling	12-15	N=11,364	N/A
It's not on the radar': The hidden diversity of children and young people at risk of sexual exploitation in England	Barnardo's	Fox (2016)	No	UK	Discussion Article	Roundtable events	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Caring for Boys Affected by Sexual Violence	Organizations: Proteknôn Consulting Group, Family for Every Child	Gruber et al. (2018)	No	N/A	Literature review and qualitative interviews	Agency	Non-probability purposive sampling	N/A	N=20 (key informants)	N/A
Alabania Case-Based Surveillance Study on Violence Against Children	Children's Human Rights Centre of Albania (CRCA)	Hazizaj et al. (2013)	No	Albania	Cross-sectional quantitative survey	Agency	Representative randomized sampling and non-probability convenience sampling	11-16	N=28	N/A
I thought it could never happen to boys" Sexual Abuse & Exploitation of Boys in Cambodia; An exploratory study	Organization: Social Services of Cambodia (SSC) For: HAGAR, World Vision Canada & World Vision Cambodia	Hilton et al. (2008)	No	Cambodia (Siha-noukville, Battambang, Phnom Penh)	Qualitative interviews	NGOs and services	Non-probability purposive sampling	N/A	N=340 (boys and young men, adults, key informants)	n=40 (interviewed boys and young men)



TITLE	ORGANIZATION	FIRST AUTHOR, YEAR	TRANSLATION	SETTING (COUNTRY)	RESEARCH DESIGN	SAMPLING LOCATION	SAMPLING STRATEGY	AGE OF PARTICIPANTS	SAMPLE SIZE	MALE SAMPLE (N/%)
Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children – in the Philippines. A qualitative study based on seven respondents' construction of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children as a social problem	Institution: Linneuniversitetet (institutionen for socialt arbete)	Jansson & Dahl (2014)	No	Philippines	Qualitative interviews	Organizations	Non-probability convenience sampling	N/A (service providers)	N/A	N/A
Under the Radar: The Sexual Exploitation of Young Men	Independent researcher (supported by AIDS Calgary)	McIntyre (2005)	No	Canada	Qualitative interviews	Community	Non-probability snowball sampling	N/A	N=37	100%
Aproximación a la explotación sexual comercial de niños y adolescentes de sexo masculino en Bogotá y Cartagena de Indias - Colombia (Spanish)	ECPAT Colombia & ECPAT International	N/A	Yes	Colombia	Qualitative interviews	N/A	Non-probability purposive sampling	<18	N=45	n=12
L' exploitation sexuelle de l'enfant: cas de Marrakech (Sexual Exploitation of Children - The Marrakech Case)	Moroccan Association for Community Development	N/A	Yes	Morocco	Qualitative interviews	N/A	Non-probability voluntary and accidental sampling	10-18	N=100	n=62
Prostitution of underage boys of non-Dutch origin	N/A	N/A	Yes	Netherlands	Qualitative interviews	Organizations	Non-probability purposive sampling	12-16 (estimate by social workers)	N=854 (836 social work annual reports, 18 key informants)	N/A
La Explotación Sexual Comercial de Niños y Adolescentes Varones en Guatemala (Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Boys and Adolescents in Guatemala)	Organization - ECPAT Guatemala & ECPAT International	N/A (2010)	Yes	Guatemala	Qualitative interviews, workshops, and observational	Organizations	Non-probability purposive sampling	13-17 (for workshops)	N=255 (192 informant interviews, 63 youth workshop participants)	N/A

TITLE	ORGANIZATION	FIRST AUTHOR, YEAR	TRANSLATION	SETTING (COUNTRY)	RESEARCH DESIGN	SAMPLING LOCATION	SAMPLING STRATEGY	AGE OF PARTICIPANTS	SAMPLE SIZE	MALE SAMPLE (N/%)
Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in Uganda, A critical review of efforts to address CSEC 2005 - 2011	Organization: Uganda Youth Development Link (UYDEL), Acting for Life UBOS, NCC and Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social development	N/A (2011)	No	Uganda	Qualitative interviews and quantitative survey	Districts	Non-probability purposive and snowball sampling	10-17	N=529	n=84
Violence Against Children in Tanzania - Findings from a National Survey 2009	Organizations: United Nations Children's Fund, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Institution: Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences	N/A (2011)	No	United Republic of Tanzania	Cross-sectional quantitative survey	Household	Probability nationally representative (three-stage cluster household survey)	13-24	N=3,739	n=1,771
Diagnóstico Sobre Violencia Sexual Comercial en Bolivia	Consortio ECPAT Bolivia	N/A (2012)	Yes	Bolivia	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Exploratory research –Trafficking in Boys in Viet Nam	Government of Viet Nam, United Nations in Viet Nam, International Organization for Migration Viet Nam, Community Health Development Consulting Joint Stock Company	Nguyen & Nguyen (2012)	No	Vietnam	Desk review and qualitative interviews	Community	Non-probability convenience, purposive, and snowball sampling	6-25 (overall)	N=367 (82 boy victims, 285 key informants)	n=82

TITLE	ORGANIZATION	FIRST AUTHOR, YEAR	TRANSLATION	SETTING (COUNTRY)	RESEARCH DESIGN	SAMPLING LOCATION	SAMPLING STRATEGY	AGE OF PARTICIPANTS	SAMPLE SIZE	MALE SAMPLE (N/%)
Gendered perceptions: what professionals say about the sexual exploitation of boys and young men in the UK	National Centre for Social Research (NatCen), Department of Security and Crime Science at UCL (University College London) Barnardo's.	Nicholls et al. (2014)	No	UK	Qualitative interviews	Service	Non-probability purposive sampling	N/A	N=50 (key informants)	N/A
Research on the sexual exploitation of boys and young men: A UK scoping study Summary of findings	Barnardo's & NatCen (funded by the Nuffield Foundation)	Nicholls et al. (2014)	No	UK	Literature review, cross-sectional quantitative survey, qualitative interviews	Service (e.g., Barnardo's, CSE services, etc.)	Non-probability purposive sampling	8-17	N=9,050 (9000 cases, 50 key informants)	N/A
I Piccoli Schiavi Invisibili	ECPAT Italy, Save the Children On the Road Onlus	Tratta (2011)	Yes	Italy	N/A	N/A	N/A	15-18	N/A	N/A
INVESTIGATING EXPLOITATION Research into trafficking in children in the Netherlands	ECPAT Netherlands, Defence for Children International, The Netherlands and Unicef Netherlands, PLAN Nederland	van den Borne & Kloosterboer (2005)	No	Netherlands	Qualitative interviews, documentary records, the media, and the expert literature	Organizations	Non-probability purposive and snowball sampling	N/A	N=487 (246 key informants, 230 case descriptions, 11 interviews with boys)	n=11
Child Trafficking in Hungary -Sexual Exploitation, Forced Begging and Pickpocketing	Institution: Central European University (CEU)	Vidra et al. (2015)	No	Hungary	Qualitative interviews	NGOs, institutions, community	Non-probability purposive and snowball sampling	N/A	N=74 (key informants)	N/A

TITLE	ORGANIZATION	FIRST AUTHOR, YEAR	TRANSLATION	SETTING (COUNTRY)	RESEARCH DESIGN	SAMPLING LOCATION	SAMPLING STRATEGY	AGE OF PARTICIPANTS	SAMPLE SIZE	MALE SAMPLE (N/%)
Unholy Nexus - Male Child Sexual Exploitation in Pilgrim Tourism Sites in India: Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, and Orissa	EQUATIONS & ECPAT International	Vidya et al. (2008)	No	India	Qualitative interviews	Community	Non-probability purposive sampling	N=8-18 (Tirupati) N=6-18 (Puri)	N=22	N/A
And Boys Too: An ECPAT-USA discussion paper about the lack of recognition of the commercial sexual exploitation of boys in the United States	ECPAT-USA	Willis et al. (2013)	No	USA	Desk review and qualitative interviews	Service and agency	Non-probability purposive sampling	N/A	N=40 (key informants)	N/A



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